

France and Britain condemn Israeli settlement plan in occupied East Jerusalem



Paris, June 5 (RHC)-- France and Britain have condemned Israel's recent approval of plans for the construction of hundreds of new settler units in the occupied East Jerusalem, irrespective of the international outcry against the Tel Aviv regime's land expropriation and settlement expansion policies in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The French Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the decision is a matter of concern contributes to unrest and undermines the achievement of a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of the so-called two-state solution.

The statement then described Israeli settlements as contrary to international law, particularly United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334. The European Union has denounced as "illegal" Israel's settlement activities on occupied Palestinian lands as the Tel Aviv regime is planning to construct hundreds of new housing units in East Jerusalem.

The French ministry called on Israeli authorities to reverse the decision to build over 800 new settler units in East Jerusalem, and to abandon any project that would harm the possibility of the two-state solution.

Earlier, the British government condemned the latest Israeli settlement plan. “The UK Government is gravely concerned by plans announced on May 30 to advance tenders for hundreds of settlement housing units in occupied East Jerusalem,” Palestine's official WAFA news agency quoted British Minister for the Middle East Andrew Murrison as saying.

“We are clear that settlements built on occupied Palestinian territory are contrary to international law and an obstacle to a two-state solution. Regrettably, this takes us further away from a negotiated peace agreement,” he added. Murrison noted that he visited Jerusalem between May 28 and 30, where he reiterated London’s support for the two-state solution.

On May 30, Israel's Housing Ministry published tenders for the construction of 805 new settler units in East Jerusalem. A total of 460 units will be constructed in Pisgat Ze'ev settlement, while another 345 will be built in Ramot neighborhood in the northern part of East Jerusalem.

Palestinians and Israeli anti-settlement groups have slammed the Judaization nature of the move. About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The UN Security Council has condemned Israel’s settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

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