

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

STATEMENT ON IRAQ

I am extremely concerned for the safety of up to 1.5 million people living in Mosul who may be impacted by military operations to retake the city from ISIL. Families are at extreme risk of being caught in cross-fire or targeted by snipers. Tens of thousands of Iraqi girls, boys, women and men may be under siege or held as human shields. Thousands may be forcibly expelled or trapped between the fighting lines. Children, women, the elderly and disabled will be particularly vulnerable. Depending on the intensity and scope of the fighting, as many as one million people may be forced to flee their homes in a worst-case scenario.

I renew my call on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and ensure they have access to the assistance they are entitled to and deserve. Nothing is more important.

Humanitarian partners will be doing everything possible to support the people who may be displaced and affected by this military operation. Shelter is currently available for 60,000 people in camps and emergency sites. Construction of additional sites, with capacity for 250,000 people, is underway. Food rations for 220,000 families are ready for distribution, 143,000 sets of emergency household items are in stock; latrines and showers are being readied for dispatch and 240 tonnes of medication are available at distribution points.

Despite generous contributions from donor countries, funding has been insufficient to prepare fully for the worst-case scenario. With the resources available, humanitarian partners have done their best to prepare as efficiently as possible. Working under some of the most difficult and insecure conditions in the world, humanitarian partners will be doing everything possible to help as many people as possible in the days and weeks ahead.

New York, 16 October 2016

For further information, please contact:

*Russell Geekie, OCHA New York: rgeekie@un.org, +1 917 331 0393
Jens Laerke, OCHA Geneva: laerke@un.org, +41 22 917 1142, +4179 472 9750
OCHA press releases are available at www.unocha.org or www.reliefweb.int.*