

## Israel halts work on West Bank settlement

*by UPI*

JERUSALEM - Israel has announced a halt in the construction of a new neighborhood in a West Bank settlement north of Jerusalem. The government cited an order by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Defense Minister Ehud Barak two weeks ago barring any new construction in the West Bank, Haaretz reported. Plans to build the Agan Ayalot neighborhood in Givat Ze'ev are almost a decade old. The Housing Ministry and Israeli Lands Administration began selling lots there in 1999 but stopped the sales when the second intifada began in 2000. Shlomo Gan Zvi, lawyer for the Legal Forum for the Land of Israel, said he had asked the attorney general to clarify the government's position, given Olmert's promise to the Shas Party ruling out a construction freeze in Jerusalem. "This project was initiated by the state, which invested a fortune in it," Gan Zvi said. "All its infrastructure has been completed and the state has refused for years to void the alliance with the contractors. It is absurd to let it collapse just when there's a chance to complete it, merely because of a momentary political whim."

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