



**'I WANT TO GO HOME,
BUT I AM AFRAID'**

THE IMPACT OF WAR ON MOSUL'S CHILDREN

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH



WAR
child

ACRONYMS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 03

SUMMARY 04

MAPS 07

LIFE UNDER ISIS 08

LIFE AFTER LIBERATION 13

I - CHILD PROTECTION 15

II - EDUCATION 20

**III - EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION AND
PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING 23**

CONCLUSION 26

CFS	Child Friendly Spaces
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EiE	Education in Emergencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PSS	Psychosocial support
TLS	Temporary Learning Space
WASH	Water supply, sanitation and hygiene

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

War Child would like to thank the children, families and NGO staff in Hammam Al Alil camp for their cooperation in the creation of this report. We would also like to thank numerous international NGO and UN staff who gave their time to be interviewed.

To protect the identities of those who participated in this research, all names have been changed and specific locations withheld.



In early July 2017, the coalition¹ military offensive to oust so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) from Mosul reached its grisly climax. Civilians have borne the brunt of this conflict, with half a million school-aged children amongst the displaced.² Amid the horror of the ISIS occupation of Iraq's cities and villages, it is comforting to believe that once the group has been defeated militarily, normality will return and traumas inflicted will quickly recede. Yet in the medium to long-term, the suffering of Mosul's children looks set to continue. This report seeks to highlight the immediate and ongoing needs of children affected by the conflict in Mosul and Ninewa Governorate.

Hundreds of thousands of children have spent up to three years trapped under ISIS control and endured deeply traumatising experiences. Children have been forced to witness executions and the murder of their friends and family. Their education has been disrupted and replaced with exposure to a warped and violent ideology. It is hard to truly appreciate the harm these experiences will have had on these children – but what is clear is the need for dedicated and prolonged support for the harm to be addressed.

Though the fighting has wound down, counter-insurgency to root out ISIS members who fled Mosul continues. We have learnt of boys accused of ISIS membership being detained and ostracised from their communities, and of families being collectively punished for having a family member in ISIS.³ It is clear that the impact of injustices committed against these children will continue to ripple out across their lives, leaving them vulnerable to further discrimination, marginalisation and trauma. Furthermore, these crimes, and the brutalisation children have experienced, could contribute to a cycle of violence that will create a new generation of marginalised young adults vulnerable to the appeal of extremist ideologies.

Humanitarian organisations, including War Child UK, have been delivering services to children close to the front line of the fighting. Many agencies report that with the liberation of cities such as Ramadi and Fallujah, humanitarian funding has quickly dried up as donors shift their focus to the next hotspot in the conflict. The UN humanitarian appeal for Iraq is currently 45% funded, with education having received only 33% funding.⁴ The offensive against ISIS and associated humanitarian response will last at least until the end of the year. The funding previously pledged must be disbursed as soon as possible. Donors must also make further multi-year commitments to bridge existing and future gaps in funding for humanitarian response and stabilisation efforts. This will give humanitarian actors the opportunity to adapt their response plans so as to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.⁵

Children have a long road of recovery ahead on which they will need to **be protected from harm, feel secure and be supported to access a quality education. Prioritising the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents is a key step** that humanitarian agencies, donors and national authorities must take if they hope to achieve the vision of long-term peace and stability in Iraq.

1 Operation Inherent Resolve, US-led coalition military campaign to destroy ISIS in Iraq and Syria <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/>

2 OCHA Mosul Situation Report 5 – 11 June 2017

3 Human Rights Watch 25th March 2017: Iraq: Displacement, Detention of Suspected "ISIS Families" <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/05/iraq-displacement-detention-suspected-isis-families>

4 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan 43% funded. Checked 12/07/17 <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/550/summary>

5 An Unbearable Reality: The impact of war and displacement on children's mental health in Iraq, Save the Children 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS

GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ AND ITS ALLIES

- Place the protection of children at the heart of all political and military strategies. In particular this means investing in programmes and approaches that rehabilitate and reintegrate all children formerly associated with armed groups, and ensuring that families suspected of associating with armed groups are not collectively punished or ostracised by their communities.
- Support those displaced by the conflict to safely and voluntarily return to their homes and places of origin.
- Ensure registration of all children born under ISIS occupation, allowing each child to receive the services entitled to Iraqi citizens.
- Prioritise full funding for education in the government budget.

INTERNATIONAL DONORS

- Significantly increase funding to mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian contexts. Ensure this programming becomes a core intervention as part of the recovery and stabilisation phase and, in the long term, supports the inclusion of psychosocial programming into formal education.
- Commit long-term funding to enable children to catch up on their missed education, ensuring the provision of well trained teachers, suitable infrastructure and quality learning materials.
- Provide funding for non-formal education opportunities so that education is accessible to all children, including those who are working.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on extensive interviews with national and international human rights and humanitarian agencies operating in Northern Iraq, including staff working in War Child's own programmes in the region. Children and care givers in Hamam Al Alil IDP camp⁶ were interviewed on their experiences living under ISIS occupation, the conditions they face as IDPs, and their hopes and fears around returning to their homes. Teachers and Temporary Learning Space Facilitators were interviewed in focus-group discussions.

⁶ Hamam Al Alil camp is located south of Mosul. The majority of the camp population arrived in the last 5 months following the start of the coalition campaign to retake Mosul.

