



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

STATEMENT ON ALEPPO

I am gravely alarmed by the disturbing developments in the eastern part of Aleppo City in Syria, where civilian, humanitarian and commercial movements have been effectively cut off following the closure of Castello Road, the last remaining access route in and out of this area. An estimated 200,000-300,000 people are at risk of besiegement.

Humanitarians have not been able to reach eastern Aleppo since clashes started on 7 July between the Government of Syria forces and non-state armed groups, which rendered the road impassable.

Hundreds of mortars, missiles and projectiles were launched on both eastern and western Aleppo in the past weeks, resulting in dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries including several children. Hospitals and other civilian infrastructure have also been affected by the fighting. For example, on 16 July, a hospital in eastern Aleppo City was reportedly hit, and a number of medical staff injured. This was the third time the facility was hit in the last two months. The humanitarian community has repeatedly stressed that medical staff and facilities must not be targeted, as international humanitarian law clearly states.

While the United Nations and our partners still have some stocks to respond to humanitarian needs, food in east Aleppo is expected to run out by the middle of next month. Our highest priority is to re-establish access to eastern Aleppo city, through both cross-line convoys and cross-border operations from Turkey, so that we can replenish critical life-saving assistance like food, medical supplies and fuel, and assure the continuation of basic services.

I call on all parties to the conflict to immediately enable unconditional, unimpeded and sustained access to the millions of people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas across Syria. I urge them to lift all sieges, to respect the safety of medical and humanitarian workers, and to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

New York, 21 July 2016