

Annan calls on Israel to halt destruction of Palestinian homes in Gaza

17 May 2004 – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today repeated his condemnation of Israel's widespread destruction of Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip, the latest demolitions which have left nearly 19,000 people left homeless.

According to UN relief teams, 2,197 people have lost their homes following the demolition of 191 homes throughout Gaza in the first 15 days of May, with Rafah the worst-affected area. There was also news of Israeli military plans for a more extensive round of house demolitions in Gaza.

"[The Secretary-General] repeats his call on the Government of Israel to fulfil its obligations under international law as it acts to ensure its security. As the occupying power, it must cease such acts of collective punishment immediately, and to refrain from further grave violations of international law," Mr. Annan's spokesman said in a [statement](#).

[Asked](#) earlier by reporters about the destruction of housing in Gaza, the Secretary-General said: "I am really distressed that [it] continues. It really is causing a very difficult and painful situation for the people of Palestine."

Meanwhile, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has opened a school to house the latest victims of the destruction and is distributing tents, food, water, kitchen kits, mattresses and blankets. The Agency estimates that it will cost \$32 million to re-house the 18,382 people who have lost their homes across the Gaza Strip.

UNRWA Commissioner-General Peter Hansen [said](#) the Agency now "has the job of dealing with the human tragedy behind each demolition - the distressed children in its schools, the homeless families in need of basics like blankets, food and water, and the communities shaken by the stress of ceaseless conflict."

He also stressed that his agency is facing severe under-funding of its Emergency Appeal for 2004 and is unlikely to receive all the resources it needs to meet the needs of the homeless. Already, many thousands of people have waited more than two years for the agency to provide them with new, permanent shelter.

Link:

<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/14AEACD3FDA4D50D85256E980050AF0F>