



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR THE SYRIA CRISIS

**Statement by Mark Cutts, Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis,
on the attack on a camp for displaced people in Qah, northwest Syria**

Gaziantep, 21 November 2019

On 20 November missiles were fired into a crowded residential area in a displaced persons camp in Qah, Idleb governorate, in northwest Syria. According to early reports, the attack killed at least 12 people and wounded dozens, including children. Damage and destruction of camp infrastructure, including tents, was also reported. A nearby maternity hospital also sustained damage, and four humanitarian workers were reported injured.

“I am appalled by reports of this latest devastating attack on civilians in the Idleb area”, said Mark Cutts, Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis. “I find it sickening that missiles hit vulnerable civilians, including elderly people, women and children sheltering in tents and makeshift shelters in a camp for internally displaced people. This horrific incident needs to be fully investigated. These camps are places where people who have already fled violence seek safety and shelter.

International humanitarian law requires all parties to strictly distinguish between civilians and combatants and to take constant care to spare civilians in the conduct of military operations. Directing any attack on civilians is a violation of international humanitarian law,” he added.

Since late April, the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has verified over 1,000 civilian casualties in northwest Syria as a result of the hostilities, hundreds of them children. Dozens of attacks against medical facilities and staff across Syria have also been verified.

“I condemn this latest attack in the strongest possible terms. I call once again on all parties to the conflict to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law,” said Mr. Cutts.