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**ATAMANENKO CALLS ON P.M. TO END SILENCE
ABOUT GAZA ATTACKS AND BACK UN CALL FOR CEASEFIRE:
Urges return to Peace Process**

CASTLEGAR – Alex Atamanenko, MP for BC Southern Interior, called on Prime Minister Harper today to condemn the unacceptable escalation of violence in Gaza that is causing the death and injury of so many civilians.

“The government of Canada should be calling for an immediate end to the aerial bombing of Gaza, and urge both sides to reinstate a ceasefire and return to the peace process,” said Atamanenko. “The government must also work to ensure that medical and food aid is provided to civilians through UN agencies that can be guaranteed safe access, and that Canada provides some of it,” he added. “Canada has been notably silent when compared to the leadership shown by other nations in the world working for a peaceful resolution.”

“The attack on United Nations Relief workers and Red Cross personnel is completely unacceptable,” said Atamanenko.

“This is not a new situation between Israel and Palestine. This is happening in the context of an on-going UN-recognized decades-long Israeli occupation of Palestine, a 2 year blockade by Israel that has limited food and medical supplies, and an attack by Israel on Gaza last November 4th which severely broke the six-month ceasefire terms and escalated the conflict. Rockets launched by various groups from Gaza into Israel are unacceptable, but escalation occurred after the November Israeli attack.

“The Prime Minister must speak out in support of the UN Security Council’s resolution, including supporting an “immediate and durable” ceasefire. The citizens of this country want to see Canada take a role as a peacemaker and not remain silent during such conflicts,” added Atamanenko.

The recent attacks have reportedly killed over 750 Palestinians to date with over 3,000 injured. Ten Israelis have been killed in the conflict to date, including four soldiers from friendly fire, more than all Israelis killed last year from Gaza launched rockets or mortars.

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