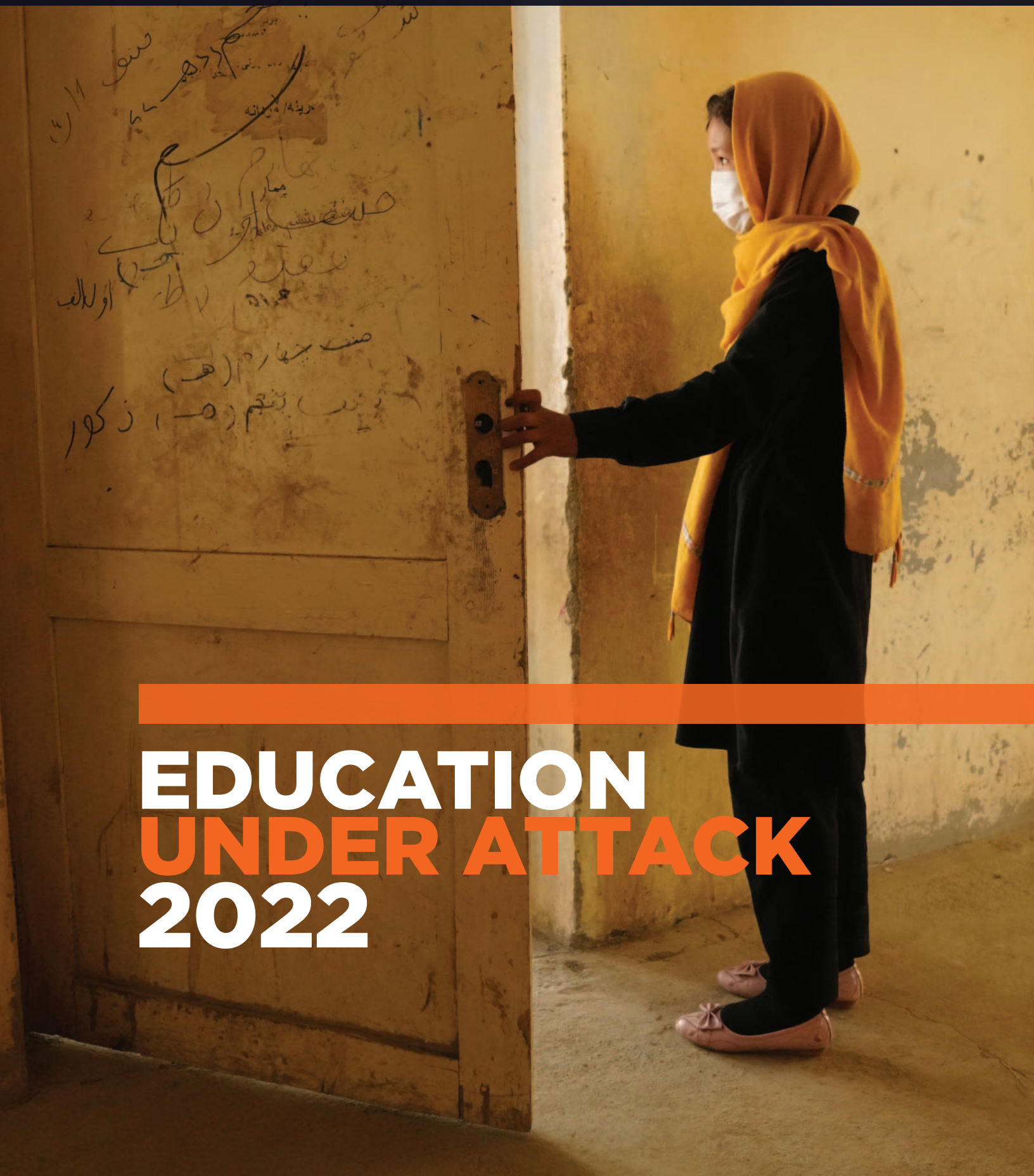
Global Coalition to
Protect Education from Attack

GCPEA



EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2022

Global Coalition to **Protect Education from Attack**

This study is published by the **Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)**, which was formed in 2010 by organizations working in the fields of education in emergencies and conflict-affected contexts, higher education, protection, and international human rights and humanitarian law that were concerned about ongoing attacks on educational institutions, their students, and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity.

GCPEA is a coalition of organizations that includes: Save the Children (Chair), Amnesty International, the Education Above All Foundation (EAA), Human Rights Watch, the Institute of International Education (IIE), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Plan International, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). GCPEA is a project of the Tides Center, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Education under Attack 2022 is the result of independent research conducted by GCPEA. It is independent of the individual member organizations of the Steering Committee of GCPEA and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Steering Committee member organizations.

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EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2022

CONTENTS

Abbreviations....4
Executive Summary....6
Global Overview....23
Positive developments in protecting education from attack....70
Recommendations....78
Methodology....82
Country Profiles....90
Endnotes....206

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Arakan Army (Myanmar)
ABVP	All India Student Council (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad)
ACSS	African Center for Strategic Studies
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACT	Alliance of Concerned Teachers (Phillipines)
AFP	French Press Agency (Agence France-Presse)
AGC	Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia)
AKP	Justice and Development party (AKP)
AMU	Aligarh Muslim University
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Burkina Faso and Mali)
ASWJ	Al-Sunna wa Jama'a
AU	African Union
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Philippines)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRN	National Revolutionary Front (Barisan Revolusi Nasional) (Thailand)
BU	Boğaziçi University
CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CAR	Central African Republic
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CESCR	UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CIMP	Civilian Impact Monitoring Project
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force (Nigeria)
CNN	Cable News Network
COALICO	Coalition Against Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia
CONASUR	National Council of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation
CPC	Coalition of Patriots for Change
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EHRC	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
EiEWG	Education in Emergencies Working Group
ELN	National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) (Colombia)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación (Ejército Popular de Liberación) (Colombia)
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ESMAD	Mobile Anti-Riot Squadron (Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios) (Colombia)
EU	European Union
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo)
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces Armées de la Republique Democratique du Congo)
FACA	Armed Forces of Central African Republic (Forces Armées Centrafricaines)
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
FETÖ	'Fethullahist Terrorist Organization' (Turkey)
FFP	Fund for Peace
FLM	Macina Liberation Front (Mali)
FPRC	Popular Front for the Renaissance in the Central African Republic (Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain)
GCA	Government-Controlled Areas (Ukraine)
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education under Attack
GIEI	Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (Grupo Interdisciplinario de Expertos Independientes)
GNA	Government of National Accord (Libya)
HRC	Human Rights Council
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IRG	internationally recognized government of Yemen
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Centre (Nepal)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IS	"Islamic State"
ISIL	"Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant"
ISACS	International Small Arms Control Standards
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISF	Israeli Security Forces
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISKP	"Islamic State of Khorasan Province" (Afghanistan)
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JAS	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
JeM	Jaish-e-Mohammad (Pakistan and India)
JNIM	Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen) (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger)
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
LNA	Libyan National Army
MARTE	Management of Explosive Devices (Manejo de Artefactos Explosivos) (Colombia)
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MoE	Ministry of Education
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPC	Central African Patriotic Movement (Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique)
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NAS	National Salvation Front
NDS	National Directorate of Security (Afghanistan)
NGCA	Non-Government-Controlled Areas (Ukraine)
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
NISS	National Intelligence Security Service
NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces (Iraq)
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RFI	Radio France Internationale
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
RULAC	Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts Project
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM-AW	Sudan Liberation Army led by Abdul Wahid Al-Nur
SMM	Special Monitoring Mission
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (Ethiopia)
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army In Opposition
SOS	Save our Schools Network (Philippines)
SRSG CAAC	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
SSD	Safe Schools Declaration
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defense Forces
STC	Southern Transitional Council (Yemen)
STJ	Syrians for Truth and Justice
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TLP	Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan
UAF	Ukrainian Armed Forces
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Project
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNA	National Agrarian University
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Missions in Afghanistan
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Missions in Iraq
UN CTFMRM	United Nations Country Taskforce on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJHRO	United Nations Joint Human Rights Office
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UPC	Union for Peace in Central African Republic (Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique)
UXO	unexploded ordnance
VOA	Voice of America
YPG	People's Protection Unit (Syria)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2022

A classroom in Gaza, Palestine sustained damages due to explosive weapons during fighting in May 2021. Over 290 schools were damaged by attacks during a 10-day escalation of hostilities between Israeli armed forces and Palestinan armed groups.

© 2021/Save the Children

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Attacks on education and military use of schools increased by one-third in 2020 compared to 2019, and remained at the same rate in 2021.** Meanwhile, the number of people harmed in attacks and military use declined by half in 2020, compared to 2019, then doubled in 2021, returning to near pre-pandemic rates. In some countries, during initial public-health lockdowns in early 2020, GCPEA noted a reduction in attacks on education followed by a spike in attacks on schools or school teachers and students when educational facilities reopened in late 2020 or early 2021. **Armed forces and non-state armed groups also took advantage of vacant schools, using them for military purposes during the pandemic in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria**, and **Sudan**, amongst others.

   One explanation for the decline in the number of people harmed in 2020 may be that fewer students or staff were present in schools or universities when attacks occurred. Alternatively, with students and teachers out of schools due to the pandemic, armed groups and armed forces opposed to education no longer needed to violently prevent their attendance. As students and educators resumed in-person learning in 2021, the number of people harmed was similar to in years prior to the pandemic.

2. **In 2020 and 2021, the highest incidences of attacks on education schools were in Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Myanmar, and Palestine.** In each country, hundreds of school buildings were threated, bombed, burned, or looted, among other violent attacks.

   During the same period, **India**, **Nigeria**, **Pakistan,** and **Turkey** had high reported numbers of people harmed as a result of attacks on education. In Nigeria, high numbers of students, including girls, were abducted, while the other countries saw hundreds or thousands of educators or students arrested for protesting education policy.

3. **Two situations are profiled for the first time in the 2022 report: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in Azerbaijan and an insurgency affecting the northern Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique.** In Azerbaijan, over 130 schools were reportedly damaged or destroyed by heavy fighting and military use in 2020. In Mozambique, over 110 classrooms were reportedly destroyed due to armed attack.

4. **Attacks rose in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mali, Myanmar, and Nigeria during this reporting period, compared to 2018-2019.** In Myanmar, attacks on schools and military use skyrocketed after a military coup in February 2021. In Colombia, attacks on schools and educators appeared to worsen during the pandemic, as fighting between armed groups and government forces caused an increase in violence in 2020. Hostilities erupted in northern Ethiopia in late 2020, resulting in a significant uptick in attacks on education. In Nigeria and Burkina Faso, the number of students or educators abducted by armed groups increased.

5. **In Ukraine, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, among other countries, attacks on education declined in 2020 and 2021, as compared to 2018 and 2019.** These declines were related to conflict de-escalation.

6. **Globally, incidents of military use of schools and universities more than doubled in 2020 and 2021, as compared to 2018 and 2019, rising to over 570 incidents.** Driving this increase was a spike in the military use of education facilities in **Myanmar**, where nearly 40 percent of all such cases occurred in the last two years. GCPEA also observed increases in cases of military use in **CAR, DRC, Ethiopia,** and **Iraq.**

7. **Girls and women were reportedly targeted because of their gender in attacks on education in at least 11 countries.** In certain contexts, such as **Afghanistan, Nigeria**, and **Pakistan**, armed groups targeted female students and teachers or their education facilities in efforts to obstruct their access to education. In addition, armed forces, state security forces, and non-state armed groups perpetrated conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls at, or on the way to or from, schools or universities.

