

United Nations Calls on Israel to Stop Settlement Expansion



United Nations, January 27 (RHC)-- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has blasted Israel over plans to construct new illegal settler units in the occupied Palestinian territories, calling for an end to the unlawful activity.

In an address to the UN Security Council's periodic Middle East debate at the UN headquarters in New York on Tuesday, Ban said: "Progress towards peace requires a freeze of Israel's settlement enterprise." The UN chief also described the Tel Aviv regime's continued settlement activities "an affront to the Palestinian people and to the international community."

In his address, Ban Ki-moon expressed concern over plans by the Israeli regime to build over 150 new illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and to confiscate 380 acres (154 hectares) of agricultural land in the Jordan Valley near the West Bank city of Jericho.

"These provocative acts are bound to increase the growth of settler populations, further heighten tensions and undermine any prospects for a political road ahead," he added.

Over half a million Israelis live in more than 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The United Nations and most countries regard the Israeli settler units as illegal.

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