

# *Israeli Prime Minister Vows Hard Line Against International Pressure*

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Tel Aviv, March 3 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he will maintain a tough line against heavy international pressure to make concessions to Palestinians. The Israeli prime minister made the remarks on Sunday shortly before heading to Washington for a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama.

The Israeli premier vowed to resist pressures and to "stand steadfast" on the interests of Israel in dealing with Palestinians. Obama and Netanyahu are slated to discuss issues around the so-called peace talks in the Middle East.

Palestinian and Israeli negotiators began a fresh round of talks in July 2013. Since the resumption of the direct talks, Palestinians have objected to a number of issues including the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks broke down in 2010 after the Tel Aviv regime refused to halt its settlement construction. Israel's settlement expansion policy in the West Bank has created a major obstacle to the progress of the talks.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 illegal settlements built since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. The settlements are illegal under the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied land.

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