

**Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General
on Gaza**

New York, 26 August 2014

The Secretary-General welcomes today's announcement of an open-ended ceasefire for Gaza, brokered under Egyptian auspices. A brighter future for Gaza and for Israel depends on a sustainable ceasefire. It is up to the parties to live up to this responsibility. After this latest round of killing and the further widespread destruction of Palestinian homes, civilians on both sides need a reprieve in order to resume their daily lives, and to allow for humanitarian and early recovery efforts to address the desperate needs of the people in Gaza. The children of Gaza and Israel must be able to start the school year without the sound of rocket alarms and airstrikes. After 50 days of profound human suffering and devastating physical destruction, any violations of the cease-fire would be utterly irresponsible.

Any peace effort that does not tackle the root causes of the crisis will do little more than set the stage for the next cycle of violence. Gaza must be brought back under one legitimate Palestinian Government adhering to the PLO commitments; the blockade of Gaza must end; Israel's legitimate security concerns must be addressed. The United Nations stands ready to support efforts to address the structural factors of conflict between Israel and Gaza.

The Secretary-General remains hopeful that the extended ceasefire will act as a prelude to a political process as the only way of achieving durable peace. The two-state solution is the only viable option. The Secretary-General urgently calls on both parties to return to meaningful negotiations towards a final status agreement that addresses all core issues and ends the 47-year occupation.

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