

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

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN ALEPPO, SYRIA

16 April 2017

I am horrified by reports that scores of people including civilians have been killed by an explosion near their convoy during an evacuation from the besieged towns of Foah and Kefraya.

My deepest sympathies go out to the families of those killed and those injured.

The perpetrators of such a monstrous and cowardly attack displayed a shameless disregard for human life. International humanitarian law is very clear: warring parties must protect civilians and distinguish between military and civilian targets.

Humanitarian organizations, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and UN partners, are providing assistance to the injured, including transferral to hospitals.

This evacuation is part of an agreement regarding the besieged Four Towns of Foah and Kefraya in Idlib, and Madaya and Zabadani in Rural Damascus.

While the United Nations was not involved in this agreement or evacuation process, we are ready to scale up our support to evacuees. In that regard, I call on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, and to facilitate safe and unimpeded access for the UN and its partners to bring life-saving help to those in need.