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Statement by Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Ivan Šimonović, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, on the situation in Yemen

(New York, 19 September 2017) The Special Advisers to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect express concern at continued allegations of grave violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law in the context of the on-going conflict in Yemen and voiced their support for the call made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an impartial, international mechanism to investigate the facts and the circumstances.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict in Yemen. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that since March 2015, there have been 13,920 verified civilian casualties, with 5,159 civilians killed and 8,761 injured - an average of more than 110 civilians killed or injured per week. Coalition airstrikes continued to be the leading cause of civilian casualties, and child casualties, in the conflict. These include only the casualties recorded by reporting mechanisms; the true extent of casualties is almost certainly much higher. The conflict has been characterised by a disturbing pattern of apparent attacks by all parties to the conflict targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, markets and residential areas, without consideration for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

The impact of the conflict has been exacerbated by disregard for international humanitarian law. According to United Nations estimates, 17 million people are food insecure, including seven million people on the brink of famine. The unprecedented rise in the cholera epidemic has reached over 690,000 suspected cases with 2,090 associated deaths – the largest ever outbreak in a single year.

“We call on the international community – and particularly the Security Council and Human Rights Council – to take action to end the carnage and remedy this man-made crisis”.

“The international community has a moral and legal responsibility to support accountability in Yemen by immediately establishing an impartial international mechanism to comprehensively investigate allegations of serious abuses and violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict, and their allied forces with a view to ending impunity. The perpetrators must be brought to account. Justice must be served to the victims. It is incumbent on the international community to halt the suffering that is being inflicted on the Yemeni population”.

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