

STATEMENT BY THE TWELVE ON THE EXTENSION OF JEWISH
SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES : 20 FEBRUARY

The Twelve reiterate their view that Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law. They are seriously concerned at the possibility that immigrants to Israel may be settled in the Occupied Territories. The further call made in recent days for increased Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza only increases this concern. The Twelve deplore the Israeli settlement policy in the Occupied Territories. The Israeli statements on this matter are not conducive to establishing the climate of confidence necessary to make the progress which is urgently needed in the peace process.

As they made clear in their statement of 31 January, the Twelve warmly welcome the liberalisation of Soviet emigration controls, including the freedom of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel and elsewhere. They believe that this sentiment is very widely shared in the international community, on the basis that the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own, is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The attainment by Soviet Jews of this right must not, however, be at the expense of the rights of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

The Twelve urge the Israeli government not to jeopardise the prospects of bringing peace to the region by either allowing or encouraging Jewish immigrants to settle in the Occupied Territories.

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