

11 October 2023, New York

## **Press Statement by the Secretary-General regarding the situation in the Middle East**

"I have been closely following dramatic events in Israel and Gaza.

I will never forget the images of the supercharged cycle of violence and horror.

I am in continuous contact with leaders in the region with an immediate focus on several key priorities.

We must avoid spillover of the conflict.

I am concerned about the recent exchange of fire along the Blue Line and recent reported attacks from Southern Lebanon.

I appeal to all parties – and those who have an influence over those parties – to avoid any further escalation and spillover.

I call for the immediate release of all Israeli hostages held in Gaza.

Civilians must be protected at all times. International humanitarian law must be respected and upheld.

About 220,000 Palestinians are now sheltering in 92 UNRWA facilities across Gaza. UN premises and all hospitals, schools and clinics must never be targeted.

UN staff are working around the clock to support the people of Gaza and I deeply regret that some of my colleagues have already paid the ultimate price.

Crucial life-saving supplies – including fuel, food and water – must be allowed into Gaza. We need rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access now.

I want to thank Egypt for its constructive engagement to facilitate humanitarian access through the Rafah crossing and to make the El Arish airport available for critical assistance.

There is no time to lose. Every moment counts.

Thank you."

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/db231011.doc.htm>