

OFF-THE-CUFF**Secretary-General's remarks at press conference
with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel****Tel Aviv, 22 July 2014**

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. Shalom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you again for your warm welcome. It is always a pleasure to visit, for me, Israel, but this time I am standing with a very heavy, heavy heart.

As we speak, rockets from Hamas and Islamic Jihad continue to be fired on Israel. I have just seen myself with the Prime Minister all kinds of rockets fired by Hamas on to the heads of all of these people and the neighbourhoods where many people are living. This is quite shocking. And I have seen all the photos and videos and evidence myself.

The United Nations position is clear: We condemn strongly the rocket attacks. These must stop immediately.

We condemn the use of civilian sites – schools, hospitals and other civilian facilities – for military purposes.

No country would accept rockets raining down on its territory – and all countries and parties have an international obligation to protect civilians.

I extend my deep condolences to the Prime Minister and to the people of Israel on the fatalities from the recent escalation.

We will not forget the killing and abduction of Eyal Yifrach, Gilad Shaer and Naftali Fraenkel.

I was deeply moved by the words of Rachel Fraenkel as she buried her own son:

"We will learn to sing without you," she said. "We will always hear your voice in our hearts."

She went on to reach out to the family of Muhammed Abu Khdeir, the 16-year old boy burned alive simply because of who he was.

Mrs. Fraenkel said: "No mother or father should ever have to go through what we are going through, and we share the pain of Muhammed's parents."

It is that spirit of shared anguish, humanity and hope that calls me here.

Too many Palestinian and Israeli mothers are burying their children.

We owe it to their sacrifice, and to Israelis' and Palestinians' aspirations for peace, to intensify efforts to find a solution.

Over the last three days, I have met with the leadership in Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt. I met [Palestinian] President [Mahmoud] Abbas in Qatar and US

Secretary of State John Kerry in Cairo yesterday.

This is all part of a concerted international effort for urgent action.

My message to Israelis and Palestinians is the same: Stop fighting. Start talking. And take on the root causes of the conflict, so we are not back to the same situation in another six months or a year.

We must address these underlying issues – including mutual recognition, occupation, despair and the denial of dignity -- so people do not feel they have to resort to violence as a means of expressing their grievances.

Military actions will not increase Israel's stability and security in the longer term. I fully share and appreciate the legitimate security concern and right to defend your country and citizens. Israel is a democratic, strong country and I urge you to demonstrate fortitude by exercising maximum restraint.

Recovery and reconstruction work is more needed than ever. Governance issues must be addressed by one legitimate Palestinian government

adhering to the PLO commitments: non-violence, recognition of Israel, and respect for previous agreements.

The United Nations will continue to support these efforts.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am always energized by my visits to Israel and the region. Even in the darkest hours, the people of this country have such a tremendous capacity for generosity and good.

I understand that some may feel threatened by negative regional developments and disenchanted with the peace process. But there is no viable alternative to a two-state solution.

No closure, no barrier, can separate Israelis and Palestinians from a fundamental truth: You share a common future.

You have my strongest possible commitment that I will continue to do all I can for lasting peace and security, freedom and justice for all Israelis and Palestinians.

Thank you. Toda.

Off-the-Cuff on 22 July 2014

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- [Ramallah - Secretary-General's remarks to the press with Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah of the State of Palestine](#)