



25 July 2014 - There have been days in the past weeks when Gaza's children have been killed by Israeli strikes at a rate of one per hour.

Houses have been bombed with people in them, burying entire families under rubble.

And families have taken the heart-wrenching decision to split up and move to different locations – mother and son to one; father and daughter to another – hoping to improve the chance that one part of the family survives.

This is the reality in the Gaza Strip under the Israeli military operation 'Protective Edge'. The fear, despair and hopelessness of children and their parents is beyond imagination.

The violence is also taking a toll on people in southern Israel. It has to stop. A lasting ceasefire

is needed for the people of Gaza and Israel and the root causes of the conflict must be addressed.

We urgently need humanitarian cease-fires so that aid workers can get supplies into areas where people are desperate for help. Aid workers must be able to conduct search and rescue to save anyone still alive under rubble, deliver food, water and emergency health care, rescue the injured and perform the grisly task of retrieving the dead. Critically, we must have access to repair essential infrastructure such as water, sewage and electricity.

Humanitarian pauses are also critical to allow civilians to seek safer shelter and to allow people to restock on basic supplies. Lives depend on it.

But delivery of relief is not enough. Much more must be done to protect civilians. The expansion of hostilities into built up areas and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is deeply concerning. We know from experience that such weapons cause civilian death, injury, displacement and damage or destruction of essential infrastructure.

UN organisations and our NGO partners are leading the humanitarian effort in the Gaza Strip delivering food to people in shelters, getting essential drugs and other medical supplies to hospitals and helping children and their caregivers cope with the psychological distress. Aid workers are working in deeply challenging circumstances but we can do more if the resources are there.

Aid agencies urgently need additional funds to deliver to the people of Gaza. We are asking governments, the corporate world and individuals to support our appeals and help us help the people in need. We must all act to mitigate this human tragedy.

*By Kyung-wha Kang, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator*