STATEMENT BY DR. KEREM KINIK, PRESIDENT OF TURKISH RED CRESCENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC)

ON RECENT ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN IDLIB

31 May 2019, Ankara

Considering the recent escalation of violence in Idlib and its widespread destructive impact on more than 2.5 million civilians residing therein.

Witnessing with grave concern on its humanitarian impact causing lives of more than 160 people, injuring thousands and the displacement of more than 270,000 people only in the last month,

Deeply concerned about the strong likelihood of the ongoing violence causing more civilian casualties and further displacement of civilians,

Reminding the obligations of parties to the armed conflict and the consequences of International Humanitarian Law violations in the form of indiscriminate targeting or disproportionate use of force by those,

Noting with grave concern the impact of damaged or destroyed medical facilities on the accessibility of those in need to medical services and its hindrance on the ability of medical staff to serve those sick and wounded,

Recalling UN Security Council Resolutions of 2139 and 2165 providing humanitarian space to UN agencies and their implementing partners for cross border and cross line assistance and calling parties to the conflict to protect and facilitate the humanitarian staff and response,

Commending the efforts of all humanitarian actors on the ground working amidst unbearable difficulties and with high level of exposure to risks in order to save human life and dignity under inhumane conditions.

As an impartial and neutral humanitarian actor active on the ground assisting millions in need across all accessible locations in Syria, the Turkish Red Crescent, calls upon the states and other actors of international community to:

- Engage with all parties to the conflict, demanding respect for International Humanitarian Law and ensuring their compliance with principles and rules governing armed conflict.
- Strongly urge all parties to the armed conflict to immediately stop their violations of International Humanitarian law.
- Remind the parties to the conflict that they will certainly be held accountable for deliberate and indiscriminate targeting which result in the death of civilians and destruction of hospitals and clinics and civilian infrastructure.
- Request all parties to the conflict to establish hospitalized and neutral zones in order to more effectively protect civilians and those wounded and sick, and to ensure their access to medical care.

- Advocate for a broader humanitarian space for humanitarian agencies on the ground to enable them to sustain their life-saving activities in a neutral impartial and safe manner.

- Mobilize all resources that could be immediately available to support humanitarian agencies that is delivering assistance to those in need in an impartial manner.