STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton
on the latest Israeli announcement of settlement plans

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

"After Wednesday's announcements by the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office and Ministry of the Interior about renewed plans for Israeli settlements, I would like to recall that, on 27 September, the Middle East Quartet called on all parties to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudge final status issues.

The EU has repeatedly stated that settlements are illegal under international law. It has also called on Israel to end all settlement activity, including natural growth, and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

The EU deplores the recent settlement announcements. Any actions that could hamper or undermine the on-going negotiations must be avoided. Bold and decisive leadership is needed for these negotiations to succeed. The EU will continue to support this process."

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