

# *Hamas says settlement expansion proves Israel cannot be trusted for any peace deal*

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An Israeli bulldozer operates at a construction site near a settlement in East al-Quds (File

photo by AFP)

Gaza City, December 26 (RHC)-- The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says Israel's establishment of seven new settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank proves the regime should not be trusted for any peace deal.

"The establishment of these settlement outposts and communities on lands classified as Area B in the West Bank, which fall under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority, reaffirms the failure of relying on peace settlement options with the occupation," the Tuesday statement read.

"It underscores the need to confront its criminal policies aimed at erasing the Palestinian presence on their land and its relentless efforts to displace the people of the West Bank," Hamas stated.

Hamas also cited a report by Israeli human rights organization Peace Now, which revealed that Israeli occupying authorities had established at least seven new settlement outposts on Palestinian-owned land.

This, according to Hamas, is part of the occupation regime's ongoing plans to annex and Judaize the area, in blatant violation of international resolutions and laws that criminalize settlement activity.

Far-right Israeli finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, a close ally of Benjamin Netanyahu, recently urged the regime to take "control" of the Gaza Strip and adopt an "offensive" approach in the occupied West Bank to expand illegal settlements and block the creation of a Palestinian state.

The Israeli occupation forces continue to raid and occupy more land of Palestinians across the West Bank as part of a broader strategy of land confiscation escalated significantly since the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza began in October 2023.

Last week, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Israel was accelerating steps to consolidate the annexation of the occupied West Bank, including East al-Quds; replacing Palestinian communities with settlers in violation of international law.

Israel must immediately reverse this trend and comply with its obligations under international law, including those set out by the International Court of Justice, the UN office demanded.

The international community views the settlements in Palestine and elsewhere as illegal under international law and the Geneva Conventions.

Israel is already engaged in a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

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