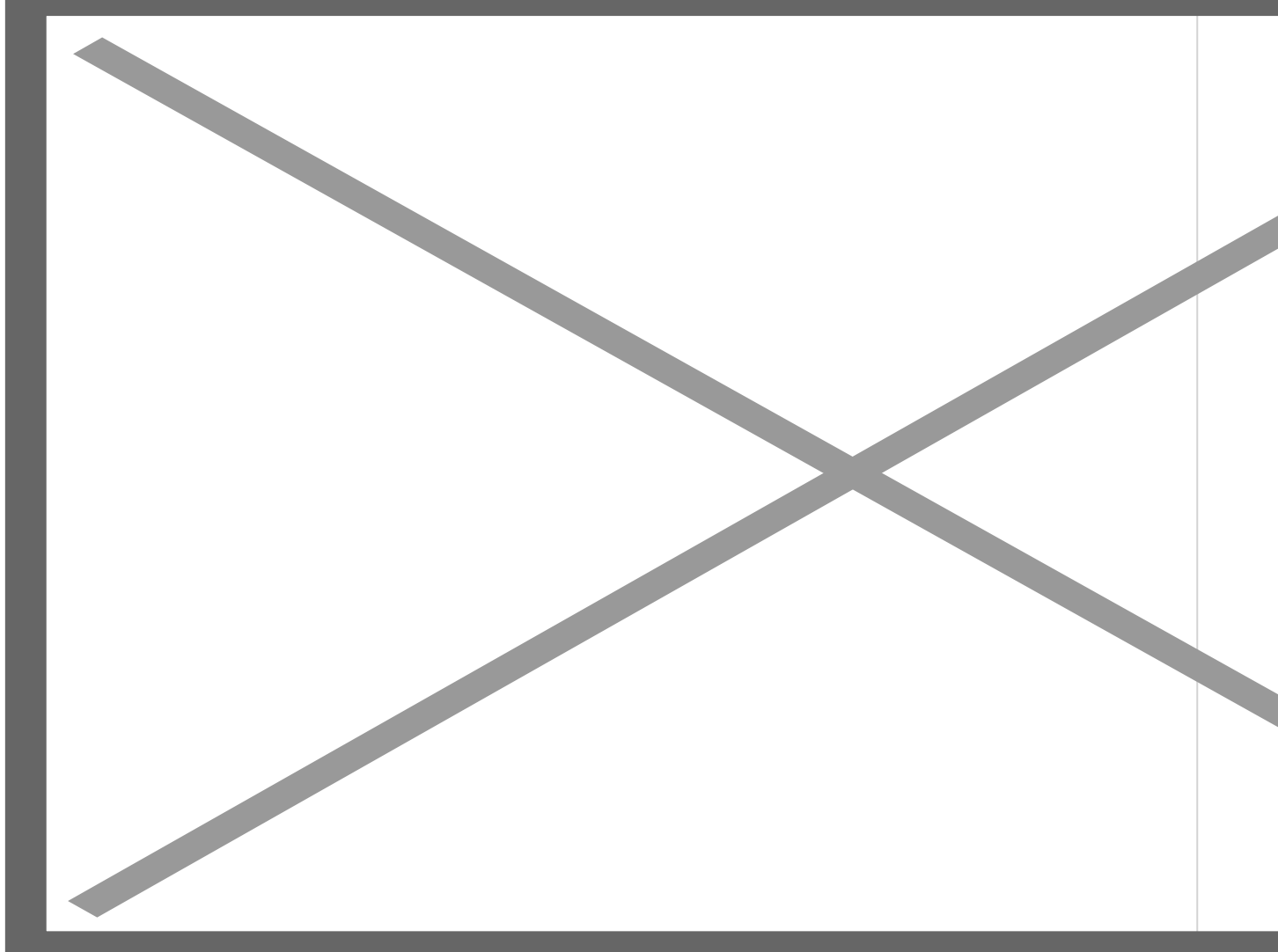


Israel green-lights construction of 3,500 more illegal settler units in West Bank

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The original file photo shows Israel's Ma'ale Adumim settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Tel Aviv, March 7 (RHC)-- Israel has approved plans for the construction of 3,500 more settler units in the occupied West Bank as the occupying regime keeps bombing the besieged Gaza Strip.

On Wednesday, the regime approved the construction of 2,350 units in Ma'ale Adumim settlement in east of Jerusalem al-Quds, 300 units in Kedar settlement and 694 in the Efrat, both situated in south of Bethlehem, the official Palestinian Wafa news agency reported.

Bezlal Smotrich, the finance minister, said the new units will be added to a record number of more than 18,500 units already approved by the cabinet of Benjamin Netanyahu. Israeli authorities seized some 2,640 dunums of Palestinian-owned lands in the towns of Abu Dis, Al-Eizariya, and Arab Al-Sawahra, east of Jerusalem al-Quds last week, Wafa further said.

The West Bank-based Palestinian Authority, led by President Mahmud Abbas, has strongly condemned the new plans. The Israeli regime has over the past decades advanced plans to build new illegal settlements while the U.S. and its allies have historically done little to pressure Tel Aviv to halt or roll back the expansion.

Tel Aviv has stepped up settlement expansion since December 2022, when Netanyahu staged a comeback as the head of a cabinet of hard-right and ultra-Orthodox parties. More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

The international community views the settlements as illegal under international law and the Geneva Conventions due to their construction on the occupied territories. Hundreds of the settlements have been built across the West Bank since Tel Aviv's occupation of the territory in 1967.

Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state with East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.

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