

## **Northwest Syria: Thousands of displaced children forced to flee their homes again as violence escalates in Idlib and Aleppo**

**As a new wave of violence hits Idlib and Western Aleppo, Save the Children confirms that as many as 200,000 children and their families have been forced to abandon their homes in northern Syria over the last two months.\* According to the United Nations, 34 children – 14 girls and 20 boys – have died in the escalating violence since January 15th 2020. Throughout January at least 37,000 children have been forced to flee in the bitter Syrian winter, often taking only what they are able to carry.\*\***

*Idlib 31. January 2020* - Save the Children's partners on the ground in Idlib say the number of people they are seeing desperately fleeing may be far higher than official estimates. Most of the families have already had to leave their homes many times before. They face new risks each time and each new displacement heightens existing vulnerabilities such as medical conditions. Ten-year old Hayat\* fled the city of Ma'arat Nu'man after increasing violence and is now living in a tent in a playground used as a collective shelter in Idlib.

She said:

"They were hitting the houses, we were scared. They hit the market. We fled here and the people welcomed us into their homes."

Hayat's\* neighbour from Ma'arat Nu'man, Karim,\* also fled with the family. He told Save the Children:

"We were at our worst during our journey. We left all our things behind, we left with only the clothes we had on. "No one was taking us with them, until God sent us good people who took us from one place to another, until we finally got here. We were sitting down then saw an airstrike approaching and fell right by this camp we're staying in, it was around 200 metres away from us.

"The situation here is bad, there are no services, it's cold and the rain is flooding the tents. The children are cold and there's no heating, there's no support at all." Children in North West Syria are continuing to bear the brunt of conflict. In July 2019, more children were killed in Idlib than in the whole of 2018.

Sonia Khush, Save the Children Syria Response Director, said:

"The number of families in Idlib and Aleppo fleeing once again for their lives is enormous. We are seeing miles of convoys with vehicles stretching out of vision as people again pack up what little they can and hope that they can travel to a place of safety. Our partners tell us that the sheer scale of displacement is unlike anything they have seen before."

Save the Children is calling on all parties to stop this war on children and to respect international human rights laws and international humanitarian laws which are designed to protect children in times of conflict. Save the Children is working through partners in Idlib who are assisting with the evacuation of people from areas of conflict using the limited means available including mobile library vehicles. Save the Children and its partners are responding to the needs of displaced children and their families by providing medical assistance, food, education and child protection services. Newly-displaced families living in communities are also being supported with hygiene and food kits.

## **ENDS**

Spokespeople are available. To arrange an interview please contact:  
Joelle Bassoul in Beirut [joelle.bassoul@savethechildren.org](mailto:joelle.bassoul@savethechildren.org); Phone: 00961 81 600696

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

\*According to the United Nations OCHA, since December 1st nearly 390,000 people in North West Syria have fled from their homes - mainly from southern Idlib and western Aleppo governorates - escaping conflict by moving to urban centres and displacement camps in northwest Idlib. Save the Children estimates that at least half of the displaced population are children.

\*\*According to the United Nations OCHA, in total 315,000 people were displaced in North West Syria in December 2019 and the total number of displaced people in North West Syria for December 2019 and January 2020 is nearly 390,000 – meaning 75,000 people were displaced in January alone. Save the Children estimates that at least half of the displaced population are children.

### **Photos, interviews and broll are available here:**

<https://www.contenthubsavethechildren.org/Package/2O4C2SQODIB2>

### **Für mehr aktuelle Informationen folgen Sie uns online:**

 [savethechildren.de](http://savethechildren.de)  [@stc\\_de](https://twitter.com/stc_de)  [Save the Children Deutschland](https://www.facebook.com/Save.the.Children.Deutschland)  [savethechildren\\_de](https://www.instagram.com/savethechildren_de)