

UNICEF: More than 200,000 Children in Homs, Syria Need Urgent Humanitarian Assistance

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NEW YORK (February 1, 2013) — A United Nations joint mission to the western Syrian governorate of Homs, in which UNICEF took part, found that 420,000 people need immediate humanitarian assistance. Half of this population is children.

The month-long mission, which just ended, found that about 700,000 people across the governorate have been severely affected by the current conflict, including some 635,000 people displaced from their homes.

“Children are the worst affected,” says UNICEF Emergency Specialist Mark Choonoo, who was on the mission. “Most children I saw were showing signs of distress. It is extremely important that we reach as many of these children as possible with the support they need to cope with their traumatic experiences.”

UNICEF assistance in the governorate of Homs has included the distribution of blankets, quilts, family hygiene kits and children’s clothes, as well as the provision of remedial education.

Out of 1,500 schools in Homs, an estimated 200 have been damaged as a result of the fighting; another 65 are sheltering children and families. This has direct implications on students’ attendance and on the quality of education.

On the last day of the mission, UNICEF visited Talbiseh, a town situated about 20 miles north of the city of Homs, which has experienced heavy fighting in the past year.

In Talbiseh UNICEF has provided 1,000 quilts, 1,000 hygiene kits and 2,000 clothing kits for children. Additional priorities include providing children with psychological support, increasing learning opportunities and rehabilitating the water network.

UNICEF recently appealed for \$68.5 million to carry out lifesaving programs inside Syria during the first six months of 2013. Only a fraction of the funds—just over \$8 million—has been received so far.

How to help: For more information or to make a tax-deductible contribution to UNICEF’s relief efforts, please contact the U.S. Fund for UNICEF:

Website: www.unicefusa.org/syria

Toll free: 1-800-FOR-KIDS

Mail: 125 Maiden Lane, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10038

As with any emergency, in the event that donations exceed anticipated needs, the U.S. Fund will redirect any excess funds to children in greatest need.

About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in 190 countries and territories to save and improve children's lives, providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when ZERO children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.

For additional information, please contact:

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