



**Statement by Robert Serry, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on the killing of Palestinian civilians and escalating violence in Gaza**

**Jerusalem, 22 March, 2011**

**United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry condemns the killing of three Palestinian children and their uncle and the wounding of thirteen other civilians by an Israeli tank shell in the Gaza Strip earlier today. He is very concerned at the escalating situation in Gaza and southern Israel.**

**Rocket fire by Palestinian militants from Gaza, including from civilian areas, escalated sharply several days ago. Mr. Serry condemns such attacks which endanger Israeli civilians. Israeli firing into densely populated areas is extremely dangerous and appalling incidents such as today's raise serious questions.**

**The Special Coordinator calls for an urgent halt to all acts of violence and full respect of international humanitarian law by all parties before more civilian lives are lost. The UN is working urgently to prevent any further escalation.**