

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2011 6:46 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Israel OKs 277 new homes in West Bank settlement (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2011 05:58 AM
To: NEWS-Mahogany
Cc: SES-O
Subject: Israel OKs 277 new homes in West Bank settlement (AP)

JERUSALEM (AP) - Israel's defense minister has approved the building of 277 apartments in a West Bank settlement, defying U.S. criticism of continued construction on lands the Palestinians claim for a state.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak authorized the construction in Ariel, the core of the settlement bloc deepest inside the West Bank. One hundred of the apartments will house Israelis evacuated in 2005 from a Gaza Strip settlement.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had no immediate comment Monday on the diplomatically charged move.

In recent weeks, Israel has also moved ahead on two other construction projects in east Jerusalem, the Palestinians' hoped-for capital. The U.S. was critical of those plans.

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.