

“Children in Gaza are consistently suffering from respiratory problems and severe flu” – SOS Children’s Villages

Monday 2 June, 2025

Children under the care of SOS Children’s Villages in Gaza are “consistently suffering from respiratory problems and severe flu due to the dust caused by the bombardment” with **those aged under one being the worst affected, according to staff working in Gaza for SOS Children’s Villages**, the world’s largest charity focused on supporting children and young people who don’t have, or are at risk of losing, parental care.

SOS Children’s Villages has been operating in Gaza and the West Bank since 1968. In May 2024, the residential homes run by SOS Children’s Villages in Rafah had to be evacuated. Later that year, these homes were reduced to rubble due to heavy bombardment in Rafah, leaving children who were already vulnerable permanently displaced.

These same children are now living in SOS Children’s Villages encampments in Khan Younis, with bombs landing as close as 800 metres away from their temporary accommodation. With the increasing lack of clarity around humanitarian zones in Gaza, children are more at risk than ever before.

An estimated 15,613 children have been killed since the conflict began, and more than a million are estimated to need mental health and psycho-social support. ¹

Alongside the immediate risk of injury, malnutrition and death, SOS Children’s Villages is now raising the alarm about the long-term health impact of constant bombardment on children in Gaza. SOS Children’s Villages staff in Gaza have said that there is little awareness of the risk of asbestos in local communities, with many being forced to live in the rubble of what used to be their homes.

The Programme Director of SOS Children’s Villages in Gaza, said, *“On the ground in Gaza, particularly in our camp, our children, especially those under one year old, are consistently suffering from respiratory problems and severe flu due to the dust caused by the bombardment.”*

The children in the temporary camp in Khan Younis are exposed *“to the dust even if there is distance between you and the bombardment location [and] we inside the camp experienced this many times, affected by the dust of bombardment [a] few kilometres away from us, it pollutes our air, our belongings our food and the atmosphere around us”.*

The team have also noticed an increase in illnesses such as acute respiratory infections, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pneumonia.

The Programme Director of SOS Children’s Villages in Gaza continued, *“The ongoing conflict, coupled with air pollution from dust and debris, has contributed to the rise in these conditions. Furthermore, the lack of adequate healthcare access and the overcrowded shelters have only exacerbated these respiratory issues.”*

Children are disproportionally affected by the conflict in Gaza. **SOS Children’s Villages is calling for a permanent ceasefire, and for increased humanitarian aid to Gaza, to ensure that children do not have to continue to bear the brunt of the conflict.**

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1. Figures from OCHA as of 21 May 2025: [Reported impact snapshot | Gaza Strip \(21 May 2025\) | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Occupied Palestinian Territory](#)

2. More on the destruction of the SOS Children's Village in

Rafah: <https://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/news/evacuated-sos-childrens-village-in-gaza-destroyed/>

3. A number of children were evacuated from the SOS Children's Village in Rafah, in Gaza, to an SOS Children's Village in the West

Bank:

Those that could not be evacuated were moved to the Khan Younis camp.

4. You can read personal stories from children living in the Khan Younis camp, here:

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