

## **Note to Correspondents - situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza)**

The Secretary-General is deeply alarmed by the human toll of the intensified hostilities in Gaza. He condemns the reported killing of over a thousand people, including women and children, since the collapse of the ceasefire.

Large-scale Israeli bombardments and ground operations have resulted in widespread destruction and the displacement of over 100,000 Palestinians from Rafah in the last two days alone, most after having already been displaced multiple times and with few belongings.

The Secretary-General is shocked by the attack by the Israeli army on a medical and emergency convoy on 23 March resulting in the killing of 15 medical personnel and humanitarian workers in Gaza. Medical personnel and humanitarian and emergency workers must be protected by all parties to the conflict at all times, as required by international humanitarian law. Since October 2023, at least 408 aid workers have been killed in Gaza, at least 280 of whom were UN staff. The Secretary-General honours all humanitarian workers who have been killed in this conflict, and demands a full, thorough and independent investigation of these incidents.

All parties must comply fully with international law at all times. Civilians must be respected and protected. The denial of lifesaving aid must end.

The Secretary-General reiterates his strong condemnation of the 7 October attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. Nothing can justify the 7 October terror attacks. And nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. The Secretary-General renews his urgent call for the immediate restoration of the ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and the unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza.

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