Palestinians Call for UNSC Action Over New Israeli Building Plans in East Jerusalem

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<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Palestinians-call-for-UNSC-action-over-Israeli-plans-for-770-east-Jerusalem-homes-462298>

The Palestinian Authority has called on the United Nations Security Council to act against Israeli settlement building, in the wake of the Jerusalem Municipality’s decision to advance 770 new Jewish homes in its Gilo neighborhood, which is located over the Green Line.

“This is yet another opportunity for the international community to show its real commitment for the two-state solution and to take all needed action in order to have Israel fully cease settlement construction in the occupied state of Palestine,” PLO Secretary-General Saeb Erekat said.

Israel holds that Jerusalem would remain its united capital in any final status agreement with the Palestinians for a two-state solution. As such, it has said, that it has a right to build homes for its residents in all areas of the city.

The plan, for what is known as Gilo’s southern slope, was deposited on Thursday before the Jerusalem District and Planning Committee, which means that there is now a 60-day objection period, before the project can be validated, according to the non-governmental group Ir Amim, which monitors such activity in Jerusalem.

Initial approval for the project was given in 2012, as the United Nations General Assembly voted to upgrade Palestine’s status by recognizing it as a non-member state, rather than an observer mission.

According to Ir Amim, if approved, the project would help solidify Israel’s hold on the southwest perimeter of the capital, which abuts both the Palestinian city of Bethlehem and the Gush Etzion area of the West Bank.

The Municipality is already building 797 new homes on Gilo’s western slope, near the site slated for the new 770 unit project.

Palestinians have argued that Israeli actions in that end of the city is creating a wedge, that is isolating Bethlehem from Israeli-Arab neighborhoods of the city and the surrounding Palestinian villages.

Such a wedge, the Palestinians have claimed, would make it difficult to enact a [two-state solution](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Middle-East-Quartet-Israeli-settlements-eroding-viability-of-2-state-solution-459241) that places east Jerusalem within the boundaries of a Palestinian state.

Gilo is located near the east Jerusalem Jewish neighborhood of Har Homa and the location of what will be the new Jewish neighborhood of Givat HaMatos.

"While Israeli ministers complain about a 'building freeze' Israel continues its policy of one-sided actions that complicate and distance the possibility for a two-state solution. The past year makes it clear that the peace and security which Israelis deserve require a totally different policy.”

Erekat said, “Israeli settlement construction in general, and in and around Occupied East Jerusalem in particular, is part of Israel’s political decision to bury the two-state solution by consolidating its illegal occupation and Apartheid regime over the Palestinian people.”