

United Nations



Nations Unies

**Statement by Robert H. Serry  
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process  
On the Escalation of Violence in Southern Israel and Gaza  
22 December 2010**

I condemn the firing of indiscriminate mortars and rockets by militant groups in Gaza at Israel, which has escalated in recent days. These attacks are in clear violation of international humanitarian law and endanger civilians in Israel.

The IDF has launched several air strikes in Gaza in recent days targeting militants. Israel has a right to self-defence consistent with international humanitarian law. I urge Israel to exercise maximum restraint and take every precaution to ensure that its forces do not endanger civilians in Gaza, who all-too-often bear the brunt of escalations in violence.

In recent months, modest progress has been made in easing the closure of Gaza. A lot more still needs to be done. The maintenance of calm is essential to create an environment in which further progress can be made in the interests of the people of both Gaza and Israel.

Ends

**For further details please contact:**

Richard Miron

Mobile: 0545627825

Email: [mironr@un.org](mailto:mironr@un.org)