



General Assembly

A/59/1 (Supp)  
20 August 2004

Official Records  
Fifty-ninth Session  
Supplement No. 1 (A/59/1)

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

Chapter II

Achieving peace and security

Conflict prevention and peacemaking

20. Turning to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, despite the strenuous efforts of the international community through the Quartet (consisting of the United Nations, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States of America) and the stated commitment of the parties to the [road map](#) initiative, the peace process remained stalled and violence persisted. The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continued to deteriorate, with a subsistence standard of living for many Palestinians being maintained only through assistance from the international donor community, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations agencies and programmes.

21. Over the past 12 months, the Security Council adopted two resolutions on the Middle East. On 19 November 2003, resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) endorsed the road map and called upon the parties to fulfil their corresponding obligations. On 19 May 2004, the Council adopted resolution [1544 \(2004\)](#), calling upon Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, including its obligation not to destroy Palestinian homes in a manner contrary to the law. The General Assembly, at its resumed tenth emergency special session, adopted [resolution ES-10/13](#) on 21 October 2003 demanding that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. On 8 December, the Assembly, again at its resumed tenth emergency special session, adopted [resolution ES-10/14](#) requesting the International Court of Justice to urgently render an [advisory opinion](#) on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall. The Court rendered its advisory opinion on 9 July 2004, finding that the route of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory was contrary to international law and that Israel was under an obligation to terminate the building of the wall, to dismantle parts already built and to make reparations for all damage caused to Palestinian property. It also found that States were under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation and to ensure Israel's compliance with international law under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Court said that the General Assembly and the Security Council should consider further action. The Assembly reconvened its tenth emergency special session to consider the issue and, on 20 July 2004, adopted [resolution ES-10/15](#), in which it acknowledged the advisory opinion, demanded that Israel comply with its legal obligations as mentioned in the opinion, called upon Member States to comply likewise with their legal obligations and requested me to establish a register of damage caused as a result of the construction of the wall.

22. I have exercised good offices through my direct contacts and those of my Special Coordinator, as well as through the Quartet mechanism. At the meeting of Quartet members, held in New York on 4 May 2004, we reiterated that all final status issues, such as borders and refugees, should be negotiated by the parties and that such negotiations must be based on the internationally accepted framework for the peace process. We also set out principles for the success of a possible Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and stated that the withdrawal should be complete, that it must lead to an end of the occupation of Gaza and that it must be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank. Discussion of an action plan has been initiated and designed to move the parties ahead and to help them to meet their obligations.

Peacekeeping and peace-building

52. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon continued to monitor the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon and to liaise with the parties to avert, minimize

and contain tensions. Unfortunately, the past year saw an increased number of incidents along the Blue Line, with Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and Hezbollah retaliatory anti-aircraft fire. Israel conducted air raids on suspected Hezbollah positions and there was an exchange of missile, mortar and small arms fire predominantly in the Shab'a farms area. Hezbollah also placed booby traps on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line in close proximity to the Israel Defense Forces patrol routes. I have continued to remind the parties to respect the Blue Line and to abide fully by their obligations. The Lebanese armed forces continue to be active in the south, but the Government of Lebanon has not yet taken all of the steps required to assert and maintain its full authority in the region. The mine action coordination centre continues to assist in clearing land in southern Lebanon of anti-personnel mines; an area of five square kilometres has been cleared since May 2002.

...

### **Chapter III**

#### **Meeting humanitarian commitments**

...

#### **Protecting and assisting refugees and displaced populations**

84. During the past year, the refugee population has decreased significantly. For the second consecutive year the figure has decreased by nearly 1 million persons, falling overall 20 per cent, from 12.1 million at the beginning of 2002 to 9.7 million at present. The total population receiving protection and/or assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees currently stands at some 17 million persons. That figure includes 9.7 million refugees and 4.2 million internally displaced persons. However, the apparent progress in the decline of refugees must be seen against the backdrop of the worldwide total of uprooted persons (including those within and outside the mandate of UNHCR), which is currently estimated at nearly 50 million, or one in every 126 persons on earth. This worldwide figure also includes more than 1.6 million refugees from the occupied Palestinian territory who continue to receive life-saving assistance from UNRWA.

...

#### **Coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance**

100. With the intifada in the occupied Palestinian territory continuing for a fourth year, the socio-economic hardship of the Palestinian population has been worsening as a result of Israeli actions such as closures, curfews and military operations. The emergency interventions of UNRWA continued to be an important source of assistance and stability, although the Agency remained concerned about restrictions on humanitarian access. The construction of a physical barrier in the West Bank has added another obstacle to humanitarian access and has severely affected the livelihoods of the Palestinians affected and their access to essential services. UNRWA also maintained its regular programme of education, health, relief, social and microfinance services to over 4 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

#### **Funding humanitarian emergencies**

...

106. The \$135.8 million shortfall in contributions to the UNRWA emergency appeals for the occupied Palestinian territory was one of the Agency's prime concerns during the year, as needs in the refugee community continued to increase without sufficient resources to address them. In Gaza, UNRWA has been able to rehouse fewer than 10 per cent of the 21,000 Palestinians that have been uprooted by Israeli military operations since October 2000. Funding shortfalls have also made it difficult to maintain emergency food assistance for more than 1 million refugees and to implement the Agency's emergency job creation programme.

...

---