

---

**OFF-THE-CUFF**

**Secretary-General's remarks at press encounter**

**New York, 10 July 2014**

/...

Before taking your questions, I would like to reiterate two key points from my briefing to the Security Council this morning on the alarming escalation between Israelis and Palestinians.

First, the human cost is already very high and is rising fast. Once again, civilians are paying the price for the inability of the two sides to resolve the conflict. The United Nations remains determined to deliver essential humanitarian assistance and we continue to press for unhindered humanitarian access.

Second, it is imperative not only to restore calm today, but to establish a political horizon for tomorrow. Without the prospect of an end to the conflict, the sides will grow ever more polarized.

Deepening violence and distrust will only complicate diplomatic efforts, and will surely resound around the region, with potentially dangerous consequences for all.

Through my own phone calls and other consultations, I am continuing to work with the parties and all relevant actors to find a way to de-escalate and resume meaningful negotiations towards a two-state solution. Time is of the essence.

Thank you.

/...

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, do you see any progress on getting a ceasefire in the Middle East, and do you plan on going to the region as you did the last time?

SG: I will first continue to closely watch the development of the situation. I am going to continue my engagement with regional leaders or other world leaders who can have influence on the parties. I will make a decision if it is really necessary for me to visit the region when there is good chance of making the situation calm down. As you know, I have had extensive involvement in the first Gaza crisis and the second Gaza crisis - in 2009 and 2012, respectively. But at this time, I am still in consultation with regional actors and world leaders, and I am also urging, particularly, leaders of Israel and the Palestinians to first of all stop this violence and engage in dialogue, and I will do whatever I need to do as Secretary-General. Thank you very much.