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UN chief calls for efforts to revive stalled Israeli-Palestinian talks

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UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 8 (Xinhua) -- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Monday that it was vital to break the current diplomatic stalemate, resume the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and produce results.

The UN chief made the statement in his meeting with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against a backdrop of the stalled direct peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

"The secretary-general and Prime Minister Netanyahu discussed the ongoing efforts to move the Middle East peace process forward," said a UN readout released at the end of the Ban-Netanyahu talks, which took place late Monday at the UN headquarters in New York.

"The secretary-general emphasized that it was vital to break the current diplomatic stalemate, resume negotiations and produce results," the readout said. "He expressed concern at the resumption of the settlement activity and recent announcements of further settlement construction in East Jerusalem."

Talks between Israelis and Palestinians, mediated by the U.S. government, have stalled due to Israel's decision not to extend a 10-month moratorium on the proliferation of its settlements. The moratorium expired about three weeks after the direct talks started in Washington in early September.

"The secretary-general and the prime minister also discussed the latest report on SCR (Security Council Resolution) 1701, including current proposals on the issue of Ghajar," the readout said.

"They also reviewed the regional situation, including Iran," the readout said. "Finally, the

secretary-general expressed hope for further measures by the government of Israel to ease the movement of people and goods to and from Gaza."

Netanyahu flies to New York on Monday after his meeting with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Sunday in New Orleans, where they were attending an American Jewish conference. During his current visit to the United States, Netanyahu will not speak to U.S. President Barack Obama, who is on his Asia tour.

The United Nations, together with the European Union, Russia and the United States, makes up the Middle East Quartet, a diplomatic group in search of the two-state solution -- a secure Israel living in peace with an independent Palestinian state.

The Israeli prime minister held talks with the secretary-general after his government on Monday has okayed new construction tenders for over 1,000 apartments it plans to build in Jerusalem, beyond the 1967 war cease-fire lines.

Robert Serry, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said late in October that renewed settlement construction, which is illegal under international law, runs counter to the international community's repeated appeals to the parties to create conditions conducive to negotiations.

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