

Terror, Sounds of War Surround Children in Syria

After 20 months of fighting, there is no sign to an end in the civil war ravaging Syria. The war has claimed more than 30,000 lives and left the country in ruins. The children of Syria have been among the victims.

"I spoke to a little girl (Yasmin) in Damascus," an Open Doors contact says. "What the girl shared with a mix of seriousness and humor shows what a terrible situation Syrian children grow up nowadays. Yasmin told me that they got rain and thunder in Damascus as the fall season is approaching. Then she continued to say with a small laugh, 'it's raining and thundering not just what God is sending us, but all kinds of stuff.'

"Children call the sound of bombings, attacks, gun shots and cannons 'music.' We wake up with this sound of music, live with it during the day and go to sleep with it."

The girl also told about shelling near her school. "All windows broke, but I wasn't hit by the glass. While all students were running around crying, I and a friend of mine were not afraid. We felt how the peace of Jesus fell on our lives."

The Open Doors contact adds: "Bombings, missiles, shelling, attacks are happening all over the country and are increasing in Aleppo and Damascus. But God's favor is over His church. Pain and suffering are seen daily, but the church is keeping its hope in Jesus."

The reality is harsh. Sunday there was a bomb attack in the Christian neighborhood of Bab Toma in the old city of Damascus. "Thirteen people died and over 70 got injured," says

the contact. "One person from the Presbyterian Church died. Jenna from the Nazarene Church got injured. She shared how God lifted her up by a miracle and placed her back on the ground. She had just passed the car with the bomb three seconds earlier."

The bomb exploded around 11 a.m. Sunday morning, the Open Doors' contact shares. "One of the pastors of a nearby church said that this was not long after their morning service was over. The believers went back to church for the evening service and many came."

A pastor from Aleppo reports that prices are getting higher and higher. "We are in a very tough situation and we don't know where we are heading. But thank God, after one week without running water, we just have water again. Having water is a luxury these days."

Christians in Damascus see God's protection and testify about His power. Martitza tells: "My bedroom was destroyed by a grenade which fell nearby. My bed was split in half. Because I was that night taking care of my mother-in-law who is very ill, I did not die in my bed."

In the midst of all the fighting, there are many kidnappings. According to the Open Doors contact, a priest and his wife in Katana were kidnapped. "Bold attacks on Christians and Christian areas are increasing." The contact says that churches continue to do their best to reach out to people and take care of them. "They focus their eyes and hope on Christ and on His plans."

The contact urges Christians in the West to **pray** for an end to the war, for Christians the energy to handle daily calamities and boldness to reach out with the gospel of Jesus Christ.