8. **Explosive weapons were used in around one-fifth of all reported attacks on education during the reporting period.** Such attacks were either targeted or collateral and involved air-launched or ground-launched explosives, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), landmines, and unexploded remnants of war. These attacks often caused damage or destruction to educational infrastructure and killed or injured hundreds of students and educators. In 2020 and 2021, these attacks were most frequently reported in **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Myanmar, Palestine**, **Syria**, and **Yemen**. For example, attacks on schools involving explosive weapons killed or injured at least 185 students and educators in Afghanistan, nearly all of them girls, in the first half of 2021 alone.

9. **Between the publication of Education under Attack 2020 and February 2022, nine new countries endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, with a total of 113 countries now committing to protect education in situations of armed conflict. T**he United Nations (UN) observed the first and second International Day to Protect Education from Attack on September 9, 2020, and 2021. Global leaders, including the Secretary-General of the UN, highlighted the importance of the Declaration. The UN Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement on Attacks on Schools in September 2020 and a resolution on attacks on education in October 2021 with explicit mention of the Safe Schools Declaration.



Police use teargas and water cannons to disperse protesting teachers, in Agartala city, Tripura state, India, on January 27, 2021. The teachers protested the elimination of teaching appointments across the state and irregularities in hiring.

© *Times of India/PTI Photo*

Education came under violent attack frequently over the last two years, even as the Covid-19 pandemic closed schools and universities around the world. Attacks on education and military use increased globally during this period, as compared to the previous two years.

In 2020 and 2021, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) identified over 5,000 reported attacks on education and cases of military use of schools and universities. Over 9,000 students and educators were abducted, arbitrarily arrested, injured, or killed in these events. By comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected over 4,300 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use that harmed approximately 9,400 students and educators.

Two weeks in May 2021 underscore the unrelenting pace and far-reaching effects of these violent attacks. First, on May 8, 2021, an attack on a girls' school in Kabul, Afghanistan, killed or injured over 320 people, the majority of whom were reportedly schoolgirls.[1] Just a day after the funeral for victims of the Kabul attack,[2] news emerged of escalating hostilities in Palestine. Between May 10 and 21, 2021, a staggering 290 education facilities were damaged or destroyed there.[3] Meanwhile, on May 17, 2021, an armed group reportedly abducted 11 teachers and staff from a vocational training center in the North-West region of Cameroon;[4] on that same day, two schools were bombed in Myanmar, according to media reports,[5] and, two days later, in Colombia, security forces allegedly fired live ammunition at protesters in a school.[6] In that same week, an armed group raided a primary school in Mali and stole teachers' personal effects.[7] Soon after, on May 20, 2021, bombs struck a school in Yemen, killing four children.[8]

These events in May 2021 were not exceptional. **On average, six attacks on education or cases of military use of schools were recorded daily over the past two years.**

The *Education under Attack 2022* report profiles the 28 conflict-affected countries most affected by attacks on education in 2020 and 2021. While analyses reveal a global increase in attacks on education, as the following pages highlight, complex dynamics occurred between and within countries, with rates of attacks rising in some areas alongside declines elsewhere. The Global Overview and country profiles provide background on the contextual factors driving these attacks, along with annual trends and incident reporting.

Trends in the five categories of attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in 2020-2021

GCPEA tracks five categories of attacks on education and military use of educational facilities. The following are global trends for the 2020-2021 reporting period for each of these categories.

Attacks on Schools

Attacks on schools were the most common form of attacks during the reporting period, making up nearly two-thirds of all reported incidents of attacks on education and military use collected by GCPEA. In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected reports of over 3,000 attacks on schools which occurred in 27 of the 28 profiled countries.

During the reporting period, **DRC**, **Mali,** and **Palestine** were the countries most affected by attacks on schools, each experiencing over 400 attacks in 2020 and 2021. Mali experienced hundreds of threats of violence that led over 1,000 schools to close.[9] In DRC, hundreds of schools were damaged or destroyed during conflict. For example, the UN reported that in 2020, over 340 schools in Tanganyika province had been destroyed due to armed conflict.[10] In Palestine, attacks damaged over 190 education facilities in Gaza during 11 days of heavy conflict May 2021.[11] In one incident, an airstrike damaged 29 classrooms and the compound wall of two United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools in Gaza,[12] while over 50 schools in the West Bank received stop-work or demolition orders, among other types of attacks.[13]

Other countries where schools where heavily affected by attacks included **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan,** and **Myanmar.**

"I am afraid that my school will be hit again"

In Syria, at least 70 reported attacks on schools and universities involving explosive weapons occurred in 2020 and 2021, many of which produced damage or destruction. Sometimes schools, or students and teachers, were repeatedly affected. Rose, a 13-year-old student, went to two different schools that were attacked during the conflict: "I used to go to a school at the southern end of my town, but it was destroyed during the ongoing conflict. I moved to another school that was in a basement, but it also was attacked and damaged and is no longer a place where we can learn. I have been displaced again, and now I go to a new school. I never told anyone I was afraid, but our teacher told us that it is OK to be afraid. Now I can tell you I am afraid that my school will be hit again."[14]

Attacks on School Students, Teachers, and Other Education Personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified over 630 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel across the 28 profiled countries. In these attacks, over 2,400 students, teachers or education personnel were reportedly injured, killed, abducted, or threatened, and around 2,300 were reportedly arrested or detained. These attacks were distinct from students or teachers injured or killed in attacks on schools and universities. In several countries, girls and women were specifically targeted due to their gender.



A survivor of the May 8, 2021, bombing of Sayed Al-Shuhada school in Kabul, Afghanistan, reads a book a week after the attack. At least 85 civilians were killed and over 240 were wounded, the majority of whom were reported to be schoolgirls ages 11 to 18.

© 2021 UNICEF/UN0464832/UNICEF Afghanistan

Nigeria had the highest number of people harmed, with over 1,000 students or educators reportedly abducted, injured, or killed, at least one-third of whom were women and girls. The rate of these attacks, many of which were perpetrated by unidentified armed groups, escalated from December 2020 onwards.[15] **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon, Palestine, Somalia,** and **Colombia**, also had high numbers of students and educators threatened, abducted, injured, or killed by targeted and indiscriminate attacks.

In **Pakistan**, more than 200 students and teachers were arrested or detained for participating in education-related protests and in **India** the number was over 1,500.

"Teachers are being persecuted every day, every hour."

On October 5, 2021, Cameroonian teachers held a protest to call for better protections for educators working in conflict-affected areas of the country. In 2020 and 2021, teachers confronted violence from both Boko Haram in the Far North region and armed separatists in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

A spokesperson for the Cameroon Association of Teachers in Crisis told Voice of America:

"Teachers are being persecuted every day, every hour. Some have been brutally killed. Others, brutally deprived of some parts of their bodies, forced out of their areas to become internally displaced persons. Some are now jobless. My heart bleeds for these teachers. I pray peace should return."[16]

Military Use of Schools and Universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified around 570 reported cases of military use of educational facilities globally. Cases of military use more than doubled as compared to 2018 and 2019, when GPCEA collected reports of around 240 incidents of military use globally.

Military use of schools and universities was reported in 24 countries in 2020 and 2021, 23 of which were profiled in this report.

Myanmar experienced the highest number of education facilities used for military purposes, with at least 200 reported incidents over the 2020-2021 reporting period. The UN reported that security forces used 176 schools and universities between February, when the coup occurred, and September 2021.[17] These cases occurred in at least 13 states and regions, according to earlier UN reports.[18]



Troops stationed outside of a burning school in Yeghenut village (Kilbajar), Azerbaijan, in November 2020.

© 2020 Human Rights Watch/ Dmitri Beliakov



"There are soldiers inside, and I'm afraid of the soldiers"

In Myanmar, security forces were deployed to schools across the country in 2021, sometimes occupying them to use for bases and other times with the alleged purpose of protecting the schools. Military forces inside of schools deterred students from attending.

As one 10-year-old girl in Magway region told Save the Children, *"I wasn't able to go to school for the whole of last year because of the virus. And this year I dare not go. I want to go to school, but I'm scared. Although the school gates are closed, there are soldiers inside, and I'm afraid of the soldiers. I'm afraid that there might be a bomb blast at our school while we are there."* [19]

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school in four countries: **Colombia, DRC, Mali,** and **Yemen**. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified such reports in six countries; four of the countries where child recruitment and use had been reported between 2018 and 2019 had no new reports of child recruitment related to school in the 2020-2021 period, **Afghanistan, Burundi, Somalia,** and **Venezuela**. In **Mali**, GCPEA had not identified child recruitment in 2018 or 2019.

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school and university

In the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university in seven countries, including six profiled in this report: **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, DRC, Nigeria,** and **Turkey.** Women and girls were primarily affected by this violation, although GCPEA also identified reports of sexual violence against boys and men. With the exception of Nigeria, GCPEA had not identified any reports of sexual violence in these countries in 2018 or 2019. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence in nine countries.

Sexual violence perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities, and non-state armed groups, at, or on the way to or from, school or university remained one of the most challenging areas to collect data.

Primary school students in Kalemie, DRC stand in front of their classroom that was under repair in November 2021 after being burned down during communal conflicts in Tanganyika province.

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Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 320 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in the countries profiled in this report. Of these, around 240 reported attacks were directed at university students and personnel, while over 80 reported attacks targeted university facilities. By comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected around 340 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in conflict-affected profiled countries.[20]

In 2020 and 2021, over 580 university students or personnel were injured, abducted, or killed, as a result of attacks on higher education, and another 1,450 were detained, arrested, or convicted.

The profiled countries most affected by attacks on higher education facilities were **Myanmar, Palestine**, and **Yemen,** where many of the attacks involved explosive weapons. **India** and **Turkey** were the profiled countries most affected by attacks on university students and personnel. In both countries, over 400 students and academics were arrested during education-related protests, or in relation to their academic work.

November 2020 Attack on Kabul University

"We were very scared and we thought it could be the last day of our lives… boys and girls were shouting, praying and crying for help," reported a 23-year-old survivor of the November 2, 2020 attack on Kabul University. The student recounted how he and his classmates were held hostage by Islamic State gunmen for more than two hours before being rescued.[21]

The gunmen detonated explosives, fought state security forces, and held dozens of students and staff hostage in classrooms. The attack lasted over five hours; about 22 students (ten women)[22] were killed and over 20 wounded (including many women).[23] The attack damaged classrooms and educational materials and affected the learning of more than 21,000 students (including over 7,000 women).[24] Several students reported psychological distress from the attack and did not resume classes. Months later, six perpetrators of the attack were tried and convicted.[25] To read more about the impacts of this attack, see GCPEA's Case Study on the Impact of Explosive Weapons in Afghanistan.



Explosive weapons severely damaged a school in the frontline village of Shyrokyne in eastern Ukraine, in April 2021.

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Belongings of abducted students are seen inside the premises of Bethel Baptist High School as their parents pray for their return. Gunmen abducted the students in Chikun Local Government Area, Kaduna state, Nigeria on July 14, 2021.

© 2021 Kola Sulaimon / AFP via Getty Images

Schoolgirls abducted from Zamfara state, Nigeria, in February 2021

Over 100 gunmen allegedly stormed a Government Girls Secondary school in Jangebe town in Zamfara state, Nigeria, at 1:00am on Friday, February 26, 2021, while schoolgirls were sleeping in the dormitory.

