



## **Statement on children in Gaza**

***Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, UNICEF Eminent Advocate for Children  
Amman, Jordan, 5 January 2009***

### **Our Humanity is Incomplete**

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" ... Article one, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" ... Article three, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Over the past 41 years, the people of Gaza have been living under occupation. Over the past 18 months, they have been living under siege. And for the past 10 days, the people of Gaza have been subject to a cruel and continuous military attack.

Either the declaration is not so universal, or the people of Gaza are not human beings, worthy of the same "universal" rights. This is the message the world is sending out today.

Today, I am here with representative members of the UN family, to share with you the extent of the humanitarian crisis that is Gaza.

But not only is there a humanitarian crisis in Gaza... there is a crisis in our global humanity. Nelson Mandela once said that "our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." Today, I tell you, our humanity is incomplete without theirs. It is incomplete. It is not universal.

This is the message I am sending world leaders: Our humanity is incomplete when children, irrespective of nationality, are victims of military operations.

More than seventy dead children. Close to six hundred injured. What does the world tell to their mothers? To the Palestinian mother who lost five daughters in one day? To the mothers watching their children cry in pain, huddle in fear, and deal with more trauma than any of us will experience in an entire lifetime?

That they are collateral damage?

That their lives don't matter?

That their deaths don't count?

That the children of Gaza do not have "the right to life, liberty and security"?

What do we tell them?!

It is imperative that every nation acts to end the fighting, and open all crossings, especially Karni, to permit the uninterrupted passage of wheat, fuel, medicine, and other vital supplies.

At the very least, we must push for a ceasefire, a humanitarian ceasefire, a ceasefire for children, to help the wounded, to look for those buried under the rubble, to tend to the sick and elderly trapped in their homes, and to bring in vital medical supplies, equipment and staff.

At the very least, governments should... governments must contribute to UNRWA's emergency appeal for \$34 million to meet the immediate needs of Gaza's innocent civilians.

The children of Gaza, the dead and the barely living... their mothers... their fathers are not acceptable collateral damage; their lives do matter, their loss does count. They are not divisible from our universal humanity – no child is, no civilian is.