
Readout of the Secretary-General's telephone conversations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas

New York, 16 May 2013

In the past two days, the Secretary-General had phone conversations with both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas. They discussed the Middle East Peace Process and the situation on the ground, including in East Jerusalem. The Secretary-General strongly encouraged the ongoing efforts toward the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, and expressed his hope that they will lead to a substantial peace initiative soon. He stressed the importance for the parties to create the conditions conducive to a resumption of meaningful negotiations.

Regarding recent tensions in East Jerusalem, and more particularly restrictions of access to Muslim and Christian holy sites, the Secretary-General conveyed his concerns to the Israeli authorities, urging Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General stressed to both leaders the importance of respect for the religious freedom of all, and that worshippers of all faiths should have access to their holy sites.

With regard to the regional situation, the Secretary-General reiterated that all should act responsibly and abide by international law to prevent escalation.