How the war in Syria is causing big problems for children with disabilities and their rights

“It Was Really Hard to Protect Myself”: Impact of the Armed Conflict in Syria on Children with Disabilities.
About us

We are called Human Rights Watch.

We work to make sure that everyone in the world is treated fairly and gets their rights.

About this report

This report is about big problems for children with disabilities in Syria because of the war.

There has been a war in Syria for 11 years.

Many people have been hurt or killed.

Many buildings like schools, hospitals, and homes have been damaged.
And many people had to leave their homes.

This report looks at some of the bad things that are happening to children with disabilities in the war.

We spoke to some people in Syria from 2020 to 2022.

Some of the people we spoke to were:

- Children and young people with disabilities.
- Parents and family members of children with disabilities.
- Organizations that support people when there is war or other problems.
- Medical people.

The people we spoke to were in the northwest and northeast of Syria.

Some people had come from other parts of Syria.
This report is about:

• What we found out.

• And what we think should happen next.

What is happening to children with disabilities in Syria

The war has caused big problems for everyone in Syria.

The war has meant that many people do not have enough money to live on.

And many people find it hard to get the things they need.

But things are often worse for children with disabilities and their families.

That includes children who had a disability before the war.

And children who got a disability because of the war.
Problems leaving home when there is danger

Many children with disabilities find it hard to leave quickly if there is fighting or danger near their homes.

For example, children with disabilities might not have the things they need to be safe if there is danger. Like hearing aids, wheelchairs, or false legs.

Some families might leave their children with disabilities behind if they have to leave quickly.

For example, families might find it hard to run quickly if they have to help their children with disabilities as well.
Problems getting the things they need

Many families cannot afford to buy the things they need.

That includes food, health care, medicine, and other things that their children need for their disability.

Many children with disabilities cannot get the health care, advice, and support they need for their disability.

Support for children with disabilities can be many things.

For example, support to be safe, go to school or do everyday things.

Good support helps children with disabilities to have a better life.

But many children with disabilities are not getting the support they need.
Covid-19 has made these problems worse.

For example, many support services had to stop because of Covid-19.

Covid-19 is an illness that many people in the world are getting.

**Being hurt or treated badly**

Violence can also happen to children with disabilities.

For example, people around them may hurt them, say mean things to them, or ignore them.

**Problems going to school**

It is hard for many children with disabilities in Syria to go to school.

Many school buildings have been damaged.

And it might be hard to get to school, because of roads that were broken in the war.
Teachers might not have the right training to teach children with disabilities.

And they might have unfair ideas about children with disabilities.

Problems sending money and support to children in Syria

Many countries are giving money to support people in Syria because of the war.

But there have been problems with that.

There is not enough money to support everyone who needs it.

And the support often does not get to people with disabilities.

They are often left out.
Only some children with disabilities are getting support.

But they are only getting support for a short time.

Or they are getting support in a separate place to children without disabilities.

That should not be happening.

**Not having enough information**

There is not enough information about children with disabilities in Syria and what they need.

That makes it hard to know how to make life better for children with disabilities.

**What should happen next**

Children with disabilities have a right to be safe and get the support they need at all times.

That includes during war.

There are rules in the world about that.
Some organizations are working to support people with disabilities in Syria. That includes organizations like the United Nations. The United Nations is a group of most countries in the world. They work together to make the world better and safer.

The United Nations and other groups should do more to support people in Syria. That includes people with disabilities.

The United Nations should include children with disabilities more in their work and decisions. For example, their reports and plans should talk about what children with disabilities need.
All groups helping people in Syria should make sure that children with disabilities get what they need to be safe and well.

That includes:

- Food and water.
- Medical care and mental health care.
- Education and housing.
- Support to keep safe.

Children with disabilities should also get the things they need to help them to move around or communicate.

For example, wheelchairs, false legs, and hearing aids.

These things should be easy for all children with disabilities to get and use.

The United Nations and other groups should get more information about what is happening to children with disabilities during the war.

And what children with disabilities need.
They should give training to workers who support children with disabilities.

And they should help the children’s families to support them.

They should also get more workers that can support children with disabilities. Like teachers who use sign language.

**Things for all groups that are fighting in the war to do**

There are different groups that are fighting in Syria. That includes the government of Syria.

All these groups should stop hurting people living in Syria who are not fighting in the war.

The groups should follow rules about keeping people safe in war. They do not always follow the rules. That puts people in danger.
The fighting groups should warn children with disabilities and their families if there is danger.

They should help them to leave safely.

The groups should let organizations give people food, medicine, and other support during the war.

They should not do anything to stop that.

They should make sure that children with disabilities are treated fairly and get everything they need.

Like education and health care.

**Making sure that people with disabilities have their say**

People with disabilities should have a big say in what happens and the support they get.

That includes children with disabilities.