

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Event: PPRC Friday Rally condemns latest expansion of illegal settlements on Palestinian land by Sharon government.

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Date: Friday, April 8th, 2005

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Pioneer Courthouse Square

PPRC Friday Rally condemns latest expansion of illegal settlements on Palestinian land by Sharon government.

The *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition's* Friday rally and march at Pioneer Courthouse Square turns once again to the Israel/Palestine conflict, condemning the latest move by the Sharon government to take more Palestinian land in violation of international law. "The massive expansion of the Ma'ale Adumim settlement, effectively merging the illegal colony with Jerusalem, cuts off the Palestinian communities within the city from the West Bank," said William Seaman, a volunteer with PPRC. "This is the next step in the broad settlement strategy aimed at ending the prospects of Jerusalem becoming the capital of a Palestinian state and further fragmenting the West Bank into Bantustans on the model of Apartheid South Africa's so-called 'homelands' policies."

Palestinian leaders have condemned the move, saying that the expansion project "will destroy the peace process and will undermine prospects for any future negotiations on the final status agreements."¹ They are calling on the United States to pressure the Israeli government not to go forward with the settlement expansion.

"The real question we face today concerns the role of the US in supporting Israel's ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people, the theft and illegal settlement of their land, the murder of their children, the destruction of their crops and orchards, the disruption of daily life," said Seaman. "If we care about the principles of international law and human rights, if we care about the security of Palestinians and Israelis, then we must demand that our government oppose these latest crimes by the Sharon government."

The coordinator of the *Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions* (ICAHD), Jeff Halper, writes that the latest move by Sharon "has highlighted American complicity in Israel's settlement expansion," noting that while the Bush Administration has called the plan "unhelpful," they "nevertheless formally recognized the Ma'aleh Adumim

settlement bloc, together with [the further expansion], in last year's agreement between Bush and Sharon - a fundamental American policy change that was ratified almost unanimously by Congress.”²

“These moves by the Sharon government, both the building of the apartheid separation wall and these latest settlement expansions, have nothing to do with security for the Israeli people,” said Seaman. “Both are squarely aimed at stealing more Palestinian land, both are aimed at making life for Palestinians in the occupied territories virtually impossible, all with the ultimate goal of annexing all of this land for Israel, a policy that is guaranteed to bring further grief to all peoples of the region.” The PPRC is asking people to call their representatives in Congress to urge them to oppose the settlement expansions and to demand that the US call for an end to the Israeli occupation.

1. “Sharon defies international objections by allowing 3,500 new homes on West Bank”, By Donald Macintyre and Eric Silver in Jerusalem, 05 April 2005 - Independent (UK)
2. “The End Of A Viable Palestinian State”, by Jeff Halper; April 03, 2005 – Z-Magazine website.