A witness to the attack reported that: "[The gunmen] broke the school gate and shot at the security man. Then they moved into the hostels and woke up the girls, telling them it was time for prayers. After gathering all of them, the girls were crying and they took them away to the forest. They were also shooting in the air as they were marching to the forest."[26]

Authorities reported that 279 schoolgirls were later released.[27] In Nigeria, armed groups have previously targeted girls in mass abductions.[28]

Gendered dynamics of attacks on education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified 11 countries where girls and women were reportedly targeted because of their gender in attacks on education. In certain contexts, such as **Afghanistan, Nigeria**, and **Pakistan**, armed groups, armed forces, and other state security forces specifically targeted girls and women. In those countries, girls' schools were burned or bombed to suppress female education, and students or staff were threatened, killed or abducted. In other instances, armed groups, military, or other security forces sexually abused or abducted women and girls at, or on the way to or from, schools, such as in **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Colombia** and **DRC**. In **Yemen**, armed groups recruited girls from schools.

GCPEA research found that women and girls are differentially impacted by attacks on education, including experiencing more difficulties in resuming education after an attack.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has found that attacks on education are on the rise in many armed conflicts around the world. These attacks cause acute and lasting impacts on teaching and learning, from physical damage inflicted on education infrastructure to lasting trauma and physical injury on students and educators. The findings of this report have also underscored the gendered impact of attacks on education and disproportionate effects these attacks have on women and girls. GCPEA's core recommendations hinge on the endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.

End attacks on education and Implement the Safe Schools Declaration and *Guidelines*

- Parties to armed conflict should immediately cease unlawful attacks on education.
- States should endorse, implement, and support the Safe Schools Declaration to ensure that all students and educators can learn and teach in safety.
- States should implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict.
- Armed forces and armed groups should avoid using schools and universities for military purposes, including by implementing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.

Monitor and report on attacks on education

- States and other monitoring bodies should strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, including disaggregating data by type of attack on education, gender, age, location, person, or group responsible, number of days the institution was closed, and type of institution to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education. Use GCPEA's new *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education*.

Hold perpetrators to account and provide assistance to survivors

- National and international justice institutions should systematically investigate attacks on education and appropriately prosecute those responsible.
- States and other institutions should provide nondiscriminatory assistance for all survivors of attacks on education, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or other attributes, while taking into account their distinct needs and experiences based on gender, and potential vulnerabilities such as disability and displacement.

Plan for and mitigate the impact of attacks on education

- Where feasible, states should maintain safe access to education during armed conflict, including by working with school and university communities and all other relevant stakeholders to develop strategies to reduce the risk of attacks, and comprehensive safety and security plans in the event of these attacks.
- Education providers should ensure that any post-Covid-19 "back-to-school" campaigns and catch-up classes include learners who previously ended their studies due to attacks on schools, insecurity, or displacement; they should also continue to expand distance-learning and other alternative education programs established in response to Covid-19 to benefit these learners.
- Education providers should ensure that education does not exacerbate conflict but promotes peace and provides physical and psychosocial protection for students, including by addressing gender-based stereotypes and barriers that can trigger, exacerbate, and result from attacks on education.
- Education providers should "Build back better" after attacks on education and ensure funding not only to repair but to improve schools and make them safer and more inclusive to all students and educators.



Children look at books in an elementary school in the village of Bisober, Tigray region, Ethiopia on December 9, 2020. The school was occupied and also damaged after fighting in November 2020.

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) documented over 5,000 reported attacks on education and military use of educational facilities in the 2020-2021 reporting period. These incidents harmed at least 9,000 school and university students, teachers, professors, and personnel.

Attacks on education and the military use of schools increased in the reporting period, as compared to the previous two years, even as schools were closed for prolonged periods due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected over 4,300 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use that harmed approximately 9,400 students, educators, and personnel.[29]

Education under Attack 2022 tracks attacks on education and military use in situations of armed conflict from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021. Each of the 28 conflict-affected countries profiled in this report experienced a systematic pattern of attacks on education.[30] In addition to the 28 countries profiled in this report, GCPEA identified sporadic reports of attacks on education in at least 56 other countries.

Attacks on education are defined as any threat or actual use of force by state armed forces or non-state armed groups, on students, education personnel, or educational infrastructure or materials, for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, or religious reasons. This report also monitors the use of schools and universities for military or security purposes.[31] Complete definitions of attacks and military use are included in the Methodology section of this report.

Summary of Findings

In 2020 and 2021, **Mali** and **DRC** were the countries where GCPEA recorded the highest incidence of attacks on education. During the same period, **India**, **Nigeria**, **Pakistan,** and **Turkey** had the highest reported numbers of people harmed as a result of attacks on education. In these countries, high numbers of students or educators were impacted in events directly targeting them, such as arrests or abductions.

Analyses found that school closures during Covid-19 drove attacks down initially in some countries, such as **Palestine** and Sahel countries like **Mali,** but that these declines, for the most part, were temporary, and attacks escalated when schools reopened.

Education under Attack 2022 profiles two countries not included in the previous report: **Mozambique** and **Azerbaijan**. Mozambique faced insurgencies in its northern and central regions, whereas Azerbaijan experienced an international armed conflict.

Of the countries profiled in the last edition of the report, *Education under Attack 2020*, one country, **Egypt**, experienced a decline in reported attacks, alongside a decline in violence, and so no longer met the threshold for a profile in this edition.[32]

GCPEA found that reported incidents of attacks and military use, or people injured, killed, or otherwise harmed by them, increased in several countries, including **Burkina Faso, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mali, Myanmar,** and **Nigeria,** as compared to 2018 and 2019; Mali, Colombia, and Ethiopia had high numbers of actual or threatened attacks on schools, while Burkina Faso and Nigeria experienced a significant number of attacks on school and university students or educators.

In **Ukraine, South Sudan, Syria**, and **Yemen,** amongst other countries, attacks on education declined in 2020 and 2021, as compared to the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*; these declines were related to conflict de-escalation. In **Palestine** and **DRC**, attacks on education occurred at a similar rate, but affected different regions of the country. Meanwhile, rates of attacks on education and military use peaked in **Afghanistan** and **India** in 2018 and 2019 respectively, but on average, rates remained constant across the reporting periods.

Women and girls were affected by targeted attacks in at least ten countries during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Women and girls were also disproportionately affected by sexual violence at or on the way to or from school.

Contextualizing Attacks on Education in 2020 and 2021

Several trends marked the 2020-2021 reporting period, not least the Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside the pandemic, a range of country- and region-specific political and contextual factors, and fluctuations in armed conflict, impacted rates of attacks on education and military use.

In March 2020, governments around the world closed schools and universities to prevent the spread of Covid-19, affecting over 1.5 billion students and youth around the world.[33] Around the time that schools shut their doors, the UN Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire.[34]

This appeal notwithstanding, conflict and political violence continued at high levels in several contexts during the reporting period.[35] For example, the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) observed that global levels of armed conflict remained constant between 2019 and 2020, with a slight decline in the number of casualties.[36] Despite this overall trend, certain forms of violence and ongoing conflicts declined in 2020 compared to 2019.[37] For example, the UN found that airstrikes decreased globally between April and July 2020, as compared to the same period the previous year, from 554 to 160.[38] Some declines in hostilities were driven by negotiations and ceasefires from before the pandemic such as the United States (US)-Taliban peace talks in **Afghanistan** in late February 2020[39] and the Russian-Turkish ceasefire in **Syria** in early March 2020,[40] according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).[41]

Beyond armed conflicts, ACLED reported that political violence decreased by around 22 percent in 2020 compared to 2019.[42] This decline was largely driven by a decrease in protests and demonstrations, and violent efforts to repress them, during the first months of the pandemic.

Civilians increasingly suffered the worst effects of armed violence in many countries during the pandemic.[43] For example, in 2020, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) recorded 9.8 million people newly displaced due to conflict and violence around the world, an increase from 8.6 million in 2019.[44] The UN also reported that civilians made up nearly 90 percent of all casualties resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in 2020.[45]

In the Middle East, although overall levels of violence decreased, conflict and violence persisted or even increased in some countries. The reduction was related to the decline in violence involving the Islamic State (IS) in **Iraq** and **Syria,** as well as the 2020 ceasefire in Syria. Meanwhile, countries such as **Yemen** and **Iraq** continued to register high rates of political violence in 2020, as compared to other countries, according to ACLED.[46] In **Yemen**, governates in the north experienced an increase in both hostilities and civilian casualties in 2020.[47] In **Libya,** despite a UN-brokered ceasefire in October 2020 and the formation of a Government of National Unity in 2021, low-level violence persisted in several parts of the country, in 2020 and 2021.[48]

In Europe, the decades-long Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in **Azerbaijan** escalated in 2020, with PRIO documenting over 7,600 fatalities in the year. It was the second most deadly conflict globally[49] and caused significant damage to civilian infrastructure.[50] In **Ukraine**, the UN and International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that violence, already reduced relative to previous years, further declined in 2020 after a strengthened ceasefire was negotiated in July 2020.[51] However, ceasefire violations increased throughout 2021, with five times as many violations in December 2021 than during the same month in 2020.[52]

In **Colombia,** the UN documented an increase in violence in 2020,[53] and reported that armed groups and criminal groups were increasingly targeting former armed group members, human rights defenders, and women, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian leaders.[54] In East Asia, the security situation deteriorated in **Myanmar** after a military coup in February 2021 sparked widespread protests and violent efforts to repress dissent.[55] In **Thailand,** violence briefly declined during the reporting period, after the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), a separatist armed group, declared a unilateral ceasefire in April 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.[56] However, violence persisted in late 2020 and 2021, according to a local security observatory and media reports.[57] In the **Philippines**, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN reported that violence against human rights and Indigenous leaders rose in the context of an anti-communist insurgency campaign in 2020 and 2021.[58]

In South and Central Asia, violence declined in 2020, only to spike again in 2021 in **Afghanistan,** as the Taliban battled state armed forces and non-state armed groups to eventually retake control of the government and most territories.[59] In **India**, low-grade violence continued in Jammu and Kashmir and in central and eastern states affected by the Naxalite insurgency, while tensions over state borders resurfaced.[60] In **Pakistan**, attacks by armed groups targeting security forces and civilians increased in both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security forces carried out attacks on armed groups. [61]

Violence remained constant or increased in many African countries in 2020 and 2021, due primarily to increased activities of non-state armed groups.[62] This may also be reflected in the findings of the report: the two most affected countries, **Mali** and **DRC**, are located in sub-Saharan Africa. Some non-state armed groups were aligned with the Islamic State while others regrouped around ethnic identities, according to ACLED.[63] In August 2020, the Global Protection Cluster reported a 30 percent increase in attacks against civilians globally, and a 70 percent increase in violence by non-state armed groups in East and West Africa, most prominently observed in **DRC**, **Burkina Faso**, and **South Sudan**.[64] For example, in 2020, the UN estimated that armed violence killed over 2,100 civilians across eastern **DRC**, more than double the number of civilian deaths in 2019, with armed groups responsible for the majority.[65] Hostilities continued in **Nigeria's** northeast between government forces and Boko Haram, a non-state armed group that has explicitly targeted what it calls Western education for over a decade,[66] as well as

Attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in profiled countries, 2020-2021

