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## **Statement by the spokesperson of the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Israeli settlement approvals of 22 February**

**The spokesperson of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today:**

*"The High Representative is deeply concerned by the approval on 22 February by the Israeli Civil Administration of new construction in the settlements of Shvut Rachel and Shilo as well as the retrospective approval granted for housing units already built.*

*Settlements are illegal under international law. In addition the Quartet Roadmap states that Israel should not only freeze all settlement activity, but also dismantle those settlements erected since March 2001. It is particularly important at this point that neither party in the Middle East peace process undertakes provocative actions which undermine the prospects for continuing the dialogue which was re-established in January.*

*The High Representative calls on Israel to respect its obligations under the Roadmap and reverse this decision. "*

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**P R E S S**

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