

Media Release

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SYRIA: URGENT HUMANITARIAN ACCESS NEEDED TO FAMILIES DISPLACED BY FIGHTING IN DERA'A

Save the Children is calling for a ceasefire and urgent humanitarian access to children displaced by fighting in Dera'a in Southwestern Syria. Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced to Quneitra on the border with the Occupied Golan Heights and parts of Western Dera'a under the blazing summer heat.

The humanitarian needs among displaced communities are huge. There's a critical shortage of tents and mattresses, clean water, food and medical care. Amid temperatures of up to 45 degrees several children are reported to have died from dehydration, heatstroke and scorpion bites, according to the UN.

Currently, no cross-border humanitarian access is possible from either Jordan or Israel, and no aid has been able to reach these areas from other parts of Syria. Syrian humanitarian workers who were displaced themselves are doing everything they can to provide life-saving support, but with are struggling with limited supplies and insecurity.

Save the Children's partners are still responding in parts of Western Dera'a and the organisation is scaling up a short-term emergency response in Quneitra, providing relief supplies and psychosocial support, nutrition and informal education for children.

Caroline Anning, Save the Children's Syria Advocacy Manager, said:

"The displacement created by the violence in Dera'a in the last few weeks is the highest we've seen in a short space of time since the war started more than seven years ago. Children are still trapped in areas with heavy fighting, and tens of thousands of displaced families need urgent life-saving support.

"Tens of thousands of displaced families are scattered on in remote border areas where there are barely even trees to protect them from the blazing sun. Save the Children partners distributing emergency relief supplies and tell us the situation is dire, with frustrated parents struggling to cope. There are no tents, toilets or running water and everyone is exhausted, both physically and mentally. Many children are showing symptoms of heat stroke, and people are getting sick from being forced to drink dirty water from irrigation pipes."

"It is vital that parties to the conflict and neighbouring states facilitate access to humanitarian aid across borders and across frontlines, commit to protect civilians and humanitarian workers, and stop devastating attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure such as schools and hospitals."

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About Save the Children

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In New Zealand and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to

respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

Save the Children have spokespeople available for interview in Amman and London please contact:
Ally Clelland, Communications Specialist, Save the Children NZ, phone 022 531 9514 or email
ally.clelland@scnz.org.nz