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UNICEF: 14 Million Children Affected by Conflict in Syria and Iraq

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As the conflict in Syria enters its fifth year, the condition of more than 5.6 million children inside the country reaches “the most desperate,” according to a UNICEF statement published on its official website on Thursday.

Up to 2 million children living in conflict areas are largely cut off from humanitarian assistance due to fighting or other factors, according to the same source.

The statement added that around 2.6 million Syrian children “are still out of school,” while another almost 2 million Syrian children are living as refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and other countries.

“This is in addition to the 3.6 million children from vulnerable communities hosting refugees, who themselves are suffering due to the strain on services like education and health,” added the statement.

UNICEF went on to say that “the increasingly interlinked” crisis in Iraq has forced more than 2.8 million children from their homes, and left many others trapped in areas “controlled by armed groups.”

“For the youngest children, this crisis is all they have ever known. For adolescents entering their formative years, violence and suffering have not only scarred their past; they are shaping their futures,” UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake lamented.

“As the crisis enters its fifth year, this generation of young people is still in danger of being lost to a cycle of violence – replicating in the next generation what they suffered on their own,” Lake added.

At the same time, UNICEF underlined some positive examples of children and young people who continue to demonstrate perseverance against all odds, such as Alaa, a 16-year-old Syrian boy who fled his home in Homs to continue his studies while providing training courses for other children.

UNICEF also related the story of 10-year-old Christina, who lives in a shelter in the northern Iraq and helps younger children with their lessons.

In order to build a more stable future and meet the needs of children, UNICEF seeks opportunities for children to continue their education.

The UN fund also urges countries hosting Syrian refugees to improve their psychological assistance and support for children.

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