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UN Secretary-General Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Francis Deng, and Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Edward Luck, on the Situation in Libya

(New York – 22 February 2011) As the Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the responsibility to protect, we are alarmed by the reports of mass violence coming from the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Widespread and systematic attacks against civilian populations by military forces, mercenaries, and aircraft are egregious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. If the reported nature and scale of such attacks are confirmed, they may well constitute crimes against humanity, for which national authorities should be held accountable.

We remind the national authorities in Libya, as well as in other countries facing large-scale popular protests, that the heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit pledged to protect populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement.

We join Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in urging all parties to exercise utmost restraint and to seek peaceful means of resolving their political differences.

For media queries please contact:

Valerie Rocher
Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
Email: rocher@un.org