

Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on Gaza

The Secretary-General has condemned in the strongest terms the 26 May air strikes on Rafah hitting tents sheltering displaced people. He is heartbroken by the images of the killed and injured, including many small children. As he has said before, the horror and suffering must stop immediately.

The Secretary-General grieves for the over 36,000 Palestinians and some 1,500 Israelis killed in the relentless violence, including the gruesome acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023, the devastating Israeli assault on Gaza, the continued indiscriminate rocket launches towards Israel. The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is now compounded by the unconscionable prospect of a man-made famine.

The Secretary-General reiterates his demand for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. He recalls the recent orders of the International Court of Justice, which are binding and must be complied with.

The Israeli authorities must allow, facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian supplies assistance to those in need and all crossing points must be open in line with Security Council resolution 2720 (2023). Humanitarian organizations must have full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to reach all civilians in need across Gaza, in line with Security Council Resolution 2712 (2023).

We must work expeditiously to restore security, dignity and hope for the affected population. This will require urgent efforts to support and strengthen the new Palestinian Government and its institutions, including preparing the Palestinian Authority to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza. We must also move forward with tangible and irreversible steps to create a political horizon.

The devastation and misery of the past seven months have reinforced the absolute need for Israelis, Palestinians, the States of the region and the broader international community to take urgent steps that will enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path to achieve a two-State solution. The UN will continue to support all such efforts.

Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General
New York, 28 May 2024