

Israel Approves Plans to Build 800 New Settler Units



Tel Aviv, July 4 (RHC)-- Israel has approved plans to construct 800 new housing units for settlers in and around the occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem) in open defiance of international law.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the minister of military affairs, Avigdor Liberman, approved the new construction plans on Sunday, Haaretz quoted an Israeli official as saying but did not name him.

According to the report, 560 units will be built in the settlement of Maale Adumim in the occupied West Bank near East Jerusalem. Another 140 units will be built in the settlement of Ramot and about 100 in Har Homa and Pisgat Zeev settlements on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

The official also claimed that Netanyahu also approved the construction of 600 houses for Palestinians in the Arab neighborhood of Beit Safafa.

On Saturday, Netanyahu also reopened a tender contract for the construction of 42 units in the Kiryat Arba settlement located in the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron). The project had been halted for a year and a half as contractors refrained from taking part.

Earlier on Sunday, the United Nations (UN)'s special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, warned that the "two-state" solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis has faded away.

His remarks came after a report by the Middle East Quartet — which is mediating the so-called peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — that directly called on the Tel Aviv regime to put an end to its settlement expansion activities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The UN and most countries regard the Israeli settlements as illegal because the territories they are built on were captured by Israel in a war in 1967 and are hence subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied lands.

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