

UN expresses deep concern by Israel's unrelenting settlement expansion



United Nations, June 20 (RHC)-- The United Nations has voiced deep concern about Israel's plan to approve the construction of a significant number of new settler units in the occupied West Bank.

The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland said on Monday he was "deeply concerned" that Israel had decided to "alter settlement planning procedures that have been in place since 1996, which is expected to expedite settlement expansion." "I am also alarmed by the anticipated advancement next week of over 4,000 settlement housing units by Israeli planning authorities."

Media reports quoting Israeli sources said on Sunday authorities had tabled plans to approve the construction of 4,560 settler units in various areas of the West Bank. The plans were included on the

agenda of an Israeli planning council that meets next week.

"I reiterate that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East al-Quds, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law," Wennesland said, urging Israel "to halt and reverse such decisions, which are a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace."

"At a time of increased violence and fragility on the ground, the prolonged absence of a political process, and concerted international and regional efforts to support constructive dialogue between the parties, such steps only push Israelis and Palestinians further apart and risk destabilizing an already highly tense situation on the ground."

The constructions would be added to the thousands-strong similar structures that are located inside the more than 250 illegal settlements. The Israeli regime has already authorized new settlement outposts and pledged to construct new units in the West Bank.

Since taking office in January, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has approved the promotion of more than 7,000 new settler units. It also amended a law to clear the way for settlers to return to four settlements that had previously been evacuated.

Emboldened by former President Donald Trump of the United States and his all-out support, Israel stepped up its settlement expansion in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334, which pronounced settlements in the West Bank and East al-Quds "a flagrant violation under international law."

During the Donald Trump administration in the U.S., Israel named one of its new settlements "Donald Trump." Now, Israeli's living there can say: "

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has called on the international community and the UN to take serious and urgent steps to stop Israel's Judaization and colonial projects in the occupied territories.

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