

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 was adopted on 23 December 2016. It concerns the Israeli settlements in "Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem". The resolution passed in a 14–0 vote by members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Four members with United Nations Security Council veto power (China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom) voted for the resolution, while the United States abstained.^[1]

The resolution states that Israel's settlement activity constitutes a "flagrant violation" of international law and has "no legal validity". It demands that Israel stop such activity and fulfill its obligations as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.^{[2][3]}

Background

Israeli settlements are Jewish^{[12][13]} Israeli civilian communities built on Palestinian lands occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War.^[14] Resolution 2334 concerns such settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Fourth Geneva Convention makes it illegal for nations to move populations and establish settlements in territories acquired in a war, and an overwhelming number of countries consider the Israeli settlements to be illegal on that basis.^{[15][16]} Israel states that these are not "occupied" but "disputed" territories because "there were no established sovereigns in the West Bank or Gaza Strip prior to the Six Day War".^[17] This argument was rejected by the International Court of Justice in 2004.^[18]

The UN Security Council previously addressed Israeli settlements in UN Security Council Resolution 446 and Resolution 465. The Council also endorsed the Road map for peace, which required a freeze to settlement expansion in Resolution 1515.

In February 2011, during Barack Obama's first administration, the US used its veto power to block a similar UN Security Council resolution^{[15][11]} and settlement activity grew substantially, with the settler population increasing by at least 100,000 during Obama's time in office.^[19] and The Quartet report in July 2016 said that 570,000 Israelis lived in the settlements.^[20] Prior to voting on the resolution, diplomats predicted that US frustration with the growth of settlements, as well as the poor relationship between President Obama and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, might cause the US to abstain, rather than veto the resolution.^[20] Netanyahu was confident that Israel's diplomatic standing was on the rise, and that the world was no longer very interested in the Palestinian issue.^[21] Until the U.S. abstention led to the passage of UNSCR 2334, Obama had been unique among American presidents for not allowing any resolution critical of Israel to pass through the Security Council.^[22]