

Warring parties in Yemen 'must take all feasible precautions' to minimize harm to civilians – UN envoy

21 June 2017 – Civilians in Yemen continue to be killed and injured during Ramadan, despite calls for the conflict parties to respect their obligations under international law, the senior United Nations aid official in the country warned today.

“Targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen continues during the holy month of Ramadan despite my repeated calls and the calls from the international community, including the UN Security Council, to all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws, [said](#) Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, in a press statement.

On 17 June, at least 22 civilians, including six children, were reported killed and injured in a series of air attacks on a market in Sa’ada Governorate, near the border with Saudi Arabia.

“There were no reported military targets in the proximity of the market at the time of the attack, and no warning was issued to civilians in the area,” said Mr. McGoldrick.

On 19 June, the power lines to the main water supply system in Dhamar City were damaged as a result of military activity, affecting one million people who rely on this water source and putting them at greater risk of death, given the current fast-spreading cholera outbreak in Yemen.

Following the attacks on the market in Sa’ada, the European Union and others in the international community have expressed concern over the reported deaths of civilians, noting that this is a stark reminder that Yemeni civilians are the ones bearing the brunt of a war that has devastated their country.

“The disregard for the loss of civilian lives and damage to civilian infrastructure at a time of great need, due to the combined effects of the cholera outbreak and the looming famine, continues to shock me and must end,” underscored the Humanitarian Coordinator.

“Wars have laws and I implore that all parties to the conflict uphold their responsibilities to comply with international humanitarian and human rights laws,” he continued. “The warring parties must distinguish between the civilian population and combatants at all times and between civilian objects and military objectives; and must take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects.”

Mr. McGoldrick urged those influencing and arming the parties to use their

position to end the conflict and to stop fuelling the violence.

“The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is entirely man-made and it is immoral to allow hardship and deprivation to continue. We must give hope to millions of Yemenis by showing that the world is not indifferent to their suffering,” he concluded.