Very heavily affected

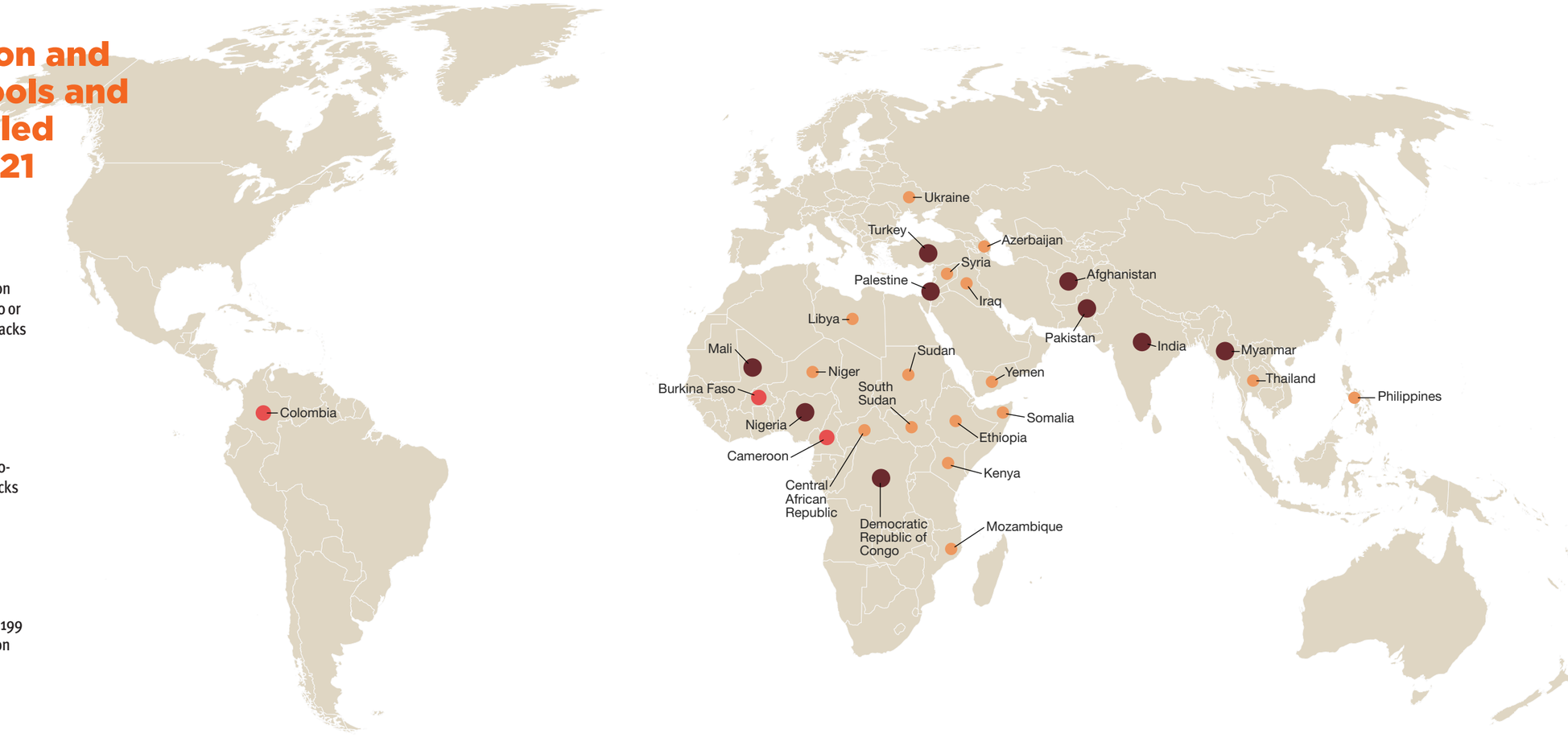
Reports documented 400 or more incidents of attacks on education or military use of educational facilities or 400 or more students and education personnel harmed by attacks on education

Heavily affected

Reports documented 200-399 incidents of attacks on education or military use of educational facilities or 200-399 students and education personnel harmed by attacks on education

Affected

Reports documented 10-199 incidents of attacks on education or military use of educational facilities or 10-199 students and education personnel harmed by attacks on education



between government forces and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), now considered the dominant group after the death of Boko Haram's leader in May 2021.[67] Meanwhile, violence between pastoralists and farmer communities continued in **Nigeria's** northwest and northcentral regions, and recently expanded to some southern states.[68] In **Cameroon,** armed separatists in the North-West and South-West regions increasingly perpetrated attacks on civilians in 2020,[69] while in the Far North region, the African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) reported a 90 percent increase in violence by Boko Haram in 2020, as compared to 2019.[70]

In **Central African Republic,** electoral violence in late 2020 and early 2021 led to significant human rights violations;[71] the UN also decried the involvement of private security personnel in the fighting.[72] In **Ethiopia,** armed conflict erupted in Tigray region in November 2020, then spilled into neighboring Amhara and Afar regions in mid-2021.[73] Islamic State-related conflict fatalities remained relatively low in **Iraq** and **Syria** during the reporting period, according to UCDP.[74] However, IS and other militant groups expanded in Africa, according to UCDP and ACLED.[75] In addition, armed groups affiliated with IS and Al-Qaeda increasingly battled each other for territorial control in **Burkina Faso, Mali,** and **Niger**;[76] ACSS observed a 70 percent increase in violent events in the three countries in 2021, as compared to 2020, with over half of all incidents occurring in **Burkina Faso**.[77] ISWAP fought Boko Haram, and affiliated or splinter groups, in **Nigeria**, **Cameroon**, and **Niger**, with violence escalating as ISWAP attempted to consolidate the two groups following the death of Boko Haram's leader in May 2021.[78] In **Mozambique**, an armed group that claimed affiliation to the Islamic State captured strategic towns in the northern Cabo Delgado region in 2020, and increasingly engaged state forces and attacked villages.[79]

Covid-19 and Attacks on Education and Military Use of Schools and Universities

"The schools are closed because of Covid and war."[80]

— Community leader, Macomia, Mozambique, October 2020

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic spurred an unprecedented closure of schools and universities in over 190 countries, ultimately affecting over 1.5 billion students,[81] including 220 million tertiary education students globally.[82] In conflict-affected countries, Covid-19-related closures compounded many existing challenges faced by students and teachers, including attacks on education.[83] The pandemic also brought a massive infusion of resources into distance learning, a response long promoted to continue education in insecure areas. In the first weeks of school and university closures, the United Nations and international organizations posited that vacant school buildings would become increasingly vulnerable to military use during Covid-19,[84] leading to a rise in both use of and attacks on education facilities. Others speculated that violations against students and educators at school or university, including sexual violence and child recruitment, might decrease during closures . They warned, however, that these violations were likely to increase in home learning environments.[85]

GCPEA has identified some emergent trends relating to violent attacks on education during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. **Globally, reported attacks on education rose by one-third in 2020 as compared to the prior year.** Underlying this upward trend, GCPEA found that Covid-19 differentially impacted the various types of attacks on education, with significant variation between countries and regions.

In some cases, prolonged periods of closure heightened schools' and universities' vulnerability to military use and attack. In other cases, by staying home from school, students were spared the worst effects of armed violence, particularly in contexts where they were specifically targeted before the pandemic. Elsewhere, students and staff protesting either a return to, or delays to restarting, in-person learning were met with excessive force by police.

Where armed conflicts escalated during the 2020-2021 reporting period, attacks on education also tended to rise. While Covid-19 contributed to increased armed conflict and political violence, it was often alongside other geopolitical dynamics, as described in the previous section. For instance, in some countries where fighting increased, GCPEA also observed rises in attacks on education, such as in **Colombia, Central African Republic (CAR), Mozambique, Mali, Myanmar,** and **DRC.** Determining definitive linkages between Covid-19 and these increases in attacks on education was not possible, however. Among other reasons, lockdown periods were intermittent in many countries and often varied between regions, with some places experiencing far longer periods of school closures in order to contain the spread of the virus.

This textbox highlights some of the major trends in attacks on education related to Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021 among the countries profiled in this report.

In some countries, during initial lockdowns in 2020, GCPEA noted a reduction in attacks on education that was followed by a spike in attacks on schools or school teachers and students when educational facilities reopened. In the Central Sahel countries of **Burkina Faso, Mali**, and **Niger**, GCPEA noted that reported attacks on schools, students, and personnel came to a near halt between mid-March and late May 2020, and then began again in June 2020, when some classrooms reopened their doors.[86] In **Mali**, for example, the Education Cluster recorded over 500 threats and attacks against schools and teachers in June 2020 when some classrooms reopened.[87] In **Cameroon**, GCPEA noted an uptick in reported attacks on education between October and December 2020 as schools reopened after both Covid-19 and conflict-related closures; the UN recorded at least 35 attacks on schools in North-West and South-West regions between October 1 and December 10, 2020,[88] while only a handful of incidents were recorded between March and September during closures. In **Thailand**, after several months without reported incidents, attacks on education increased in the months following the reopening of schools in July 2020.

Elsewhere attacks continued unabated during Covid-19-related school closures. In some cases, after lockdown measures were lifted, schools that sustained damage in attacks experienced delays in reopening or reopened with damaged facilities. In **Azerbaijan,** a six-week conflict erupted in Nagorno-Karabakh only two weeks into the new school year in September 2020; in addition to re-closing schools for two to three months, at least 85 schools and kindergartens sustained looting or damage.[89] Human Rights Watch reported that several schools were repaired, but others opened with limited capacity after the conflict and lacked functional teaching space and supplies.[90] In **Colombia**, anti-personnel mines were found in two schools in Antioquia department in November 2020, according to local media. The mines, which had been installed during Covid-19 closures, prevented the municipality from reconnecting water service at the schools. The presence of mines and

lack of running water necessary for adequate sanitation delayed the re-opening of the schools by an additional week.[91]

While the overall number of attacks increased, GCPEA found that the number of students and personnel harmed in attacks on education declined by over half in 2020 as compared to 2019. One explanation may be that fewer students or staff were present in schools or universities when attacks occurred in 2020. For example, on June 18, 2020, a roadside explosive device reportedly detonated around 150 meters from a Turkish-run school in the Hodan area of Mogadishu, Banadir region, **Somalia**. According to a school board member, the blast did not harm any students or staff because the facility was closed due to Covid-19.[92] In **Turkey**, media sources reported that armed groups bombed or burned two school dormitories in 2020[93] and 2021,[94] both of which were empty at the time of attack due to Covid-19. This indicates that although schools continued to be impacted by armed violence, the students and teachers attending them were less likely to experience harm.

In some contexts where teachers and students were typically targeted in attacks in previous years, GCPEA recorded fewer attacks during Covid-19 lockdowns. In **Palestine**, for example, the number of attacks on school students and schools dropped to zero during the first month of Covid-19 lockdowns, according to Save the Children.[95] In **Cameroon,** around 250 students and teachers were reportedly harmed in targeted attacks in 2020 and 2021, a decline compared to 2018 and 2019 when over 500 school and university students and personnel were harmed, often in mass abduction incidents.[96]

In contrast, in other contexts where attacks on education are not specifically targeted, GCPEA observed few shifts in attacks on education related to Covid-19. For instance, in **Ukraine** and **Libya,** attacks remained relatively steady in the months immediately before and after Covid-19 school closures in 2020.

As the UN and international organizations had warned, armed forces and non-state armed groups took advantage of vacant schools, using them for military purposes during the pandemic. In **Sudan**, Human Rights Watch and local media reported that, on June 14, 2020, Sudan's Rapid Support Forces occupied a girls' school that was closed due to the pandemic and used it as a training base. The soldiers reportedly continued to use the school even after reopenings, preventing students from going back to school.[97] In **Afghanistan**, in July 2020, the Taliban reportedly established a position inside a high school in Takhar province while the school, which served over 1,000 students[98], was closed due to Covid-19. They allegedly set fire to the building, destroying education materials and equipment. In **Syria,** in May 2020, the UN reported that the Syrian Democratic Forces armed group used a school in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, for military purposes while it was closed during the pandemic. In **Myanmar,** between February 2021 and September 2021, the UN reported that 176 education facilities were used for military purposes, in at least 13 states and regions;[99] schools had been closed at the time of hostilities in February 2021 until June 2021 to prevent the spread of Covid-19,[100] which may have contributed to the staggering number of schools used for military purposes.

