

Annan condemns Palestinian attack in Jerusalem as 'utterly reprehensible'

Press Release, 11 June 2003 - Calling such attacks "utterly reprehensible," United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the suicide bombing by the Palestinian militant group Hamas in Jerusalem, saying such actions "only serve to spur further hatred and mistrust."

A statement issued by a UN spokesman said Mr. Annan also believed the Israeli attacks in Gaza today, following the suicide bombing which killed at least 16 Israelis and injured dozens more, only contributed to a renewed cycle of violence.

"The Secretary-General calls on the leaders of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples not to be deterred from the path to peace through the Quartet's Road Map by this (Hamas) attack," the statement, Mr. Annan's third in as many days on the Middle East crisis, said in reference to the latest peace initiative. "He urges Palestinian Prime Minister Abbas to work assiduously to fulfil his pledge to end the armed intifada. The Secretary-General calls on both sides to act with restraint in the face of this terrorism."

On Monday he deplored violence by Palestinian groups over the weekend and yesterday he voiced "serious concern" over Israel's attempted extra-judicial killing of a Hamas political leader in Gaza.

"The Secretary-General remains firm in his belief that security for both Israelis and Palestinians can best be achieved through the resolution of this conflict through the two-state solution called for in the Road Map," today's statement concluded.

The Road Map is the plan drawn up by the diplomatic quartet - UN, United States, European Union and Russian Federation - calling for Israelis and Palestinians to take a series of parallel and reciprocal steps over the next three years towards the vision of establishing two states living side by side in peace and security.

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