

**Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General
on the Situation in Gaza and southern Israel**

The Secretary-General is gravely concerned about the situation in Gaza and southern Israel and the potential for further violence and civilian suffering if calm is not restored.

He condemns today's rocket attacks on southern Israel and calls on Hamas to ensure that rocket attacks from Gaza cease immediately. He urges all parties to work to secure the immediate restoration of the calm and an urgent easing of humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, including the continuous provision of humanitarian supplies. He calls for respect by all parties of international humanitarian law.

The Secretary-General reiterates, as the Quartet stated when it met on 15 December, that a lasting solution to the situation in Gaza can only be attained by peaceful means.

New York,
24 December 2008