



Press Release

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Français

**SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN EXPRESSES RELIEF AT OUTCOME
OF SHARM EL-SHEIKH SUMMIT ON RECENT MIDDLE EAST TURMOIL**

**Commitment to Peaceful Resolution of Differences Lauded;
Parties Also Urged to Refrain from 'Language of Violence'**

This statement by Secretary-General Kofi Annan was delivered today at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt:

I am relieved and thankful that here today, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Israeli and Palestinian leaders, under the tireless chairmanship of Presidents Mubarak and Clinton, have stepped back from the abyss and renewed their commitment to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

The Sharm-El-Sheikh Summit has produced agreement in three vital areas: on security cooperation; on renewing the peace process; and on a committee of fact-finding to inquire into recent tragic events and how to prevent their recurrence. It has not been easy. Feelings run high on both sides. Mutual mistrust is deep. There are wounds in the families and communities concerned that may take a generation to heal.

But we must move forward, painful though it is, so that the children and youth of today -- angry and frustrated as they are -- can have a better world to live in. One of the lessons of the past few days is that there can be no lasting security without lasting peace. That is why we need to look beyond the violence and bitterness, the pain and the hurt, beyond even the outcome of today's summit, to a future in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in a just and lasting peace.

Silencing the guns, ending the violence, is a real achievement. But language can be violence too. I also appeal to the leadership on both sides, to all Israelis and Palestinians, and to the wider international community to weigh their words carefully. For words can inflame or soothe, and everyone needs a restoration of calm and quiet so as to create the best possible atmosphere for a resumption of peace talks.

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