

## Controversial barrier proposed in Israel

by UPI

JERUSALEM - Israeli forces want to erect a security fence through the Judean Desert over the objections of environmentalists and settlers, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz ordered construction on the barrier to stop in January and told Israeli forces to come up with "technological alternatives" to the physical barrier, the newspaper said.

A senior official told the Post that officials found no alternative to protect the area from militants but to build a physical structure in the area.

The Post said it had seen details of the plan, which includes a security fence that would run about 15.5 miles of the 18.6-mile section. A mountainous stretch between Mount Hezron and Mount Holet would be protected by sensors, the newspaper reported.

The plan includes holes in the barrier for wildlife, the Post said.

"We are doing the utmost to prevent harm to the environment," a senior Central Command officer told the newspaper. "But at the end of the day, there is no alternative to a physical barrier and a fence is the only way to guarantee Israel's security."

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