

Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

On Gaza

The Secretary-General condemns the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) firing on a United Nations aid convoy in Gaza, the killing of two UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) staff in separate incidents and the injuring of a contract worker. Since the conflict began 13 days ago, four UNRWA local staff have been killed. The UN is in close touch with the Israeli authorities about full investigation of this and other incidents, and about the need for urgent measures to avoid them in the future.

The Secretary-General calls once again for an immediate ceasefire in order to facilitate full and unhindered humanitarian access, and to allow aid workers to work in safety to reach persons in need. UNRWA has been forced to suspend food distribution as it cannot guarantee the safety of its staff. The inability of the UN to provide assistance in this worsening humanitarian crisis is unacceptable.

New York, 8 January 2008