

Secretary-General's statement on the establishment of the Panel of Inquiry on the flotilla incident of 31 May 2010

For the past two months, I have engaged in intensive consultation with the leaders of Israel and Turkey on the setting-up of a Panel of Inquiry on the flotilla incident of 31 May. Today I am very pleased to announce the launch of the Panel. This is an unprecedented development.

I thank the leaders of the two countries with whom I have engaged in last minute consultations over the weekend, for their spirit of compromise and forward looking cooperation.

The Panel will be led by eminent personalities: former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr. Geoffrey Palmer as Chair and the outgoing President of Colombia, Mr. Alvaro Uribe as Vice-Chair. The Panel will have two additional members, one each from Israel and Turkey. It will begin its work on 10 August and submit the first progress report by mid September.

I hope the Panel will fulfil its mandate based on the Presidential Statement of the Security Council and with the fullest cooperation of the relevant national authorities of the two countries. It will also give me recommendations for the prevention of similar incidents in the future. I also hope that today's agreement will impact positively on the relationship between Turkey and Israel as well as the overall situation in the Middle East.

New York, 2 August 2010