



Secretary-General
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SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR ACTION BY BOTH PALESTINIANS, ISRAELIS TO DEFUSE CRISES

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about developments in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the continued detention of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants; the killing by Palestinian militants of an Israeli civilian, whose body was found this morning; further rocket attacks against Israel; and Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, which have resulted in a serious deterioration in humanitarian conditions there. He is also concerned that Israel has detained 64 Palestinian officials, cabinet ministers and members of the Legislative Council, who were elected in January.

The Secretary-General calls on the Palestinian Authority to do its utmost to secure the release of the Israeli soldier, and to end rocket attacks against Israel and other action by militants. The Secretary-General also calls on the Government of Israel to show restraint, to avoid actions that damages civilian infrastructure and that aggravates the hardship of the Palestinian population, and to abide by international humanitarian law. To prevent a further decline in the humanitarian situation, Israel should also act urgently to facilitate the import of essential medical supplies, food stuffs and, particularly, fuel into the Gaza Strip.

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