



**RETURNING JUVENILES: WAR TRAUMA AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT;  
FAMILY ADJUSTMENT AFTER TRAUMA AND SEVERE DISRUPTION**

## ‘Children are observed to be very resilient in the aftermath of crises’

“Unfortunately, mental health is often not a priority in the humanitarian sector. But, unless we look at this issue and provide correct and adequate support, we are creating a huge problem.” warns Christine McCormick from Save The Children. McCormick kicked off the inspiration session with shocking figures about the current child protection concerns in Syria. For example, as of 2017, the recruitment rate of children is up to 90 percent. This is a figure that has increased by almost 60 percent in the past two years. McCormick also talked about the psychological impact on children in Iraq as reported by local mental health professionals. “The children suffer from somatic conditions and other physical conditions due to psychological trauma. And there is also the impact of violence on the parents, which influences their ability to take care of their children.” McCormick’s main message is that “we need to see how we can work together to be able to support the mental health needs of children in places like Syria and Iraq.”

Trudy Mooren from the Dutch Foundation Centrum 45 is an expert in the field of family adjustment after trauma. In her presentation, Mooren explained: “Once children have been part of, witnessed or have indirectly been confronted with consequences of war, violence and migration, they are vulnerable to develop psychosocial difficulties. At the same time, children as well as families are observed to be very resilient in the aftermath of crises.” After talking about the main symptoms of traumatisation and how severe disruptive events can not only traumatise parents, but also influence the next generation, Mooren concluded on an upbeat note: “We can help these people. We also have to remember: if children are supported, parents also feel supported, and vice versa.”