

# *Israeli Cabinet Approves \$11 Million for Settlements Activities*

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Tel Aviv, December 28 (RHC)-- The Israeli cabinet has approved \$11 million in funding for settlement activities in the occupied West Bank following a meeting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a group of Zionist rabbis.

Israeli daily Haaretz reported on Wednesday that Netanyahu met with the rabbis in an attempt to gain their support against the backdrop of two corruption investigations that are being conducted against him.

Netanyahu is involved in two separate corruption cases and investigators have questioned him seven times. The cases involve allegations that Netanyahu received lavish gifts from wealthy businessmen and negotiated a deal with a newspaper owner for more favorable coverage. He has, of course, denied any wrongdoing.

During the meeting, the rabbis in return called on Netanyahu to give higher priority to Israeli settlements, the report added.

Israeli authorities have denied any relation between the meeting and the settlement funding.

Much of the international community regards the Israeli settlements as illegal because the territories were captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and are hence subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied lands.

Last month, the European Union urged the Israeli regime to stop plans for the construction of new settler units in the occupied West Bank, warning that such moves undermine peace efforts.

The last round of talks between Israelis and Palestinians collapsed in 2014. Tel Aviv's settlement activities and its refusal to release senior Palestinian prisoners were among major reasons behind the failure of the negotiations.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the

Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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