



**Statement by United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,
Nickolay Mladenov, on Gaza protests**

Jerusalem, 17 March 2019

“I strongly condemn the campaign of arrests and violence used by Hamas security forces against protesters, including women and children, in Gaza over the past three days.

I am particularly alarmed by the brutal beating of journalists and staff from the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) and the raiding of homes.

The long-suffering people of Gaza were protesting the dire economic situation and demanded an improvement in the quality of life in the Gaza Strip. It is their right to protest without fear of reprisal.

I call on all Palestinian factions to engage in earnest with Egypt in order to implement the Cairo Agreement (2017) in full.

The United Nations will continue its efforts to avoid escalation, relieve the suffering of people in Gaza, lift the closures, and support reconciliation.”

ENDS