

Words are not enough

The continued growth of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Israeli governments have built about 150 settlements in the West Bank -including East Jerusalem- since 1967. More than 100 'outposts' have been erected by settlers -without official authorization- in the same period.¹ While world leaders speak with one voice in condemning the expansion of Israeli settlements, illegal under international law, the government of Israel continues to defy the international community, creating ever greater difficulties for the Palestinian population and threatening a just and durable solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.²

Between 2002 and 2012, the Middle East Quartet, which includes the European Union, United Nations, United States and Russia, has made 39 joint statements calling on Israeli governments to halt the expansion of settlements.³ Yet during the same period, the number of settlers living in settlements has risen by more than one third - from approximately 377,000 to 500,000.⁴

European leaders, together with the rest of the international community, must now move beyond statements and take urgent action to press the Government of Israel to end the construction of settlements and comply with its responsibilities under international law.⁵

Statements by the international community	Deteriorating realities on the ground
2012	
<p>Statement by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton (June 8): "I deplore Israeli Government plans to build over 800 additional settlement housing units as well as the plan to relocate some of the settlers from Ulpana within the occupied Palestinian territory. Settlements are illegal under international law and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible ..."⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July, a new report by an Israeli government appointed committee led by Retired Supreme Court Judge Edmond Levy recommended legalizing West Bank outposts and easing settlement restrictions. The committee claimed that settlements do not breach international law.⁷
<p>European Foreign Affairs Ministers (May 14): "The EU expresses deep concern about ... the marked acceleration of settlement construction following the end of the 2010 moratorium, the recent decision of the government of Israel regarding the status of some settlements outposts as well as the proposal to relocate settlers from Migron within the occupied Palestinian territory"⁸</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 6 June, the Israeli government announced the construction of 851 new settlement homes.⁹

Statements by the international community	Deteriorating realities on the ground
2012	
<p>Statement by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton (December 2011): "I wish to express my strong disapproval of the Israeli authorities' announcement that they intend to publish tenders for the construction of some 1000 housing units in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. I urge them not to proceed with this publication. The EU's position is clear: settlement construction is illegal under international law and further complicates efforts to find a solution to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."¹⁰</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 21 March, the Israeli Knesset's Finance Committee approved the allocation of around \$30 million to support settlements.¹¹ • On 4 April, the Israeli government unveiled the tenders for 1,121 new settler homes.¹² • In 22 April, the outposts of Sansana, Bruchin and Rehelim were legalized under Israeli law. These were the first completely new settlements to be approved since 1990.¹³
2011	
<p>Joint statement of ambassadors from Britain, France, Germany and Portugal (December): "The Israeli government's decision to speed up settlement construction is a 'wholly negative' development. We call on the Israeli government to reverse these steps."¹⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011 saw a 20 per cent rise in new constructions in existing settlements compared to 2010.¹⁵ • In 2011 alone, 1,577 units in settlements were published as part of the Israeli Ministry of Housing's official list of upcoming tenders.¹⁶
<p>Statement by UK Foreign Minister William Hague (November): "Settlements on occupied land are illegal. We are very clear about that and have condemned recent decisions to accelerate settlement building, and I condemn them again today."¹⁷</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December, the Israeli Housing Ministry published tenders for 1,028 homes to be built in settlements.¹⁸
<p>Statement by US State Department (April): "... not only are continued Israeli settlements illegitimate, Israel's actions run counter to efforts to resume direct negotiations. The building of housing units in East Jerusalem would be detrimental to building good faith between Israel and the Palestinians."¹⁹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August, Israel's Interior Minister gave final approval for the construction of 1,600 new settler homes in East Jerusalem. Plans were also announced to approve 9,000 more homes. • In September, the Israeli government approved the construction of 1,100 new housing units in East Jerusalem.²⁰
2010	
<p>Statement by German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle (October): "The Israeli government's decision to build 2600 new housing units in the settlement of Givat Ha'matos runs against the spirit of the Middle East Quartet declaration and Israel's roadmap obligations."²¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2011 Israeli budget, announced in December 2010, allocated the equivalent of \$564 million to settlements with millions more hidden among the different clauses of the bill.²² • In 2010 the government of Israel built 6,794 settlement housing units, four times more than in 2009.²³
<p>Joint Statement by the Middle East Quartet (March): "The Quartet urges the government of Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001, and to refrain from demolitions and evictions in East Jerusalem."²⁴</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between the end of Israeli government's decision to freeze settlement construction in September and November, Israeli settlers had started building 1,629 housing units and laying the foundations for 1,116 more.²⁵

1 UN OCHA, 'The Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies' (January 2012), at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_3294.pdf p. 1.

