

**STATEMENT OF THE YEMEN HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR,****MR. JOHANNES VAN DER KLAUW**

Sana'a, 31 March 2015.

Humanitarian partners and local residents have confirmed that air strikes bombarded Al Mazraq area of Hajjah Governorate yesterday morning, hitting a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and surrounding civilian infrastructure. According to initial reports from the World Health Organization, these strikes killed at least 29 people and injured 41 – all of whom appear to be civilians. Of the 41 people injured, 14 are children and 11 are women. Casualty figures are likely to rise as bodies are retrieved from the camp and additional injury reports are verified. Confirmed reports state that the strikes destroyed a camp management office and a bridge adjacent to one camp, as well as damaging the local market and a health facility. These sites constitute civilian infrastructure.

I deplore yesterday's attack in the strongest terms.

All parties to conflict have a legal and moral obligation to refrain from targeting civilian infrastructure of any kind, and to do everything in their power to avoid civilian casualties. I call on all parties to observe their solemn obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law at all times.

Camp residents are now reportedly fleeing for other areas. Many of these residents may have no means with which to secure alternative shelter or critical services. Local hospitals are being supported by humanitarian partners and the Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population. I salute these efforts – and all ongoing response efforts in Yemen – which are continuing under extremely difficult circumstances.

An estimated 1,100 families were living in the Al Mazraq camps before yesterday's events. These families fled a series of conflicts in Sa'ada from 2004-10 and were relying entirely on external assistance to meet their most basic needs. They are among the most vulnerable people in Yemen. With many camp residents now fleeing, they are again forced to seek refuge elsewhere, adding trauma to their already vulnerable state. In mid-March, humanitarian partners had initiated a voluntary return programme for camp-based IDPs. Unfortunately, these efforts have now come to a halt.

For further information, please contact:

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