

Media Update

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UNICEF

Press Release

Children in Aleppo trapped in “living nightmare” - UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth

NEW YORK, 28 September 2016 – At least 96 children have been killed and 223 have been injured in Eastern Aleppo since Friday, UNICEF said.

“The children of Aleppo are trapped in a living nightmare,” said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth. “There are no words left to describe the suffering they are experiencing.”

The health system in Eastern Aleppo is crumbling with some 30 doctors left, hardly any equipment or emergency medicine to treat the injured, and an ever increasing number of trauma cases.

A doctor on the ground told UNICEF that children with low chances of survival are too often left to die due to limited capacity and supplies.

“Nothing can justify such assaults on children and such total disregard for human life. The suffering – and the shock among children – is definitely the worst we have seen.”

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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UN Women

Press Release

Pakistani Youth Activist Urooj Ashraf At UN Women's HeForShe Turns Two!

A Pakistani youth activist Urooj Ashraf Awan, was invited as a guest speaker to the 2nd anniversary of HeForShe turns TWO event held in the Museum of Modern Arts (MoMA), New York on 20 September 2016.

Urooj shared the stage with dedicated change-makers creating the movement IMPACT 10x10x10 Champions including: His Excellency Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland; Bob Moritz, Chairman PricewaterhouseCoopers International Limited and Samuel L. Stanley Jr, President of Stony Brook University. The event also invited leaders of the world and UN representatives including Honorary Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau; Prime Minister of Japan Shinzō Abe; UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador HeForShe Emma Watson; UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador Édgar Ramírez; First Lady of New York; Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the Executive Director of UN Women - Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Here is Urooj's story:

I am from Pakistan and the place that I call home is ranked 144 out of 145 countries in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap Report 2015 - We are second to last in global gender equality.



While it is common around the world for parents to favor sons over daughters and certainly in Pakistan, I personally never felt anything like that. Growing up as a daughter of an Army man, I received equal treatment in both my family and in my surroundings. As the eldest daughter, there was pressure to become an 'exemplary' figure for my younger siblings.

Having been selected to study in one of the most renowned engineering institutes of Pakistan, in the Civil department where the boy to girl ratio was 12:1, was a stark environment and the gender imbalance was indeed challenging. I recall being called bossy, selfish, show-off and demanding. I was also once told by a male student that the reason a woman gets good grades is based on the amount of 'makeup' she applies and not her brains or her work ethic.

On signing up to male dominated societies in my university, I witnessed male 'ownership' over their fellow female students, leaving with little to no liberty to express myself. This domination over an assumed weaker sex led me and other girls to create an all-girls society of my own, "Zimal" and our tagline was "Breaking stereotypes for HER".

On 8 March 2015, International Women's Day, our society decided to bring the HeForShe movement to our and other Universities across Pakistan. We joined forces with a boy's society "Khardaar" (with the slogan "As Brothers We Stand"), to raise awareness about and engage men in the HeForShe campaign. Throughout our University campus we created and hung posters, banners with one goal: to make people aware of everything that is wrong with gender discrimination in our society.

As you can imagine, not everyone agreed with us. We faced considerable resistance and even threats of violence from hardcore conservative groups. Our posters and banners were torn down and destroyed. A group of men complained to the university administration that such a campaign would endanger students and should not be held on campus. Sadly, the University requested for the campaign to move off-campus. We remained adamant and strong-willed; we stuck to our promise and commitment.

At some point in our campaign, one man said to me, "You are in university. You have rights. Why do you need to do this?" My response was "It is not about us; it is about every woman and every girl who does not have, or who is allowed to use her rights."

Together, we students who were in our final year of engineering and preparing for our end-of-term exams, in over 48 hours uploaded 6,000 commitments collected, and in the process contributed to the global HeForShe ticker crossing the 300,000 sign-up mark. I remember my wrists being sore after typing consecutively for two days straight, but it was worth it! Our passion and spirit for the cause has been, and continues to be, internationally appreciated. UN Women presented us with the first ever “HeForShe Hero of the Month” International Award in May 2015 which led me to believe that you are never too young to make a difference.

When man himself empowers women, he stands up against the violence and harassment that is inflicted on them. He breaks stereotype and re-creates a new status quo. Countries that are more gender equal are also the countries that score highest on happiness scale. Equality is just, it is ethical and it's in favor of men as well. It's a win-win situation.

Thank you.

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