

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

STATEMENT ON UKRAINE

I am deeply concerned for the well-being of some 400,000 people on both sides of the 'contact line' in the Donetsk Oblast of eastern Ukraine who have been without access to safe drinking water for four days due to shelling of the First Lift Pumping Station of the South Donbass Water Pipeline on 11 June. The water supply to another 700,000 people is also hanging in the balance.

The conflict – now in its fourth year - is denying vulnerable people of their most basic need, water. I appeal to all parties to the conflict to immediately ensure a prolonged cessation of hostilities to allow critical repair and maintenance to restore the water supply, including the facilitation of any movements across the 'contact line'.

Emergency services and aid agencies are working together to provide water to affected communities by any means possible.

I am extremely concerned about possible outbreaks of water-borne diseases and the effect that water cuts will have on health facilities in the area. The need for urgent and permanent repairs to the pumping station is paramount.

I remind all parties to the conflict of their obligation to respect civilian areas and infrastructure and that the intentional disruption of access to sufficient quality water supply in conflict-affected areas is a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

New York, 14 June 2017