



# Press Release

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## **UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL EXPRESSES GRAVE CONCERN AT IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF MIDDLE EAST VIOLENCE, URGES RESTRAINT**

This is the text of a statement issued today by the Under-Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu:

I have followed with grave concern the recent escalation of tension and violence in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. I welcome the agreement that has now been reached at the Sharm El-Sheikh Summit.

Particularly distressing in these three weeks of violence has been the tragic impact on children, who have suffered injury, trauma, fear and loss of life. They have also been drawn directly into the conflict. I extend my deep sympathies to all the children and the families who have suffered. In this critical time, I address a solemn appeal to the parties to the conflict:

Children suffer most from the impact of armed conflict; I appeal to the political leaders to do all within their powers to end the violence as promised at Sharm El-Sheikh.

As the parties to the conflict look to the future, I urge them to make the protection and well-being of all children a common ground for building confidence and understanding. A tragic cycle of violence has marked generations of young people in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. Ultimately, only a political settlement can break the cycle, and give these young people a future of hope and reconciliation. For the sake of these children, I urge the political leaders to return to the path of negotiations leading to a political settlement.

I take this opportunity to echo once again the Secretary-General's appeal to all leaders to "stop and think about what they are doing today and what kind of tomorrow they want for their children".

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