

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Hunger and uncertainty for children in Douma, Eastern Ghouta

Berlin, 04.04.2018 As negotiations over a reconciliation deal continue in Douma, Eastern Ghouta, tens of thousands of civilians are estimated to remain in the opposition-held area. There are acute shortages of medical supplies and nutritious food in the enclave, which - according to Save the Children's partners - has left many children malnourished.

Local organisations remain on the ground going door-to-door delivering aid to basement shelters where many civilians who remain in the enclave are seeking safety. In the last week, Save the Children partners in Douma reached more than 1,000 people a day with hot meals, and provided food baskets to malnourished children. A number of humanitarian workers and medics have fled with their families already, reportedly leaving only two fully qualified doctors in the city.

Save the Children is deeply concerned about the safety and security of humanitarian workers and other civilians, both those who remain in Eastern Ghouta and those who are evacuating to other areas.

It is essential that the warring parties work with the UN and ICRC to ensure that anyone who chooses to remain is protected from renewed violence, arbitrary arrest or retaliation, and that civilians who want to leave to opposition-held areas are free to do so. Civilians must also be protected in the areas they are fleeing to. There has been a significant increase in deadly airstrikes on Idlib, where thousands of families are being evacuated to, over the last few weeks leading to the deaths of children and aid workers.

In February, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2401 calling for a 30 day nationwide cessation of hostilities - which needs to be implemented immediately to ensure aid reaches the most vulnerable.

Audio file of an employee with a Save the Children partner organisation inside Eastern Ghouta is available for download [here](#). Transcript below.

For interviews with spokespeople in Amman call Lily Partland on +44 (0) 7721 261 997 / out-of-hours call +44 (0) 7831 650 409

Voice message from Dr. Samer* who works with one of Save the Children's partner organisations in Douma. 3rd April, 2018:

00.00-00:10

Hello, how are you? I am a 29-year-old dentist from Douma city. I come from a family of seven, we were born and raised in Douma.

00:10- 00:20

The family consists of my father, mother, three brothers and one sister. I am the eldest child; my second eldest brother was killed in 2012.

00.21-00:29

And last Tuesday (27th March), less than a week ago, my other brother, who's younger than him, was killed. I now only have one brother left who's 12 years old and one sister who's 16.

00:29 00:39

I was attending university when the Syrian crisis started, so I left university and came back to my city to help the people there following the events and oppression that took place.

00:40-00:55

I worked in first-aid and in various field hospitals, and later when we became more structured, I worked in various organisations and institutions as a dentist and in administration.

00:56-01:13

With the start of the latest campaign, we formed teams for health and nutrition emergency response, consisting of around 140 members, where we visit basements and shelters and conduct surveys for malnutrition and provide nutrition baskets for malnourished children as well as pregnant and lactating women.

01:14-01:23

The teams also follow up with injured people and perform first-aid for those in basements and shelters and who are unable to reach health centres. We're trying to do our best.

01:24-01:39

The organisation works on other aspects as well such as providing hospitals and health centres with fuel and insulating these centres and hospitals to protect them from the shelling. In our last campaign, we now have a project on monitoring the local council's emergency committee's work.

01:39-01:56

We want to live with our families and friends on our land, don't allow them to force us to leave. We dream of living in a democratic and civil state, which guarantees a life of dignity for us. This is all we dream of. Don't let them force us to leave. We don't want to leave. We don't want to leave our land.

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About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We



ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.