

Palestinians Criticize Israeli Land Grab Plan



Ramallah, September 1 (RHC)-- Palestinians have denounced an Israeli plan to grab hundreds of hectares of Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, calling for international action against Tel Aviv.

Israeli military sources said on Sunday that about 400 hectares of land at the settlement of Gevaot in the southern city of Bethlehem are "declared as Israeli land."

The chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erakat, condemned the Israeli plan, saying that the Tel Aviv regime is "committing various crimes against the Palestinian people and their occupied land." Erakat said: "The international community should hold Israel accountable as soon as possible for its crimes and raids against our people in Gaza and the ongoing Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem."

Israeli media reports also said that the plan is part of Tel Aviv regime's settlement expansion projects. Israeli settlement's council has welcomed the new plan and council members have expressed hope that it will pave the way for the expansion of the Gevaot settlement and for making a new city.

The international community regards all Israeli settlements built on occupied Palestinian land as illegal. And Tel Aviv's expansionist policies have long been considered as an obstacle in the so-called peace

talks between Israel and Palestine.

Even the United States had to keep its distance from its ally, describing the Israeli army's announcement of new land grabs in the occupied West Bank as "counterproductive" to the so-called peace efforts, calling on Tel Aviv to reverse the decision.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 illegal settlements built since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories 47 years ago. Israel occupied and then annexed the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the Six-Day War of 1967, but the move has never been recognized by the international community.

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