Dr. Erekat on Israel's Approval of New Illegal Settlement Units and Projects in Occupied Palestine

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While the world is celebrating Christmas with its spirit of peace and joy, the Grinch "occupation" decided to steal the Christmas spirit from the people of Palestine. As part of his early election campaign, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has as well stolen more Palestinian land and resources for the benefit of Israel's illegal colonial settlement expansion.

What we witnessed in the previous Israeli elections was an evident incitement race against the rights of the Palestinian people, their lives, land, and resources, for the benefit of Israel's colonial settlement project and to appease its settlers. Such illegal actions are a deliberate campaign to destroy the two-state solution and to prevent the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The occupying power announced today the approval of 2,500 illegal settlement units and two industrial zones to be constructed on lands belonging to Palestine. This announcement is undoubtedly part of Israel’s long list of violations of international law and legitimacy, including of the United Nation Security Council resolution 2334 among others. Therefore, it is of utmost urgency for the International Criminal Court to accelerate the process of investigating Israeli crimes, including its settlement enterprise. Further delays will cost more Palestinians lives, land, resources, and more suffering and despair, and we trust that Mrs. Fatou Bensouda will take this issue seriously.

The world has to act before it is too late. In fact, Israel’s disregard and contempt to international law and legitimacy have been encouraged by the lack of international accountability, and therefore, the time has come for the world to end its double standards and to act with determination and courage to fulfill its responsibilities towards the people of Palestine. To this regard, the collective international responsibility should ensure the implementation of UNSC 2334 towards holding Israel accountable for its ongoing crimes against the people of Palestine.