



Syria: A Children's Protection Crisis

Child Protection Programming's Essential Role in Child Safety and Survival

URGENT Funding Alert

The protracted conflict - which is accompanied by persistent, serious violations of human rights and a worsening of the humanitarian situation - is having disastrous effects on the safety and wellbeing of girls and boys across Syria. Almost **3 million** children have never known anything but war in their short lives. **5.8 million** boys and girls in Syria are in need humanitarian assistance and protection, with nearly **7 million** living in poverty and **2.7 million** children are internally displaced.¹

The 2017 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan requests \$76 million USD for child protection interventions for 900,000 children. As of May 2017, only 7 million has so far been received.²

Children across Syria live in daily fear of mortar shells, airstrikes or bullets. International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law continues to be breached, with persistent use of explosive weapons in populated areas resulting in countless deaths and injuries, and massive destruction of essential civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, playgrounds, and homes. Children are at risk of harassment, abduction, arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and ill treatment. In addition to other protection risks and violations they experience on a daily basis including recruitment and use in the conflict, engagement in the worst forms of child labour, family separation, physical and sexual violence, and lack of birth certificates, and profound psychosocial distress. All of this against a backdrop of continuous displacement, deepening poverty, and the persistent lack of access to even the most basic necessities.

Violations of children's right to protection have **life-threatening, immediate impacts**. Some effects may only be seen in the long term, yet are no less significant and detrimental for children, families and societies as whole, and may exacerbate and maintain conflict, perpetuate cycles of poverty, violence and community instability.³

There is an urgent need to expand and strengthen Child Protection programming to address these challenges and ultimately save lives. Without the ongoing investment from donors we risk losing a generation of children:

- ❖ **800,000 children and caregivers** will not receive access to psychosocial support and child protection programmes needed to reduce the risk that **short-term distress** leads to **longer-term mental health and protection concerns**.

Centre and mobile services provide essential psychosocial support to children and their caregivers to provide a sense of normality, stability and structure to children to reduce the risk that short-term distress leads to longer term concerns, and assist child protection actors in identifying and supporting children in need of more specialised child protection interventions, for example high risk cases such as unaccompanied and separated children.

¹ All figures in this paragraph are from 2017 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview, available at <http://hno-syria.org/#home>

² Source: FTS (June 2017). Not all CP funding can be tracked in FTS as some organisations implementing CP activities do not have dedicated CP project sheets in OPS. Figure should be viewed as approximate.

³ Global Child Protection Working Group, A Matter of Life or Death: Child Protection Programming's Essential Role in Ensuring Child Wellbeing and Survivor During and After Emergencies



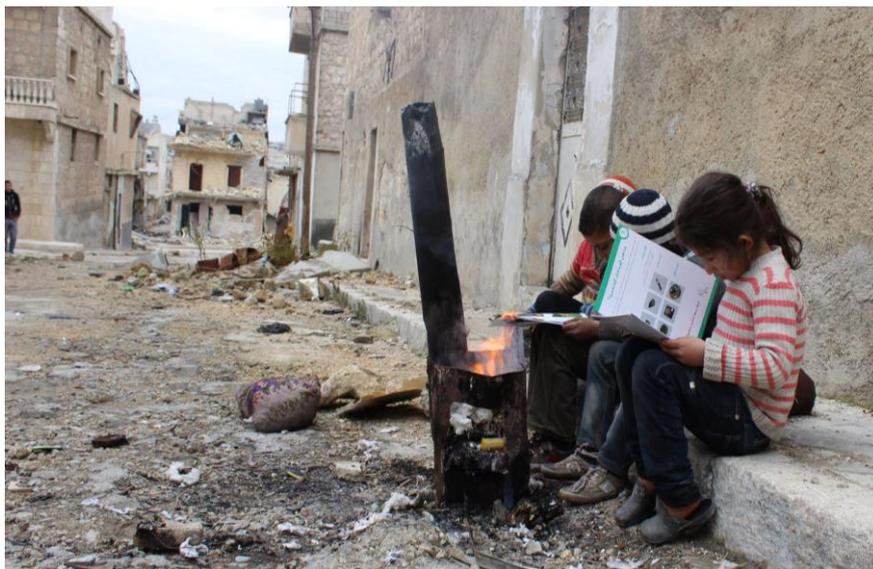
- ❖ **30,000 child survivors** of protection concerns will not receive individual support to cope and recover from their experiences, and will be at **significantly higher risk of death or serious injury**.⁴

The delivery of specialised services, including case management, addresses the specific protection needs of children who are survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation. This includes services for high risk cases, such as unaccompanied and separated children, child labourers, children associated with armed groups and armed forces, children deprived of their liberty and other at-risk children.

- ❖ **1.3 million children** will not gain the knowledge and skills needed to **prevent death and injury** caused by explosive hazards and other child protection concerns.

Mine/explosive remnants of war risk education and safety messaging through schools and community-based activities is an essential element of the child protection response to generate behaviour changes that minimise death and injuries posed by explosive weapons.

With the funding appealed for in 2017 HRP, the Child Protection Area of Responsibility could sustain current interventions in 102 sub-districts and expand child protection services to other areas where critical protection needs are not being met.



***Who are we?** Child Protection Area of Responsibility is comprised of over 60 partners including UN agencies, INGOs, Syrian NGOs and SARC. Together we are working to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation through strengthening community-based child protection programming, including psychosocial support; through providing specialised child protection services to child survivors; and strengthening the capacity of frontline workers and volunteers to respond to child protection issues.*

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⁴ Global Child Protection Working Group, A Matter of Life or Death: Child Protection Programming's Essential Role in Ensuring Child Wellbeing and Survivor During and After Emergencies