



UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIAN DIVISION)

UNWORLD - NEWS FOR THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

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Topic of the Month: Conflict in Gaza

Secretary-General relieved at ceasefires called by Israel, Hamas

19 January 2008

Voicing relief at Israel's unilateral decision to halt its 22-day military offensive in Gaza and Hamas' announcement of a temporary ceasefire, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today stressed his determination to do everything possible to assist Gazans and being the reconstruction process.

Mr. Ban asked leaders gathered at the Arab Economic, Social and Development Summit underway in Kuwait to "do all possible to ensure that this tragedy does not occur again" and "to come together to prevent further violence, help the people of Gaza in this hour of desperate need and restore stability."

A lasting halt to the fighting is essential, he said, urging Hamas to cease firing rockets and on Israel to

and out of Gaza, one that will immediately allow full access for humanitarian goods and personnel," the Secretary-General [stated](#).

"As well, the Palestinians themselves must face the challenge of reconciliation, and work to achieve a unified government under the leadership of President [Mahmoud] Abbas within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority."

He issued a call to all Arab leaders for their support in this effort, adding that "we cannot rebuild Gaza without Palestinian unity."

"A true end to violence, and lasting security for both Palestinians and Israelis, will only come through a just and comprehensive settlement to the



A Palestinian boy amidst the debris of a destroyed house in Gaza City



UNHCR Emergency Fund

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withdraw its forces from Gaza.

"A durable ceasefire needs an open functioning system for the crossings in

Arab-Israeli conflict," the Secretary-General said at today's gathering in Kuwait, underscoring the need to end the occupation that began in 1967.

[More Details](#)



UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) warehouse burns in Gaza

UN already assessing Gaza relief needs on first full day of halt to fighting

19 January 2008

The United Nations has already started assessing the devastating damage and relief needs in the Gaza Strip on the first full day of a truce in fighting between Israel and Hamas, with the overall bill possibly reaching billions of dollars, amid a feeling of "overwhelming grief" among the 1.5 million inhabitants there, senior officials said today.

"The pervasive sense here among the population is one of overwhelming grief, so many families have been destroyed in so many ways," the top

UN official in Gaza reported from ground zero, noting that at his last briefing on Friday he had hoped they would not have a further death toll.

"But we did, and again the number of children that were killed since Friday were 42 out of 159 in total," told Gaza Director of Operations of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) John Ging.

[More Details](#)

Peace and Security

With 30,000 civilians at risk, UN urges halt to renewed clashes in South Darfur

18 January 2009

The senior United Nations humanitarian official in Sudan has called for an end to the renewed fighting in southern Darfur's Muhajeria area, which has exposed about 30,000 people to previously unseen levels of violence, destroyed an aid agency's office and forced the world body to relocate its staff.

Acting UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan Kenro Oshidari deplored the loss of life and injury to civilians in the area, where the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Sudan Liberation

Army/ Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) have clashed in recent days.

The fighting resulted in an aid agency's office being burnt to the ground and reached the point where the UN has relocated aid staff from Muhajeria.

"The hostilities must stop so that aid agencies can get back to the town to continue their life-saving work," Mr. Oshidari said in a statement.

[More Details](#)

Cyprus reunification talks making 'good progress,' says UN official

16 January 2009

Today's United Nations-led talks between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders aimed at reunifying the Mediterranean island were "positive," according to a senior official with the world body.

Addressing reporters following the meeting between Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat in Nicosia, Alexander Downer, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser

Mechanisms to resolve deadlocks were the focus of today's discussions, which also touched on past acts and the hierarchy of norms.

The two leaders asked Mr. Downer to stress that they held a "very good" meeting today, he said.

In response to a question, the Adviser said that he remains convinced that "there is a real possibility of reaching a settlement here" this year, but



People of Darfur



Special Advisor on Cyprus Alexander Downer

More on *Peace and Security*:

- [Solid peace in West Africa requires collaboration in meeting challenges – UN report](#)
- [Nuclear power](#)

[Nuclear power](#)
['renaissance' spurs greater investment in uranium exploration](#)

Secretary General's Special Adviser, said that "good progress was made," building on talks held earlier this week.

acknowledged that it would be an "incredibly difficult task."

[More Details](#)



Part of Nausori areas in Fiji under floodwaters.

More on *Health and Poverty*:

- [Tens of thousands face food shortage in Burundi due to drought – UN aid agency](#)
- [UN agencies team up to provide family planning for refugees in Thailand](#)

Health and Poverty

UN provides cash, assistance to flood-beleaguered in Fiji

19 January 2009

The United Nations has been providing assistance to Fiji, where recent heavy rains have claimed 11 lives and forced over 10,000 people from their homes.

The Pacific island nation's National Disaster Management Office reported that the flooding, caused by rains which fell mainly between 7 and 10 January, will recede over the coming days, allowing people to return to their homes. But it cautioned that Fijians still face health, sanitation and livelihood challenges.

Fiji's Interim Government last week asked international partners for immediate necessities, including 200 large water tanks, 6,000 water containers and 300,000 water purification tablets.

UNICEF is providing water tanks, water containers and water purification tablets, among other supplies, while the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is helping introduce a surveillance system for diarrhoea, prolonged and acute fever and acute respiratory infections.

