

UN official hails Egyptian efforts on Gaza truce

CAIRO, July 8 (Xinhua) -- Visiting UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East peace process Robert Serry on Tuesday hailed Egypt's mediation efforts to stabilize an Egyptian-brokered truce between the Palestinians and Israel in the Gaza Strip.

Serry expressed his appreciation following talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit, the Egyptian state MENA news agency reported.

The UN special envoy, who arrived here on Monday for a two-day visit to Egypt, also held talks with Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman.

Serry said they discussed means to strengthen the truce in Gaza that took effect on June 19 but is still fragile.

Since Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups agreed to implement the truce on June 19, Israel has closed all Gaza crossings for five times following homemade rockets attacks carried out by Gaza militant groups who oppose the truce.

Following a personal request made by Suleiman, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak on Tuesday gave an instruction to Israeli defense establishment that the goods crossings into Gaza will partially reopen on Tuesday afternoon, Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

Serry also reviewed the implementation of the Annapolis agreement between the Palestinians and Israel, indirect talks between Syria and Israel as well as the situation in Lebanon during the talks.

Serry has left for the Jordanian capital Amman to cement truce between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and keep up indirect dialogue between Syria and Israel. On Saturday he had met with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in Jordan and urged Palestinian reconciliation.