

China refuses sending Workers to West Bank Settlements

By [PNN](#)

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China has told Israel it will not allow migrant builders to work on settlements in the occupied West Bank, a senior Israeli government official said on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged during his reelection campaign to step up settlement construction, and cabinet ministers in his new government have called for more building in the occupied Palestinian territories. In addition, Israel is willing to bring in thousands of foreign workers to accelerate the pace of the construction across the country and in the West Bank, The Economic Times reported.

Last year, the Israeli government decided to increase the number of foreign builders to 8,000 and later to 15,000 to boost construction and reduce property prices which have soared in the last few years, Haaretz said.



“We are negotiating with China for an agreement on the arrival of thousands of additional workers,” the official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

“Beijing is demanding that we ensure there are no workers in this region,” he added, without elaborating.

There has been no immediate comment from Beijing, but China’s position could undermine lengthy negotiations between the two countries aimed at striking a labour agreement.

Under the deal the Israeli government would be responsible for bringing foreigners into the country to work in the construction sector, *Haaretz* newspaper reported on Sunday.

“The agreement would replace the current arrangement, in which private companies contract directly with Chinese firms that supply the labour, an arrangement that has resulted in allegations of serious violations of labour laws,” the paper said.

The Israeli official denied that China’s decision had anything to do with growing calls for an economic and cultural boycott of the Jewish state.

The international community regards all Israeli construction on Palestinian land seized during the 1967 Six-Day War as illegal.

Israel has bilateral agreements with Bulgaria, Moldavia and Romania for the employment of builders, and with Thailand and Sri Lanka for migrant farmhands.

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