

In Gaza, UN envoy urges Israel, Palestinian factions to step back from brink of a war that 'everybody will lose'

With a ceasefire largely holding after a day-long flare-up in fighting between Israel and Gaza militants, the United Nation envoy on the Middle East peace process was in the enclave on Sunday urging Israelis and Palestinians to pull back from the brink of a confrontation "that nobody wants...and everybody will lose."

"Yesterday we were [on the brink of war](#). And it has taken the concerted efforts of everyone to make sure that we step back from confrontation," UN [Special Coordinator](#) Nickolay Mladenov told a press conference in the Gaza Strip earlier on Sunday.

Telling Palestinians in Gaza that he knew the difficult conditions they lived in and how hard it was to believe anyone who tells them that their lives would be improved, Mr. Mladenov appealed "to all Palestinians, to all parents of all children in Gaza today to step back and keep the protests peaceful."

He appealed to the Palestinian factions to not provoke incidents at the fence, to stop the firing of rockets and mortars, to stop the incendiary kites and to "give peace a chance."

"I appeal to Israel, to be very restrained in its responses to the situation in Gaza. I appeal to snipers not to shoot children," said the envoy, adding: "I appeal to everybody to step back from the brink!"

Mr. Mladenov laid out in detail the grim series of events that had led to this most recent face-off between Israel and Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip, citing the rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation with the collapse of the economy and ongoing water and electricity shortages; the stalled Palestinian reconciliation process; and the dire security situation in the wake of Israel's deadly response to the recent series of Palestinian [protests that began at the Gaza border fence](#) in March.

I appeal to everybody to step back from the brink! – UN Special Coordinator on the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov

"I want to begin by expressing deepest condolences to the parents of all the children whose lives have been lost in the past few weeks; to all journalists and to all medical professionals, who have lost their lives in the line of duty," said Mr. Mladenov.

For any progress to be made in tackling these challenges and easing the current flaring tensions, he called for concerted efforts by all to pull back from “a confrontation that nobody wants, nobody needs and in which everyone will lose.”

Further, the international community has the responsibility to act immediately and meet the expectations not only of providing aid to the people of Gaza, but of designing a political path to move forward,” he said, and key allies in this effort would be the Palestinian people in Gaza themselves.

Getting the reconciliation process back on track was vitally important and he appealed to the leadership of both Hamas and Fatah and all Palestinian factions, to take Egypt’s initiatives very seriously.

“The only realistic perspective today is this: avoid war, fix the humanitarian problems of Gaza, and get back to the reconciliation process.”

“If we are able to do this, we can achieve a lot. But we need and I hope we will have the full cooperation of all Palestinians and all Israelis who are sick and tired of war and conflict, who want to live in peace, and who want to see their lives not constantly threatened by rockets or air strikes,” Mr. Mladenov underscored.

The full transcript of Special Coordinator Mladenov’s press remarks can be found [here](#).