

Pakistan Condemns Israeli 'Greater Israel' Plans

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ISLAMABAD / JERUSALEM: Pakistan strongly condemned recent Israeli statements indicating plans to expand settlements in the West Bank, describing them as part of a so-called “Greater Israel” strategy that could forcibly displace Palestinians. The United Nations human rights office stated that settlement expansion could constitute a war crime.

Foreign Office spokesperson Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan said in a statement on Friday that such announcements represent “a blatant violation of international law, the UN Charter, and relevant United Nations resolutions.” The remarks followed Israeli far-right Minister Bezalel Smotrich’s declaration that construction would begin on a long-delayed settlement in the E1 area east of Jerusalem, a project critics say would divide the West Bank and separate it from East Jerusalem.

Israeli settlements in the West Bank are widely regarded as illegal under international law. International critics warn that construction on roughly 12 square kilometers of land could jeopardize the possibility of a contiguous Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Ambassador Khan urged the international community to reject these initiatives, stating they are aimed at entrenching Israel’s occupation and undermining regional peace, adding that the statements demonstrate disregard for international efforts and could escalate instability in the region. Pakistan reaffirmed its support for a viable Palestinian state based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital.

The UN human rights office warned that plans to build new settlements in the West Bank may violate international law and could put nearby Palestinians at risk of forced eviction. A spokesperson said such actions would break the West Bank into isolated enclaves, noting that “it is a war crime for an occupying power to transfer its civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

Many international powers have expressed concern that settlement expansion undermines the two-state solution framework, envisioning a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, territories captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel cites historical and biblical ties to the area and considers the West Bank “disputed” rather than “occupied.” Approximately 700,000 Israeli settlers currently live among 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Reports indicate that Israel and South Sudan have held discussions regarding the potential resettlement of Palestinians from Gaza, though details remain unverified. The plan, which Palestinian leaders have rejected as unacceptable, would relocate residents from a war-affected enclave to a nation already facing political and ethnic tensions. South Sudan’s foreign ministry has described earlier reports of the plan as “baseless.” Arab and

international leaders have also opposed any proposal to move Gaza's population to another country, citing the historical displacement during the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

The UN human rights office reported that at least 1,760 Palestinians have died while seeking aid since late May, though figures remain provisional. Gaza's civil defense agency reported that at least 23 people were killed by Israeli fire on Friday, including 12 individuals awaiting humanitarian assistance, pending verification. The Israeli military said it is investigating the incidents.