



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**Under-Secretary-General and
Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos**

**Statement on Occupied Palestinian Territory
Wednesday, 16 July 2014
New York, USA**

I am extremely concerned about the escalation of hostilities in Gaza and its impact on civilians. According to preliminary estimates, as of 15 July, 194 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli attacks, including 149 civilians.

Hundreds of homes have been directly targeted by Israeli airstrikes, many of which were allegedly the residences of members of armed groups. More than 1300 families have been forced to seek shelter with relatives and neighbours. Nearly 80 schools have been damaged because of their proximity to targeted sites. In one incident, an Israeli airstrike killed 18 people in one house, including six children and three women.

Public services have been suspended and the water supply is at risk after two maintenance engineers were killed by an Israeli missile.

Armed groups are firing rockets from residential areas in Gaza towards populated areas in Israel, reportedly killing one civilian so far and putting at risk the lives of thousands more, both Israeli and Palestinian.

Sustained bombardment is terrifying for everyone but particularly for children, who will need psycho-social support long after the violence subsides.

Parties to conflict have responsibilities under international humanitarian law. They must take precautions to protect civilians and must distinguish between civilian and military targets.

This is the third major military confrontation in Gaza in six years, and civilians have borne the brunt each time. They are paying the price for a collective failure to break the cycle of violence and reach a lasting political solution.