

**Readout of Secretary-General's telephone calls with H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, and H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine**

**Washington, D.C., 20 November 2014**

The Secretary-General spoke separately by telephone today with H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, and H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine.

The Secretary-General said he was shocked by the deadly attack of 18 November on a synagogue in West Jerusalem.

The Secretary-General said he was extremely alarmed by the upsurge of violence in recent weeks. The dangerous downward spiral must urgently be reversed. He emphasized that at this delicate and dangerous juncture, courage and responsibility were required from both the President and the Prime Minister to take a stand that may be contrary to extremists in their own domestic constituencies.

The Secretary-General said he hoped the recently announced confidence-building measures and firm commitments made by both sides at the meeting in Amman to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites would be further translated into a de-escalation of tensions. Absent this, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may quickly morph into a religious conflict, over which the international community will have limited, if no, leverage.

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