



**29 November 2014 – Over the last year, the protracting conflict between Palestinians and Israeli security forces across the Occupied Palestinian Territory has flared up, with rising tensions and repeated clashes. On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expresses his deep concern about the current situation in Jerusalem and the West Bank, stating the "mindless cycle of destruction must end" and the "virtuous circle of peace must begin".**

But violence and clashes is not the only threat facing the region. The United Nations has declared a state of emergency in the Gaza Strip after two days of heavy rains and flooding in the war-battered enclave. Robert Turner, [UNRWA](#) director of operations in Gaza, said the agency was "very concerned about such severe storms this early in the season and on the back of unprecedented damage and destruction" from the war.

"Such devastation exacerbates the already poor humanitarian situation for refugees and non-refugees in Gaza, which is dealing with the aftermath of a recent conflict and an acute fuel and energy crisis."

## **Punitive house demolitions**

Tensions at the moment have been particularly high in Jerusalem as violence has returned to the holy city, with the attack on a [Jerusalem synagogue](#) on Tuesday was the latest in a series of revenge attacks that threatens to take the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to dangerous levels. The Israeli government has stepped up punitive

[home demolitions](#)

, sending notices to families of Palestinian attackers.

"All acts of violence require a firm response from the Israeli authorities, and those responsible should be tried before a court of law and sentenced for their crimes," said UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Makarim Wibisono.

## **Achieving long-term stability**

Israeli security forces have slated at least six homes of Palestinian suspects located in occupied East Jerusalem, Askar refugee camp near Nablus, and Hebron for demolition or sealing. A number of other [house demolitions](#) are being prepared in response to the synagogue attack. The Rapporteurs warn that such demolitions only add to the frustration and despair felt by people living under prolonged military occupation, and sow the seeds of more hatred and violence for the future.

"Simply put: the use of house demolition as a punitive measure is a form of collective punishment contrary to international law. Israel must immediately end its use of this devastating practice", UN Special Rapporteur Ms. Farha noted.

"An end of the conflict will only come through a negotiated and just political solution, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions", UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon explained in his [message for the International Day of Solidarity](#)

"Long-term stability depends on addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. That means lifting the closure on Gaza, ending the half-century occupation of Palestinian land and addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns."

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