

# *Israeli Lawmakers Approve Funding to Build Tourist Center in West Bank*

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Tel Aviv, December 22 (RHC)-- The Israeli parliament (Knesset) has approved a 3.3-million-dollar funding to build a tourist center at an illegal settlement in the occupied West Bank. According to a Sunday statement by the Knesset, the money will be injected into the project at the Barkan settlement in the north of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Israeli opposition lawmakers condemned the ratification of the funds by the Knesset's financial committee as "electoral corruption." They accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of trying to "please the settler lobby" before the March 17 general elections.

Earlier this month, Netanyahu called for the dissolution of the parliament after sacking Minister of Judicial Affairs Tzipi Livni and Lapid, the finance minister, from his coalition. The two ministers were among the critics of Netanyahu's policies.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 120 illegal settlements built since the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967.

Israeli settlements are considered illegal by much of the international community because the territories were captured by Israel in the Six-Day War, and are hence subject to the Geneva Conventions, which forbid construction on occupied lands.

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