



Secretary-General
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**SECRETARY-GENERAL STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM GAZA,
FRAMEWORK FOR DURABLE END TO VIOLENCE, AS HE MEETS WITH ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER**

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

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met today with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. During the meeting the Secretary-General once again expressed his relief that Israel had declared a unilateral ceasefire. He stressed the importance of the full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and of putting a framework in place to ensure a durable and sustainable end to the violence.

The Secretary-General informed Prime Minister Olmert that the United Nations would continue to play a pivotal role in providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza, as well as in long-term recovery and reconstruction.

The Secretary-General told the Prime Minister that he was going to Gaza today in solidarity with United Nations staff who have worked heroically during the past weeks, and to demonstrate his respect and concern for all Gazans who lost friends and families.

During his visit to Gaza, the Secretary-General also intends to assure the people of Gaza that the United Nations will provide urgent humanitarian assistance and help them start the challenging process of reconstruction.

He will also visit the town of Sderot.

The Secretary-General firmly believes that a true end to violence, and true security for both Israelis and Palestinians, will only come through a just and comprehensive settlement to the long-festering Arab-Israeli conflict, including the creation of the State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel, in peace and security, consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions.

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