

Data Shows Israeli Settlements Expanded During Obama Presidency



Tel Aviv, September 19 (RHC)-- According to the latest statistics, the Israeli regime has expanded its settlement activities in the occupied territories during the presidency of Barack Obama.

Israeli data, released by Tel Aviv's Central Bureau of Statistics, over 12,288 new settlement units were launched during Obama's term from 2009 up to June 30, 2016. The most recent figures showed that in the first half of 2016 alone, work began on 1,195 settlement units.

Based on that pace of construction, the number could well exceed 13,000 housing units by the time Obama leaves office, according to the report. The surge comes despite Obama's repeated criticism of Israel for its settlement expansion.

Hanan Ashrawi, member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said she was "not surprised at all" by the figures, dismissing the U.S. criticism as mere lip service. She said: "They did nothing to stop it. On the contrary, they looked the other way."

Over half a million Israelis live in more than 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation

of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. Tel Aviv has defied calls to stop the settlements expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel's settlement expansion has been among the main reasons behind the collapse of the last round of the so-called Middle East peace talks in 2014.

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