



**Statement by UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,
Tor Wennesland, on changes to Israeli settlement advancement procedures**

Jerusalem, 19 June 2023

I am deeply concerned by the Israeli Government's decision yesterday 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.

I reiterate that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law.

I urge the Government of 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.

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