

**P R E S S E M E L D U N G****Thousands of children in grave danger as Mosul Old City offensive begins**

An estimated 50,000 children are in grave danger as the fighting in Mosul enters what is likely to be its deadliest phase yet, warns Save the Children.

As the offensive moves into the densely populated streets of the Old City, the charity says parties to the conflict must take all feasible precautions to minimise civilian casualties, and refrain from using explosive weapons which will inevitably kill civilians, including children.

Ana Locsin, of Save the Children, says: “As the fighting gets even fiercer in the narrow old city streets, children are surrounded by danger and have nowhere to hide or escape. They are running out of food and water, and face violence wherever they turn. The impact of artillery and explosive weapons is likely to get even more deadly and indiscriminate, putting vulnerable children at greatest risk.”

Around 100,000 civilians, half of them children, are still believed to be trapped in the Old City and at risk of being used as human shields. Many families have been unable to flee due to the heavy bombing and ISIS snipers, landmines and explosives. Save the Children says safe routes out of the city for civilians must be established.

There have been widespread reports of civilian casualties since the West Mosul offensive launched in February, and nearly 700,000 people have so far fled the city. Thousands of homes and more than 700 schools are believed to have been destroyed.

Camps around Mosul are already overcrowded and struggling to keep pace with the massive scale of displacement. Save the Children is providing clean water and other life-saving aid to thousands of people in camps such as Hamam al Alil and Jed'ah, but warns that the enormous needs are now likely to grow.

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Save the Children Deutschland

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