

# *Israel Approves 243 More Settler Units in East Jerusalem*

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Tel Aviv, December 26 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime has approved the construction of 243 new illegal settler units in the occupied Palestinian territories, despite mounting international criticism of Israeli settlement expansion.

On Thursday, the municipal planning committee in East Jerusalem authorized 243 new settler units to be built in the Ramot Alon neighborhood of the city. It also approved changes to pre-existing plans for 270 settler units in the same area and in Har Homa settlement in the occupied West Bank.

According to city councilor Yosef Pepe Alalu, local Israeli authorities are taking advantage of the attention that is being given to the March 2015 general elections in order to expand construction projects.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman warned the Security Council on October 29th over Israel's expansionist policies in East Jerusalem, saying they threaten the viability of a future Palestinian state.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 settlements built since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 1967.

Much of the international community considers the settlements illegal because the territories were captured by Israel in a war in 1967 and are thus subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied lands.

Palestinians are demanding that Israel withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. Tel Aviv, however, has refused to return to the 1967 borders and is unwilling to discuss the issue of Jerusalem.

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