War Child UK in Iraq

War Child has been in Iraq supporting children affected by conflict for 12 years. We are currently supporting newly displaced children and youth (aged 6–18 years) fleeing conflict-affected areas, providing child protection and education, and addressing children’s psychosocial wellbeing. In the early stages of our Mosul response, War Child responded to the initial influx of IDPs by establishing a presence in Nargizlia and Qaymawa camps to provide non-formal education services. To meet the needs arising from new displacements in east and west Mosul, along with the needs of IDPs who have begun returning to Mosul, War Child has recently scaled up its programme to include parts of Mosul city and Hamdania, and is now operational in Hammam Al Alil IDP camp.

Temporary Learning Spaces

War Child’s Temporary Learning Space (TLS) approach in Iraq offers structured age-appropriate learning programmes, and structured psychosocial support (PSS) and recreational activities. Learners who have experienced displacement and/or several years living under challenging conditions need teaching within a predictable structure, using positive classroom management techniques and, initially, shorter learning periods to build concentration and ease transition back into the formal system.

BEFORE ISIS

Since the 1980s Iraq has experienced cycles of violence and deprivation, including the first Gulf War, a devastating ten-year embargo, the 2003 US-led invasion and the instability that followed, and the rise of jihadist groups, most recently ISIS.

Iraqi children have suffered grave violations of their rights for much of the last decade. The UN has provided a record of these violations in the Secretary General’s annual report on Children in Armed Conflict,⁷ which as far back as 2006 listed, amongst other violations, the abduction of children, their use as suicide bombers, and recruitment into armed groups. More than 100 school students and academics were killed between 2009 and 2012, and there were numerous direct attacks on schools, which have continued to this day.⁸ The mental health impact of this violence has been profound.⁹ The explosion of violence from ISIS must be seen in the context of ongoing instability and a weak state unable to exert control over its territory. ISIS will be remembered for its catalogue of human rights abuses, yet after the ousting of ISIS, Iraq’s many social, security and structural problems will remain.

⁷ UN Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict: Conclusions on Children and Armed Conflict in Iraq 03/10/11 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/AC.51/2011/6&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

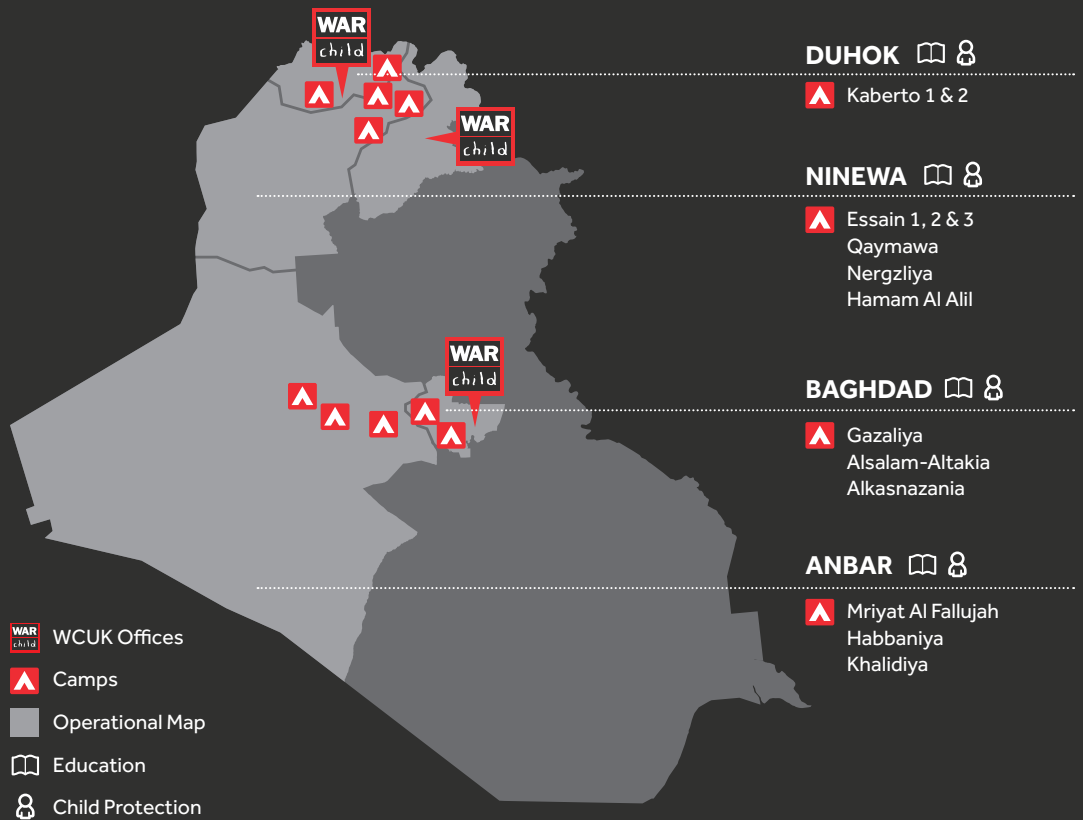
⁸ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack: Iraq Country Profile <http://protectingeducation.org/country-profile/iraq>

⁹ CNN Report: Silent Victims: What will become of Iraq’s Children, March 2007



Areas controlled by ISIS in January 2016.

