



News note

UNICEF concerned about impact of Libya hostilities on children

AMMAN, 5 April 2011 – UNICEF expressed deep concern today at the continuing hostilities in Libya and their impact on children.

“The current fighting in Libya is putting children at high risk,” said Shahida Azfar, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa. “Their right to education, play, health and even survival are under serious threat.”

Schools have reportedly been closed for over six weeks, depriving children of learning and affecting their well-being.

Thousands of people in the conflict areas have been displaced from their homes. In Ajdabyia alone, over 27,000 people are reported to have fled the fighting to neighbouring towns. While most of them moved in with relatives or host families, others are currently accommodated in temporary facilities including schools.

There are concerns that civilians affected by the violence are experiencing shortages of food and have limited access to basic services.

The situation of migrant workers remains precarious. The number of workers and their families who have fled to neighbouring countries is increasing. There are currently 650 children in the transit camps in southern Tunisia and 450 in the Salloum border crossing in Egypt. Only two weeks ago, there were only 120 children on the Tunisian side of the border and 80 on the Egyptian side.

UNICEF is providing humanitarian assistance to the populations stranded at the border in the areas of water, sanitation, hygiene, health, psychosocial support and early childhood development.

In Libya, working with partners on the ground, UNICEF has distributed emergency health kits which contain enough drugs, medical supplies and basic medical equipment to cover the needs of 60,000 persons.

Additional UNICEF supplies are also available on the Tunisian and Egyptian borders to meet the increasing humanitarian needs inside Libya

UNICEF will need \$13 million to respond to the Libya crisis. Of this amount, only \$2.6 million has been received so far.

“UNICEF urges all our donors to help us make sure that children affected by the situation in Libya receive all the support they deserve,” Azfar said.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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