

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UN organizations say that the current violence is pushing Gaza into a humanitarian crisis

For immediate release:

(Jerusalem) 5 October 2004 - Twelve United Nations organizations working in Gaza today stated that the ongoing violence on top of the sharply deteriorating humanitarian situation this year is pushing the Palestinian population into a deep crisis.

They voiced their serious concern about the ability of the population to cope. Since 28 September 2004, 82 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza including 24 children; 5 Israelis have been killed including 2 children.

During 2004, approximately 45 Palestinians have been killed each month in Gaza and poverty rates are predicted to rise to 72%. The attached 'fact sheet' highlights the dimensions of the developing crisis.

At the same time, IDF movement restrictions have prevented effective delivery of humanitarian aid. UNRWA has not been able to deliver emergency food aid to the north of Gaza. The IDF has also denied UN personnel secure access into Gaza for the last 14 days – making a total of 65 days so far this year that the UN has not been able to enter.

The UN organizations recognize Israel's legitimate security concerns, particularly the need to stop Palestinian rocket and mortar attacks into civilian areas, however, its actions should be in conformity with international humanitarian law and it should not use disproportionate force.

The UN agencies call on Israel to:

- Guarantee humanitarian agencies unrestricted and secure access into Gaza for both personnel and relief supplies;
- Ensure the free movement of humanitarian goods and personnel within the Gaza Strip;
- Respect its obligations under international humanitarian law by ensuring the safety of the Palestinian civilian population.

For further information: David Shearer - UN OCHA +972-(0) 545-627-841

Paul McCann - UNRWA +972-(0) 57-721-4431, +972-(0)59-428-008

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Office of the United Nations Special Co-ordinator (UNSCO), World Food Program (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Food & Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO)
