



Secretary-General SG/SM/16061

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Secretary-General, Strongly Condemning Ceasefire Breach in Gaza, Says Reported Killing, Capture of Israeli Soldiers Calls into Question Hamas' Credibility

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

The Secretary-General condemns in the strongest terms the reported violation by Hamas of the mutually agreed humanitarian ceasefire which commenced this morning. He is shocked and profoundly disappointed by these developments.

The Secretary-General notes that the UN has no independent means to verify exactly what happened. According to the latest reports, two Israeli Defense Forces soldiers were killed and one taken captive after the humanitarian ceasefire came into effect. This would constitute a grave violation of the ceasefire, and one that is likely to have very serious consequences for the people of Gaza, Israel and beyond. Such moves call into question the credibility of Hamas' assurances to the United Nations. The Secretary-General demands the immediate and unconditional release of the captured soldier.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned about the resumption of Israeli attacks on Gaza and the killing of over 70 Palestinians this morning. Instead of giving both sides, especially Gazan civilians, a much-needed reprieve to let them attend to their injured, bury their dead and repair vital infrastructure, this breach of the ceasefire is now leading to a renewed escalation.

The Secretary-General urges both sides to show maximum restraint and return to the agreed 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire that tragically lasted such a brief period of time. He also urges those with influence over the parties to do everything to convince them to observe the humanitarian ceasefire.

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