

OFF-THE-CUFF**Secretary-General's press remarks prior to meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry****Cairo, Egypt, 21 July 2014**

I am very pleased to be joined by you.

Our joint efforts will, I hope, make a great contribution to ongoing mediation efforts by the parties in the region to end the violence. I would like to thank [United States] Secretary [of State John] Kerry for his active engagement and tireless commitment for the peace and security in the Middle East and, in particular, in Gaza and Israel.

Our joint efforts are rooted in three mutually reinforcing efforts.

First and foremost, we must find a way to stop the violence. So many people have died. As the Secretary just said, it's mostly the civilian population – women and children. It's very sad, it's tragic. We have to do all that we can do. That is why I am here in support of the Egyptian mediation proposal. And I'm coming from Qatar, where I met with the Qatari Emir, and also I met President [Mahmoud] Abbas in Doha. And I went to Kuwait and I had a very good meeting with the Kuwaiti Emir, who is now the chair of the League of Arab States.

Tomorrow, I'm going to Israel and Palestine.

And the second priority should be that we are urging the parties to return to dialogue. I believe that all the options should be on the table so that they can address these issues through dialogue in a peaceful means, without resorting to violence.

Thirdly, we hope that they will also address the root causes of this crisis. There have been many dialogues, there have been many crises, but we have not yet been able to address all these root causes.

I deeply appreciate and highly commend Secretary Kerry's diplomatic efforts to have the Middle East peace process. I sincerely hope that when a ceasefire is realized, that you will immediately resume the dialogue, at this time. I fully understand, fully sympathize, with the suffering of the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza. These restrictions should be lifted as soon as possible so that people should not resort to this kind of violence as a way of expressing their grievances. At the same time, I fully appreciate the legitimate right, to defend their country and citizens, of Israel. Israel should also be able to live in peace and security without [their citizens being] endangered. I'm asking that Hamas should immediately stop firing rockets. While I understand why Israel has to respond militarily, but there is a proportionality, and most of the death toll [has been among the] Palestinian people. Therefore, at this time, our first and foremost effort should be focused on ending the violence.

I hope during Secretary Kerry's and my visit in the region these days, we will be able to help the parties agree to a ceasefire in a reasonable form and immediately return to dialogue and address the root causes. And I really appreciate, again, your diplomatic efforts, and the United Nations will spare no efforts. And I really appreciate your very generous humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people. The UN will try to mobilize the necessary humanitarian assistance as much as we can as we have been doing in the past. Thank you very much.

Off-the-Cuff on 21 July 2014

- [Cairo, Egypt - Secretary-General's remarks to the press with the Foreign Minister of Egypt \[Q&A below\]](#)