

*21 July 2018*

**Statement by the Secretary-General on the violent escalation in Gaza**

I am gravely concerned over the dangerous escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel. I deeply regret the loss of life. It is imperative that all sides urgently step back from the brink of another devastating conflict.

I call on Hamas and other Palestinian militants to cease the launching of rockets and incendiary kites and provocations along the fence. And Israel must exercise restraint to avoid further inflaming the situation.

I encourage all to engage with the UN, and particularly my Special Coordinator, and work to find a way out of this dangerous situation. Any further escalation will endanger the lives of Palestinians and Israelis alike, deepen the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and undermine current efforts to improve livelihoods and support the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza.