

Secretary-General's video message to the Israeli and Palestinian people – 19 October 2015

Salaam Aleykum, Shalom!

Today, I would like to speak directly to the peoples of Israel and Palestine about the dangerous escalation in violence across the occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel, especially in Jerusalem. I am dismayed — as we all should be -- when I see young people, children, picking up weapons and seeking to kill.

Let me be clear: violence will only undermine the legitimate Palestinian aspirations for statehood and the longing of Israelis for security.

To the youth of Palestine I say: I understand your frustration. I know your hopes for peace have been dashed countless times. You are angry at the continued occupation and expansion of settlements. Many of you are disappointed in your leaders and in us, the international community, because of our inability to end this occupation.

And to the leaders of Palestine I say: Harness the energy of your people in a peaceful way to make their dreams and aspirations a reality. You have the right to live a decent life in dignity, respect and freedom.

I know that this is your goal. It is also our goal. But it can only be reached by establishing a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Israel, not through the violent acts we have been witnessing.

I urge the youth of Palestine — as the future of your people and society — to turn your frustration into a strong, but peaceful, voice for change. Demand that your leaders act responsibly to protect your future. Demand progress for a political solution — from your leaders, from Israeli leaders, and from the international community.

I am not asking you to be passive, but you must put down the weapons of despair.

To the leaders and people of Israel: Let me say, I appreciate your genuine concern about peace and security. I also understand the anger many Israelis feel.

When children are afraid to go to school, when anyone on the street is a potential victim, security is rightly your immediate priority. But walls, checkpoints, harsh responses by the security forces and house demolitions cannot sustain the peace and safety that you need and must have.

There is no so-called “security” solution. You – the people of Israel -- as much as the Palestinian people, need to see a political horizon to break this cycle of violence and fear.

The United Nations stands by you. We will continue to support all efforts to create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations. In this we have never wavered.

And to all I say: do not allow the extremists on either side to use religion to further fuel the conflict. Palestinian and Israeli leaders: Stand firm against terror, violence and incitement. Demonstrate in both words and deeds that the historic status quo of holy sites in Jerusalem will be preserved.

Reaffirm your commitment to end the occupation and pursue a two-state solution by making changes on the ground.

Non-violence requires more courage and strength than violence. At this difficult time, let us say "enough is enough". Let us stop the posturing and brinkmanship. Let us stop mortgaging the future of both peoples and the region.

Let us get truly serious about reaching the only solution capable of durably stanching the bloodshed, the hatred and the fear of even greater conflict.

That is the courage and leadership the peoples of this holy land demand and deserve.

Shukran jazeelan. Toda raba.

Thank you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKb4wzm6MP8>

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2015-10-19/secretary-generals-video-message-israeli-and-palestinian-people>