

## *Annan strongly condemns latest incursion into Gaza refugee camp*

23 December 2003 – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today strongly condemned the latest military incursion in the Rafah refugee camp in Gaza, which left at least eight Palestinians, many of them civilians, dead.

"The Secretary-General reiterates that Israel, as the occupying power, must protect the civilian population and desist from using disproportionate force," a spokesman for Mr. Annan said in a [statement](#), which noted that dozens more, including many children, were wounded and several houses destroyed.

"He strongly urges the Government of Israel to refrain from such violent actions and return to peaceful negotiations with its Palestinian partners according to the Quartet's Road Map," the statement added, referring to a peace plan sponsored by the UN, European Union, Russian Federation and the United States that calls for a series of parallel and reciprocal steps leading to two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace by 2005.

Through his spokesman, the Secretary-General also sent his condolences to the families of the victims.

*Link: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=9306#.WRRdFvI96vE>*