

P R E S S E S T A T E M E N T

One child killed or maimed every 5 hours over 20 years of war in Afghanistan – SAVE THE CHILDREN

KABUL, 31 August 2021 – Almost 33,000 children have been killed and maimed in Afghanistan over the past 20 years, an average of one child every five hours, Save the Children said as the last of the international military forces pulled out of Kabul on Tuesday.

The aid organisation said the numbers were a devastating insight into the deadly cost of war on children.

The real number of direct child-casualties of the conflict will likely be much higher than the estimated 32,945^[1], and this number does not include children who have died due to hunger, poverty and disease in that time, according to Save the Children.

Even before the recent escalation in violence, nearly half of the population of Afghanistan – including nearly 10 million children – were in need of humanitarian assistance with drought, a third wave of COVID-19 as well as conflict driving the country even deeper into crisis. Half of all children aged under five were expected to suffer from acute malnutrition this year.

Hassan Noor, Asia Regional Director for Save the Children, said:

“As the last military planes fly out of Kabul today it is a sad truth that, along with the planes, the international coverage, attention and support Afghanistan has received over the past few weeks are also likely to depart. But while the rest of world moves on, millions of Afghan children will go to bed tonight hungry, grieving and unsure of what their futures hold.

“What remains after 20 years is a generation of children whose entire lives have been blighted by the misery and impact of war. The magnitude of human suffering of the past two decades is beyond comprehension.

“Every single child born and raised in Afghanistan has known nothing but conflict, and lived in the certainty that explosives could go off at any moment, or bombs could fall out of the sky. They have seen siblings succumb to hunger, poverty or disease. As we speak, thousands of families who have been forced to flee their homes are living outside in the open with not even a blanket to protect them from the bitter winter ahead. A nightmare scenario is unfolding before our very eyes.

“The military has left, but we urgently call on the international community to stay and support the children of Afghanistan. With food, clean water, shelter, with education – if this doesn’t happen, the efforts of the last 20 years will truly have been in vain.

“We urge the international community to keep supporting the work of national and international NGO’s in their vital work to reach the most vulnerable – including the tens of thousands of families that have left Afghanistan. And we urge the new authorities to grant humanitarian organisations safe, unfettered and unconditional access to those most in need

as soon as possible. Children and their families in Afghanistan are facing a drought, COVID-19 and a harsh winter – there is no time to wait.”

Save the Children is an independent, impartial, and politically neutral organisation that has worked in Afghanistan since 1976 to deliver lifesaving services to children and their families across the country but has had to temporarily suspended services. The organisation provided health, education, child protection, nutrition, and livelihoods services, reaching over 1.6 million Afghans in 2020.

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^[1] Based on data from the UN, Save the Children found some 32,945 children were killed or maimed between 2005 and mid-2021. Between the start of 2020 and mid-2021, there were 4,301 child casualties, including 806 children who died in the violence).

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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 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.