An estimated 1 million children were living under ISIS control by November 2016*



* Over a million children living under ISIS in Iraq have missed out on education: Save the Children <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2016-11/over-million-children-living-under-isis-iraq-have-missed-out-education-save-children>



1. LIFE UNDER ISIS

1. LIFE UNDER ISIS

Repeated bouts of sectarian strife since 2003 have forced many civilians from their homes, yet the scale of displacement since the advent of ISIS is unprecedented. More than 4.2 million Iraqis have been forced to flee their homes since January 2014.¹⁰ Those who could not flee have endured daily intimidation, extreme violence, and an increasingly desperate humanitarian situation. While each context is different, such experiences have the potential to permanently scar the minds and wellbeing of children and their families.

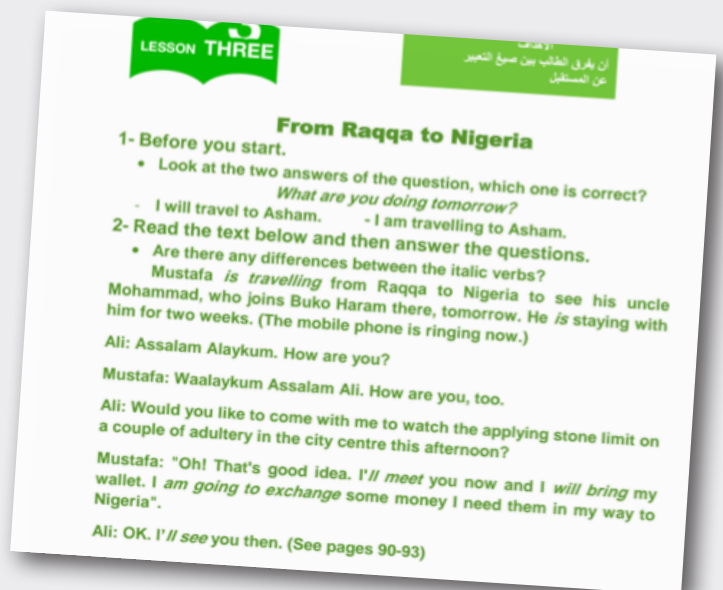
In June 2014 ISIS began a major offensive in northern Iraq, and on 10th June Mosul, along with much of Ninewa Governorate, was captured. Among the children displaced from Mosul are those who escaped soon after ISIS arrived, and those who only recently escaped having spent up to three years under ISIS control.

The majority of children interviewed for this report in Hamam Al Alil camp had only recently arrived.

EDUCATION IN MOSUL UNDER ISIS

The ISIS invasion precipitated an almost complete collapse in education services in areas under its control. Within months of taking Mosul in 2014, ISIS had imposed strict rules on dress for students and cancelled classes on art, music, history and geography.¹¹ A revised curriculum was introduced which manipulated and re-packaged the regular curriculum, combining standard text with jihadist messages. In seemingly innocuous English text books children would learn basic grammar and then be faced with language exercises in which characters discuss killing apostates.¹²

Extract from Islamic State school text book- *English for the Islamic State – Book six, p.38*¹³



¹⁰ According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix of the International Organisation for Migration, available at iraqdtm.iom.int/ (DTM tab)

¹¹ What education is like under Islamic State, Al-Fanar Media, 14/09/14 <http://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/09/education-like-islamic-state/>

¹² English for the Islamic State – Book six, p.38 https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8vKlisGf_YjMzg5aC04U1VSODQ/view

¹³ ibid

School attendance soon dropped for many reasons, including females not being permitted to move about unaccompanied in public, and harassment and intimidation of school staff, teachers and pupils.¹⁴

Children and adults we interviewed report that, following the establishment of ISIS control over schools, many parents withdrew their children as they were disturbed by the new curriculum, the presence of weapons in the schools and threats by ISIS 'school authorities'. As a result, close to 90% of children in Mosul and outlying areas stopped attending.¹⁵

Many children have missed up to three years of education, which could have profoundly negative consequences for their future development. They have also missed out on the vital socialisation and personal development that school provides. More insidiously, those who remained in school have been exposed to the inculcation of values based on religious extremism and violence.

I stayed (in the ISIS school) for two days and they taught us about bullets and guns. They said to the girls that if you do anything wrong in the school we will kill you and they told the boys if you say anything bad about ISIS we will slaughter you and your parents. I was so upset by this so I stopped going. Then I just stayed in my home for more than a year. Sometimes we slept with no food.

Nour, 10

Many teachers chose to stay in the schools through a sense of duty to students.

Even teachers have been changed because of Daesh. We used to teach in fear. They would come into the school and control the teaching. We would have to cover everything, our face, our hands, everything. Sometimes they would come and punish or torture a teacher. Some of us saw this happening. The teachers who did not see it heard it. Some teachers stopped coming to school – others kept teaching and were afraid to stop in fear of what Daesh would do. Some teachers were determined to keep teaching despite the constant, daily fear and threats. One teacher spoke about Daesh clamping the arms of other teachers in the neighbouring classroom. She could hear her colleague screaming and crying. She spoke about Daesh often using the pliers to squeeze or clamp the female teachers' upper arms if they were found doing something that did not comply with the rules of dress (i.e. covering the hands, face and feet when teaching).

Teacher – informal interview

CHILDREN'S ONGOING FEAR UNDER ISIS

Beginning in October 2016, Operation Inherent Resolve – led by Iraqi forces and backed by international air strikes – began the campaign to retake Mosul. The situation grew even worse for children caught up in the fighting. Supply routes had been cut and families, especially those in west Mosul, faced siege-like conditions as food, medicine, fuel and clean water ran out. Whether they chose to stay or flee, families lived under the constant threat of being used as human shields by ISIS, or getting killed in the crossfire of ground fighting, or by airstrikes, sniper-fire or explosions. Those who escaped to safe areas, such as the displacement camps, have endured a dangerous flight. Left physically and mentally exhausted, they often find themselves provided with only limited assistance. These experiences have had profound mental health and psychosocial impacts on children.

