

PRESSEMITTEILUNG

Children dying from starvation in Kabul as ‘unprecedented’ food crisis leaves almost 14 million Afghan children hungry

Kabul, 25 October 2021 – More children in Afghanistan are going hungry than ever before, [according to UN data](#) analysed by Save the Children, with 22.8 million people – including almost 14m children – expected to face crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity this winter.

More than 5 million children are now just one step away from famine, putting millions of young lives at risk as the country faces its worst ever food crisis since records began.

Yesterday it was reported that [eight children from the same family died of starvation](#) in Kabul after losing both of their parents. The siblings - four boys and four girls - were aged between just 18 months and eight years old.

The data projects an alarming 35% increase in the number of people facing crisis or emergency levels of hunger compared with the same season last year.

The triple impacts of drought, conflict and economic collapse have pushed many families into dangerous territory, Save the Children warned. It said families were taking desperate measures to survive – selling what little they have to buy food, sending their children to work or getting by on bread alone.

Food price hikes have seen the cost of food items like oil, wheat and rice soar by up to 55% in the past year, pushing food out of reach for many families who are living on next to nothing after being displaced from their homes or losing their incomes.

Zarghuna*, 35, and her husband have six children aged between one and 15 years old. Her family received life-saving nutrition services from Save the Children. She said:

“Our situation is not good so we have to rely on aid these days. A few days ago we received a sack of flour and we have started to eat that. Everything has become expensive. We cannot buy flour and oil anymore because the price is too high.

“Since food started getting expensive, we have only been able to eat once a day. We just have dinner in the evening. Sometimes we don’t even have that and we go to sleep without eating anything. In the morning we just have tea. Me and my husband can go hungry but we are worried about our children – they cry because they are hungry and that is so difficult,”

Zarghuna’s eight-year-old son, Abdullah*, said:

“We have bread and sometimes rice, but never meat and fruit. We have so much less food than before and it makes me worried. Sometimes, when we don’t have food I go to sleep without eating anything.”

Gul Pari*, 35, is a mother to four children – a nine-year-old son, and three daughters aged four, seven and eight. Her husband, a labourer, is unable to find work. She said:

“I wish my husband could find work so we had food for our children. We have had to reduce the number of meals we eat, and we only eat bread most of the time. When the children cry because they’re hungry I try to find some rice to give them. Otherwise I find one or two potatoes to boil.”

Even before the recent political turmoil, Afghanistan had the second-highest number of people facing emergency levels of hunger in the world. Half of all children aged under five were expected to suffer from acute malnutrition this year and require specialised treatment to survive.

Chris Nyamandi, Country Director of Save the Children in Afghanistan, said:

“It seems there is no end to the agony for Afghan children. After decades of war and suffering, they now face the worst hunger crisis in their country’s history.

“The situation is already desperate – we see young children in our clinics every day who are wasted from severe malnutrition because they have nothing but scraps of bread to eat. But when winter sets in we’re going to see more children going hungry than ever before.

“Afghan children need the world’s help if they are going to have even a fighting chance of surviving this crisis. We will continue doing everything we can to get them the life-saving services they need, but for aid efforts to continue we urgently need governments to step up with more aid to the country.”

Save the Children’s health teams in Afghanistan are delivering lifesaving health and nutrition services for children and pregnant and nursing mothers suffering from acute and severe malnutrition. The agency is also providing counselling on recommended feeding practices to protect, promote and support breastfeeding and complementary feeding, and providing children diverse and nutritious diets. In September, Save the Children teams provided health and nutrition services to a total of 3,527 people, including 978 children.

*Names have been changed

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The [Integrated Phase Classification](#) (IPC) is an internationally recognised famine early-warning system, based on a scale from one (minimal food stress) to five (catastrophe/famine).
- 22.8m people (13.7m children) are facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above between November 2021 and March 2022, according to the IPC report.
- 8.7m people (5.2m children) are facing IPC 4.

Bei Interviewwünschen oder weiteren Anfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle.

Kontakt:

Save the Children Deutschland e.V.
Pressestelle – Claudia Kepp
Tel.: +49 (0)170 – 7858 935
Mail: Claudia.Kepp@savethechildren.de

Für mehr aktuelle Informationen folgen Sie uns online:

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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 rund 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.