

## **Annan calls on Israelis and Palestinians to observe international obligations**

4 January 2005 – Expressing concern over the deaths of seven Palestinian civilians during Israeli military operations in northern Gaza Strip on Monday after Palestinians there launched rocket attacks, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today [called](#) on both sides to fulfil their international obligations in the run-up to Palestinian elections next week.

“He is particularly disturbed that at least five of the victims were under the age of 18,” UN spokesperson Marie Okabe said, adding, “The Israeli military operations followed a marked increase in recent days of Qassam rocket attacks by Palestinian militants.”

Mr. Annan reminded them of “the vital importance of exercising maximum restraint and responsibility during this critical period before the 9 January Palestinian presidential elections,” she said.

The Secretary-General renewed his call on both parties “to follow their obligations under international law and in particular to ensure the protection of the civilian population,” Ms. Okabe said.

Meanwhile, 51 countries had sent observer delegations with 320 delegates so far for the elections on Sunday and more than 700 international observers would be deployed on the election day, she said.

“Further to the UN’s ongoing technical and logistical assistance programmes, the Palestinian Central Election Commission and Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested the UN to deploy a Liaison and Support Unit,” she said.

*Link: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=12959>*