

P R E S S E M E L D U N G

## **Idlib, Syria: Casualties as ten schools hit in one day during intense shelling**

- At least ten civilians killed, including one child
- Highest number of schools attacked in single day in Idlib since at least start of 2019

*25th February 2020, Idlib* – At least one girl and nine other civilians were killed today during the shelling of ten schools, as the latest escalation in conflict continues, Save the Children and partner Hurras Network can confirm. Some schools were in class, some had broken up for the day and some were being used as shelters.

According to Hurras Network, this is the highest number of schools hit by attacks in Idlib in a single day since at least the start of 2019. Twenty-two schools have now been hit since the start of 2020 – almost half of them today.

Save the Children and Hurras Network are still receiving and verifying information on the attacks but can confirm that at least three teachers were killed. Dozens more children and at least seven teachers were injured. Most of the attacks took place during school hours.

The girl who died was killed outside her school just after she had left, and her school was also directly hit.

At one school sheltering displaced people, four people were killed and 15 injured.

Save the Children has spoken to an eyewitness to some of the attacks who said: “School hours in Idlib are ‘emergency attendance’. It usually starts at 7:30am and ends at 10:30am because of the intense shelling near Idlib and our fear of something happening in the city.

“Today around 9:00am we were shocked with sudden shelling that directly hit schools. At one school which was badly hit, many were injured, and others were killed. A science teacher was killed and six of his colleagues were injured.

“In another some students were injured. Two teachers and a student were also killed on their way back from school after school was dismissed”.

### **Sonia Khush, Save the Children’s Syria Response Director said:**

“Schools must be safe havens for children, even in a conflict zone. Today’s attacks are another sign that fighting in North West Syria has reached catastrophic levels of violence against children and civilians which go far beyond what is acceptable in conflict. Vast numbers of families have been forced from their homes many times in search of some semblance of safety and stability. And still they face daily and nightly terror as bombs rain down. Nowhere is safe, not even school.

“We call on all warring parties to ensure that children and civilians – along with the schools and hospitals they need to learn and stay alive – are off limits and protected. International humanitarian and human rights laws must be respected. There can be no excuses.”

Save the Children is calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities. All sides must respect International Humanitarian Law and protect schools, hospitals and other vital civilian infrastructure from attack. Children are particularly vulnerable to the impact of explosive weapons, and warring parties should make a particular effort to protect them.

Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle in Berlin.

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**Über Save the Children**

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in über 120 Ländern im Einsatz. Save the Children ist da für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen – seit 100 Jahren und darüber hinaus. Diese Kinder zu schützen, zu stärken und zu fördern ist das zentrale Anliegen der Organisation. Die Schwerpunkte der Arbeit liegen in den Bereichen Schule und Bildung, Schutz vor Ausbeutung und Gewalt sowie Überleben und Gesundheit. Save the Children setzt sich ein für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen können.