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Thursday, August 25, 2005 - Page updated at 12:05 AM

# Israel says it will take Palestinian settlement

By Laura King  
*Los Angeles Times*

JERUSALEM — Israel said yesterday it had ordered the seizure of land owned by Palestinians to build a separation barrier that will encompass the West Bank's largest Jewish settlement.

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Palestinian officials objected vehemently to the plan, which effectively annexes the settlement of Maaleh Adumim to Israel. They called on the Bush administration to intercede.

"This is a disastrous decision," said Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator.

The plan would place Maaleh Adumim, five miles east of Jerusalem, inside the security barrier Israel is building around the West Bank. The settlement, which has a population of about 30,000, has been cited repeatedly by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as among the Jewish population centers in the West Bank that Israel intends to keep if and when the Palestinians achieve statehood.

The landowners have the right to appeal the orders to Israel's Supreme Court, and Palestinian officials indicated they would do so.

Erekat said that after Israel's withdrawal from the Jewish settlements of the Gaza Strip and a small swath of the northern West Bank, "We are looking for hope and peace, but this step undermines any attempt to resume meaningful negotiations."

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Challenges to Israel's high court have in several instances resulted in orders to reroute the 425-mile barrier, a blend of fencing and high concrete walls, augmented by patrol roads, watchtowers and trenches. Israel built the barrier to keep out Palestinian suicide bombers, but the World Court ruled it illegal.

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Meanwhile, an Israeli military raid on a West Bank refugee camp left five Palestinians dead and an Orthodox Jewish man was stabbed to death in Jerusalem.

At the Tulkarem refugee camp, Israeli soldiers surrounded a house and exchanged fire with its occupants inside and outside, witnesses said. Five Palestinians died. Israeli military officials identified the Palestinians as local leaders of the Islamic Jihad, responsible for the last two suicide bombings in Israel: in Tel Aviv in February and Netanya in July.

Earlier in Jerusalem, a Palestinian stabbed two ultra-Orthodox Jews in the Old City, police said. One victim died, and the assailant escaped. Israeli media reported the dead man was a seminary student from Britain.

Also yesterday, Israel said it had finalized an arrangement handing Egypt the primary responsibility for policing the Arab nation's border with Gaza.

Israel currently has a heavy troop presence in the frontier zone, which is a major route for arms smuggling.



*Material from The Associated Press is included in this report.*

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