

UNICEF fights to protect children from COVID-19 and poverty



The United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, has requested extra support to assist millions of children living in the Middle East and North Africa, affected by the misfortunes of war and who are now being threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UN agency needs an additional 100 million dollars to fill the gaps that the virus has caused in a region where more than 105,000 cases have already been detected and more than 5,600 have died.----

About 25 million children live in the Middle East and North Africa, and around four million children will experience absolute poverty due to this virus.

According to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, based in Beirut, Lebanon, around 1 million 700,000 jobs will be lost this year due to the closure of many companies, the suspension of wages and quarantine measures being taken.

The effects will be extremely serious for about 8 million people, half of them children. It is a region of great political instability, ravaged by wars and also the battlefield of rival gangs and organized crime.

On top of all that, the area has been harshly affected by climate change.

The new coronavirus pandemic could have disastrous effects among people that suffer from malnutrition and are packed into refugee camps where their living conditions are precarious.

Ted Chaiban, the UNICEF regional director, predicted that the years of conflict, poverty, deprivation and lack of basic services, combined now with COVID-19, will harshly hit children and turn their already miserable lives into unbearable experiences.

As in any disaster -- war, natural phenomenon or pandemic -- it is always the poor and most vulnerable who suffer the most. The pandemic of poverty must be fought relentlessly, even after COVID-19 passes into history.

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