

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

### **Sudan: Calls to protect children in Khartoum as fighting spreads**

*Khartoum, 16. April 2023* – As fighting spread to residential areas of Khartoum on Sunday, Save the Children called on all parties not to target areas where children are living or schools and health centres where they could be sheltering.

With unconfirmed media reports of more than 56 civilian deaths and up to 600 casualties as fighting spread across the city, Khartoum was paralysed with all airports closed. Schools did not open on Sunday as usual with families seeking safety off the streets. It is not yet known if any children are among the casualties.

The eruption of fighting comes as Sudan is facing its worst ever humanitarian crisis with conflict, natural disasters, disease outbreaks and economic degradation resulting in 15.8 million people – about a third of the population and more than half of them children – needing humanitarian support.

Save the Children's acting Advocacy Communications Campaigns and Media director, Katharina von Schroeder was with her 8-year-old son in a school in Khartoum on Saturday morning with nine other parents and 11 children when fighting broke out. They have been unable to leave the school since and slept overnight in the sports hall on gym mats.

"The explosions have not stopped since Saturday morning. We are trying our best to shield the children from the events, but they are starting to worry. In the morning, we heard heavy shelling and explosions nearby and we sheltered for some time in the basement. Afterwards, we found two stray rifle bullets outside," she said.

"It is still very early to predict how the situation will evolve, but the conflict will exacerbate an already dire situation in the country. Children in Sudan have already been exposed to the consequences of conflict and climate change for years now, and we are deeply concerned about this uptick in violence."

#### **Save the Children's Country Director in Sudan, Arshad Malik, said:**

"While fighting is ongoing, there are international legal obligations to take all necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, which are protected under International Humanitarian Law. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas should also be avoided as it risks severe harm to civilians, in particular children.

"We call on all parties to the violence to halt the fighting immediately, before more lives are lost."

Save the Children has worked in Sudan since 1983 to provide humanitarian relief to people affected by the drought in western Sudan. Since then, Save the Children continued programming for children and families affected by conflict, displacement, extreme poverty, hunger and a lack of basic services. Many of the children and families we serve are among the most vulnerable and hardest to reach.

In 2022, Save the Children directly reached 2.1 million people, with 1.5 million of them children, with programming focused on child protection, access to quality education, health and nutrition support and responding to emergencies.

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**Kontakt:**

Save the Children Deutschland e.V.  
Pressestelle – Susanne Sawadogo  
Tel.: +49 (0)30 – 27 59 59 79 – 120  
Mail: [susanne.sawadogo@savethechildren.de](mailto:susanne.sawadogo@savethechildren.de)

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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, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben sowie frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.