



**Statement by the United Nations Special Coordinator  
for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert Serry**

**on the occasion of an incident during today's Easter procession in the Old City**

**Jerusalem, 19 April 2014**

Today, the Special Coordinator, together with dignitaries of the diplomatic corps visited an Easter procession from the New Gate to the Holy Sepulcher at the invitation of the Palestinian Christian community in Jerusalem. The procession was stopped on the fourth security checkpoint prior to the entry on the church grounds. Despite earlier assurances to the Palestinian Christian community in Jerusalem of unhindered access to the Holy Sepulcher Church on the occasion of Easter celebrations, the Israeli police refused to allow such entry claiming they had orders to that effect. A precarious standoff ensued ending in an angry crowd pushing their way through.

The Special Coordinator was dismayed that a peaceful procession on the occasion of Easter in the Old City was disrupted by unacceptable behavior from the Israeli security authorities. "Once again I call on all parties to respect the right of religious freedom, granting access to holy sites for worshippers of all faiths and refraining from provocations not least during the religious holidays," the Special Coordinator remarked.

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