Whilst some children know that they are now out of the reach of ISIS, many still fear violent attacks from the armed group and have vivid nightmares that haunt them during the day.

Under Daesh all the girls had to wear the Niqab. Now in Hammam Al Alil some of the girls still wear these as they are afraid that people will see their faces and they will be punished. One girl who is now in the camp came from Mosul under Daesh. Her sister once removed her Niqab, and when Daesh found out she was lashed 50 times. Since that time this girl has refused to remove her Niqab even now she is free.

Suha, 32- War Child Case Worker

War Child case workers report that children suffer from sleeplessness, nightmares, repetitive story-telling of gruesome events, irritability, angry outbursts or total withdrawal.¹⁶ They reveal intrusive thoughts and flashbacks even when trying hard “not to think about it”. Some show signs of numbing, others engage in hurtful talk or play, or express revenge wishes. They fear they will never be able to return to what they had, nor engage once more in activities precious to them.

Some struggle with the notion that they may have caused the trauma that befell their families. This arises from an ISIS tactic to exert control, which saw the use of children to check on their family's loyalty to ISIS. Children would routinely be asked whether their family members used the derogatory term 'Daesh' or preferred 'Islamic State'. If the former was the case the family would be punished.

The loss of schooling and normal routine, combined with the daily struggle for resources in the IDP camps, heighten the feeling of hopelessness.

'SOMETIMES DAESH WOULD SHOW LIVE SCREENINGS OF EXECUTIONS IN PUBLIC SQUARES, MANY CHILDREN SAW THIS. THIS WAS A WAY OF TERRIFYING PEOPLE TO COMPLY WITH THEM.'

Aisha- 24, Facilitator in War Child Temporary Learning Space

The campaign to oust ISIS from Mosul and Ninewa Governorate, in particular the aerial bombing of the city, was frequently mentioned as traumatic by children in the Temporary Learning Spaces. This has been experienced far more acutely by children in the last four months, as the campaign intensified.

An ISIS fighter came into our house and said, 'I will not leave, we will live together or die together!'. An aeroplane fired a rocket at our house, the house became black with smoke. We escaped to a room but ISIS came and made us leave. Then another rocket hit the house. Then the Iraqi army arrived. It was like a dream. We got to an army checkpoint.

I can't forget what happened. Watching ISIS fighters die in the street, the aeroplanes. But when I come to the Temporary Learning Space and play I can forget for a while.

Now the soldiers in control of my house say we cannot go back.

Karim, 13





2. LIFE AFTER 'LIBERATION'

2. LIFE AFTER 'LIBERATION'

Around one million people have been displaced from Mosul and its surrounding areas since October 2016, when the military offensive against ISIS began. This includes over 500,000 people from western Mosul since the second phase of the military offensive was launched in mid-February, 2017.¹⁷ As of June, following the retreat of ISIS, around 120,000 people had returned to east Mosul and 63,000 people to west Mosul.

While families in IDP camps have escaped the deprivation and horror of living under ISIS, there are continuing threats to their safety and challenges in accessing their rights. The majority of those displaced from Mosul have spent up to three years living under ISIS and as a result have come into contact with the group. Children passed through ISIS-run schools, young men were encouraged to join the group, and family homes were occupied by ISIS fighters. This proximity has created suspicion that families may have collaborated with ISIS, despite being powerless to resist ISIS dominating most spheres of their lives.



I. CHILD PROTECTION

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1989, Article. 38.4

"In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, State Parties shall take all feasible measure to ensure **protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.**"

*(Iraq acceded to the CRC in 1994)*¹⁸

The international coalition supporting Operation Inherent Resolve bears a heavy responsibility to ensure that the conduct of fellow members is in accordance with international law, and that children's rights are respected.¹⁹ There is a danger that any abuse of children will only deepen the marginalisation of communities and entrench resentment, contributing to further conflict. The UN Secretary General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism notes that:

In Member States' responses to violent extremism, children are often systematically treated as security threats rather than as victims, and are administratively detained or prosecuted for their alleged association. Depriving children of liberty following their separation is contrary not only to the best interests of the child, but also to the best interests of society as a whole. This approach further complicates efforts to reintegrate children and can also lead to the creation of community grievances.

CHILDREN ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED GROUPS

In 2015, more than 1,000 children were reportedly abducted by ISIS from Mosul district.²⁰ It is widely documented that ISIS has used children as fighters,²¹ and has forced them to execute prisoners in propaganda films.²² As Iraqi security forces continue to hunt for ISIS fighters who have escaped into the IDP population, many children who have lived under ISIS have fallen under suspicion and been questioned or held by the authorities. The security services face a difficult job of protecting the community from terrorist acts, and have detained some boys who could potentially pose a security threat. Yet any detention of children must be conducted in accordance with Iraq's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children shall be *held in conformity with the law and [detention] shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.*²³

¹⁸ Manar Network for Child Rights: Iraq acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 1994. <http://www.ibcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Country-Profile-Iraq.pdf>

¹⁹ Article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, which requires States Parties to "respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances"

²⁰ Report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict 2016, p.12

²¹ Iraqi News: ISIS recruits 800 Iraqi Children 23/06/15 <http://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/isis-recruits-800-iraqi-children/>

