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**TRANSCRIPT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S OPENING REMARKS  
AT PRESS ENCOUNTER IN NEW YORK,**

**12 AUGUST 2014**

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Let me now turn to the situation in Gaza.

The most recent ceasefire, brokered by Egypt, appears to be holding. But that is not enough. I strongly hope that a durable ceasefire will be reached soon.

We must use this cessation of hostilities to address urgent humanitarian needs. The toll of death and destruction is staggering.

According to preliminary information, nearly 2000 Palestinians have been killed -- almost 75 per cent of them civilians, including 459 children. There were more children killed in this Gaza conflict than in the previous two crises combined.

More than 300,000 people are still sheltering in UNRWA schools, government and private schools and other public facilities, or with host families. At least 100,000 people have had their homes destroyed or severely damaged.

Most of Gaza's households have little or no water supply. Hospitals meant to cope with disaster are themselves disaster zones. The new school year was scheduled to start in less than two weeks, but a great many of the buildings will not be ready or are totally unusable in their current state.

The United Nations will work with regional and international actors to rebuild. But unless we address the underlying causes of the conflict, another round of violence and vengeance is almost guaranteed.

Israel's duty to protect its citizens from rocket attacks by Hamas and other threats is beyond question. At the same time, the fighting has raised serious questions about Israel's respect for the principles of distinction and proportionality. Reports of militant activity does not justify jeopardizing the lives and safety of many thousands of innocent civilians.

I have called for an investigation into the repeated shelling of UN facilities harbouring civilians. I expect accountability for the innocent lives lost and the damage incur

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