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UN Head Praises Ceasefire, but Urges "restraint"

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A U.N. press release stated that, "The Secretary-General welcomes the efforts leading to a new ceasefire as announced today. He commends the parties for committing to this ceasefire of 72 hours, to begin Tuesday, 5 August, at 8 a.m. local time, and calls on them to abide by it. Until the start of the ceasefire, the parties must exercise the utmost restraint."

Ban Ki-Moon also is pushing for "talks in Cairo on a durable ceasefire and the underlying issues."

The release states that, "In this regard, he [Ban Ki-Moon] welcomes the proactive engagement of the Palestinian delegation under the leadership of President Abbas. Such talks are the only way to sustainably stop the violence, which has cost far too many lives, and to change the untenable and tragic status quo in Gaza. The United Nations stands ready to lend its full support to these efforts."

The conflict so far has seen the death of more than 1,800 Palestinians, mostly civilians and a large number being women and children. 64 Israeli soldiers have died, as well as three civilians in Israel.

During Monday's seven hour humanitarian ceasefire, the United Nations restocked supplies in the schools and other buildings being used as temporary shelters for the nearly 270,000 displaced people throughout the Gaza Strip.

The UN Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees spokesperson Chris Gunness said that "These people are deeply traumatized and living in fear because we have seen that even a U.N. safe shelter, and I hate to use the word 'safe' because it's such a misnomer... even they are being hit."

U.N. envoys from all of the 193 member countries are due to meet for a General Assembly on Wednesday to discuss the crisis.

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