

**STATEMENT OF THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN,
JOHANNES VAN DER KLAUW, ON THE DIRE SITUATION IN TAIZZ CITY**

(Sana'a, 24 October 2015) The war in Yemen is taking a dreadful toll on civilian populations, either through the conduct of hostilities from the parties to conflict or the restrictions on commercial imports that have deprived institutions of critical supplies to provide basic services. Since escalation of conflict in March, some 2,577 civilians have been killed and a further 5,078 injured. Tattered basic services, including health services, provision of water and sanitation, are on the verge of collapse. Millions of Yemenis are in desperate need of food assistance, as well as nutritional support for their children to survive.

I am particularly concerned about the situation in Taizz. The city of Taizz has been under a virtual state of siege since the beginning of September 2015. Little, if any, commercial goods or humanitarian assistance have been able to enter the three city districts of Al Mudhafer, Al Qahirah and Al Salh. Two-thirds of the population has left the city. Some 175,000 to 200,000 men, women and children, however, still remain. They desperately need access to food, water and medical and other critical services to ensure their survival.

The residents of Taizz city remain caught between the frontlines and are subject to intermittent airstrikes and shelling. On 21 October, rockets fired into civilian areas killed at least 15 people, including one woman and two children, and injured over 70, over a dozen of them children. Residential areas, medical facilities and other civilian infrastructure have repeatedly been subjected to such attacks. Such actions are deplorable and I call once again on all parties to abide by their responsibilities to protect the lives and rights of civilians and civilian infrastructure as required under International Humanitarian Law.

For weeks, the United Nations and partners have tried to reach people in Taizz with humanitarian assistance. With the exception of limited health and water supplies, all assistance has been prevented from entering the city. The United Nations and its partners call on parties to the conflict to allow unfettered access to provide urgently needed life-saving assistance.

I salute the courageous actions of the people of Taizz who reach out and assist each other with the scarce resources left in the city. With these resources rapidly dwindling, assistance must be brought into the city - once a beacon of peace and tolerance - to lift its people out of their ordeal. In the face of the extremely dire situation in Taizz, I call on those who control access to the city to act in accordance with their responsibilities to alleviate the inhumane suffering of the population of Taizz.