



Secretary-General

SG/SM/10566

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SECRETARY-GENERAL DISPATCHES TEAM LED BY SPECIAL ADVISER TO MIDDLE EAST

The following statement was issued today in Rome by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

The Secretary-General has decided to dispatch a three-person team led by his Special Political Adviser, Vijay Nambiar, to the Middle East to help defuse the major crisis in the region. The other members will be senior United Nations officials Alvaro de Soto and Terje Rød-Larsen.

The team will first visit Cairo to meet with Egyptian officials and consult with Arab League foreign ministers, who will be meeting there on Saturday. Mr. Nambiar and his team are also expected to travel to Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, and Syria. Other stops will be added, as needed.

Mr. Nambiar will emphasize to all parties the Secretary-General's call to exercise restraint and to do whatever possible to help contain the conflict. He will also reiterate the Secretary-General's message to respect international humanitarian law and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

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