Statement by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert Serry on Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention

Jerusalem, 25 February 2013

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Robert Serry, is deeply saddened and concerned about the death in Israeli detention on 23 February of Mr. Arafat Jaradat, arrested on 18 February. He sends his condolences to the family of Mr. Jaradat.

Mr. Serry and Deputy Special Coordinator Mr. James W. Rawley discussed the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention this morning with Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad and Palestinian Chief Negotiator Erekat.

The Special Coordinator takes note of the preliminary findings of the autopsy that was conducted on Mr. Jaradat's body with the participation of Israeli and Palestinian experts. The United Nations expects the autopsy to be followed by an independent and transparent investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Jaradat's death, the results of which should be made public as soon as possible.

The Special Coordinator reaffirms the position of the United Nations as expressed by the Secretary-General last week that international human rights obligations towards all Palestinian detainees and prisoners in Israeli custody must be fully respected. The United Nations remains concerned about the deteriorating health of Palestinian detainees on hunger strike, and reiterates that those held in administrative detention without charge should be charged and face trial with judicial guarantees in accordance with international standards, or promptly released.

The United Nations is closely monitoring the situation on the ground where mounting tensions present a real risk of destabilization. The United Nations appeals for maximum restraint by all parties to prevent further violence. The United Nations will continue engaging with the parties on the ground with a view to finding a solution that addresses the plight of prisoners and preserves the calm.

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