²² The Independent website: ISIS forces child to execute prisoners in haunting new video, 20/09/16 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-forces-child-execute-prisoner-haunting-new-video-a7318931.html>

²³ Convention on the Rights of the Child- Art 37 (b) - No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time

In January 2017, Human Rights Watch reported that at least 183 children from Ninewa Governorate were being held in detention by the authorities and at risk of their rights being violated. Throughout the operation to retake Mosul, Human Rights Watch has documented Iraqi forces detaining and holding thousands of men and boys in inhumane conditions without charge, and in some cases torturing and executing them under the guise of screening for ISIS affiliation. In April 2017, an interagency needs assessment in areas of Mosul retaken from ISIS found 93% of respondents reporting that the main child protection issues were detention and lack of registration of new-born babies.²⁵

Existing detention centres are poorly equipped to cope with radicalised youth. Far from receiving specialised care, child detainees interviewed by human-rights groups say security forces have tortured them.²⁶ Besides the obvious trauma and suffering these children will endure as a result, their experiences have the potential to fuel antagonism towards the state.

The United Nations has consistently verified the recruitment of children into Kurdish armed groups and the Iraqi government-aligned Popular Mobilization Forces.²⁷ The most recent UN assessment of children's rights in Iraq expressed deep concern that children enrolled in armed groups had been arrested and imprisoned by Iraqi authorities, and were therefore particularly vulnerable to torture and other ill-treatments.

The extremist and brutal nature of ISIS means there will be no peace negotiations or formal processes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.²⁸ Yet for child combatants, a rehabilitation and reintegration process must take place.

Children accused of crimes allegedly committed while they were associated with armed forces or armed groups should be considered primarily as victims of offences against international law, not as perpetrators only.²⁹

In balancing accountability and reintegration, the focus should be on restorative, rather than punitive, justice. Such measures should be in the best interests of the child and must be conducted in a manner that takes into account their age at the time of the alleged commission of the crime, promotes their sense of dignity and worth, and supports their reintegration and potential to assume a constructive role in society. Serious long-term community engagement is required to support the reintegration of children associated with armed groups (safely) back into their families and communities.³⁰

²⁴ Human Rights Watch, KRG: Children Allege Torture by Security Forces, 29/01/17 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/29/krp-children-allege-torture-security-forces>

²⁵ http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_awg_mosul_city_multi-cluster_rapid_needs_assessments_april2017.pdf

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, KRG: Children Allege Torture by Security Forces, 29/01/17

²⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/70/836-S/2016/360) 20/04/16 <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries-caac/iraq/>

²⁸ Operation Inherent Resolve: <http://www.inherentresolve.mil/>

²⁹ Paris Principles: The Principles and Guidelines on Children associated with Armed forces / Groups: February 2007 [https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/parisprinciples_en\[1\].pdf](https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/parisprinciples_en[1].pdf)

³⁰ *ibid*

SOCIAL AND LEGAL EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN

The operation to retake Ninewa Governorate has resulted in the scattering of ISIS fighters, many of whom have dropped their weapons and uniforms to blend back into society. Security operations continue to identify those who have played an active role for ISIS and may continue to pose a threat. Yet, while security forces are often unable to locate men accused of fighting with ISIS, the families of suspects are being collectively punished on their behalf.

Iraq has a pluralistic legal system which embraces tribal and customary law. Tribal law allows for the punishment and exclusion of families for infractions committed by family members. The centuries-old, unwritten codes of tribal justice govern disputes ranging from commercial to criminal offenses. They impose penalties and determine how to settle disputes with “blood money”—compensation for victims—among tribal members and between tribes. Tribes have the means to enforce judicial rulings through tribal militias that have assumed a local security role in the face of weakened government institutions.³¹

I have been in the camp for 2 months but took the day off yesterday to visit my house in Mosul. I left Mosul three months ago. I left school when they [ISIS] started teaching about weapons, so I started work in a restaurant. Later the restaurant was attacked by a suicide bomber and destroyed. ISIS took us as human shields from the east to west side of Mosul. When ISIS had been pushed out of east Mosul we returned to see our house but there was writing on the wall saying YOU ARE DAESH. We went to the police and they said it was OK to go back. But we are scared it is not safe. Now I will go and try to do my homework and learn something.

Nabil, 10



Already some communities in Ninewa, with the support of local government, are forcibly displacing families as punishment if members are suspected of having joined or supported ISIS.³² Accused of wrongdoing by association, these families are in many cases themselves victims of ISIS abuses and deserve the protection of the government, not retribution. The complicity of government authorities in vigilantism has the potential to perpetuate deep mistrust in the state and fuel further conflict. Children are most vulnerable to marginalisation if the denial of their education, physical displacement and stigmatisation is sanctioned by the authorities.

There have been efforts to limit the use of tribal law and ensure that tribal leaders use national law.³³ For instance, in January 2017 Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi sharply criticised the regional policy of forced evictions and ordered Baghdad officials to resolve the issue.³⁴ All parties to the military conflict in Iraq—Iraqi government forces, Kurdish forces and other coalition forces and insurgent groups—are bound by the Geneva Convention, which imposes legal obligations on warring parties to reduce unnecessary suffering and to protect civilians and other non-combatants.³⁵ An important guiding principle of international humanitarian law is to distinguish between combatants and those not taking part in hostilities. These principles and requirements cannot be discarded or superseded by local tribal law.

