

Iraq's children caught in cycle of violence and poverty as conflict escalates, UNICEF warns

22 June 2017 – The past three years of intensifying conflict in Iraq have left the country's children trapped in a grinding cycle of violence and poverty, an assessment out today by the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has warned, calling on the warring parties to immediately end hostilities.

“Across Iraq, [children continue to witness sheer horror](#) and unimaginable violence,” said Peter Hawkins, the UNICEF Representative in the country, in a statement on the launch of the new assessment.

Entitled *Nowhere to Go*, the assessment underscores that more than five million children in the country are in need of urgent humanitarian aid.

“They have been killed, injured, abducted and forced to shoot and kill in one of the most brutal wars in recent history,” Mr. Hawkins emphasized.

In west Mosul, children are being deliberately targeted and killed to punish families and deter them from fleeing the violence. In less than two months, at least 23 children have been killed and 123 have been injured in that part of the city alone, according to UNICEF.

Among others, the assessment on Iraq outlines that since 2014:

- 1,075 children have been killed, 152 in the first six months of this year;
- 1,130 have been maimed and injured, 255 in the first six months of 2017; and
- More than 4,650 have been separated from their families.

In addition, over the same three-year period, there have been 138 attacks on schools and 58 on hospitals; over three million children miss school on a regular basis while 1.2 million are out of school; and one in every four children comes from a poor household.

For nearly four decades, Iraq has faced violence, war, sanctions and instability. But in the last three years alone, conflict has displaced three million people – half of them children. Many parts of the country were turned into war zones with civilian infrastructure severely damaged or destroyed. Half of all schools in Iraq are now in need of repairs.

As life opportunities for children dwindle, UNICEF continues to respond to their growing needs and those of their families.

Pointing out that all warring parties owe it to the children of Iraq to end

the violence, UNICEF is appealing for an immediate end to the conflict. The agency is also calling for all children affected by the crisis to have access to unimpeded and sustained humanitarian assistance and basic services; and for children in detention to have access to legal protection and services in line with international standards of juvenile detention.

UNICEF also requesting an end to all grave violations against children including killing, maiming and recruitment and an end to attacks on civilian infrastructure; freedom for all families to move, should they wish to flee or return to home; and increased investments to improve the quality of education, healthcare and protection services for all children.

Finally, the agency called for sustained humanitarian contributions, noting its funding gap of \$100 million for lifesaving emergency operations in Iraq and to support children returning home to resume their lives.