In law-enforcement operations in several countries profiled in this report, students and education staff protested school and university closures, as well as policies related to their reopening or the provision of distance learning during the pandemic. In response, police and state security forces in some countries violently repressed these education-related protests. In **Colombia**, Scholars at Risk and local media reported that in April 2021, ESMAD police forces entered the University del Valle, in Valle del Cauca department, to forcibly remove protesting students from campus including by using teargas. The students had held a sit-in on campus to protest the partial return of in-person classes and to demand adequate health protocols and necessary equipment for distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.[101] In **India,** media outlets reported that in July 2021, students protested taking in-person exams during the Covid-19 pandemic at the College of Engineering, Trivandrum, in Kerala state, including by entering the exam hall and throwing away exams. The police reportedly arrested three students in response and used excessive force while disbursing others.[102] In **Pakistan**, Scholars at Risk reported that in January 2021, at University of Central Punjab in Lahore, Punjab province, police baton-charged student protesters and arrested at least 37 students. Protesters were demanding online exams rather than on-campus exams amid the coronavirus pandemic. Police alleged that the demonstrators set fire to the campus gate and pelted stones at security guards.[103]

Additionally, in other law-enforcement operations in several countries profiled in this report, police and state security forces used violent force against students and staff demanding that schools and universities be reopened. For example, in **Sudan**, police used teargas to disperse teachers and persons with disabilities in February 2021, in Kassala city, Kassala state. Demonstrators were protesting that special needs schools had still not reopened after COVID-19 closures, even though other schools had opened two months earlier, as reported by local media *Radio Dabanga*.[104] In **DRC**, local media reported that a group of students from several higher education institutions demonstrated in Bukavu town, South Kivu province, on January 12, 2021; police allegedly used teargas and live ammunition to disperse the students, who were demanding an end to Covid-19 related closures of universities.[105]

Finally, in some countries profiled in this report, students and teachers protested the cost of school or university during the pandemic and were met with excessive force by police. In one example, in **Ethiopia,** in March 2020, police officers reportedly used excessive force, including firing shots, when dispersing student protests at Hawassa University's extension campus in Yirga Alem town, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples region. According to media outlet *Addis Standard*, students demonstrated after administrators rescinded transportation assistance when the university closed due to Covid-19 precautions. Around 50 students were allegedly injured in the incident.[106]

While the full extent of the effects of Covid-19 on education in situations of armed conflict remains to be seen, the pandemic had a clear influence on the dynamics of attacks on education in many countries. Military forces and groups occupied closed schools, attacks on students and teachers declined while learning occurred at home, in some countries, whereas students' demands over education during Covid-19 were violently repressed in others. As many governments raced to adopt distance learning measures, some countries, such as **Burkina Faso**, committed to extending these new modalities to students whose education was interrupted due to conflict and attacks on education.[107] GCPEA encourages other governments to make similar efforts to ensure that education innovations brought about by the pandemic benefit students and education personnel affected by armed violence.

For more details about how governments can protect education from attack during the Covid-19 pandemic by endorsing and implementing the Safe Schools Declaration, refer to *Supporting Safe Education in the Central Sahel* and the recommendation section of this report.

Motivations for attacks on education in the 2020-2021 reporting period

In 2020-2021, schools, universities, students, and teachers faced violence during armed conflict for several reasons. In some places, parties to conflict intentionally burned, looted, or otherwise damaged schools or universities because they oppose a certain type of instruction, such as girls' learning; or they viewed schools, and their students and personnel, as agents or symbols of a state system that they oppose. In these cases, school and university buildings, as well as students and educators, were targeted, including by threats, killings, and abductions. These types of attacks frequently occurred in countries like **Afghanistan**, **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger, Mali,** and **Myanmar** over the past two years.

In other countries, like **Colombia**, teachers were targeted for their activism and participation in unions. And in **the Philippines,** Lumad, or Indigenous, schools and their teachers were targeted for both ethnic and political reasons. In some countries, when schools serve as polling stations during elections, they also become targets for groups who are attempting to disrupt electoral processes or damage voting materials, such as in **CAR, India, Iraq,** and **Pakistan**.

In other contexts, parties to conflict frequently used explosive weapons in populated areas where schools and universities were located. These weapons, which include airstrikes, shelling, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and mines, can produce blasts that cause indiscriminate and far-reaching damage. Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) reported that at least 402 incidents of attacks on schools and universities involved explosive weapons globally between 2011 and 2020, resulting in over 5,961 casualties.[108] AOAV reported that IEDs were most commonly used in attacks on schools, and since this particular explosive weapon requires placement in or near a school, this suggested that such attacks were often targeted.[109] During the reporting period, GCPEA found that explosive weapons damaged or destroyed a significant number of education buildings or harmed a significant number of students and education personnel in **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan**, **Syria,** and **Yemen**. (See the textbox on the impacts of explosive weapons for more information on this topic.)



A sixth-grade student in Segou, Mali, who was displaced after armed attacks in his region, follows radio lessons in February 2021.

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Iraqi riot police try to disperse a protest by university students demanding the payment by the government of monthly allowances, which stopped since 2014, on November 23, 2021, near Sulaimaniyah University.

© AFP/ Shwan Mohammed via Getty Images

In other contexts, state police, military, or paramilitary forces arrested school and university students or personnel for holding protests or strikes on campus or related to education issues, such as in **India** and **Pakistan**. Also, state military or non-state armed groups sometimes attacked or threatened individuals or groups for academic scholarship that may be viewed as in opposition to their belief system or ideology, such as in **Colombia, the Philippines,** and **Yemen**.

In 2020 and 2021, state military, state police, and non-state armed groups, used school and university infrastructure for tactical purposes, for example as bases, barracks, fighting positions, prisons, interrogation or torture centers, or by placing barricades near them. In some cases, such as in **Myanmar, Syria,** and **Afghanistan**, this rendered the educational facilities vulnerable to either targeted or collateral attacks and placed students and personnel in close proximity to armed forces or groups, increasing their exposure to munitions and their risk of child recruitment, sexual violence, and injury. School-related child recruitment and sexual violence also occurred outside contexts of military use; GCPEA found incidents of both of these violations in **Yemen, Colombia,** and **DRC** during the reporting period.

Impacts of explosive weapons on education

In conflicts around the world, the use of explosive weapons has had devastating impacts on education facilities, students, and teachers. **In the 2020-2021 reporting period, approximately one-fifth of all reported attacks on education involved explosive weapons**, such as airstrikes, artillery, mortars, car bombs, roadside bombs, other improvised explosive devices (IED), and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Attacks on education using explosive weapons occurred in at least 25 countries during the reporting period.

Explosive weapons that produce wide-area effects are particularly dangerous when used in populated areas. They create a large blast, can spread fragments over a wide radius, and can cause indiscriminate harm to civilians.

Attacks on education using explosive weapons most commonly involved:

- Targeted or collateral strikes, whether air- or ground-launched, on education facilities, including mortars, artillery, grenades, and other bombs;
- IEDs or antipersonnel mines planted at or near education facilities, or along school or university routes, including roadside bombs or car bombs;
- Explosive remnants of war identified at or near schools, including unexploded mortars or artillery shells;
- Explosive weapons stored in schools or universities by armed groups or armed forces.

In 2020 and 2021, these attacks were most frequently reported in Myanmar and Palestine, where more than 180 and 290 incidents were reported respectively, followed by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Syria, countries where 85 or more attacks were identified.

State armed forces, whether national, foreign, or international, were typically responsible for air- and ground-launched strikes. Globally, air- and ground-launched strikes made up over two-thirds of all explosive weapons attacks in 2020 and 2021. A large proportion of these attacks occurred during intensive periods of fighting in Palestine and Azerbaijan. For example:

- In **Azerbaijan**, explosive weapons impacted education in the Nagorno-Karabakh zone of conflict. In areas administered by Nagorno-Karabakh de facto authorities, at least 71 schools and 14 kindergartens were reportedly damaged by shelling between September 27 and November 9, 2020.[110] The attacks and general insecurity caused the closure of 220 schools and 58 kindergartens in Nagorno-Karabakh, impacting around 24,000 school students and 4,000 pre-school students.
- In **Palestine,** during an 11-day escalation of hostilities in May 2021, explosive weapons damaged or destroyed around 191 public, private, and UNRWA schools and education administrative buildings; 19 higher education facilities; and 80 kindergartens, according to the Education Cluster, the UN, and Save the Children.[111]

Reports often attributed attacks with improvised explosive devices and mines to non-state armed groups. Sometimes these involved directly targeted attacks on schools, including girls' schools. During the reporting period, over half of all reported IED attacks on education took place in **Myanmar**. In more detail:

- In **Afghanistan**, between January 2020 and mid-2021, around 85 percent of attacks on education that GCPEA identified involved explosive weapons.[112] In one incident, on May 8, 2021, an unidentified armed group detonated a carful of explosives and two other bombs outside Sayed Shuhada High School, a girls' school, near Kabul. At least 85 civilians were killed and over 240 were wounded, the majority of whom were reported to be schoolgirls aged 11 to 18.[113]
- In **Colombia**, GCPEA identified over 25 reported attacks involving explosive weapons in 2020 and 2021, primarily IEDs and anti-personnel mines placed near schools and along school routes, in many cases preventing students from attending class.[114] In one example, a non-state armed group detonated two cylinder-bombs five meters from a school in Arauca department, targeting a passing military patrol, on September 6, 2021. The explosion injured one female student and damaged the school's foundation and electrical system, leaving more than 670 students who study in shifts without classes, according to Save the Children and local media.[115]
- In **Myanmar**, Save the Children identified over 100 explosive weapons incidents at education facilities in May 2021 alone, most of which involved IEDs.[116] Unidentified armed groups reportedly emplaced such weapons at or near schools, universities, or education administration buildings.[117]

During or after conflict, explosive remnants of war can remain near schools and continue to endanger students or teachers, or make it unsafe for schools to reopen. For example, in **Ukraine** on October 6, 2020, a 15-year-old boy and a 16-year-old boy were harmed when they picked up a hand grenade near a school, causing it to detonate, in Makiivka, Donetsk (NGCA), according to OHCHR.[118] The report did not specify whether the boys were students.

In some cases, schools or universities that are used for military purposes are targeted by an opposing group with explosive weapons. In other cases, schools or universities are used to house explosive weapons, which are sometimes detonated. GCPEA does not count these incidents as attacks on schools or universities, but rather as military use, since occupation of educational facilities, which includes weapons storage, can compromise their protection as civilian objects under international humanitarian law. For more information, see the methodology section of this report.

One example of explosive weapons use related to occupation of an educational facility occurred in **Yemen**, where local media reported that an armed group blew up a school where it had been storing weapons. The report claimed the detonation occurred upon the advance of national army forces to the area.[119]

Attacks on schools and universities in Syria with explosive weapons compared to attacks without, 2020-2021

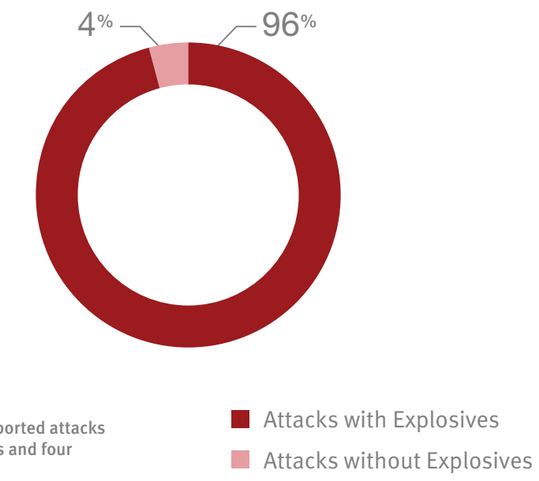


Figure 1

GCPEA identified 86 reported attacks with explosive weapons and four attacks without.