LACK OF BIRTH REGISTRATION

The legal registration of children born under ISIS rule has become problematic. If one or both parents are dead, missing or foreign, it can be extremely difficult for relatives to register the child. In Iraqi law, the father of a child must be present when obtaining a birth certificate.³⁶ For children whose fathers have been killed in fighting, or who have been born of rape by an ISIS fighter, the father's absence will leave the child without legal registration and not eligible for any social services. Children born at the beginning of the occupation are reaching three years of age. In only two to three years they should be starting school. Without formal identification, children are unable to enrol. A solution is needed as soon as possible to avoid a completely lost generation.

³² Rudaw News, Locals in Iraqi town take matters into their hands to expel ISIS families, 21/6/2017 <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/21062017>

³³ Iraqi Tribes Sharpen Legal Tools to Root Out ISIS, USIP 22/06/17 <https://www.usip.org/index.php/publications/2017/06/iraqi-tribes-sharpen-legal-tools-root-out-isis>

³⁴ The New York Times, Iraqi Region Is Evicting Families of ISIS Members 29/01/17 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/29/world/middleeast/iraq-tikrit-isis.html>

³⁵ Common article 2 , Additional Protocol 3, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolIII.aspx>

³⁶ Children of the Caliphate: What to Do About Kids Born Under ISIS- Foreign Affairs: November 2016

WHAT IS NEEDED...

Rehabilitation and reintegration of all children associated with armed groups

In balancing accountability and reintegration of children associated with armed groups, the focus should be on restorative, rather than punitive, justice. Rehabilitation processes should emphasise the child's sense of dignity and worth, and support their reintegration and potential to assume a constructive role in society. Serious long-term community level engagement is required to support the reintegration of children (safely) back into their families and communities.

Protecting all families

Iraqi federal authorities must end the forced displacement of families accused of association with ISIS by state/governorate forces. Displaced families should be supported to voluntarily return to their homes or areas of origin.

Ending the use of torture

The government of Iraq should ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture,³⁷ which would allow the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture to visit detention facilities in Iraq.

Child recruitment

The government of Iraq should ensure that minors are not recruited and/or accepted into armed groups under government control, in accordance with Iraqi law and international standards.

Register every child

The government should instigate a results-based campaign to enable a simple birth registration process in IDP camps and other displaced communities, with clear guidance on steps and documentation required. This could include setting up birth registration facilities at the camps; eliminating any fee for obtaining a birth certificate and working together with international organisations to ensure all children have birth certificates regardless of ethnic background and any associations their families may have had with any group.

Further research

Further research is needed to understand the scale and extent of practices that punish families and communities suspected of supporting ISIS, and the stigma associated with this.

II. Education

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1989, ART. 28.1(a)

“State Parties recognize **the right of the child to education**, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular... make primary education compulsory and available free to all...”

In Iraq nearly 3.7 million school-aged children attend school irregularly and are in need of extra educational support.³⁸ More than 765,000 displaced children have missed an entire year of education. While nearly 500,000 children have been supported with emergency education, some 70,000 children affected by the Mosul emergency are currently not accessing any form of education.³⁹ In the 2015–16 school year Iraq spent only 5.7% of its government expenditure on education – less than any other country in the Middle East.⁴⁰ The humanitarian response is also underfunded, with only 33% of education funding received from international donors.⁴¹

The uneven development of the conflict saw some families return to east Mosul following the ousting of ISIS, while families continued to flee from west Mosul. An April 2017 interagency needs assessment in areas of Mosul retaken from ISIS found that children in 89% of neighbourhoods face challenges in accessing education.⁴² Of these neighbourhoods, the main issues preventing access were lack of useable schools or classrooms (43% of neighbourhoods) and inadequate learning materials (27%).⁴³ Some key informants also described how teaching staff had not received salaries, negatively impacting their motivation to come to work. Although reported attendance levels in east Mosul are high, issues such as overcrowding, lack of materials and unpaid staff are all problems that negatively affect the quality of education.⁴⁴

³⁸ Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan 2017 <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/iraq>

³⁹ OCHA Mosul Situation Report 5 – 11 June 2017

⁴⁰ The cost and benefits of education in Iraq: An analysis of the education sector and strategies to maximize the benefits of education - Ministry of Education- Iraq / UNICEF, May 2017

⁴¹ Iraq: Education Cluster Dashboard March 2017, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/march-dashboard-edited.pdf>

⁴² Assessment Working Group Iraq Mosul Multi-Cluster Rapid Needs Assessment, April 2017 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iraq_awg_mosul_city_multi-cluster_rapid_needs_assessments_april2017.pdf p.15

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*

CHALLENGES TO EDUCATION IN IDP CAMPS AND COMMUNITIES

The last three years have seen the widespread destruction of schools and educational infrastructure. A focus group of teachers from 10 schools in the area around Hamam Al Alil highlighted significant challenges that undermine the availability and quality of education.

