

Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

On the One Year Anniversary of “Operation Cast Lead”

A year after the start of “Operation Cast Lead”, the Secretary-General is deeply concerned that neither the issues that led to this conflict nor its worrying aftermath are being addressed.

Very few of the key elements for stability, as identified in Security Council resolution 1860, have been implemented. While violence has been at lower levels this year, incidents continue and there is no durable ceasefire in place.

The quality and quantity of humanitarian supplies entering Gaza is insufficient, broader economic and reconstruction activity is paralyzed, and the people of Gaza are denied basic human rights. Efforts are being made to combat illicit trafficking of weapons, but smuggling continues. Egypt has tirelessly worked for Palestinian unity, but without a breakthrough so far.

There is a sense of hopelessness in Gaza today for 1.5 million Palestinians, half of whom are under eighteen. Their fate and the well-being of Israelis are intimately connected.

A fundamentally different approach to Gaza is urgently required. The Secretary-General calls on Israel to end the unacceptable and counterproductive blockade of Gaza, facilitate economic activity and civilian reconstruction, and fully respect and uphold international law. He calls on Hamas to bring an end to violence and fully respect and uphold international law. The Secretary-General also calls on all Palestinians to work for unity and elections within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority.

Today’s anniversary is a reminder of the bitter consequences of the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to which there is and can be no military solution. The urgent priority of all Israeli and Palestinian leaders, the region, and the international community as a whole must be the achievement of a two State solution.

New York, 27 December 2009