



Secretary-General

SG/SM/16062
GA/PAL/2177

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

CONDEMNING ATTACK ON UNITED NATIONS SCHOOL PROVIDING SHELTER TO CIVILIANS.
SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS 'MADNESS MUST STOP'

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the killing today of at least 10 Palestinian civilians in shelling outside of a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school in Rafah providing shelter to thousands of civilians. The attack is yet another gross violation of international humanitarian law, which clearly requires protection by both parties of Palestinian civilians, United Nations staff and United Nations premises, among other civilian facilities.

United Nations shelters must be safe zones not combat zones. The Israel Defense Forces have been repeatedly informed of the location of these sites. This attack, along with other breaches of international law, must be swiftly investigated and those responsible held accountable. It is a moral outrage and a criminal act.

The Secretary-General is profoundly dismayed over the appalling escalation of violence and loss of hundreds of Palestinian civilian life since the breach of the humanitarian ceasefire on 1 August. The resurgence in fighting has only exacerbated the man-made humanitarian and health crisis wreaking havoc in Gaza. Restoring calm can be achieved through resumption of the ceasefire and negotiations by the parties in Cairo to address the underlying issues. The Secretary-General repeats his demand to the parties to immediately end the fighting and return to the path of peace. This madness must stop.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record