



**Media Release: Strict Embargo 12:00 EST**

**Statement from Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education**

**WAR CRIME PROSECUTION CALLED FOR AFTER REPEATED AERIAL BOMBINGS OF SYRIAN SCHOOL KILLS 20 PUPILS AND TEACHERS**

**2016: WORST YEAR FOR CHILDREN AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS SINCE 1940S AS ESCALATING AND UNSPEAKABLE VIOLATIONS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS THREATENS 11 MILLION DISPLACED CHILDREN**

**BROWN SAYS WE MUST PREVENT 2017 FROM BECOMING AN EVEN WORSE “YEAR OF FEAR” FOR CHILDREN IN CONFLICT ZONES**

**ANNOUNCES THE “EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT” FUND’S INITIAL \$42 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR FIRST 1.5 MILLION CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES BUT CALLS FOR AN END TO THE CYCLE OF DOING THE LEAST FOR THOSE WHO NEED THE MOST**

**BROWN CALLS FOR NEW SYSTEM OF HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR WORLD’S 30 MILLION DISPLACED CHILDREN**

Speaking to the United Nations Correspondents on 27 October 2016, UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown said:

“With the latest descent into barbarism – with at least 20, and probably upwards of 30, pupils and teachers dead after a succession of strikes on a school complex in Haas in the Western Syrian province of Idlib – the worst assault on school children among 98 separate attacks on Syrian schools in the last two years – I am calling on the Security Council to immediately agree that the International Criminal Court prosecutor conduct an investigation into what I believe is a war crime – with the intention that, if proven, the perpetrators will be hunted down and the case against them prosecuted before the International Criminal Court.

“Article 8, Section 2B of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court states that 'For the purposes of this statute, war crimes,' and what are called ‘serious violations,’ include 'intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to [...] education.'

“The Security Council should meet now because while Russia vetoed a resolution to refer atrocities in Syria to the ICC in 2014, the Russian Foreign Affairs spokesperson Maria Zakharova has said of the school killings, ‘We demand all international organizations join the investigation without further delay.’ She stated that there should be ‘prompt involvement of all international institutions in the investigation...we urge maximum attention to this tragedy and its investigation without delay.’

“Now that Russia, for the first time, has urged such ‘an immediate investigation,’ the Security Council should ask the International Criminal Court prosecutor for an investigation into what is happening in Syrian schools and in Syria as a whole. Or if they cannot accept this, they should conduct their own investigation as a Security Council as they are entitled to do, and have done so previously in other cases.

“Today I am announcing that the Education Cannot Wait fund is allocating \$15 million to children’s education inside Syria, some of which can be used to benefit the children in Idlib province as part of a \$42 million investment that will deliver hope to 1.5 million children.

“Yet, already 2017 looks like it too will become a ‘Year of Fear’ for children. A report on Iraq last week highlights torture, executions and sexual violations of children near Mosul. In addition, Yazidi girls in Iraq have been identified as victims of rape and have been sold and trafficked. In Turkey, refugees as young as 11, 12, and 13 – and some even as young as 7 and 8 – have been forced into child labour producing branded textile garments for the United Kingdom, United States and Western markets. And in refugee camps across the region, we have seen the doubling of the rates of forced child marriage. In Nigeria, despite the welcome release of 20 kidnapped school girls, there are unconfirmed reports that one-third of the group of 200 could be dead. In conflict zones, it may be more dangerous today to be a girl forced onto the streets than a soldier in the trenches.

“And in 2016, there are now 30 million displaced children throughout the world – the largest number since the 1940s, who are among the world’s most vulnerable children – the children who need the most help but for whom we do the least. And yet their fate is tethered to the most fragile and least certain of lifelines: a begging bowl we, the international community, circulate when disaster strikes.

“According to figures released to me today by UNICEF, there are a total of 11 million displaced and at risk boys and girls in the Middle East and North Africa:<sup>1</sup>

- 1.75 million school-age children (5-17) in Syria
- 739,000 school-age Syrian refugee children (5-17) in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt as of August 2016
- 3 million school-age children (5-14) in Iraq before the Mosul offensive, including IDPs (6-17)
- 3 million school-age children (5-13) in Sudan in 2014

- 2 million school-age children (5-14) in Yemen in 2016
- 95,000 school-age children (5-14) in Djibouti in 2015
- 279,000 school-age children (6-18) in Libya as of August 2016
- 52,000 school-age children (5-15) in the State of Palestine (SOP) in 2014
- 357,000 out of school children in Chad (ages 6-11).

