

**Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General
On Gaza**

The Secretary-General appeals urgently for an immediate end to the violence now engulfing Gaza and affecting communities in southern Israel. He repeats his earlier calls for an immediate cessation of Palestinian sniper and rocket attacks into Israel, and for maximum restraint on the part of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). He reminds the parties, once again, of their obligation to comply with international humanitarian law and not to endanger civilians.

Of particular concern today, in addition to the upsurge in violence, is the decision by Israel to close the crossing points in between Gaza and Israel used for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Such action cuts off the population from much-needed fuel supplies used to pump water and generate electricity to homes and hospitals. If this situation endures, the closure will also cause further shortages of food, medical and relief items in the Gaza Strip. The Secretary-General calls on Israel to refrain from actions that will harm the well-being of the general civilian population in Gaza.

The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern that the hostilities taking place on the ground will undermine the hopes for peace generated by the political process begun at Annapolis.

18 January 2008

New York,