

Statement by the Spokesperson on Israel's continuing settlement expansion in the West Bank

The Israeli authorities have recently approved plans to construct 98 new housing units in what is effectively a new settlement in the northern West Bank, near the existing settlement of Shiloh. This decision continues the accelerating trend of new settlement announcements since the start of 2016 and risks further separating Ramallah from Nablus and thus further undermining the contiguity of a future Palestinian state.

The retroactive authorisation of nearby illegal outposts or redrawing of local settlement boundaries contradicts previous public statements by the Government of Israel that it had no intention of creating new settlements. The decision to continue settlement building and expansion goes directly against the recommendations of the Quartet Report, weakens rather than strengthens the prospects for a two-state solution to the Middle East peace process, and makes the possibility of a viable Palestinian state more remote. Settlements are illegal under international law. Continued settlement expansion also calls into question Israel's commitment towards reaching a negotiated agreement with the Palestinians.