2 Since EU High Representative Lady Ashton took office in 2009, she has made at least 17 public statements on the issue of the Government of Israel's settlement expansion and other illegal practices of statements. Since 2001, all European States have either collectively or individually called for the Government of Israel to end the construction of settlements.

3 Since 2001, the Quartet has issued 56 statements, of which 39 refer either directly to the illegal status of Israeli settlements in the OPT or other documents, such as the Road Map or Tenet Plan that call on Israel to suspend settlement expansion and dismantle all outposts constructed after March 2011

4 OCHA (2012) The humanitarian impact of Israeli settlement policies, January 2012; See also: Jewish Virtual Library: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/arabs/PaIPaper110409.pdf>

5 At least 7 UN Security Council resolutions have been passed calling on Israel to respect the 1967 borders, including the status of East Jerusalem. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also holds that the establishment of Israeli settlements violate Fourth Geneva Convention.

6 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130759.pdf

7 <http://www.pmo.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/42C25B01-428B-40FC-8A6B-E9B1F5315D74/0/edmundENG100712.pdf>

8 Council of the European Union, Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process, 3166th FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting, Brussels (14 May 2012), at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130195.pdf

9 Barak Ravid, Jonathan Lis, Oz Rosenberg and Tomer Zarchin 'Netanyahu promises new West Bank construction, on heels of failed outpost bill', Haaretz (7 June 2012), at <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/netanyahu-promises-new-west-bank-construction-on-heels-of-failed-outpost-bill.premium-1.434870>

10 European Union, 'Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on plans to construct 1000 housing units in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem' (December 2011), available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127069.pdf

11 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: March 2012' (31 March 2012), at <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/806ff412853a0362852579f7004fce44?OpenDocument>

12 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: April 2012' (30 April 2012), at <http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/2e94a096dce1fe90852579fb005e7d67?OpenDocument>

13 Peace Now, 'For the First Time Since 1990 – the Government is to Approve the Establishment of New Settlements' (19 April 2012), at <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/rechelim-bruchin-sansana>

14 Joint statement by European Union Security Council members, 'All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, must cease immediately' (20 December 2011), available at <http://ukun.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?id=708021082&view=PressS>

14 These are "new building starts". See Peace Now: <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/2011Summary>. The growth rate in the settlements is 5,8% compared to 1,8% in Israel, meaning that the settlements are growing much faster than the population in Israel; also see Peace Now, March 2012.

16 Peace Now <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/2011Summary>

17 House of Commons, 'Oral Answers to Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office' (November 2011), available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm111129/debtext/111129-0001.htm>

18 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: December 2011' (31 December 2011), at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/3822b5e39951876a85256b6e0058a478/6a38ece95968c4ea85257996005c0682?OpenDocument>

19 Natasha Mozgovaya, 'U.S. 'deeply concerned' about Israel settlement expansion' (5 April 2011), at <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/u-s-deeply-concerned-about-israel-settlement-expansion-1.354174>

20 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: August 2011' (31 August 2011) at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/1ce874ab1832a53e852570bb006dfaf6/b0137cc09f71e8248525790d005bfd7c?OpenDocument> and UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: September 2011' (30 September 2011), at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/eed-216406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/fe73add936792b8285257944006a3aa0?OpenDocument>

21 Abrar Online, 'German FM raps new Israeli settlement plans in E. Jerusalem' (18 October 2011), at <http://www.abraronline.net/en/index.php/news/81-news/6502-german-fm-raps-new-israeli-settlement-plans-in-e-jersuaem-.html>

22 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: December 2010' (31 December 2010), <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/3822b5e39951876a85256b6e0058a478/195085142e24bb6e85257817006f201d?OpenDocument>

23 PCBS, 'Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Issues a Press Release on the Occasion of Land Day, March 30, 2011: Number of Housing Units Built in the Israeli Settlements Increased Four Times in 2010 Compared with 2009', at http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/Press-Release/land_day_E30032011.pdf

24 'Middle East Quartet Statement', (19 March 2010, Moscow) at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/113436.pdf> Almost 70% of statements issued by the Quartet since 2001 have called on Israel to end its practice of settlement expansion.

25 UNISPAL, 'Chronological Review of Events Relating to the Question of Palestine: November 2010' (30 November 2010), at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/1ce874ab1832a53e852570bb006dfaf6/ca9cb7a9d593ef62852577f3006e94b7?OpenDocument>