Press Release

UNFPA Expresses Utmost Concern about Humanitarian Consequences of Escalating Violence in Gaza

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**UNITED NATIONS, New York**—UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is extremely concerned about the plight of civilians in the Gaza Strip, and reiterates the call by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all other voices for an immediate halt of military hostilities that are heavily impacting the civilian population.

“We call for humanitarian assistance, including food, medical supplies and equipment, to be promptly allowed into Gaza,” said UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid. “This is critical to address the urgent needs of Gaza’s 1.5 million inhabitants, especially women and children.”

Even before the eruption of the current hostilities, the closures imposed on Gaza presented special challenges to women and their infants and children. Pregnant women had difficulty accessing maternal health services, which, coupled with widespread poverty, resulted in high levels of anemia and malnutrition.

The current crisis is amplifying these risks. With delivery wards being used as surgical facilities to treat the wounded, more women are forced to deliver at home—further exposing them to maternal death or injury, thus invisibly and silently adding unknown numbers to those dead and injured by the military action. In addition, the displacement of families following the total or partial destruction of their homes is having a heavy physical and psychological impact on women and children in particular.

As a response to the humanitarian consequences of the conflict, UNFPA, along with its United Nations sister agencies, has delivered medicines, intravenous fluids and disposable medical supplies to major hospitals in Gaza. It has also been providing support to displaced women and their families. But this assistance is not sufficient and much more is needed to be done. UNFPA calls for the opening of all crossings to allow humanitarian aid to reach those who are most impacted by the military action.