

Statement by the Secretary-General on Gaza

I am very concerned at the decision taken today by the Israeli government to declare the Gaza Strip an “enemy entity” and its announced intent to interrupt essential services such as electricity and fuel to the civilian population. Such a step would be contrary to Israel’s obligations towards the civilian population under international humanitarian and human rights law.

The United Nations has broad humanitarian responsibilities and is mandated to provide assistance to and meet the humanitarian needs of the civilian population of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. There are 1.4 million people in Gaza, including the old, the young and the sick, who are already suffering from the impact of prolonged closure. They should not be punished for the unacceptable actions of militants and extremists. I call for Israel to reconsider this decision.

The continued indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza into Israel is unacceptable and I deplore it. I call for it to stop immediately. I understand Israel’s security concerns over this matter.

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