
Ramallah, 20 March 2010 - Secretary-General's remarks at Ramallah site visit with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad

SG: Thank you for taking me to this place where I can see plainly despite the challenges you are facing and at the same time I'd like to really highly commend your leadership in building state institutions despite such limitations and restrictions. I can see how much how much difficulty you are having all this Area C, 60% of your land that you are not able to develop and people are living in strict restrictions, this is unacceptable. I am also coming from the Quartet meeting, our Quartet partners have sent a very strong and clear message that they will support your plan of establishing a independent viable Palestinian state that's what we're very working hard for. At the same time I am very much concerned about all these humanitarian challenges both in West Bank and particularly in Gaza. Yesterday the Israeli government has approved as a first positive step to allow UN humanitarian projects to carry on, that is a first welcome step, however much more needs to be done you can count on me as the Secretary-General and the whole United Nations [inaudible] work very very hard and again thank you very much showing me this, this is a real [inaudible] to have seen for myself.

Q: What's your reaction now after you have seen the fence here areas B C and A as you can see Jerusalem?

SG: I have seen for myself plainly and clearly how much difficult and what big challenges the Palestinian are living under such restriction and limitations even in your territory you are not able to develop and you are not able to maintain a normal economic life. I highly commend Prime Minister Fayyad's leadership and President Abbas' leadership under such difficult conditions. People of Palestine have been able to with resilience and endurance this difficult life, the whole world is supporting you.

I am coming from Moscow, after having participated in the Quartet Meeting. The Quartet has sent out a clear and strong message that we are surely supporting your efforts to establish an independent viable Palestinian state that can live side by side in peace and security with Israel and other neighbors, that is our goal and commitment and vision. At the same time we have condemned strongly in the name of the Quartet the recent Israeli measures to establish 1600 units as a settlement, this is against international law and against the Road Map.

The Quartet will continue to work hard, and I as the Secretary-General will again discuss this matter very seriously with the Israeli leadership and I'm going to visit Gaza tomorrow. As you know just two days ago the Israeli authorities have approved UN humanitarian projects. We are going to build a Khan Younis housing unit, 150 units, we are going to build a flour mill and we will have sewage treatment facilities. These are first positive steps, but much more needs to be done. I am deeply concerned about this worsening humanitarian situation where Palestinian people are suffering this will have to improve their daily life and I will urge again the Israeli authorities to remove roadblocks, ease these crossings and permits, these are some very important issues which we will continue to work on.