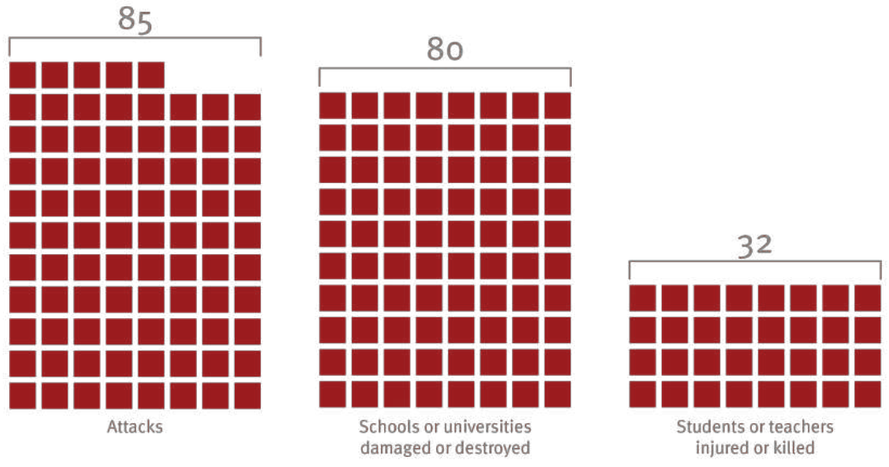


Figure 2

The number of reported incidents of attacks on schools and universities; the number of schools or universities damaged or destroyed; and the number of students or staff injured or killed.

Impacts of Explosive Weapons on Education in Syria

Attacks on schools and universities using air- and ground-launched mortars, rockets, and other explosive weapons can cause significant damage to educational facilities. In **Syria**, GCPEA identified approximately 90 reports of attacks on schools and universities in 2020 and 2021; around 85, or 96 percent, of these attacks involved explosive weapons (see graph 1). The majority of these attacks took place in 2020. Air- and ground-launched strikes were most common, although data sources did not reliably differentiate between these two types, so determining exact percentages was not possible.

During this reporting period, the approximately 85 reported attacks on schools and universities involving explosive weapons reportedly injured or killed at least 32 students and educators, and damaged or destroyed at least 80 education facilities in **Syria** (see chart 2). In some cases, a single air- or ground-launched strike caused damage to multiple education facilities.

In 2020, education in Idlib governorate was particularly affected by explosive weapons. Save the Children and local organization Hurras Network reported that on February 25, 2020, shelling struck ten schools in Idlib governorate, killing at least three teachers, and injuring dozens of children and around seven teachers.[120] In Idlib city alone, the UN verified eight attacks on schools and seven teacher casualties that same day.[121] Several of the schools sustained damages and reportedly closed following the attacks, affecting the education of thousands of students.

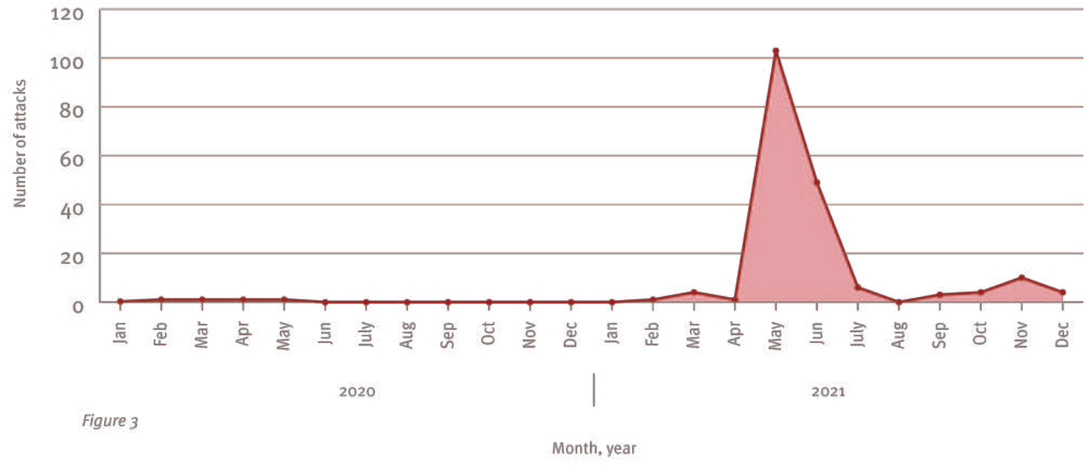


Figure 3

Impacts of Explosive Weapons on Education in Myanmar

The use of explosive weapons gravely impacted education in **Myanmar**. Government armed forces and non-state armed groups reportedly attacked schools and universities approximately 10 times in 2020 and over 200 times in 2021; the majority of these attacks involved the use of explosive weapons. Attacks on schools and universities involving explosive weapons escalated beginning in May 2021, several months after the February coup, when GCPEA recorded approximately 100 reported incidents that month alone. In 2020 and early 2021, fewer than five reported attacks involving explosive weapons were identified each month. After the peak in May 2021, GCPEA continued to identify reports of events involving explosive weapons, but in relatively reduced numbers: over 45 in June 2021 and more than five in July and November 2021 (see chart 3). Only a quarter of the country's 12 million students returned to school in June 2021, due to bombings of schools, insecurity, and the dismissal of teachers.[122]

Attacks on schools and higher education facilities involving explosive weapons also reportedly produced casualties and damage in **Myanmar**. In 2020 and 2021, explosive weapon attacks on schools and universities damaged more than 25 education facilities and harmed or killed more than 55 students or educators. For example, on February 13, 2020, an artillery shell struck the Basic Education Post-Primary School in Kha Mhwe Chaung village, Buthidaung township, according to the UN and media sources. The blast damaged the school and injured around 20 school children, some of whom were reportedly playing in the school yard at the time of the attack.[123] In comparison, attacks on schools and higher education facilities not involving explosive weapons, such as arson, small arms firing, threats, and looting, reportedly harmed or killed two students or educators and damaged 22 educational facilities (see graph 4).

Among reported attacks involving explosive weapons in Myanmar, explosives directly emplaced at schools or universities were the most prevalent, including IEDs and other explosive weapons planted in or near educational facilities. Based on incident reports only, GCPEA determined that directly emplaced explosives made up approximately 92 percent of reported attacks involving explosives, while ground-launched strikes including shelling, mortars, and grenades composed around 6 percent of attacks. GCPEA also identified reports of airstrikes on schools comprising only two percent of all attacks involving explosive weapons.

The need to curb explosive weapon attacks

This textbox has shown some of the differential impacts of explosive weapons in situations of armed conflict around the world. While Myanmar experienced a higher number of reported attacks on schools and universities using explosive weapons during the reporting period, these attacks, which primarily involved IEDs, damaged or destroyed fewer schools than in Syria. On the other hand, Syria experienced fewer attacks on schools and universities using explosive weapons, nearly all of them air- or ground-launched explosive weapons, but they produced greater reported damage or destruction of education buildings.

Given that approximately one-fifth of all attacks on education globally involved explosive weapons in 2020 and 2021, curbing their use has the potential to significantly decrease the number of attacks on education each year. Addressing the use of explosive weapons is particularly important since they are responsible for harming or killing a significant number of students and educators, as well as damaging or destroying many schools and universities.

Explosive weapons with wide area effects often indiscriminately harm civilians and damage civilian infrastructure. Some of the damage and destruction to schools and universities in explosive weapon attacks is collateral, rather than targeted. By reducing the use of weapons with wide-area effects, fewer schools are likely to fall within the blast radius of explosive weapons, reducing the total number of attacks and their damage.

By adhering to existing international law and supporting additional means, such as new international declarations or treaties limiting the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, governments and the organizations that support them can better safeguard education in armed conflict. Endorsing and implementing the Safe Schools Declaration is also relevant for protecting schools from attacks involving explosive weapons, and responding to them when they occur, since the Declaration provides concrete commitments for states to follow, such as providing assistance to victims and collecting reliable, gender-disaggregated data on attacks on education.

Attacks on schools and universities in Myanmar with explosive weapons compared to attacks without, 2020-2021

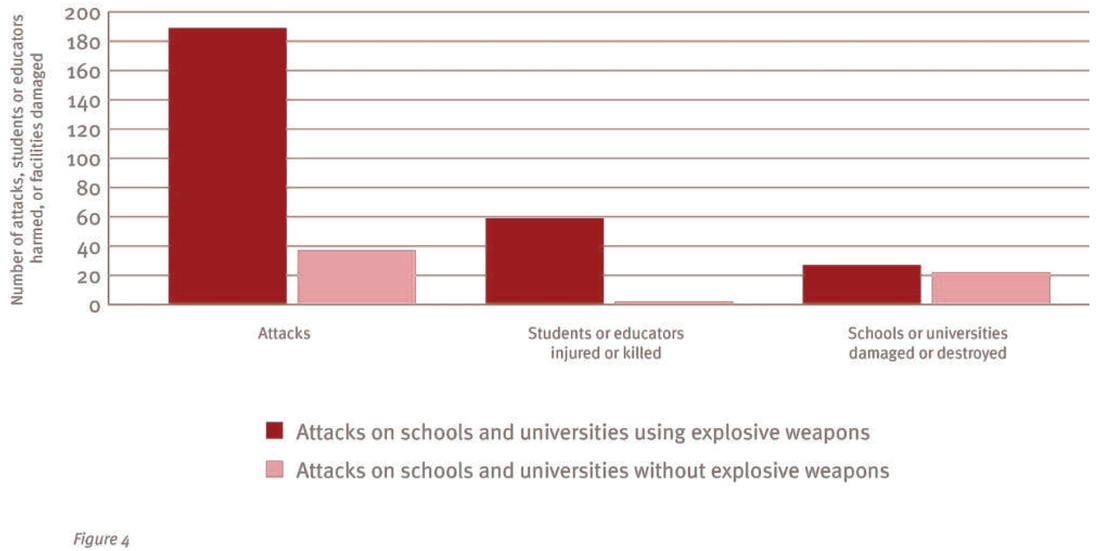


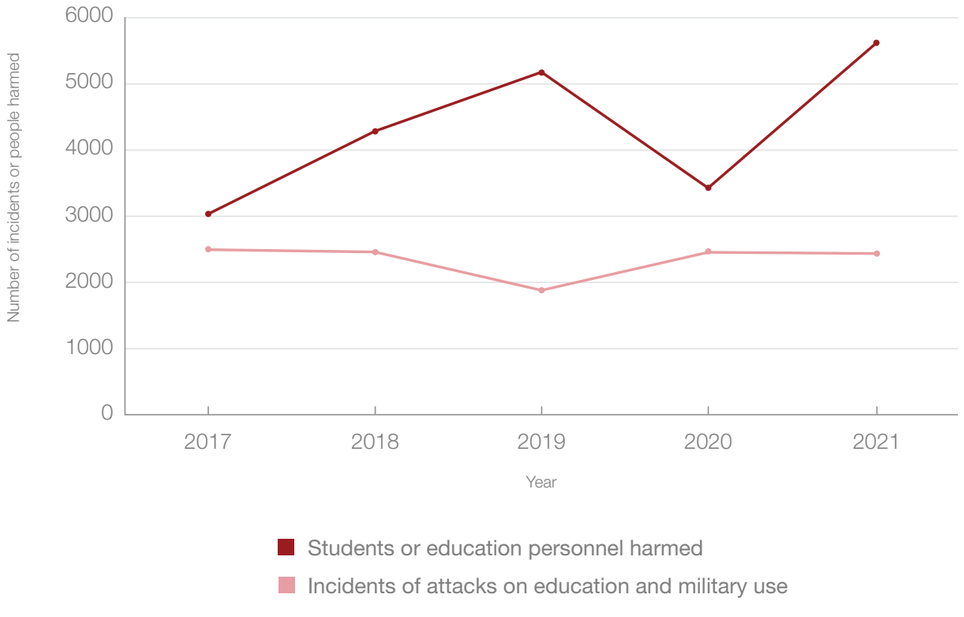
Figure 4

GLOBAL TRENDS IN ATTACKS ON EDUCATION: 2020-2021

During the 2020-2021 period, GPCEA identified over 5,000 reported attacks on education and military use globally. These attacks harmed at least 9,000 students and education personnel. This marked an increase in attacks on education and military use and a decline in the number of students and educators harmed, as compared to previous years. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected more than 4,300 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use that harmed approximately 9,400 students and education personnel.

