

UNICEF says children in Yemen face acute humanitarian needs



Amman, March 27 (RHC) -- Three years of war coupled with decades of chronic underdevelopment in Yemen has resulted in 11 million children plagued by malnutrition and disease and facing acute humanitarian needs, a senior official of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said.

Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, said Yemeni children have been killed or seriously injured at a minimum rate of five per day in 2017 alone. The outbreaks of cholera and diphtheria have also claimed hundreds of children's lives.

Yemen, already one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, has been devastated by a civil war since 2015, when what was supposed to be a peaceful transition of power from the longtime president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to his deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi evolved into a regional conflict.

Intervention of a foreign coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, dragged Yemen into a war, which experts say shows no sign of abating until today.

He further said that while there were 200,000 Yemeni children suffering from severe malnutrition in 2015 -- already one of the highest numbers in the world by then-- that number has more than doubled in three years' time until now.

The UN official called for an immediate cease of war and urged authorities in all parts of the country to allow entry of humanitarian assistance without preconditions.

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