

Statement of the Secretary-General on crisis in Gaza

In light of the deepening crisis in Gaza, I recalled my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, to brief me in New York on the situation on the ground as well as diplomatic efforts underway. I also convened a meeting of my senior advisors as part of the ongoing response of the United Nations to all aspects of the crisis.

I believe the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, has a central role to play in bringing a speedy end to the conflict. I regret that the Security Council has not been able to reach a consensus, including during its emergency session held yesterday evening, in order to bring about an end to the violence. I will be working actively with members of the Council and other key players, in particular Arab leaders who I am seeing tomorrow at United Nations Headquarters, to facilitate the emergence of a consensus.

Meanwhile I remain extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground. We are in close contact with the Israeli authorities to press them to open not only the Kerem Shalom crossing, but also Karni and Nahd Oz, to allow in, particularly, wheat grain and fuel for the power plant, as well as other essential supplies.

Given the crucial juncture at which we have arrived in the search for a ceasefire, I appeal to all members of the international community to display the unity and commitment required to bring this escalating crisis to an end.

New York, 4 January 2009