
UN envoy condemns Israel's extra-judicial assassinations



Terje Roed-Larsen

25 August 2003 – The senior United Nations envoy for the Middle East, Terje Roed-Larsen, today condemned Israel's extra-judicial assassination on Sunday of four Palestinians, when helicopter gun-ships fired missiles into a car in Gaza City, reportedly killing a Hamas militant and three Islamic University students.

Mr. Roed-Larsen, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, reiterated the world body's consistent and vocal opposition to such assassinations.

Israel clearly has a right to live in peace and security, Mr. Roed-Larsen said in a statement, but no country can resort to these extra-judicial measures.

He urged all parties to halt violent actions and immediately re-engage in a constructive process toward peace, as outlined in the Road Map, the plan drawn up by the UN, United States, European Union and Russian Federation that calls for Israel and the Palestinians to take a series of parallel and reciprocal steps culminating in the achievement of two states living side by side in peace by 2005.

The Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand Ramcharan, has also condemned acts of violence by both the Israeli and Palestinian sides over the past week and appealed to all parties to refrain from any further violence and to do their utmost to control those who commit terrorist acts against civilians or engage in the disproportionate use of force.

Mr. Ramcharan called last week's Palestinian suicide bombing in Jerusalem, which killed 20 people, "senseless and repulsive violence" but also referred to subsequent Israeli military operations and extra-judicial killings.

"Such acts of violence on both sides are severe and unacceptable breaches of the truce agreed upon by the Palestinian Authority and Israel and work against all efforts carried out so far within the Road Map process to achieve a just and sustainable peace in the region," he said in a statement.