

Israel announces plan to expand settlement in occupied West Bank



Tel Aviv, September 22 (RHC)-- Israeli authorities have announced that they plan to expand a settlement in the southern occupied West Bank as the Tel Aviv regime presses ahead with its land expropriation policies in the occupied territories irrespective of great international outcry.

Israel's so-called Civil Administration announced the plan, saying it will expand the settlement of Tina Omarim in the town of Dahriyeh, in the southern occupied West Bank district of Hebron.

The Palestine's Land Research Center, which obtained a copy of the detailed plan, said the plan would change the classification of the Palestinian-owned land from agricultural into urban, in an attempt to justify expanding the Israeli settlement.

The report further said that the plan would lead to the seizure of 64 acres of Palestinian-owned land in the town of al-Thahriyeh. It also noted that the plan would include the building of some 150 housing units, the establishment of public institutions, public parks, streets and parking lots.

Figures show that Israel started the construction of 794 new settlement housing units in the second quarter of 2018, compared to 279 it built in the first quarter of the same year. Furthermore, Tel Aviv launched the construction of 1,073 housing units in the first half of this year, compared to 818 in the second half of last year.

The occupying regime's policy of expanding settlements and outposts has been escalating recently particularly due to U.S. President Donald Trump approving three times more the amount of settlement units than that which were approved in the year and a half before his inauguration.

Tel Aviv, emboldened by the reactionary U.S. president, has proceeded with constructing more settlement units in the occupied territories in defiance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334.

In another development earlier this month, the Israeli High Court approved plans for the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar village and evacuation of its residents. It could be razed within the coming days. Israeli officials allege that Palestinian structures there have been built without the relevant building permits and pose a threat to residents because of their proximity to a highway.

Critics, on the other hand, maintain that building permits are nearly impossible to obtain for Palestinians in Israeli-controlled areas of the West Bank and the demolition is meant to clear the way for new settlements.

The controversial decision to demolish the village, which will leave more than 35 Palestinian families displaced, also drew condemnations from abroad. About 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built illegally since the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian lands.

The resolution, approved in December 2016, states that Israel's establishment of "settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-state solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace."

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