



Press Release

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry visits Egypt, urges calm in Gaza

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UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry held consultations in Cairo today with the Egyptian government, including H.E. Nabil El-Arabi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and General Murad Muwafi, Chief of Intelligence. He also called on H.E. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr Serry discussed the tense situation in Gaza. The UN has repeatedly called for militant rocket fire to end and for maximum Israeli restraint, to protect civilians on both sides. Mr. Serry noted that violence subsided overnight but express concern that the situation is still tense and incidents continue. He appealed for calm to be observed and for redoubled efforts.

Stressing the need for helping the people of Gaza, Mr Serry briefed his interlocutors on UN efforts to complete USD150 million of approved reconstruction works in Gaza and to push for further measures by Israel to ease the closure of the Strip by allowing construction materials into Gaza. He underscored UN support for Palestinian unity efforts based on PLO commitments and discussed President Abbas' important initiative in this regard.

Mr Serry expressed the UN's appreciation for Egypt's important role on these issues and in supporting efforts to bring about resumed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He stressed the UN's serious concern at the impasse in the peace process and the urgent need to move forward on the two state solution. Mr Serry informed his counterparts that the UN has recently joined Quartet partners in engaging the parties in consultations and, while there continue to be difficulties, there is consensus on the urgency of moving forward and strong international determination to try to help the parties do so.