

# *Israel announces new illegal settler homes in occupied West Bank before Biden sworn in*

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Tel Aviv, January 12 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered plans be advanced for the construction of 800 new settler units in the occupied West Bank, days before the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden.

The so-called Civil Administration's High Planning Committee will meet next week to okay the erection of 500 units in the West Bank settlements of Itamar, Beit El, Shavei Shomron, Oranit and Givat Ze'ev, the Kan public broadcaster reported. Additionally, the committee is expected to advance plans to build 100 units in Tal Menashe and more than 200 homes in Nofei Nehemia outpost.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid slammed the timing of the approvals. "This is an irresponsible step. The Biden administration still hasn't taken office and the [Israeli] administration is already leading us to an

unnecessary confrontation,” Lapid tweeted. “A sane administration doesn’t start an unnecessary battle with a new American president,” Lapid, who heads the Yesh Atid party, added.

The anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now also said that Netanyahu's announcement sends a signal to the Biden administration that “Israel wants a confrontation.”

Biden had an important role in Israeli settlement construction freeze in Jerusalem al-Quds as well as the West Bank during the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama, where he served as vice president. This is while the administration of outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump staunchly supported the Israeli regime’s settlement expansion and land expropriation policies.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements illegally built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

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