



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

staff of the
UNSC/1999

11 February 2009

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 11 January 2009, expressing your concern over the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza and the number of civilian casualties during the fighting there.

Much like you, I was deeply concerned over the situation in Gaza and the heavy price being paid by the civilian populations. I repeatedly called for an immediate end to the violence, and I expressed my condemnation of the excessive use of force by Israel as well as the rocket and mortar attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian militants. I called on all concerned parties to comply fully with international human rights and humanitarian law.

As you know, I travelled to the region on 13 January 2009 to underscore the urgent need to reach an immediate ceasefire and to implement Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). During my trip, I held talks with the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Turkey, Lebanon and Syria, as well as with regional and international leaders at a meeting convened by President Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh and at the Arab Economic Summit in Kuwait.

On 20 January 2009, I visited Gaza to inspect the extent of the destruction, and to pledge the support of the United Nations and its commitment to the continued provision of humanitarian assistance and a concerted early reconstruction effort. I also wanted to personally visit and thank United Nations staff who worked steadfastly during the crisis, in great danger, and to pay tribute to those killed and injured.

Staff Associations of international Organizations
and United Nations agencies based in Syria
Damascus

29-00974 / 29-01538

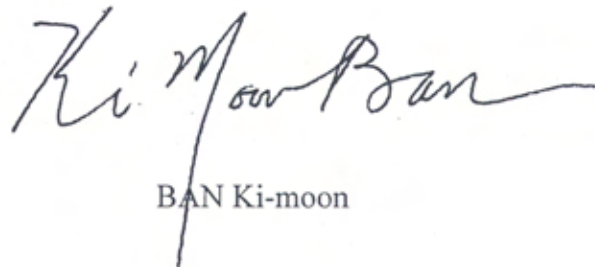
In the aftermath of my visit, the United Nations launched a Flash Appeal for humanitarian assistance, and will work, in concert with other concerned actors, to ensure that humanitarian needs in Gaza are addressed fully and rapidly, and that a coordinated early reconstruction effort begins soon, with the full support of the international community.

During and after my visit to Gaza, I also made clear that attacks such as the repeated shelling and destruction of United Nations facilities are unacceptable. I protested such attacks in the strongest possible terms and demanded a thorough investigation into each of these incidents. I expect to receive a full explanation of each incident and that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions. In the meantime, I am initiating a United Nations Board of Inquiry into the casualties and damage at the Gaza facilities of both the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and of the United Nations Special Coordinator Office for the Middle East. I have also raised with the Security Council the issue of an enquiry into the broader question relating to the conduct of the parties to this conflict during the hostilities.

I wish to assure you that the United Nations will continue its efforts to help bring about a durable ceasefire arrangement, and to contribute to the achievement of our ultimate goals: the ending of the occupation that began in 1967, the establishment of a Palestinian state and its coexistence in peace and security alongside Israel, with the attainment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and all its Arab neighbours, based on relevant Security Council resolutions.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to all of you, our colleagues of the United Nations family in Syria, and to thank you for your important work in service to the Organization. I hope you will join me in our efforts to help bring about peace and security for all peoples in the Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

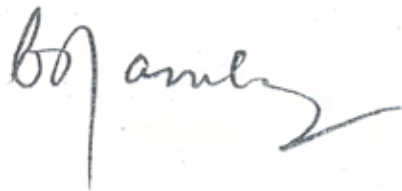
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki-moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ki" and last name "Ban" being more prominent than the middle name "moon".

BAN Ki-moon

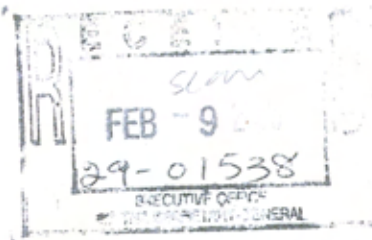
**4 LETTERS FOR SG'S SIGNATURE
CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN GAZA**

1. The Honourable Dato' Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, MP and Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association;
2. Dr. Sergio Piazzi, Secretary-General, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean;
3. Professor Dr. Ir. H. Ginandjar Kartasasmita, Chairman of the House of Regional Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia; and
4. Staff Associations of international Organizations and United Nations agencies based in Syria.

Drafter: DPA
Proofread by: JL/SH
Approved by:
Date: 11 February 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. J. Amley'.

29-01472,
29-01474,
29-01536,
29-01538



**ACTION
COPY**

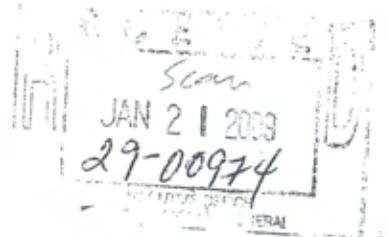
Note to Mr. Nambiar

**LETTER TO STAFF ASSOCIATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS AND UN AGENCIES IN SYRIA**

Please find attached a letter for the Secretary-General's signature responding to a letter from staff associations of international organisations and UN agencies in Syria, concerning the Gaza crisis.

B. Lynn Pascoe
5 February 2009

ACTION COPY



To: Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
UN Secretary General

We, the representatives of the staff associations of all International Organizations and UN agencies based in Syria, express our dismay and indignation at the targeting of civilians during recent attacks in Gaza. We are seriously alarmed by the increasing numbers of casualties amongst civilian population.

As international civil servants bound by the UN charter and all pertinent UN Security Council resolutions in upholding international humanitarian and human rights law, we reaffirm our position that all civilians, especially women and children, should be protected.

As we support and urge your continued efforts to put an end to violence in Gaza, we voice our fear of the continued hardship and suffering faced by the innocent population in attaining their right to live and to have the basic needs.

We mirror the daily demonstrations demanding the UN to take a stronger stand in resolving the current critical situation, to stop the aggression against civilians and to enable the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Staff Associations of International Organizations and UN agencies based in Syria

Staff Associations and Staff members of: UNDP, UNIFEM, UNRWA, UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, WFP, UNFPA, WHO, FAO

Damascus 11 January 2009

DPA/OUSG

Rec'd 3/2/09

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ACTION MOUNTA

As Appropriate
BLP / JK / P : HSG /

LB/JK/VP/SA