

RELEASE IN FULL

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From: Withers, Anne M
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Subject: (AP) Israel: Settlers brace for end of building freeze

JERUSALEM (AP) - An Israeli lawmaker says Jewish settlers have hauled construction equipment into a settlement deep inside the West Bank in preparation for the end of a construction moratorium. The end of the settlement slowdown presents the first major crisis in Mideast peace talks launched early this month in Washington. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who imposed the slowdown 10 months ago as a peace gesture, says he will not extend the restrictions. But the Palestinians say they will not continue negotiations if building resumes. The U.S. is trying to broker a compromise. Pro-settler lawmaker Danny Danon said on September 25 that activists plan to lay the cornerstone of a new neighborhood in the Revava settlement September 26, the last day of the slowdown. He said further construction is planned September 27.