



PRESS RELEASE: A BRIEF TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL BY MR. ROBERT SERRY, UN SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

17 September 2012, New York. The United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Robert Serry today briefed members of the Security Council on recent developments in the Middle East peace process and the region. Mr. Serry began his report by warning that “the lack of progress on the political track and ongoing conflict and occupation put at risk the very viability of the two-state solution.” He said that “amidst a fiscal crisis and related social unrest in the West Bank, the stakes are growing.”

In particular, Mr. Serry highlighted the Palestinian Authority's grave fiscal situation and called for “nothing short of unequivocal support by the international community for the PA and collective intensified efforts to address the fiscal difficulties presently faced and preserve the institutional gains made to date.”

Regarding the peace process, Mr. Serry also expressed concern that developments on the ground do not support efforts to overcome the political stalemate. In this regard the Special Coordinator highlighted continued settlement activity, settler violence, and the continued Palestinian divide.

Mr. Serry spoke about Gaza and the UN report entitled "Gaza 2020" which highlights the stress that population growth in Gaza will place on the provision of clean water, electricity, health and education, which are inadequate now and will not keep pace with the needs of a population that is projected to grow to 2.1 million people in 2020. He said “The implications if there is no change to the current untenable situation should be a reason for alarm to all concerned.” Mr. Serry condemned continued rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and urged Israeli restraint, noting the danger posed to civilians in the territory and within Israel.

The Special Coordinator emphasized the positive impact of ongoing UN projects in Gaza and announced that this week an additional package of US\$85 million of work is expected to be approved by Israel, including housing, schools, shelters and solid waste treatment infrastructure.

The Special Coordinator also addressed the situation in Syria and said that August registered the highest number of casualties thus far, and more than 2.5 million people – including refugees

from Palestine and Iraq – now need assistance and protection inside Syria. UN agencies and humanitarian partners are working to deliver food and basic assistance to those in need in Syria as well as to refugees across borders.

In conclusion, Mr. Serry underscored that “in a volatile and rapidly changing region, the vision of the two-state solution and the achievements of the Palestinian Authority are elements of stability and progress that should not be lost but rather maintained and realized in full without further delay.” In that context, the Special Coordinator called on the international community to “seriously reassess its role in resolving the conflict.” He expressed the hope of the Secretary-General that Quartet partners, in consultation with the parties, will chart a credible political way ahead in the coming months.