



Secretary-General

SG/SM/10722

PAL/2062

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

SECRETARY-GENERAL SHOCKED BY ISRAELI MILITARY OPERATION IN BEIT HANOUN

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

The Secretary-General was shocked to learn about the Israeli military operation carried out early today in a residential area in Beit Hanoun, which has resulted in the deaths of at least 18 Palestinians, including 8 children and 7 women. He extends his condolences to the bereaved families of the victims.

Only last Friday, the Secretary-General expressed his deep concern about the rising death toll caused by the Israeli military operation in northern Gaza, given that such operations inevitably cause civilian casualties. The Secretary-General reminds both sides of their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The Secretary-General reiterates his call to the Israeli Government to cease its military operations in Gaza without delay, and calls on the Palestinian side to also halt attacks against Israeli targets.

He further takes note of the reported announcement by the Israeli Government of a full investigation into this latest incident, and looks forward to its early results.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record