



General Assembly

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Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

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Chapter II The work of the Organization

B. Maintenance of international peace and security

22. The past 12 months have witnessed several events on the international peace and security stage that are cause for deep concern.

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In the Middle East, the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers and a Palestinian teenager in the West Bank led to a severe Israeli crackdown on Hamas, on the one hand, and a barrage of rocket fire at Israel by Hamas, on the other. As at the time of preparation of the present report, more than 1,200 Palestinians, most of them civilians, had been killed in the Gaza Strip since 7 July, following the launch of a protracted Israeli military operation. During the same period, the conflict claimed the lives of 56 Israeli soldiers and two Israeli civilians. Both sides repeatedly failed to reach agreement on meaningful ceasefires and the international community's efforts in this regard also continued to fall short. An especially reprehensible feature of the fighting has been the attacks in Gaza by Israeli forces on a number of schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that were harbouring Palestinian civilians displaced by the fighting.

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