



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Situation in Gaza**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 24, 2014

The United States remains gravely concerned over the recent violence that has impacted Palestinian and Israeli civilians. We and others are working intensively to secure an immediate cessation of hostilities based on a return to the November 2012 cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hamas. It was the purpose of Secretary of State Kerry's trip to Cairo, where he met with Egyptian leaders and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. He is still in the region conferring regularly with other allies and partners. We strongly support these efforts.

The United States demands that Hamas immediately cease all rocket attacks on Israel. We affirm Israel's right to defend itself against rocket and tunnel attacks from Gaza. We also condemn in the strongest terms actions by Hamas and other militant groups, including placement of weapons in schools. At the same time, we are seriously concerned about the rising number of Palestinians, the large majority civilians, killed during Israel's military campaign, and the loss of Israeli soldiers and civilians. We urge that both sides minimize civilian casualties and comply with international humanitarian law.

As we work toward the short-term goal of a ceasefire, we recognize that we also have to solve the underlying issues that led to this conflict. Ultimately, we must build a long-term peace through a two-state solution.

The United States remains committed to seeking a permanent and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We support Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state. At the same time, we remain deeply committed to the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state that can live side-by-side with Israel in peace and security. Only through direct negotiations can a final agreement be reached. This will bring an end to this conflict and provide for a future that all Israelis and Palestinians deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.