Statement by Mark Cutts, Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis on the killing of a humanitarian worker in northwest Syria

Gaziantep, 17 February 2021

I am shocked and appalled by the killing of yet another humanitarian worker in northwest Syria yesterday, as a result of an explosion in a market area in the middle of Al-Bab city. This was the latest in a series of horrific car bombs and other improvised explosive devices that have killed dozens of civilians and injured many more in northern Syrian in recent months.

Our humanitarian colleague who was killed yesterday was a community health worker. He was working on a health project funded by the United Nations in Al-Bab, providing services for people affected by COVID-19. He leaves behind a wife and a young daughter. Two others – a driver and a co-worker – were injured in the same attack.

Nothing can justify these cowardly, indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians, and I condemn this latest attack in the strongest terms.

The United Nations has documented at least 14 cases of humanitarian workers killed in northwest Syria in the last 14 months as a result of airstrikes, shelling, car-bombs and other improvised explosive devices. With an average of one humanitarian worker killed every 30 days, this makes northwest Syria one of the most dangerous places in the world for humanitarian workers.

It cannot continue like this any longer. These killings of innocent civilians must stop. I call on the parties to the conflict and on the international community to do more to ensure the protection of all civilians in Syria, in accordance with international law. I also call on them to do more to ensure the safety and welfare of all our humanitarian colleagues, on both sides of the front-lines in Syria, so that they can continue their critical, life-saving work.