

**HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN, JOHANNES VAN DER
KLAUW**

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN YEMEN

23 April 2015

Escalating conflict over the past four weeks has worsened an already large-scale humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The upsurge in violence has further deepened the hardships faced by ordinary Yemenis and diminished the protection of civilians. Fighting and coalition airstrikes have impacted virtually the entire country. The toll on civilians has been immense. Since 19 March 2015, conservative estimates indicate that over 1,080 people have been killed, some 4,350 people injured, and over 150,000 people displaced. It is imperative that all parties to the conflict protect civilians from the effects of the fighting in compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

The supply of food, fuel, water and electricity across the country has been disrupted. Schools, health facilities and private homes have been damaged or destroyed. An estimated two million children are unable to attend school. The country's health system is at imminent risk of collapse due to shortages of medical supplies and fuel for generators. Cases of bloody diarrhoea, measles and suspected malaria have increased.

The United Nations and partners have not been spared. In the capital, Sana'a, the offices of several UN agencies and partner organizations were damaged by explosions on 20 April, forcing at least one partner to suspend operations. In Sa'ada, another partner's warehouse was reportedly hit by an airstrike on 18 April. The evacuation of third-country nationals from Sana'a has been temporarily suspended due to insecurity.

We welcome any initiatives that seek to reduce the level of violence, notably shelling and coalition airstrikes in populated areas that harm civilians and civilian infrastructure. The country's airports and seaports constitute a lifeline given that Yemen relies on imports for 90 per cent of its food and most of its fuel. However, these lifelines have been hampered as most of Yemen's airports are not open to civilian traffic, and transports by sea are subject to the coalition's inspection regime related to the arms embargo mandated by the UN Security Council.

Humanitarian pauses are urgently needed to safely bring aid workers and supplies into the country and for the aid to reach millions of people in need. This requires the support of all parties to the conflict to facilitate the safe passage of aid and unimpeded access for

For further information, please call:

Erich Ogo, OCHA Yemen, ogoso@un.org, Tel.: +962 795 203 158
Jens Laerke, OCHA Geneva, laerke@un.org, Tel. + +41 22 917 11 42, Cell: +41 79 472 9750
OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org or www.reliefweb.int

humanitarians to affected areas in accordance with IHL. Humanitarian operations by some 90 organizations are ongoing where possible, mainly through national staff and partners, but these efforts are far from enough given that imports of commercial supplies have also been hampered, increasing the vulnerability of ordinary Yemenis. Following temporary relocations, the UN and partners are exploring ways of redeploying international staff to Yemen in the coming days to support the response.

We are grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its US\$274 million donation towards the recently issued Flash Appeal. This will enable the UN and partners to scale up life-saving assistance and protection to 7.5 million people for the next three months. But the overall humanitarian response goes far beyond the bare minimum requirements of the Flash Appeal as the conflict continues. The Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, which will be revised in the coming weeks, will require additional support for the remainder of 2015 to ensure that the entirety of needs are met and that aid organizations can directly assist all those affected, according to humanitarian principles of humanity and impartiality.

We count on the continued support of all parties to the conflict and the international community to help save and protect lives across Yemen.