

New York, 19 June 2023

Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General - on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General New York, 19 June 2023

The Secretary-General is deeply troubled by yesterday's decision by the Israeli Government to amend settlement planning procedures. The changes can be expected to expedite the advancement of Israeli settlement plans in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. He is also deeply alarmed by the anticipated advancement next week of over 4,000 settlement housing units by Israeli planning authorities.

The Secretary-General reiterates that settlements are a flagrant violation of international law. They are a major obstacle to the realization of a viable two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The expansion of these illegal settlements is a significant driver of tensions and violence and deepens humanitarian needs. It further entrenches Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory, encroaches on Palestinian land and natural resources, hampers the free movement of the Palestinian population, and undermines the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and sovereignty.

The Secretary-General urges the Government of Israel to halt and reverse such decisions and to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to fully respect its legal obligations in that regard. He further calls for concrete steps to be taken to implement the commitments made in the Joint Communiqués in Aqaba, Jordan and Sharm al-Sheik, Egypt, respectively.