

## **U.S. Pediatric Surgeon Heals War's Youngest Victims in Iraq, Donates Medical Aid to Displaced Children in Kabul, Afghanistan**

*During his military service in Iraq, U.S. Air Force pediatric surgeon Dr. Chris Coppola scrubbed in to perform surgery on a two-year-old child shot at a checkpoint and bleeding in the swollen right lobe of his brain. Now, having returned from Iraq, Dr. Coppola is turning his attention to a non-military effort to provide medical aid to children living in Kabul's largest internally displaced persons camp.*

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During his first night on call in Balad, Iraq, Air Force pediatric surgeon Dr. Chris Coppola scrubbed in to perform surgery on a two-year-old child shot at a checkpoint and bleeding in the swollen right lobe of his brain.

“It has been ten years since residency when I last opened a skull, but I know I can provide an extra set of steady hands. And when a boy has a bullet in his brain, there is not much time to consider whether or not you’ve been properly vetted,” Dr. Coppola describes in his memoir '[Coppola: A Pediatric Surgeon in Iraq](#)'.

With domestic hospitals strained by war and many Iraqi civilians without electricity and safe drinking water, families increasingly sought health care for their children in U.S. combat support hospitals; word quickly spread about Dr. Coppola in local villages. One Bedouin family arrived at the gates of the 332nd Air Theater Hospital where Dr. Coppola was stationed, holding a slip of paper bearing only his name and the Arabic phrase, “[Doctor for Children](#).”

Now, having returned from Iraq, Dr. Coppola is turning his attention to a non-military effort to provide medical aid to children living in Kabul's largest internally displaced persons camp. In the U.S.-led effort to hunt down Taliban, many civilians have lost their homes due to bombing and violence. Thousands of families have fled Helmand and are currently living in makeshift camps on the outskirts of Kabul, where open defecation, lack of toilets, and poor sanitation, have accelerated the spread of disease. Currently, more than 70% of the 2,000 children living there have pneumonia.

During the month of December, 10% of proceeds from book sales made at [www.coppolathebook.com](http://www.coppolathebook.com) will be donated to War Kids Relief's Helmand Children's Medical Fund (HCMF). [War Kids Relief](#) has formed a partnership with three children's hospitals in Kabul to create the HCMF, and as little as \$30 may save the life of a child.

Pauline Chen of [The New York Times](#) calls 'Coppola: A Pediatric Surgeon in Iraq' “...a powerfully thought-provoking and occasionally disturbing read.”

[NTI Upstream](#) is a Chicago-based publisher dedicated to the release of nonfiction that advances the conversation about issues of health and social welfare.



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