

# *Palestine Liberation Organization Denounces Israeli Settlement Plans as ‘War Crimes’*

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Ramallah, July 30 (RHC)-- The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has blasted Israel for ordering the construction of more illegal settler units in the occupied territories, describing the move as “war crimes” against Palestinians.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, accused the Tel Aviv regime of planning to occupy further Palestinian lands and sabotaging peace efforts in the region.

“These settlement measures and war crimes are part of a plan by Israeli leaders to impose a ‘Greater Israel’ on historic Palestine and destroy ... the chance for peace” in the region, the statement said. The remarks came hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the construction of hundreds of illegal settler units in the occupied West Bank.

Netanyahu’s office said in a statement that “the immediate construction of 300 homes in Beit El” settlement had been authorized. The project was first announced three years ago. The statement further went on to say that plans for building another 504 settler units in East Jerusalem had also been approved.

Israel has expanded its illegal settlement construction in the occupied territories in the past few years in defiance of international calls on the regime to end its expansionist policies.

Over half a million Israelis live in over 120 illegal settlements built since Israel's occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem in 1967. Much of the international community considers the settler units as illegal because the territories were seized by Israel in a 1967 war and are hence subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied lands.

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