

OFF-THE-CUFF

Secretary-General's press encounter in Southern Israel

Ein Hashlosa, 14 October 2014

SG: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Shalom.

I would like to thank the Government of Israel, and in particular General Noam Tibon, for allowing me and my delegation to see the underground tunnels. I was shocked and alarmed by these underground tunnels which have been used for penetration for terrorist purposes. I have been particularly condemning these rocket attacks by Hamas from the air and also attacks through leftover tunnels, underground tunnels. This is unacceptable. I have been repeatedly saying that rocket attacks killing the civilian population is not acceptable. It should be condemned. Nobody should live under constant threat or fear by these rockets and the penetrating alarming underground tunnels.

I have been meeting the leaders of both Palestine and the Israeli Government and I am coming from Cairo after having attended the Donor Conference for Gaza Reconstruction. I have been repeatedly saying that the building and destroying and building and destroying – that cycle must be stopped. And I have been urging the two leaders of the two States to address the underlying issues. For that, they should sit down together and resume their peace talks. That is the only way – a viable option, so that the two peoples can enjoy peace and harmony and security. We have to do all that the two-state solution first asks people to do, so that Israeli and Palestinian people can live side by side in peace and security.

I just met the grandparents and uncle of Daniel – a four year old – just a young boy. What has he done wrong? Why has he to die? Even without knowing anything, even without being able to grow up at the age of four years. This is very sad. I conveyed my deepest condolences to the family. But I only hope that my words of condolence can only help a little bit, even a little bit healing their wounds. But that may not be enough.

For that, I urge again – the two parties should, must address all the underlying issues to bring peace and harmony and security to the two peoples.

Thank you very much.