



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

**Statement on Convoy to Urum al-Kubra, Syria**

I am disgusted and horrified by the news that a United Nations/Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy was hit this evening in Urum al-Kubra (Big Orem), northwest of Aleppo city. Initial reports indicate that many people have been killed or seriously injured, including SARC volunteers, as a result of these sickening attacks. A SARC warehouse was also hit and a SARC health clinic was also reportedly severely damaged.

I condemn what happened in Urum al-Kubra in the strongest possible terms. Notification of the convoy – which planned to reach some 78,000 people - had been provided to all parties to the conflict and the convoy was clearly marked as humanitarian. There can be no explanation or excuse, no reason or rationale for waging war on brave and selfless humanitarian workers trying to reach their fellow citizens in desperate need of assistance. Our hearts go out to the families of lost loved ones and our solidarity is with the injured.

International humanitarian law and human rights law plainly set out the basic responsibilities of warring parties to ensure the necessary protection of all humanitarian organizations, including personnel, facilities and other relief assets.

Let me be clear: if this callous attack is found to be a deliberate targeting of humanitarians, it would amount to a war crime. I call for an immediate, impartial and independent investigation into this deadly incident. The perpetrators should know that they will one day be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Despite the very difficult and dangerous conditions, humanitarian aid organizations remain committed to continuing their work and reaching all those in need, regardless of whom they are or where they live. I once again call for speedy, unconditional, and unimpeded and sustained access to the millions of people in need, particularly those in besieged and hard-to-reach areas across Syria. Now, more than ever, this horror has to be brought to an end.

New York, 19 September 2016