
Ramallah, Palestinian Authority, 16 January 2009
Secretary-General's press conference after meeting President Mahmoud Abbas

SG: Saidi Raiss,

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very much impressed and pleased to visit and have a meeting with President Abbas. This is my second time to visit Palestine Authority in my capacity as Secretary General. This time, I am on a mission of peace. I had sincerely hoped that, by this time, I would have brought you a good message? I would have brought you the news of a complete and immediate cease-fire, but still we are working on that.

With Prime Minister Fayyad, civil community leaders, and with President Abbas this morning, today I have had very constructive discussions with the Palestinian leadership.

With President Abbas we have discussed a number of elements which are under consideration to enable an immediate ceasefire, including stopping fighting, humanitarian assistance, management of the crossings, opening of the crossings, and how to ensure the prevention and recurrence of the smuggling of illegal arms and weapons into Gaza, and how to promote national unity of the Palestinian people and how to ensure the durable and sustainable ceasefire. And beyond a ceasefire, a durable and sustainable peace and stability in Gaza and the whole Palestinian territory. These will be our ongoing topics and ongoing tasks to discuss and realise.

However, at this time we have fully agreed that, as President Abbas just mentioned, the fighting must stop, now. We have no time to lose. If we have some more time, there will be more casualties, more losses of human lives, more destruction. I would urge again that a unilateral declaration of a ceasefire would be necessary. I am looking for that.

So I continue my discussions with the leaders in the region. I am now heading to Turkey, then Lebanon and Syria and Kuwait. I will continue to exert my utmost efforts to realise this. But my sincere hope is that before I would conclude my visits to my forthcoming destinations I would like to see an immediate ceasefire.

You have my full support and cooperation from me, from the United Nations, from the Quartet, and from the whole international community. I admire your leadership and I am very much impressed by all the impressive achievements you have made in the socio- economic and security field under your dynamic, wise leadership, and I really count on working closely with you. I am very much grateful for your continued support and cooperation on the major goals and objectives of the United Nations. And I am looking forward to another dialogue with you over lunch.

Thank you very much.

Q: What is your view on international forces for Gaza ?

SG: The deployment of international forces in Gaza - that idea has been discussed between myself and the President, and I understand the President has also discussed this matter with some of the major partners in the international community. This is one of the elements which we have been discussing, which have been raised by many international leaders. We will continue to elaborate, we will continue to discuss this issue. This is a very valid and important proposal. But we need the consensus opinions of international community, we will work on that. That will be one of the elements which can help ensure a durable and sustainable peace beyond this ceasefire. Thank you very much.

* * * * *