

Israel to build over 1,300 new settler units in West Bank despite international outcry



Ramallah, October 25 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime is planning to construct over 1,300 new settler units in the occupied West Bank as Tel Aviv continues to press ahead with its illegal settlement expansion activities and land grab policies across the Palestinian territories despite international outcry.

The so-called Israeli Ministry of Housing made the announcement in a statement on Sunday, saying tenders have been published for 1,355 units in the West Bank and final approval is expected from the ministry of military affairs this week for these settler units.

The ministry further noted that the new units would be added to more than 2,000 settler units that reports said in August would be authorized for Israeli settlers in the West Bank. The new illegal Israeli settler units are to be built in seven settlement areas and outposts, it added.

Speaking at a weekly cabinet meeting in Ramallah, Palestinian Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh called on world countries, particularly the United States, to "confront" Israel over the "aggression" that settlement construction poses for the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian Authority has said it will be keenly watching for a response from U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, which has said it opposes unilateral Israeli settlement construction as an obstacle to the so-called two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sunday's declaration drew immediate condemnation from Palestinians, peace activists as well as neighboring Jordan, which denounced the move as "a violation of international law."

The anti-settlement group Peace Now said the announcement proved that the current Israeli cabinet clearly continues former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "policy of de facto annexation." It further called on the new Israeli regime to "wake up and demand the wild building in settlements cease immediately."

The group has already condemned Tel Aviv's ongoing construction of more than 30 housing units for illegal Israeli settlers in the heart of al-Khalil city, also known as Hebron, south of the occupied West Bank.

Since taking over in June, the regime, headed by right-wing premier Naftali Bennett, has begun rapid expansion of settlements in contravention of international law. Bennett has also ruled out formal peace talks with the Palestinian Authority during his tenure, saying he prefers to focus on what he calls "economic improvements."

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