

Statement by Mr. Yacoub El Hillo, Deputy Head of UNSMIL, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, on the recent fight escalation in and around Tripoli

TRIPOLI, 03 January 2020 - The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Mr Yacoub El-Hillo strongly condemns the intensified airstrikes and shelling in and around Libya's capital, Tripoli. "I am horrified by these senseless indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and civilian infrastructure that continue to take innocent lives", said El Hillo. Since early December 2019, at least 11 civilians have been killed and more than 40 injured. The latest escalation of fighting in Tripoli directly affects the continuation and sustainability of delivery of essential life-saving services in Abu Salim, Ain Zara, Tajoura and adjacent areas to Mitiga Airport.

Half of the health facilities in the three municipalities are estimated to be in areas of active clashes. So far, 12 health facilities have been forced to close. Another four primary health care centres in Ain Zara are in high-risk areas and about to be shut down. "More than 6,000 medical and non-medical staff continue to risk their lives to provide medical care in these three municipalities. If violence continues, at least 72,000 medical consultations per month will be stopped in 48 health care facilities", said El Hillo.

Children continue to pay the highest price in this conflict. The escalation of fighting has caused the suspension of all public and private schools in Abu Salim and Ain Zara municipalities. Over 210 schools and kindergartens are closed, denying more than 113,000 school-aged students the right to education.

The civilian part of Mitiga, which is the only gateway for in Tripoli civilians to travel abroad and access point to humanitarian and life-saving services, has been targeted several times. Today several airstrikes and rockets landed in and around its perimeter causing disturbance and suspension to the civil aviation.

"Attacks against schools, medical facilities and civilian infrastructure are a grave violation of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law and deprive the most vulnerable of their rights to education and medical care. These acts of violence against civilians, humanitarian workers and civilian infrastructure are deplorable, and I condemn them in the strongest terms", continued El Hillo.

The escalation in hostilities has further driven humanitarian needs. Basic services must be provided to all civilians who are in desperate need and whose lives are at risk. "Unimpeded, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to civilians must be guaranteed, to allow concerned authorities, United Nations and humanitarian partners provide life-saving work". "I call on all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and comply with the provisions spelt out in the Geneva Conventions – which must be fully respected and implemented in this conflict". "Those responsible for these attacks should be held accountable and end impunity for those committing war crimes and grave violations against civilian populations in Libya," concluded El Hillo.

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