

UNITED NATIONS IN SYRIA

FOUR MILLION PEOPLE IN DAMASCUS HAVE NO ACCESS TO WATER

DAMASCUS, 29 December 2016- The United Nations is alarmed that four million inhabitants in Damascus and surrounding areas have been cut off from the main water supply since 22 December.

Two primary sources of drinking water- Wadi Barada and Ain-el-Fijah-which provide clean and safe water for 70 percent of the population in and around Damascus are not functioning, due to deliberate targeting resulting in the damaged infrastructure.

While Government water authorities have initiated a programme of rationing and water distribution to address the scarcity, people around Damascus have been without access to water in their homes for more than a week and are having to purchase water from private vendors, where prices and water quality are unregulated. The UN is concerned about the lack of water which could lead to waterborne diseases, particularly among children, as well as the financial strain this is having on families.

Throughout Syria, close to 15 million people are in need of water assistance and households spend up to 25 percent of their income to meet their daily water needs.

The United Nations calls on all parties to reach peaceful agreements to alleviate the suffering of civilians, and that basic services, essential for survival, such as water supply, must be safeguarded and protected at all times.

---END---