

# Annan voices hope Abu Mazen's resignation does not derail Road Map

8 September 2003, Press Release - Reacting to developments over the weekend in the Middle East, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today condemned the latest round of violence and voiced hope that the resignation of Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen would not stall efforts to bring peace to the region.

In the first of a pair of statements issued today, a UN spokesman said the Secretary-General was "greatly troubled" by the intensifying cycle of violence, retaliation and revenge between Israelis and Palestinians. "He deplores the tendency of both sides to disregard their obligation to protect civilians under international humanitarian law," the statement said.

The [Secretary-General condemned](#) Saturday's attempt by Israel to assassinate the Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. "Not only are extra-judicial killings a violation of international humanitarian law," the statement said, "the attack on Sheikh Yassin also involved the use of disproportionate force in a densely populated civilian area."

Mr. Annan also called on Israel to cease and desist from such acts and return to efforts at negotiation with its Palestinian partners, as outlined in the Quartet Road Map, a plan put forward by the UN, European Union, Russian Federation and United States calling for a series of parallel and reciprocal steps leading to two states living side by side in peace by 2005. "He fears that the alternative is still greater bloodshed and loss of innocent civilian life," the statement added.

The [second statement](#) said the Secretary-General "very much hopes" that the resignation of Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen would not derail efforts embodied in the Road Map to forge peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

"He believes it is important that the democratically elected Palestinian institutions reach consensus on the appointment of a credible and fully empowered Prime Minister, with all the necessary authority and means to implement Palestinian obligations under the Road Map," the statement said.

Source: UN News Service