

United Nations Special Coordinator Robert Serry says 2009 must be a year of achievement for the peace process

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary General to the PLO and the PA Robert Serry has been speaking of the urgency of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in 2009.

Talking to an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Vienna, Austria, Mr. Serry said "we have genuine international unity and determination behind the drive towards a two state solution. What we may not have is the luxury of time."

Mr. Serry spoke of the achievements of the Palestinian Israeli negotiations, "we can take heart there is confidence between the parties and the common determination to reach shared goals." He also stressed that the process underway as supported by the Quartet is irreversible.

But he warned that "there is plenty of worrying news too, progress has been too slow and on some issues non-existent, there remains deep skepticism about the peace process... we must close this gap between the political process and the reality on the ground."

Mr. Serry spoke of five areas that must be addressed in the coming year: settlements, violence, movement and access, Palestinian unity, and a comprehensive and substantive approach to peace.

The UN Special Coordinator also addressed the importance of a comprehensive approach to peace in the region including Israel and all of its neighbors. In conclusion he stressed the urgency of dealing with these issues in the coming year and the support of the international community in doing so.

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