Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator, Lynn Hastings, on the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel

Jerusalem, 11 May 2021

The recent escalation has already seen children and other civilians killed and injured; it must stop to avoid more deaths and injuries.

The situation will likely increase humanitarian needs, in particular in the Gaza Strip, following years of the Israeli blockade, Palestinian political divisions and recurrent escalations. The health sector, already struggling, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, must be able to respond to those who are injured.

Movement of humanitarian personnel and the entry of goods to Gaza – including fuel - must be continuously allowed: without further provision, fuel for the Gaza Power Plant is due to run out this Saturday, causing significant reduction in electricity supply, again impacting the availability of health, water and sanitation services.

All parties have obligations under international humanitarian law; the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality in the use of force must be adhered to. Airstrikes in densely populated areas risk violating these principles. Rockets are indiscriminate by nature and as such violate international law. Israeli security forces in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must refrain from using force against those peacefully exercising their rights to freedoms of expression, religion, association and assembly.

The humanitarian community, including UN agencies and the NGO partners, are continuing to deliver assistance to those in need and counts on the full support of all parties to respond to emerging humanitarian needs. The protection of civilians is of paramount importance.

ENDS

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