
DISPLACED CHILDREN AT RISK IN IRAQ

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The U.N. children organization said it is racing against time to try and protect more than 150,000 internally displaced children in Iraq whose lives are threatened by freezing temperatures and floods across the country.

The devastating floods have made this winter even more difficult for displaced children who are extremely vulnerable to hypothermia and respiratory diseases. No child should be subjected to such risks, Peter Hawkins, UNICEF representative in Iraq, said.

Most displaced families live in poverty and are unable to afford fuel for heating or warm clothes for their children. In the north, where a majority of Yazidi and other displaced children live, temperatures can fall below zero during the winter months. Forced to live in dilapidated housing or camps, UNICEF says they have little to protect them from exposure.

As part of its winter campaign, UNICEF hopes to provide warm clothes to approximately 161,000 children living in camps and in hard-to-reach areas, including Sinjar, Irbil, Basra and Baghdad. The UNICEF statement released Monday marks both International Day for Human Rights and the anniversary of the defeat of Daesh (ISIS) in Iraq.

As the world celebrates Nadia Murads incredible story of survival and her work for human rights, let us remember that there are many vulnerable children in Iraq who still need our support, even if the worse of the violence may be over, Hawkins said.

Murad, a Yazidi woman who was taken hostage by Daesh in 2014 but escaped, was the first Iraqi to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in October alongside Congolese Dr. Denis Mukwege for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

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