- ▶ **Very large Class sizes:** the school infrastructure is inadequate to cater for the increased numbers of children: rooms designed for 35 students hold classes as large as 80. Children share desks, often with three or four having to occupy a seat designed for two, with others forced to sit on window ledges. Such large numbers of pupils, far from optimal class sizes, present teachers with considerable difficulties.
- ▶ **Children in fear of ISIS returning:** traumatised by their experiences under ISIS, many children fear the return of the group and feel they should continue to do as ISIS have said. This fear affects their outlook, concentration, behaviour and ability to learn.
- ▶ **Classes taught by unqualified volunteer teachers:** volunteer teachers are eager to learn skills to help them teach confidently. Teachers reported that misbehavior in the classroom/school is a result of the disruption to children's lives and their experiences under ISIS.
- ▶ **Financial constraints:** even the trained, qualified contract teachers do not receive a regular salary, with many not being paid for months. Teachers' understandable concerns about providing for themselves and their families can result in distraction and absenteeism.
- ▶ **Lack of teaching and classroom equipment:** teachers reported an inadequate provision of classroom materials, furniture and age/subject appropriate textbooks in many of the schools in their area.
- ▶ **Child labour:** many children are the sole providers for their families and work long hours. This leaves them with limited time to attend class, while mental and physical tiredness reduces their ability to concentrate in class.



WHAT IS NEEDED...

Reintegrating children educated under ISIS

There is urgent need to review best practices in reintegrating children back into education, especially children who have been taught an extremist ideology for several years. Guidelines and teacher training should be developed as part of a nationwide process to standardise reintegration. Such guidelines should be developed alongside the young people in Mosul with expert consultation, acknowledging the differing impacts that age and gender may have had on student experience. Parents must be supported to play a role.

Education funding for immediate phase and long term

The government of Iraq and international donors must ensure holistic funding for all aspects of education provision. This would include investment to rehabilitate and build schools, equip with WASH facilities, provide government-approved text books, and ensure appropriate training and remuneration for teachers.

Psychosocial support for teachers

Teachers themselves have also gone through challenging experiences while living under ISIS control. It is critical that they too receive psychological first aid and continuous psychosocial support.⁴⁵

Non-formal education

Non-formal education opportunities need to be available so that education is accessible to all, including to those who are working. School schedules should include flexible shifts that allow young people engaged in the labour force to attend when they are able. Donor funding is needed to pilot new approaches where flexible models can be tested.

III. EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1989, ART. 27(1)

“State Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

The extreme levels of violence and the devastating use of sustained aerial bombardment in the battle to retake Mosul has made mental health and psychosocial wellbeing needs particularly acute.⁴⁶ Psychosocial support can be described as a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families and communities. By respecting the independence, dignity and coping mechanisms of individuals and communities, psychosocial support promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure.⁴⁷

There are three kids in one family whose mother was killed as they tried to flee Mosul. When we made activities in the TLS the three of them sat apart, did not join in and looked sad. As caseworkers, we started to support them. The older one especially refused to join in. So, I sat with him and started to play one-to-one and invited others to join us. After a while he went and joined the other kids playing.

There are no other services in the camp, life is tough, the kids need other support. They have no other place to go other than their tents. In 2 years the kids have not changed their clothes, they need uniforms.

Now we are preparing the kids (in the TLS) to go back to school when they return home. We hope that we have cleaned their minds from what they learnt under Isis.

Right now, we have to protect the kids until we return home, though we don’t know when that will be.

Aisha- 24, Facilitator in War Child Temporary Learning Space

The school environment provides a strong opportunity to support children’s psychological recovery. In emergency situations, education is a major factor in the protection of children and a key psychosocial intervention. If properly delivered, education can offer learners a safe, stable environment and help restore a sense of normality, dignity, and hope by providing both structure and supportive activities.⁴⁸

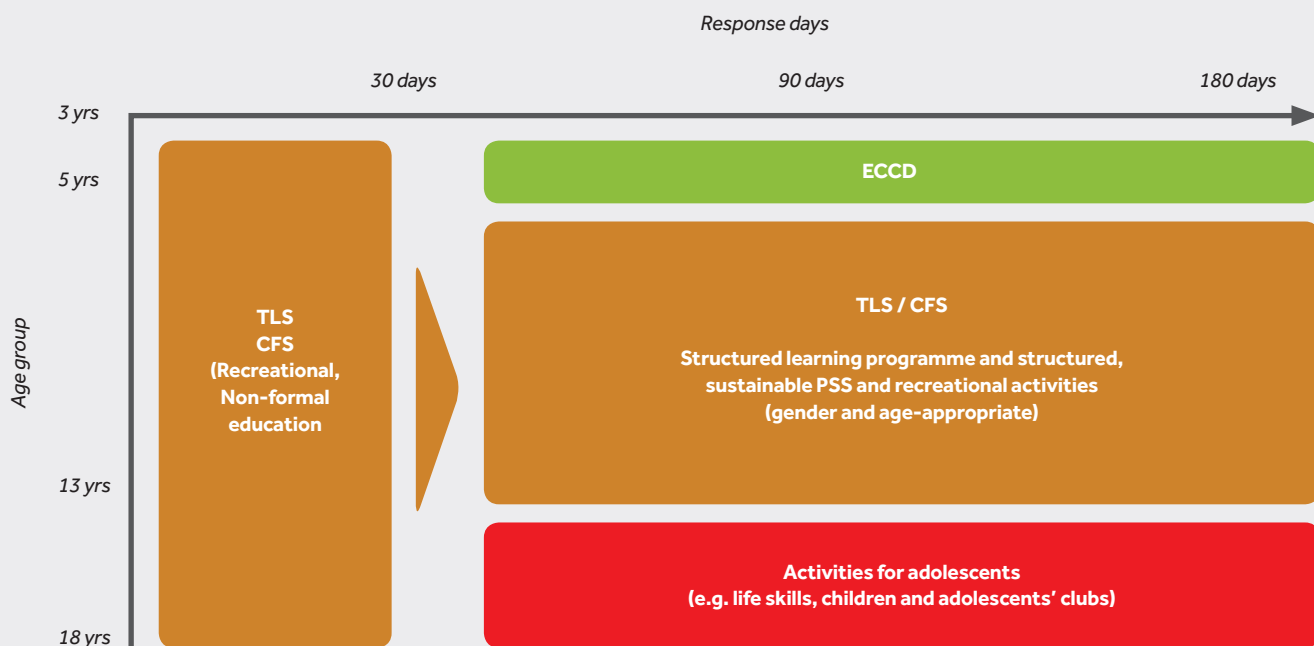
⁴⁶ Article 36, The impact of explosive violence on mental health and psycho-social well-being, September 2013 <http://www.article36.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MENTALHEALTH.pdf>

