

[Syria: Civilians, including children, killed by airstrikes, shelling in Afrin – UN](#)

Dozens of children have been killed since fighting began in the north-western Syrian town of Afrin, where people are under bombardment, hospitals have been shut down and water supplies cut off, the United Nations have reported.

Along with Eastern Ghouta, the Kurdish-held town is among the worsening flashpoints, as the conflict in Syria enters its eighth year.

“We have been receiving [deeply alarming reports from Afrin](#) in Syria about civilian deaths and injuries due to airstrikes and ground-based strikes,” Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), told reporters in Geneva on Friday.

She said that the humanitarian situation is reportedly worsening, with Afrin Hospital, the only medical facility equipped for major operations, being inundated by the influx of injured people.

“There is also a severe water shortage due to the reported destruction of a pumping station as well as the control of other water resources by Turkish-led forces,” Ms. Shamdasani said.

She also said that reports indicate that only those civilians who have contacts within the Kurdish authority or the Kurdish armed forces have been able to leave the town.

Civilians are at risk of being killed, injured, besieged, used as human shields or displaced as a result of the fighting, she warned, reminding all parties to the conflict that they must permit civilians wishing to leave combat areas to do so in safety, and to ensure the protection of those who remain.

In New York, the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said that “reports from inside Afrin indicate that dozens of children have been killed and many more injured since the start of hostilities in the district” and “for the last 10 days, children and families have suffered severe water shortages as the source of water for Afrin city has reportedly been cut off.”

“Families are relying on untreated water and boreholes, potentially increasing the risk of waterborne diseases for about 250,000 people,” said UNICEF Communications Specialist Joe English.

He said that there is no official displacement tracking mechanism but local sources estimate around 50,000 displaced people in the city. Families are being hosted by relatives and friends, in shops, government buildings and schools.