

Palestinian Authority, facing crisis, must undertake reform, Annan says

July 19 2004 - The Palestinian Authority must reform its security apparatus to tackle prevailing turmoil, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said today.

"They are facing a serious situation, a serious crisis, and they have to take steps to bring it under control because without that, it is going to be very difficult to see any progress in the way forward," he told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

Asked whether he felt "vindicated" for backing UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen's comments last week, the Secretary-General said that was beside the point. "I made clear in my own statement that I supported Larsen's statement, and he was stating the facts and I think events have borne him out, but that is not anything to take satisfaction from."

He added: "What is important is the actions that need to be taken on the ground to bring it under control and for the Palestinian Authority to take the steps necessary and to begin to reform, particularly bringing the security forces under one command."

Offering more specifics, he said, "Chairman [Yasser] Arafat should really take the time to listen to the Prime Minister and other members of his leadership, and take the necessary steps to bring the situation under control, and to work with the Egyptians and the Jordanians and the international community to reform his security apparatus."

To a question on Israel's proposed withdrawal from Gaza, Mr. Annan noted that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's initiative appears to have broad support. "I think the withdrawal will take place," he said.

The Secretary-General repeated his longstanding view that the pullout must be undertaken in line with the [Road Map](#) outline peace plan. "If it is handled properly, it may provide an opportunity for us to move the process forward," he said.

"If it is handled wrongly, then it is something else."

Source: UN News Service