Globally, GCPEA identified a 33 percent increase in the number of attacks on education or military use in 2020, as compared to 2019, despite prolonged school closures due to Covid-19. However, the number of students and educators injured, killed, arrested, or otherwise harmed by attacks on education declined by over 50 percent in 2020, as compared to 2019. This may be due to a decline in protest and demonstration events related to education during the pandemic, as they typically affect a high number of students; other factors possibly contributing to this decline were fewer students and educators present in school buildings due to school closures, leading to fewer casualties when facilities were attacked, or fewer students and educators affected by attacks on the way to or from school during periods of remote learning. (See the textbox on Covid-19 for further details on the relationship between the pandemic and attacks on education.)

Incidents of attacks on education and military use and people harmed, 2017-2021



In 2021, the total number of reported attacks on education and military use remained constant with the previous year, at over 2,100 reported incidents. However, the number of students and educators injured, killed, arrested, or otherwise harmed in attacks nearly doubled to 4,600, similar to 2018 and 2019. The increase may be attributed to students and educators resuming in-person or hybrid classes and, in some contexts, increasingly participating in education-related protests that were met with violent force. GCPEA also noted an increasing trend of abductions in a few countries.

Attacks on education reportedly occurred in 84 countries during the reporting period. This included the 28 countries profiled in this report as well as 56 countries where GCPEA identified reports of isolated or occasional attacks on education in 2020 and 2021 or that experienced attacks on education but were not in an armed conflict. This marks a slight increase as compared to 2018 and 2019, when GCPEA identified a total of 71 countries that had experienced at least one attack on education or case of military use.

Attacks in non-profiled countries largely consisted of violent repression of education-related protests, affecting school and university students and educators, and, in some cases, the arson or bombings of schools.

The 56 countries where GCPEA identified isolated reports of attacks on education or that experienced attacks on education but were not conflict-affected

Algeria
Angola
Armenia
Bangladesh
Benin
Bolivia
Botswana
Brazil
Burundi
Chad
Chile
China
Cote d'Ivoire
Congo (Republic of)
Egypt
Eritrea
eSwatini
France
Ghana
Greece
Guinea (Republic of)
Haiti
Indonesia
Iran
Israel
Italy
Kazakhstan
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Lebanon
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritania
Mexico
Morocco
Nepal
North Korea
Paraguay
Peru
Russia
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Sri Lanka
Togo
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Uganda
United States of America
United Kingdom
Venezuela
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Very heavily affected countries

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified nine countries that experienced over 400 incidents of attacks on education or military use of educational facilities, or where more than 400 people were harmed, and thus categorized as very heavily affected. **Afghanistan, DRC**, **India**, **Mali**, **Myanmar**, **Nigeria**, **Pakistan, Palestine** and **Turkey** met these criteria.

In **Afghanistan**, while the overall number of attacks was lower this period than in 2018 and 2019, the number of people harmed in attacks remained high, with at least 400 students and educators injured or killed, many of them girls. In **DRC,** attacks continued to occur at similar rates as in the previous two years throughout the eastern regions, with Tanganyika and Ituri regions experiencing spikes in attacks in 2020, whereas reported attacks declined in the Kasai region.

While GCPEA identified fewer reported incidents of attacks on education in **Pakistan** during this reporting period compared to 2018 and 2019, attacks affected hundreds of students and educators, including one attack on a school that injured over 130 students. In **Mali,** attacks by non-state armed groups intensified during the reporting period, with hundreds of threats on schools registered by the national Education Cluster in June 2020; however, increases in the number of attacks may also be due to improved reporting and systematic recording of threats to schools and educators.[124] In **Nigeria,** over 1,000 school and university students were abducted by non-state armed groups during the reporting period, an increase compared to 2018 and 2019, when only one major mass abduction occurred, affecting over 100 students. In **Turkey**, hundreds of students were arrested or charged with criminal offenses after participating in education-related protests in 2021. In **India,** after a spike in incidents of repression of university student protests in 2019, the number of protest repression incidents declined in 2020 only to increase again the following year. In 2021, over 1,500 school and university students and staff were arrested or detained.

In **Myanmar**, attacks on schools and the military use of schools and universities spiked after a military coup in February 2021, with violations spreading to previously unaffected regions. Myanmar was categorized as "affected" in the last report.



Security officials examine the aftermath of a blast at a religious school in Peshawar, Pakistan on October 27, 2020. The bombing killed at least four students and wounded dozens more, according to officials.

© AFP/ Abdul Majeed via Getty Images



A student looks on a damaged school building. The school was one of ten that were damaged or destroyed during intense shelling in Idlib governorate, Syria, on February 25, 2020.

© 2020 Save the Children/CH1420245

While **Palestine** experienced a significant decline in attacks on education in 2020, most notably during Covid-19 lockdowns, in 2021 at least 290 schools and universities were damaged or destroyed during an escalation of hostilities in Gaza and over 400 students and educators were injured, killed, or arrested.

Heavily affected countries

Heavily affected countries, or those experiencing between 200 and 399 incidents of attacks on education and military use of educational facilities, or harm to between 200 and 399 students and education personnel were **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Colombia.** In **Burkina Faso**, as armed violence escalated during the period, GCPEA identified reports of hundreds of actual or threatened attacks on teachers, a higher number than reported in the previous two years. In **Colombia**, attacks on schools, as well as school students and teachers, increased, with many educators intentionally threatened or targeted. In **Cameroon**, which was very heavily affected during the previous period due to the high numbers of students abducted or harmed, GCPEA noted an increasing trend of incidents of attacks on schools or school students, teachers, and other education personnel which affected fewer people than in earlier years. A decline in abductions may have occurred due to Covid-19 related closures which kept students and teachers at home in parts of 2020 and 2021.

Affected countries

The remainder of the countries profiled in this report were categorized as affected, with between 10 and 199 attacks on education and military use of educational facilities, or between 10 and 199 students, teachers, or other education personnel harmed. These countries were: **Azerbaijan, CAR, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Ukraine,** and **Yemen.**

Five countries that were categorized as very heavily affected in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020* experienced significant declines in attacks, leading to their categorization as affected in this reporting period, including **the Philippines, Syria** and **Yemen**. All three experienced changes in conflict dynamics and reductions in violence; for instance, a ceasefire was negotiated in Syria in 2020 and, in the Philippines, the siege of Marawi city ended in 2017. In Syria and Yemen, the decline could have also been attributed to a high proportion of schools already having been damaged or destroyed.

Although some countries categorized as affected did experience increases in the reported number of attacks as compared to the last reporting period, the number was not sufficient to move the country into a higher category. This was the case for countries such as **Ethiopia, Iraq,** and **Libya.**

Attacks on schools

Attacks on schools were the most common form of attacks on education during the reporting period, making up two-thirds of all reported incidents of attacks on education and military use collected by GCPEA. In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected reports of over 3,000 attacks on schools that occurred in 27 profiled countries, with Kenya the only profiled country not to experience an attack on a school. Attacks on schools constituted a similar proportion of attacks as in the period covered in *Education under Attack 2020*.

During the reporting period, **DRC**, **Mali**, and **Palestine** were the countries most affected by attacks on schools, each experiencing over 400 attacks on schools in 2020 and 2021. While Mali experienced a high level of threats of violence to schools that forced over 1,000 schools to close during the reporting period,[125] hundreds of schools in DRC were damaged or destroyed due to conflict. After DRC, Mali, and Palestine, the profiled countries with the highest numbers of attacks on schools were **Afghanistan**, **Azerbaijan,** and **Myanmar.**

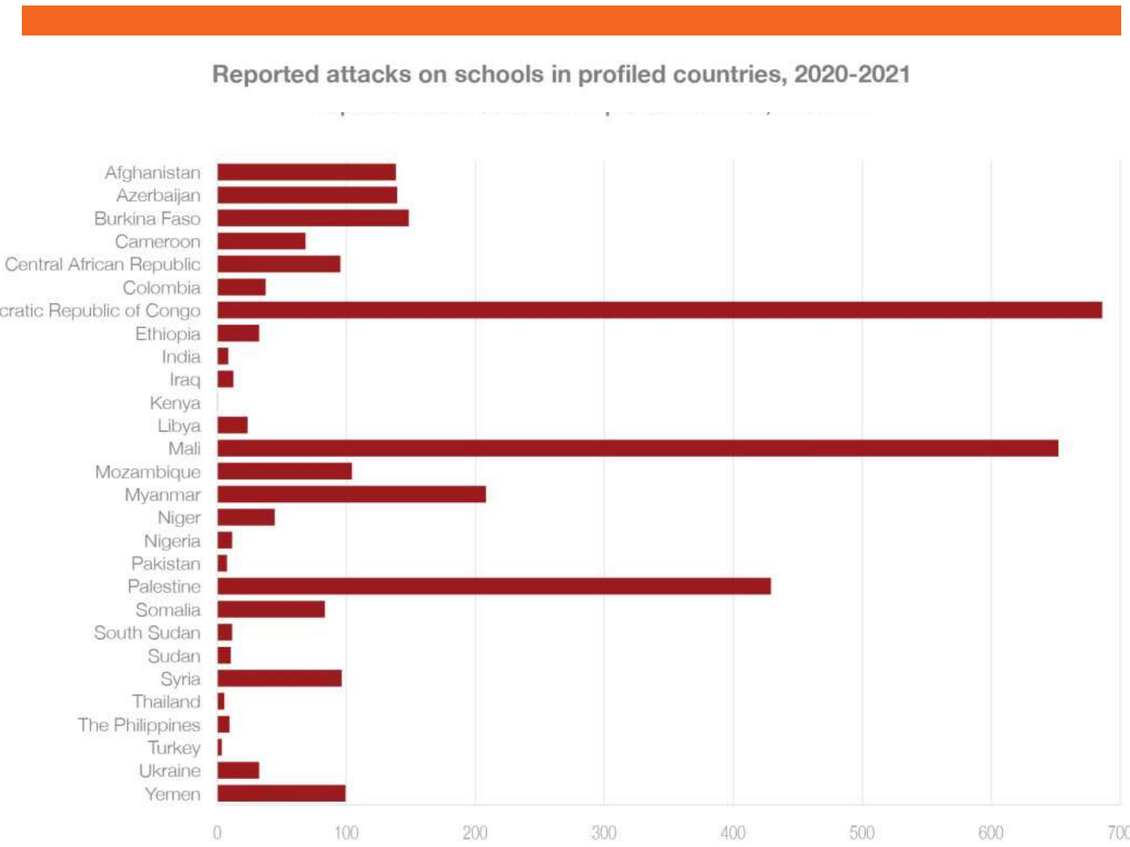
Examples of attacks on schools during the reporting period included:

- In **Azerbaijan,** a six-week conflict between Azerbaijani, Armenian, and de facto authorities erupted over control of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory in September 2020. At least 85 schools and kindergartens were reportedly damaged, mostly with rocket or missile attacks, during the fighting, according to local authorities.[126]
- In **Cameroon**, attacks on schools escalated in the second half of 2020. On October 24, 2020, a group of men armed with guns and machetes stormed Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, a private school in Kumba town, South-West region. According to Human Rights Watch and the UN, attackers forcibly entered a classroom and shot at students, killing seven students and injuring another 13.[127] The UN called the incident the deadliest attack on education since the start of the conflict in 2017.[128]
- In **DRC**, a spike in violence in Tanganyika province led to an increase in attacks on schools. The UN reported that in 2020, over 340 schools in Tanganyika province had been destroyed due to armed conflict.[129] In 2021, the DRC Education Cluster received reports that at least 250 schools were looted, destroyed, or burned in eastern DRC between January and September.[130]



A policeman looks through the debris of a classroom after a car exploded in a suicide attack near Mucassar primary and secondary school in Hodan district of Mogadishu, Somalia, on November 25, 2021.

