



Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen

**STATEMENT ON YEMEN**  
**HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR, JOHANNES VAN DER KLAUW**

(Amman, 9 May 2015) The conflict in Yemen is taking a dreadful toll on civilians. Since mid-March 2015, over 1,400 people have been killed and close to 6,000 people injured, roughly half of whom have been civilians. Even civilians across the border in Saudi Arabia's frontier towns have been caught up in the fighting.

The impact on civilian infrastructure across Yemen has been devastating. Many Yemenis are now deprived of access to basic services, including medical treatment, food, water and other necessities. Conflict continues to rage across the country, putting men, women and children from all of Yemen's communities at risk. Earlier this week, I made a statement on the plight of civilians in Aden.

I am deeply concerned about the impact of yesterday's airstrikes on Sa'ada, where scores of civilians were reportedly killed and thousands were forced to flee their homes after the coalition declared the entire governorate a military target. Many civilians are effectively trapped in Sa'ada as they are unable to access transport because of the fuel shortage. The targeting of an entire governorate will put countless civilians at risk. The indiscriminate bombing of populated areas, with or without prior warning, is in contravention of international humanitarian law (IHL).

Under IHL, all parties to the conflict must strive to avoid inflicting harm upon civilians, and must comply with the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. These obligations are binding on all those taking part in the hostilities, including coalition forces, the Yemeni armed forces and non-state armed groups. Issuing warnings of impending attacks does not absolve the parties of their IHL obligations to protect civilians from harm.

I call upon all parties to the conflict to observe their duty to protect civilians. I further call on parties to the conflict to avoid locating military personnel and assets in densely populated areas, thereby endangering civilians. In particular, all parties must avoid using populated areas as launching grounds for attacks.

Communities across Yemen are being impacted by the conflict and shortage of basic commodities, and we must all redouble our efforts to stop the fighting and to save lives.

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