

Rome, 13 July 2006

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the Middle East

The Secretary-General has decided to dispatch a three person team led by his Special Political Advisor, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, to the Middle East to help defuse the major crisis in the region. The other members will be senior UN officials Mr. Alvaro de Soto and Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen.

The team will first visit Cairo to meet with Egyptian officials and consult with Arab League Foreign Ministers, who will be meeting there on Saturday. Mr. Nambiar and his team are also expected to travel to Israel, the occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, and Syria. Other stops will be added as needed.

Mr. Nambiar will emphasize to all parties the Secretary-General's call to exercise restraint and to do whatever possible to help contain the conflict. He will also reiterate the Secretary-General's message to respect international humanitarian law and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

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