

Annan condemns ‘despicable and indiscriminate’ Palestinian suicide attacks

10 September 2003 – Condemning two suicide bombings in Israel, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called on Palestinian militant groups to halt “these despicable and indiscriminate actions, which not only spread death and misery but harm the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people.”

“He reiterates his insistence that both sides should fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians,” a statement issued by a spokesman for Mr. Annan said last night following the attacks, which killed at least 12 people and injured many more.

“The Secretary-General takes this opportunity to reiterate his passionate conviction that peace and security in the region can only be achieved through political dialogue.

“This will require statesmanship as well as maximum restraint on all sides,” the statement added, the latest of a series Mr. Annan has issued in recent weeks calling for restraint in the face of an upsurge in violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

In the latest UN condemnation of the cycle of violence and counter-violence, the senior envoy for the Middle East, Terje Roed-Larsen, today deplored Israel’s bombing of a Hamas leader’s house in a densely populated neighbourhood of Gaza, which killed three people and injured at least 30.

Noting that the bombing followed an Israeli operation yesterday in Hebron in which a 12-year-old boy was killed, Mr. Roed-Larsen, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, reiterated that Israel had an obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and refrain from the use of disproportionate violence.

He noted Mr. Annan’s condemnation of the terror attacks in Israel and sent condolences to the bereaved on both side of the recent violence.

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