



Ten years of war in Syria, more than half of children continue to be deprived of education

Joint Statement on International Day of Education

By Muhannad Hadi, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis and Ted Chaiban UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

AMMAN, 24 January 2021- “Children in Syria continue to bear the brunt of the crisis that will be marked by a grim milestone of ten years in March this year. The education system in Syria is overstretched, underfunded, fragmented and unable to provide safe, equitable and sustained services to millions of children.

“Inside Syria, there are over 2.4 million children out of school, nearly 40 per cent are girls. This number has likely increased in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated the disruption to education in Syria. One in three schools inside Syria can no longer be used because they were destroyed, damaged or are being used for military purposes. Children who are able to attend school often learn in overcrowded classrooms, and in buildings with insufficient water and sanitation facilities, electricity, heating or ventilation.

“The UN is able to confirm nearly 700 attacks on education facilities and personnel in Syria since the verification of grave violations against children began. Last year, 52 attacks were confirmed.

“While the war continues, education remains the beacon for millions of children. It is a right that should be protected and persevered. We call upon those fighting to refrain from attacks on education facilities and personnel across Syria.

“We continue to support education in Syria through a wide network of partners, but funds are running low. The education sector is chronically underfunded. Last year, our joint appeal for education received only one third of the original requirements. Sustainable and long-term funding to education will help to bridge the gap and incorporate children in education and provide them with the skills they need to rebuild their country when peace returns to Syria”.

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For further information, please contact:

Juliette Touma, UNICEF Regional Office, jtouma@unicef.org, +962-79-867-4628

Torsten Flyng, Strategic Communications Officer OCHA Regional Office for the Syrian Crisis, torsten.flyng@un.org
+962 7 9867 4195