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**Statement by the spokesperson of HR Catherine Ashton
on the announcement by Israel of a plan for
the construction of new housing in East Jerusalem**

The spokesperson of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today on the announcement by Israel of a plan for the construction of new housing in East Jerusalem:

"Catherine Ashton is extremely concerned by the announcement by Israel of a plan for the construction of 1300 new housing units in East Jerusalem.

This plan contradicts the efforts by the international community to resume direct negotiations and the decision should be reversed.

Settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. Catherine Ashton recalls that the European Union will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties.

If there is to be genuine peace, all final status issues must be resolved through negotiations, including the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. Catherine Ashton continues to call on both parties to create an environment conducive to the resumption of direct negotiations."

P R E S S

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