

Question for written answer E-000480/2022

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: The expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and related settler violence

In recent weeks, several entities in the Israeli Government have approved projects to expand illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. A particularly worrying project consists of 1 465 new housing units connecting Har Homa to Givat Hamatos¹. It completes a ring of settlements that severs East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. The EU previously indicated that this was a red line, recognising that such actions would render a two-state solution impossible²³. However, the EU's diplomatic engagement with Israel on settlement expansion has been futile to date.

Last year saw a severe increase in settler violence. Prime Minister Bennett stated that it is 'an insignificant phenomenon'⁴. However, the violence is instrumental to forced displacement and annexations of Palestinian land. The EU has repeatedly called on Israel to protect Palestinians from this violence, without success⁵.

1. When will the European External Action Service initiate a discussion among Member States on concrete measures the EU can take to address the unimpeded settlement expansion?
2. When will the Commission publish an EU-level business advisory regarding activities in settlements?
3. Will the European External Action Service examine practical steps that could be taken to deny known violent settlers access to the EU, which was mentioned as a possibility in a 2012 note endorsed by the Council's Political and Security Committee⁶?

Supporter⁷

¹ <https://t-j.org.il/2021/10/11/dangerous-developments-towards-construction-in-e-1/>

² <https://www.haaretz.com/eu-seeks-talks-with-israel-over-red-lines-in-west-bank-1.5318523>

³ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/130195.pdf.

⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.HIGHLIGHT-bennett-says-settler-violence-insignificant-calls-to-strengthen-settlements-1.10464562>

⁵ <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/following-increased-israeli-settler-violence-in-the-west-bank-heads-of-eu-missions-and-likeminded-countries-visit-beita-village-near-nablus-uk-news-story-non-un-document/>

⁶ <https://euobserver.com/foreign/118317>

⁷ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE)