(New York: 10 October, 2011): I am extremely concerned by the impact on civilians of intense fighting in and around Sirte. Thousands of people have had to flee. There is no electricity, and drinking water, food and medical supplies are running low.

I call on all parties to spare civilians from the effects of hostilities, and to comply with international humanitarian law. The sick and injured must be allowed to seek and receive medical assistance, and both civilians and captured fighters must be treated with respect, regardless of their origin or political affiliations.

Aid organizations are providing emergency medical supplies, food and water to those who have fled. However, heavy fighting prevents them from getting essential supplies to many others still inside the city. Life-saving supplies have been pre-positioned in the surrounding areas for delivery as further humanitarian access is established.