“But soon this figure will grow again to include many of Mosul’s 600,000 children being forced onto the streets.

“It is urgent that we end the neglect of the lost generation. First, we must close the financing gap which has left appeals for Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt less than 50% funded – a \$72 million shortfall this year.<sup>ii</sup> Second, in Mosul, where six camps catering to 60,000 children have been set up, financing has not been forthcoming to ensure the flash appeal for \$284 million that needs to be fulfilled.

“So today I am announcing a \$42 million investment in child protection and education to secure the future of 1.5 million children caught in the crossfire in war-torn countries. What is more, the announcement includes \$2 million of initial support for an education rapid response to ensure better preparedness to act immediately when disaster strikes.

“The \$42 million should serve as a signal flare of optimism for those giving the most at this moment of greatest need – like the White Helmets, the men and women who rush into the rubble and save lives; the brave teachers in Syria’s underground schools ensuring hope is unlocked and potential developed; and those providing psychiatric aid helping children cope with distress.

“The new funding announcement of \$42 million includes:

“\$15 million for Syria which will:

- Improve access to quality and safe education for 65,000 children;
- Provide professional development opportunities to 2,000 teachers and facilitators;
- Improve the capacity of over 850 local education community groups and strengthening coordination among the 66 partners operating in 14 governorates.

“\$15 million for Yemen which will:

- Provide more than 1.2 million students in the areas most affected by conflict with safe schooling, renewed textbooks and essential materials.
- Strengthen the local and central capacity of the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations to bolster the planning and response of providing quality emergency education.

“These funds are on top of \$12 million from the Global Partnership for Education, which I praise.

“\$10 million for conflict-hit Chad, consumed by stresses brought on by Boko Haram, which will:

- Support 153,800 children affected by crises in targeted areas
- Train 3,000 teachers in 150 communities
- Enhance direct service provision and systems strengthening over 24 months.

These funds are on top of \$7 million already allocated from the Global Partnership for Education.

“While every instance of pain can be countered with a flicker of hope, \$42 million is not enough.

“The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, comprised of twenty-five world leaders, made an international appeal in September at the United Nations. This Commission provided a blueprint for action – a call for an unprecedented expansion of educational opportunity. Their message was clear: we have both the means and the knowledge to fulfill that most basic right to an education.

“There are times when history’s moments of great suffering mark turning points that become wellsprings of hope and eventually of pride. I believe we have to create one such moment. A moment where voices at the margins – those of children left out and left behind – will finally be heard.

“So I now ask that we consider a new system for financing education in emergencies built on guaranteed funding and a new deal between the UN family, the World Bank and aid donors. The message has to go out that we cannot begin to achieve our Sustainable Development Goals as long as we condemn refugees and displaced children – those most in need who have received the least – to a future devoid of hope. For children, 2016 has been the year of fear. If 2017 is not to become another year of fear, we must act now.”

---ENDS---

**Notes for Editors:**

A full copy of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity’s report, “The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world,” can be found at: [report.educationcommission.org](http://report.educationcommission.org)

For further information, contact Reid Lidow: [rlidow@educationcommission.org](mailto:rlidow@educationcommission.org)

<sup>i</sup> Source: Estimates obtained from multiple sources including Syrian EMIS, OCHA, UNICEF MICS, UNHCR, UNPD and UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report covering diverse age groups depending on feasibility and previous statistical specifications: Syrian children (5-17), Iraq (5-14 for general population and 6-17 for IDP), Sudan (5-13), Yemen (5-14), Djibouti (5-14), Libya (6-18), SOP (5-15) and Chad (6-11).

ii

Country	London Progress Report (September 2016)		October 2016	
	% funded	Funding Gap (US\$)	% funded	Funding Gap (US\$)
Syria	43	113,983,818	46	72,278,871
Turkey	39	71,597,142		
Lebanon	75	89,000,000		
Jordan	40	60,333,313		
Iraq	37	31,114,599		
Egypt	10	18,510,471		

For the Syria HRP, information extracted from the online UNOCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS), <http://bit.ly/2eUbDpd>; for Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, information from the 3RP financial data (January-June 2016) provided by Agencies as of June 2016; in addition, for Jordan, only the InterAgency Appeal (UN and NGOs) was tracked; for Lebanon, financial figures provided by the Lebanon RACE Executive committee (REC) members as of September 2016.