



Press Release

Department of Public Information · News Coverage Service · New York

SG/SM/7718
16 February 2001

Français

**BORDER CLOSURES AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS CAUSE CONCERN ABOUT PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY'S
CAPACITY TO CONTINUE FUNCTIONING, SECRETARY-GENERAL STATES**

Following is the text of a statement issued today by the Office of the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General met this morning with Terje Rød-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, for a general overview of the current situation in the region, including the rising level of violence.

The Secretary-General wishes to express his grave concern at the growing cycle of violence and counter-violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. He appeals strongly to all concerned to prevent a further escalation of violence, which could have very serious consequences for the entire region. He reiterates his call to the parties to exercise maximum restraint and caution, and to resume their dialogue in order to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

Mr. Rød-Larsen briefed the Secretary-General on the impact of the conflict, border closures and other restrictions on the Palestinian economy and society. These restrictive measures deprive the Palestinian Authority of necessary financial resources and aggravate the serious economic and social crisis in the occupied territories. The Secretary-General is very concerned about the capacity of the Palestinian Authority to continue to function, and has raised this matter with Prime Minister-elect Sharon, as well as other international leaders, including United States Secretary of State Powell and European Commission President Prodi. He has also instructed Mr. Rød-Larsen to undertake urgent consultations with a view to preventing such a destabilizing scenario.

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