

## PLO NEGOTIATIONS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

# SETTLEMENT FREEZE LOOPHOLE: NO NEW TENDERS OR BUILDING PERMITS

## MEDIA BRIEF

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**No new tenders / building permits:** This formula does not comply with Israel's obligation to implement a comprehensive and immediate freeze on all settlement activities as stipulated in the 2001 Mitchell Report and the 2003 Road Map.

Rather, it allows Israel (or other parties) to act upon existing tenders or building permits already issued by Israeli authorities. Israel has often used the pretext that such activities are being pursued by private parties and, therefore, "out of the hands" of the Israeli government. In reality, however, under Israeli administrative and contract laws, the executive branch has the power to release itself from such contractual agreements when their fulfillment is inconsistent with the public interest.

*In the 18 months after the Annapolis Conference alone, the Israeli government issued tenders for the construction of some 2,300 new housing units in Israeli settlements. Similarly, building permits were issued for at least 2,230 units in West Bank settlements – excluding those in and around occupied East Jerusalem – in the first 15 months after Annapolis. Thus, even if no further tenders or building permits were issued, Israel would still be able to carry out the construction of at least 4,500 additional housing units, capable of housing some 20,000 new settlers, over the next several years.*

A comprehensive settlement freeze requires Israel to take the following actions, consistent with the Mitchell report and the Road map:

- **Ending all settlement and settlement-related construction**
- **Ending all financing and financial incentives for settlements and settlers**
- **Ending all land confiscations and home demolitions**
- **Ending all planning and authorization for settlements**
- **Ending the migration of settlers into the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

On-going Israeli colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around East Jerusalem, in violation of international law and Israel's Road Map obligations, continues to undermine prospects for a viable Palestinian state and the peace process as a whole. A cessation of Israeli settlement activity – or settlement freeze – is essential.