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PALESTINIANS ARE OUTRAGED AT THE LATEST ISRAELI CONFISCATION ORDERS

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During a meeting today with Assistant Secretary of State David Welch, Dr. Saeb Erekat, Chief Palestinian Negotiator, expressed serious concern over Israel's latest "highly provocative" confiscation of Palestinian land just outside East Jerusalem, but also expressed hope that the U.S. would secure Israel's compliance with its Road Map obligation to immediately freeze all settlement activity.

Dr. Erekat was referring to a military order the Israeli army issued on 24 September confiscating 1,128 dunums of Palestinian land for the construction of an "alternate" road for Palestinians linking the southern West Bank with the eastern and northern parts of the West Bank. The road will circumvent the E-1 settlement expansion area, Ma'ale Adumim and neighbouring settlements and large tracts of vacant Palestinian land swallowed by the Adumim Wall. The road will serve to reinforce Israel's settlement activity in the area and divert Palestinian traffic away from East Jerusalem.

"Israel continues to confiscate Palestinian land and expand settlements at the same time that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are meeting to draft an agreement addressing core issues for ending the conflict between them," said Dr. Erekat. "This is quite simply unacceptable to Palestinians and should be unacceptable to the rest of the world."

He emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere conducive to a genuine peace process and that such an atmosphere was impossible unless Israel abides by its Road Map obligation to freeze "all settlement activity (including 'natural growth')."

Dr. Erekat reiterated his outrage over Israel's most recent illegal activities relating to the re-routing of the Wall and the E-1 settlement expansion area near Jerusalem, especially that the timing of the confiscation order coincides with the upcoming US-sponsored Annapolis meeting.

Please find below a detailed report on the on-going settlement activity in the Adumim "bloc" and the E-1 area:

- <http://en.bpnpc.org/issues/OngoingColonyExpansionBackgroud.pdf>



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