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### **UN human rights chief expresses her grave concern in the escalating violence in Gaza**

GENEVA (OHCHR) – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay expressed her grave concern and distress at the enormous loss of life in the escalating violence in Gaza. While condemning the rocket attacks by Hamas that led to the death of one Israeli civilian, she also strongly condemned Israel's disproportionate use of force resulting in the reported death of more than 270, a large number of which were civilians, and the wounding of over 600 persons. She called on Israel's leaders to uphold international humanitarian law principles, especially those relating to proportionality in the use of military force and the prevention of collective punishment and the targeting of civilians. She also called on Israel to lift the air, sea and ground blockade it is imposing on the 1.5 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip, and to allow humanitarian assistance and independent outside monitoring, including by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied by Israel since 1967. The High Commissioner voiced her strong support for the Secretary General and the UN Security Council's statements calling for an immediate halt to all violence by both sides, and urged all parties to promptly take steps to end the human suffering in Gaza.

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