STATEMENT ON SYRIA

(New York, 15 March 2014): Three years after the start of Syria’s conflict, we estimate that more than 9 million people need aid and protection inside Syria and another 2.5 million have fled the country. The humanitarian consequences of the fighting are staggering and despite our best efforts, aid workers are struggling to reach everyone who needs help. An estimated 3.5 million people are living in 'hard-to-reach' areas and have received very little aid. Some 220,000 have been besieged for months, 175,000 in areas controlled by the government and 45,000 in areas controlled by opposition groups. We have not been allowed to help them and they have not been allowed out of their communities. In some areas there are reports that people have run out of food.

People in entire neighbourhoods and towns are being intimidated into submission. Children, women and men are being used as pawns by parties to the conflict in their battle for territorial advantage. After three years, the figures, although horrific, no longer have the impact they should. Well over 100,000 people have been killed. An entire generation of children has been traumatized and brutalized. Hospitals and school playgrounds have been attacked; residential neighbourhoods are flattened by barrel bombs. Our collective voice should be raised in protest at the flagrant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The international community needs to show the courage and determination to do all that is necessary to reach a political solution. Without that, we will see years more of destruction and continued brutality meted out to the people of Syria.

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coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.