⁴⁷ IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, 2009a, p.25. Original source: IFRC Psychosocial Framework 2005-2007

⁴⁸ Talbot, C. (2013). Education in conflict: Emergencies in light of the post-2015 MDGs and EFA agendas. NORRAG Working Paper #3. Geneva: NORRAG.

To sustain gains in supporting children’s recovery, the infrastructure of psychosocial support needs to be built into the formal education system. The inter-agency Iraq Education Cluster and Child Protection Working Group have played a key role in advocating for the integration of education and PSS,⁴⁹ both in the immediate emergency phase and within long-term formal education. After children transition back to formal education, teachers should conduct regular PSS sessions to support children’s continued resilience and to identify and refer cases where higher or longer-term psychosocial support is needed.

CPiE & EiE: Mapping of CFS / TLS target children by age group & programme



Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) and Education in Emergencies (EiE) working groups. Diagram showing integration of psychosocial support into learning programmes. Iraq Education Cluster Guidance Note. May 2017

War Child’s Temporary Learning Space (TLS) approach in Iraq offers structured age-appropriate learning, PSS and recreational activities.⁵⁰ Learners who have experienced displacement or several years living under challenging conditions need teaching within a predictable structure, using positive classroom management techniques and, initially, shorter learning periods to build concentration and ease transition back into the formal system.⁵¹

49 Iraq Education Cluster, Guidance Note - integrated EiE/CPiE programming for CFS/ TLS http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/integrated_cfs_tls_guidance_note_-_final.pdf
 50 War Child has developed IDEALS, an open-sourced life skills education approach <https://www.warchildholland.org/war-childs-life-skills-course-deals>
 51 INEE <http://www.ineesite.org/en/minimum-standards>

WHAT IS NEEDED...

Integrating psychosocial support into formal education

It is essential that education and associated mental health and psychosocial programmes for children continue and are funded sufficiently.

War Child UK advocates for continuous, in-service teacher training that looks not only at pedagogy but also PSS. Ensuring teachers know how to refer children on to specialist services and conduct regular awareness raising sessions for parents/caregivers, teachers and the community around key issues related to child protection, corporal punishment, child labour, child marriage and violence against children. This is crucial in addressing the psychosocial needs, rights and development of learners, teachers and other education personnel. To ensure sustainability these efforts should involve local education authorities.





3. CONCLUSION

3. CONCLUSION

On 10th July 2017, Iraq's Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi announced the formal end of the ISIS occupation of Mosul, declaring the "collapse of the terrorist state of falsehood".⁵² Undoubtedly this moment marks a definitive milestone in the struggle to destroy ISIS. Yet, as War Child has seen in many conflicts around the world, once the fighting has ceased the long struggle to rebuild begins. It is estimated that the repair of Mosul's basic infrastructure will cost more than \$1 billion.⁵³ The immediate stabilisation period will include repairing water, sewage and electricity infrastructure and reopening schools and hospitals.

We now have a critical window of opportunity to ensure that our response to the needs of children and families caught up in this crisis is impactful, intentional and needs-based. Precedent highlights that failing to respond rapidly in post-conflict environments can mean writing off a generation of youth—a generation whose ambitions for education and a better life could serve as a catalyst for the construction of a more peaceful society. However, accelerated education programmes that solely focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes will not be enough. Children and families may have experienced family loss, recruitment into armed groups, separation, displacement, and living in adverse and insecure environments. More than 3.5 million children across Iraq have experienced prolonged periods out of school, and children and teachers who lived under the Caliphate may have also endured prolonged periods being immersed in an ISIS-led curriculum and forced to live and work in challenging situations. Child rights agencies have a critical role to support the government of Iraq as they seek to address the needs of children, drawing upon a wealth of research that demonstrates that persistent psychological distress, if left unaddressed, can hinder education (and life) progress. Learning spaces, when facilitated in safe, conducive and productive environments by confident and motivated teachers, can be at the forefront of addressing stigma, offering peer support and giving children the tools to design their future.



Mosul's children have a long road of recovery ahead of them, on which they will need to **be protected from harm, feel secure, and be supported to access a quality education. Prioritising the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents is a key step** that humanitarian agencies, donors, the wider international community, national and local authorities must take if they hope to achieve the vision of long-term peace and stability in Iraq.

⁵² BBC News, Battle for Mosul: Iraq PM Abadi formally declares victory 10/07/17
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-40558836>

⁵³ Reuters, Basic infrastructure repair in Mosul will cost over \$1 billion - UN, 05/07/17
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-iraq-aid-idUKKBN19Q283>

Linton House, 39-51 Highgate Road, London, NW5 1RT
T: 020 7916 9276 E: info@warchild.org.uk

www.warchild.org.uk

  War Child UK

UK registered charity no. 1071659

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

