

## P R E S S E M I T T E I L U N G

### **Calls for civilians to be protected as two children killed while fleeing Irpin, Ukraine**

*Kyiv, 7 March 2022* – Save the Children is outraged at the deaths of eight people, including a woman and her two children, killed in a mortar shell attack on Sunday as they tried to flee the town of Irpin on the outskirts of Kyiv. The children – a teenage boy and primary school age girl – had been gathered with their mother and other civilians near a bridge, and were caught in the open by the mortar shells.

All children in Ukraine – at least 7.5 million under 18-year-olds – are in grave danger of physical harm, severe emotional distress, and displacement, following the breakout of large-scale conflict.

Explosions and street fighting are ramping up in cities across the country including the capital Kyiv, forcing children and families into freezing basements and bomb shelters, some without power or heating. Parents are trying to calm terrified children.

**Irina Saghoyan, Save the Children’s Eastern Europe Director, said:**

*“Save the Children is deeply saddened by the attack on Sunday that killed two children along with their mother and five other civilians. These senseless deaths are the brutal cost of the conflict – it’s the most innocent that pay the highest price. Already dozens of children have been killed in this conflict. More have lost parents and loved ones. We mourn deeply for these lives that didn’t have a chance to be fully lived.*

*“For the children who witnessed this incident, without support, their suffering may last for years. They may struggle with anxiety and depression, or have nightmares, re-living the horror of the experience.*

*“Children must be protected from attacks. All must respect international humanitarian and human rights laws and take all necessary actions to minimise civilian harm. Perpetrators of crimes against children – including children caught in the crossfire – must be held to account and brought to justice. Impunity for violations of children’s rights feed into the narrative that these crimes are tolerable, and we cannot accept a world where that is the reality.”*

While hostilities continue, Save the Children is gravely concerned that children will continue to have their rights violated, be caught up in the fighting, separated from their families, and exposed to trauma, violence, abuse and exploitation.

Save the Children has been operating in eastern Ukraine since 2014. Throughout the 8-year conflict, we have been delivering essential humanitarian aid to children and their families, including distributing winter kits and hygiene kits, providing cash grants to families so they can meet basic needs such as food, rent and medicines, or so they can invest in starting new businesses. Our specialist support children in having access to safe, inclusive, quality education and are working with schools and community centres to help children overcome the mental and psychological impacts of their experiences of conflict and violence and increase their resilience and ability to cope with stresses in their daily lives.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- Save the Children has been operating in Ukraine since 2014, delivering essential humanitarian aid to children and their families. This includes supporting their access to education, providing psychosocial support, distributing winter kits and hygiene kits, and providing cash grants to families so they can meet basic needs such as food, rent and medicines, or so they can invest in new businesses.
- We now have a team in Poland, coordinating with local partners to assess the situation and respond to needs as quickly as we can. In Romania, Save the Children staff and volunteers continue to help refugees arriving from Ukraine at the border and in reception centres with provision of basic non-food items and other outreach services.
- For many years now, Save the Children has been working with refugee and migrant children inside and outside of Europe, aiming to support vulnerable children with the greatest needs. We run reception centres providing child friendly activities and work on informing children about their rights in Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy and Norway. In Italy, we also support relocation efforts, train temporary legal guardians who assist children during their asylum procedures, and work with UN agencies to ensure unaccompanied migrant children are protected.

### **Unterstützen Sie Kinder in der Ukraine mit Ihrer Spende:**

Save the Children

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Stichwort „Spendenaufruf Ukraine“

[www.savethechildren.de/spenden/ukraine](http://www.savethechildren.de/spenden/ukraine)

### **Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle.**

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### **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.