

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, STEPHEN O'BRIEN**

STATEMENT ON SYRIA

(New York, 8 February 2016) I am gravely concerned by reports that over 30,000 civilians have been displaced from Aleppo city and other areas in northern Syria over the past week, by heavy clashes and aerial bombardment by the Government of Syria, allied forces and armed groups. About 80 per cent of them are estimated to be women and children. We have reports that civilians have been killed and injured, and that civilian infrastructure, including at least two hospitals, has been hit.

I am also extremely concerned by the situation for people in other parts of the country, including in Dar'a governorate in the south, where intensified fighting has led to the displacement of thousands of people as well as civilian deaths and injuries.

While some people are able to stay with host families or relatives, displacement camps in the areas close to the border with Turkey are already full and running above their response capacity. People urgently require shelter, food and basic household items.

I urge the Government and other parties to this conflict to hold to their obligations under international human rights and international humanitarian law to protect all civilians in Syria and allow neutral, impartial humanitarian organizations safe and unconditional access to all people in need, wherever and whenever they are.

I call on the warring parties to immediately halt all actions that might result in civilian loss of life and damage, to permit civilians to move to safer areas and to refrain from targeting medical and other civilian infrastructure.

The United Nations and humanitarian partners are working to quickly scale up response and stocks, providing newly displaced families with food assistance or cash and vouchers where feasible, as well as deploying mobile clinics, supplying health facilities and increasing water and sanitation services for new arrivals at the camps near Bab al Salameh border crossing.

At the same time agencies are working to bring household water treatment and nutrition supplies to Aleppo City as well as school-in-a-box kits for Azaz and other areas of north Aleppo governorate. USD \$10.5 million has been allocated through the Humanitarian Pooled Fund to help people affected by the conflict.