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Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on visit to Gaza

Today the Secretary-General travelled to Gaza and visited a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) housing project and a school where he joined girl students in their classroom. He also met with children who suffered serious injuries during the conflict. He was deeply moved by their stories.

Unfortunately representatives of civil society cancelled a scheduled lunch to protest against the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. The Secretary-General regrets this missed opportunity for an important exchange with Gazan civil society representatives.

The Secretary-General is concerned about the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Last night he met with the Palestinian Minister of Prisoners Affairs, Issa Karake, and received a letter outlining specific concerns.

The United Nations continues to call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law.

Gaza/New York, 2 February 2012