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18 Years Of Conflict: Every single Afghan child affected by war

As of today, every single child born and raised in Afghanistan has experienced war and conflict in their country, Save the Children said in statement today. October 7th marks 18 years since the start of the conflict between the coalition forces and the Taliban. An estimated 20 million children[i] wake up every day in fear of gunshots or bombs and being killed or maimed in their streets, schools or homes.

- Over 12,500 children were killed or maimed in the violence between 2015 and 2018, 274 children were recruited for combat or support roles[ii]

- More than 3.7 million children are currently out of school, 60 percent of them girls[iii]
- At least 700 schools are closed because of the violence in 2018[iv].
- 3,8 million children need humanitarian assistance, 600,000 of whom are suffering with severe acute malnutrition[v]
- Between 2014 and 2018, over 8,000 civilians fell victim to explosives such as IED's and mines. 84 percent of the victims of explosive remnants of war are children.
- 280,000 people fled their homes this year, more than half of them are children[vi]

Onno van Manen, country director of Save the Children in Afghanistan:

"Imagine turning 18 having known nothing but conflict and war throughout your entire childhood and formative years. Life in Afghanistan means living in daily fear of explosions, missing school because it's too unsafe and not knowing if your parents or siblings will make it home. Violence has been consistently high in recent months. In August alone, an average of 74 people were killed every day[vii].

Our staff talk to children who are out of school, working in the streets to try to help their families make ends meet, many of whom have been displaced by the conflict. Children with deep mental scars as they have lost loved ones or because they have seen terrible thing no child should witness.

It is concerning to see that children are accustomed to these levels of violence. Children are remarkably resilient, but no child should consider the sound of explosions or attack helicopters normal. Children in Afghanistan need to be protected and feel safe to go to school and work towards a future.

This day marks not one, but several generations losing out on their childhoods. For the sake of all Afghan children and the future of Afghanistan, the warring parties must do everything in their power to stop killing and maiming children during this terrible conflict and adhere to international laws and standards. That includes making sure schools and hospitals are not targets.

It's time to stop this war on children. If international humanitarian laws are breached children suffer from it, there needs to be an independent investigation with the aim of holding perpetrators to account. The international community must not forget these children, who are in dire need of physical and psychological support to recover and educational support to rebuild their lives. They have the right to do so in safety without fear of further harm.'

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- In 2018 alone, Save the Children reached some 600,000 children directly. The services included providing primary health support, nutrition and care services to around 115,000 people, among whom were over 20,000 children who were screened on malnutrition.
- Save the Children focusses on health and nutrition, education and child protection for the most vulnerable, giving thousands of children better access to child protection services when they fell victim of child abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation.

[i] See https://www.unfpa.org/data/AF – the population pyramid amounts to 20,668,000 0-19s in 2019. The difference in population between 18-19 years appears to be around 700,000-800,000.

[ii]https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/727&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

[iii]https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education

[iv]https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-eiewg-schools-closed-due-insecurity-afghanistan-january-december-2018

[v]https://m.reliefweb.int/report/2972998

[vi]https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/afg_population_mo

vement_snapshot_20190915.pdf

[vii]https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-49662640

Best,

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