

Biden's trip triggered resumption of Israel's settlement activities

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Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh (by Palestinian media)

Ramallah, July 19 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have resumed settlement expansion activities against the backdrop of U.S. President Joe Biden's controversial trip to the occupied territories and West Asia.

Speaking at the weekly cabinet meeting held in Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said on Monday Israel had endorsed plans to seize large swathes of Palestinian land to build 30,000 new settler units in Bethlehem and other cities across the West Bank.

Political experts say Biden's recent visit to the occupied territories as well as Saudi Arabia furthered the repression of the Palestinians. Some say the trip appears to be a sign that Washington is forsaking any meaningful contribution to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On July 12, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said Israeli authorities had ramped up settlement expansion and demolition activities across the West Bank and East al-Quds in the first six months of the current year.

In recent years, Israel has been rapidly expanding settlements in contravention of international law. Between 600,000 and 750,000 Israelis occupy over 250 settlements built since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent Palestinian state, with East al-Quds as its capital.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian talks collapsed in 2014, with Israel's continued settlement expansion emerging as a key sticking point.

All Israeli settlements are deemed illegal under international law as they are built on the occupied land. The UN Security Council has time and again condemned the occupying regime's diabolic settler-colonialism project in its umpteen resolutions.

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