

Dead Sea, 22 June 2003 - Secretary-General's Press Conference following the Quartet Meeting

[The Secretary-General read a press statement on behalf of the Quartet, adding comments of his own]

SG: The Quartet principals discussed today the situation in the Middle-East, following the recent release of the [Road Map](#) and the beginning of its implementation. We reviewed steps that should be taken by both sides in order to move ahead, as well as the support we in the international community need to give to the renewed peace process.

I would like, on behalf of the Quartet, to welcome the personal engagement of President Bush, demonstrated in the Sharm el-Sheikh and Aqaba summits. His continued involvement is going to be vital to progress in the months ahead. We commend Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon for their summit statements of commitment to peace. We pledge our active support to the parties to carry out those commitments. It is essential that a way be found to break the cycle of violence, counter violence and revenge.

I believe that there is agreement that moving along the Road Map's path will require determination and courageous decisions on both sides.

We call on the Palestinian Authority to make all possible efforts to halt immediately the activities of individuals and groups planning and conducting terror attacks on Israelis. However, it is obvious that the Palestinians cannot combat terrorism and end violence without Israel's active cooperation. Israeli military actions that result in the killing of Palestinian civilians do not enhance security and undermine trust and prospects for cooperation. Israel must make every possible effort to support the Palestinian government and to take immediate actions to ease the plight of the Palestinian people.

Finally, the Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, based on SCR [242](#), [338](#) and [1397](#), and look forward to continuing to work together in close consultation with the parties.

In my capacity as the UN Secretary-General, I would wish to add a few points regarding the peace process. In keeping with the approach laid out in the Road Map, the principle of parallelism should be maintained. We must address security, humanitarian and political issues at the same time. I call on the Israelis not to use disproportionate force in civilian areas; carry out house demolitions or engage in extra-judicial killings. Unless the Palestinians feel a positive change in their daily lives including ending movement restrictions, freezing settlement activities and reestablishing economic activity, I fear that there will not be sufficient public support to sustain peace.

Simultaneously, the PA must not spare any effort to bring to an end all acts of terror against Israelis anywhere. Terror is not only morally wrong, it is also counterproductive to our common goal; the full end the occupation that started in 1967, the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the universal recognition of the State of Israel and the State of Palestine living together as the best of neighbours.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell then answered a journalist's question, before a question was put to the Secretary-General.]

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, you have appealed umpteen times to the Israelis and called on them to stop this assassination, what you call, you have legal word for it, but it's downright, basically against international law to go with assassination. Are you embarrassed that you as Secretary-General of the United Nations, that all your appeals have gone unheard. [She went on to ask a question to Secretary Powell.]

SG: Let me say that I think it is important that voices be heard when things are going on that we think should be corrected. The fact that one raises one's voice to try and change direction, to try and appeal to people to do the right thing, the fact that it doesn't happen today does not mean that it's irrelevant and one should not speak out.

I think, even the fact of individuals or third parties getting involved and saying, "Stop it, it's enough, the people don't deserve this, your people have had enough," is an important message. And I think we should keep raising our voices even if it doesn't stop the fighting today or tomorrow.

[Secretary Powell then responded to the question put to him. Other members of the Quartet also fielded questions.]