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**Statement attributable to the Director of UNRWA Operations, Gaza, Mr. John Ging**

It is with deep sadness that I have to announce the death of two UNRWA workers, killed during the escalating violence in Gaza. This afternoon, a refuse collector was caught in the crossfire and died while performing his duties in Khan Younis. Another of our employees was caught in crossfire at Beach Camp yesterday and died later in hospital. Two other UNRWA workers, a sanitation labourer and a refuse truck driver, have been seriously injured but are in a stable condition.

I extend my personal condolences to the families of those who gave their lives in the performance of their duties, attempting to fulfill their humanitarian responsibilities to the Palestinian people. We at UNRWA will not forget their bravery and commitment at this most difficult time.

In view of the increased threats to our staff, UNRWA has no choice but to scale back its operations in Gaza. With immediate effect, the Commissioner General, Karen AbuZayd, has decided to suspend temporarily UNRWA operations in Gaza except essential medical services and emergency food distributions. She will keep the situation under constant review with a view to restoring full services at the earliest opportunity.

These grave incidents and the increasingly desperate situation in Gaza underline once more the need for all parties to show the utmost restraint and allow humanitarian organizations such as UNRWA to fulfill their responsibilities towards the Palestinian people.

Ends

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