[More Details](#)



Michel Sidibé

More on *Human Rights*:

- [Closing Guantánamo Bay will end 'dark chapter' for US, stress UN experts](#)
- [Nepal: UN rights office condemns killing of journalist amid growing attacks on media](#)

Human Rights

UN working to ensure release of gay men jailed in Senegal

15th January 2009

Stressing that homophobia has no place in the response to the AIDS epidemic, the United Nations today deplored the jailing of nine gay men who were members of a group working to provide condoms and HIV treatment in Senegal, and said it is working with a coalition of partners to ensure their release.

The men, who were arrested in mid-December, were sentenced by a Senegalese court for acts against nature and the creation of an association of criminals. Their case is currently on appeal.

"There is no place for homophobia. Universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support must be accessible to all people in Senegal

who are in need—including men who have sex with men," said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)).

"This will only happen if the men convicted are released and steps taken to rebuild trust with affected communities," he added.

UNAIDS has teamed up with civil society organizations, the public sector and partners such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the French Embassy and the Swedish Embassy representing the European Union, to ensure the release of the detainees, all of whom work for an association called AIDES Senegal.

[More Details](#)



US President Barack Obama

Climate Change and Environment

Barack Obama makes history as he takes office with green agenda

20th January 2009

As Barack Obama is sworn in as the 44th President of the United States, he is widely expected to usher in a new era for green leadership from the

During his election campaign, Obama said he planned to cut greenhouse emissions by 80 per cent by 2050, implement a ten-year \$150 billion

new era for green leadership from the US.
 Obama places the environment high on his agenda. On his historic victory speech on 5 November, he cited "a planet in peril" as one of the three key challenges he will face as President, alongside "two wars" and "the worst financial crisis in a century".
 One of Barack Obama's key election promises was an energy policy that will fight climate change, create jobs and reduce the US's dependence on foreign oil and gas.

implement a ten year, \$150 billion clean energy plan and create five million 'green' jobs.
 "Obama's green jobs strategy could deliver a 'quadruple win' - dealing simultaneously with the economic recession, energy security, job creation and emissions," commented Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, in an interview with the Press Association.

[More Details](#)

UNAA News & Events

Government House Open Day—Monday 26th January



Tel: 03 9655 4211 Fax: 03 9650 9050

Professor David de Kretser, Governor of Victoria and Mrs Jan de Kretser invite all citizens of Victoria and visitors to the State to visit Government House, one of Australia's finest buildings on Australia Day Monday 26 January, 2009.

access for disabled persons, and refreshments are available for purchase.

Entry is free: Entry via Government House Drive, off St. Kilda Road and from Dallas Brooks Drive.

Gates are open from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (last entrance to the house, 3.00 pm) Visitors are welcome to picnic on the lawns of Government House. Musicians will be performing throughout the day. There is ease of

C o n d i t i o n o f e n t r y :
 Present bags for inspection to security Government House Drive, Melbourne Melways Map Reference 2G, A11
 Parking: Birdwood Avenue and St. Kilda Road.

[More Details](#)



UNAA World Environment Day Awards 2009

Nominations for the 2009 United Nations Association of Australia World Environment Day Awards are set to open nationally on Monday, 2 February.

community groups, individuals and the media whose work serves to protect, manage or restore the environment.

This awards program seeks to recognise businesses, local governments, organisations,

For a complete list of categories, guidelines and entry criteria please visit our website.

Nominations close Friday, 1 May.

Victoria University - Horn of Africa Live Night

The Horn of African Communities Network Management Committee invites you to join us to celebrate a night of culture and history with the people from the Horn of Africa.

- Coffee ceremony and African food
- Traditional and modern African dances

Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis and Sudanese are coming together to share and showcase their traditional and contemporary culture.

Come and taste the flavours of Africa.

The **Horn of Africa Live Night** will include:

When: Saturday 7th February
 Time: 6:30pm
 Venue: Victoria University
 Footscray Park Campus
 Ballarat Road
 Building L, Room L114

- Fashion parades featuring traditional and modern outfits

Admission: FREE

For more information please contact

Melika: 0409 190 382

UNIFEM International Women's Day Fundraising Breakfast

United Nations Development Fund for Women (Australia) cordially invites you to the 2009 *International Women's Day Fundraising Breakfast*.

This year's international speaker is Ms Fozilitun Nessa, advocate for the Bangladeshi Acid Survivors Foundation. She will be sharing her story in a bid to raise awareness about this pervasive violation of

women's rights.

When: Wednesday 4 March
Time: 7:00am—8:45am
Venue: Leonda by the Yarra
2 Wallen Rd, Hawthorn
Admission: \$35 student/\$50 adult

Please call 0448 388 191 or email melbourne@unifem.org.au for more information.



2009 is...

- International Year of Reconciliation
- International Year of Natural Fibres
- International Year of Human Rights Learning
- International Year of Astronomy

UN Observances

27 January: International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

"New initiatives in Holocaust remembrance and education have given us an authentic basis for hope. But we can and must do more if we are to make that hope a reality.

We must continue to teach our children the lessons of history's darkest chapters. That will help them do a better job than their elders in building a world of peaceful coexistence."

- United Nations Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon

20 February: World Day of Social Justice

At its sixty-second session, in November 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 20 February as World Day of Social Justice. The day is to be observed for the first time in 2009.

Member states are invited to devote this special day to the promotion of concrete national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development. Social development aims at fostering social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries.

[More Details](#)

[More Details](#)

UNAA Victoria office:

www.unaavictoria.org.au

Ph: (03) 9670 7878 || Fax: (03) 9670 9993

Email: info@unaavictoria.org.au