© 2021 Reuters/Feisal Omar



- In **Ethiopia**, schools were damaged during hostilities in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions, as reported by media outlets and civil society organizations.[131] For example, Human Rights Watch reported that on November 28, 2020, shells hit and damaged a school in Mekelle city, the capital of the region. Witnesses said the school was empty and that they had not seen military forces or armed actors in the school when it was shelled.[132]
- In June 2020, as some secondary school classes were re-opening after Covid-19-related closures, the **Mali** Education Cluster registered over 500 reports of attacks on schools by non-state armed groups; the majority of reported incidents involved 430 direct threats to schools, as well as arson and other attacks on education facilities.[133]
- In 2020 and 2021, in **Mozambique**, an armed group destroyed over 110 schools, according to the Ministry of Education.[134] In one example, Amnesty International documented that on March 25, 2020, fighters of an armed group burned down a school, along with several government buildings, in Quissanga, Cabo Delgado province.[135]
- In **Palestine,** attacks damaged over 290 education facilities in Gaza during 11 days of heavy conflict in May 2021.[136] In one incident, an airstrike damaged 29 classrooms and the compound wall of two United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools in Gaza.[137]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified over 630 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel in the 28 profiled countries during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In these attacks, over 2,400 students, teachers or education personnel were reportedly injured, killed, abducted, or threatened, and around 2,300 were reportedly arrested or detained. These attacks were distinct from students or teachers injured or killed during attacks on schools and universities.

Nigeria had the highest number of people harmed, with over 1,000 students or educators abducted, killed, or otherwise harmed**. Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon, Palestine, Somalia,** and **Colombia**, also had high numbers of students and educators threatened, abducted, injured, or killed by targeted and indiscriminate attacks.

In **Pakistan**, more than 200 students and teachers were arrested or detained for participating in education-related protests and in **India** the number was over 1,500.

For example:

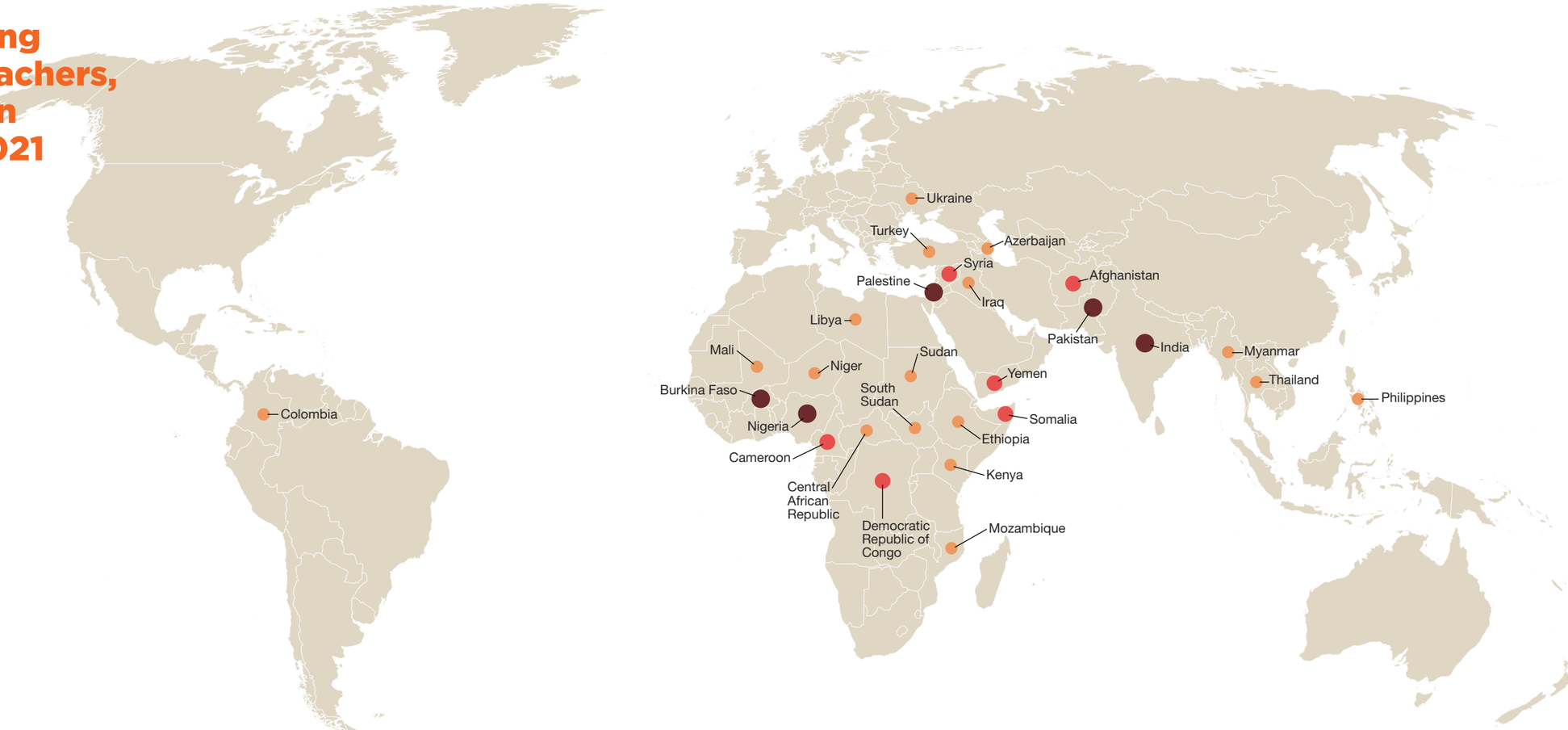
- In **Burkina Faso,** over 230 teachers were allegedly threatened or harmed in 2020, according to Amnesty International. Armed groups that opposed western education or who were fighting the state threatened, killed, or abducted educators to prevent them from teaching.[138]
- In El Salado, Bolívar department, **Colombia,** all 25 teachers working at a school reportedly received messages from an unidentified armed group threatening to kill and dismember them on their way to school, on February 7, 2020. As a result, the school suspended classes, according to local media outlet *El Universal*.[139]
- In **Cameroon,** in September 2021, armed separatists reportedly abducted at least five teachers from Ndop, North-West region; the educators had reportedly attended a meeting about the reopening of government schools. One teacher was reportedly killed six days later, according to the UN and media reports, while others were freed on September 16, 2021.[140]
- In **Kenya**, alleged al-Shabaab members attacked teachers posted in Kamuthe, Garissa county, which borders Somalia where the armed group is based. *The Guardian* reported that alleged al-Shabaab members killed three teachers and injured another at Kamuthe primary school on January 13, 2020.[141] Due to targeted violence against teachers, hundreds of schools reportedly closed in the northeast in early 2020 and thousands of teachers reportedly left the area.[142]
- In just one example from **Nigeria**, armed assailants abducted 344 boy students from the Government Science Secondary School and killed a security guard in Kankara, Katsina state, on December 11, 2020, as reported by *France 24*, *Al Jazeera*, and *Sahara Reporters*.[143] More than 600 students reportedly attended the school; however, many were able to flee the grounds to hide from the kidnappers.[144] As a result of the attack, all public schools in the state were ordered to be closed,[145] which would have been approximately 2,500 schools based on a 2010 education sector plan.[146]

Profiled countries with reports of attacks individually targeting school students, teachers, and other education personnel, 2020-2021

Reports documented more than 200 students, teachers, or other education personnel harmed by individually targeted attacks

Reports documented 100-199 students, teachers, or other education personnel harmed by individually targeted attacks

Reports documented 1-99 students, teachers, or other education personnel harmed by individually targeted attacks



- In **Sudan**, around February 23, 2021, police used teargas to disperse demonstrators, including teachers and persons with disabilities, in Kassala city, Kassala state. Demonstrators were protesting that special needs schools had still not reopened after COVID-19 closures, even though other schools had opened two months earlier, as reported by local media.[147]
- In **Syria**, in 2020, GCPEA identified local media reports that described how the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) began explicitly targeting and forcibly conscripting teachers. A local human rights organization reported that alleged SDF members abducted 34 teachers to conscript them into the armed group between January 1 and February 15, 2021.[148]

Military use of schools and universities

During the two-year reporting period, GCPEA identified around 570 reported cases of military use globally. Around 40 percent of these incidents occurred in **Myanmar,** where GCPEA documented over 220 reported cases, the highest number of education facilities used for military purposes during the period. In comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected reports of around 240 incidents of military use globally. GCPEA also observed increases in the military use of schools and universities in 2020 and 2021, as compared to 2018 and 2019, in **CAR, DRC, Ethiopia,** and **Iraq**.

Military use of schools and universities occurred in 24 countries in 2020 and 2021, 23 of which were profiled in this report. Of the profiled countries, GCPEA documented the use of schools by state armed forces, other security forces, and non-state armed groups in: **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Kenya, Libya Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey,** and **Yemen.** GCPEA also identified the military use of schools in **Venezuela.** By comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified the use of schools in 18 countries. Four countries with reported military use in 2018 and 2019 had no new reported incidents during the current reporting period: **Burundi**, **Indonesia**, **Mozambique,** and **Ukraine**.

Examples of military use of schools and universities in 2020 and 2021 included:

- In **Afghanistan,** the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan reported in June 2021 that a resource center for teachers inside a government school in Qarabagh district, Ghazni province, had been occupied by the Taliban for at least two months.[149]
- In **CAR,** following elections in late December 2020, the UN documented that armed forces, private security personnel, and non-state armed groups used dozens of schools for military purposes throughout the first half of 2021.[150] According to media reports, two schools in Boda, Lobaye prefecture, were occupied by private security forces in March and April 2021, affecting the education of around 2,000 children.[151]



Soldiers board a school bus outside a high school in Yangon in Myanmar on June 1, 2021 as schools reopened.

© 2021 Al Jazeera: Stringer/EPA

- In **Iraq,** local media outlet *Sotaliraq* reported that around October 4, 2020, the Kurdistan Workers' Party occupied a primary school in Sinjar town, Ninewa governorate, for use as a military headquarters, despite community members asking the militants to leave.[152]
- In **Myanmar,** a military coup on February 1, 2021, led to widespread protests by university students and civil society.[153] Between February and September 2021, the UN reported that security forces used 176 schools and universities.[154] These cases occurred in at least 13 states and regions, according to earlier UN reports.[155] In one example, on March 7, 2021, the Myanmar military allegedly occupied Hakha University in Hakha city, Chin state, as a base camp, according to *Radio Free Asia*. The report noted that 20 officers were occupying the campus and hospital under the direction of state military council.[156]
- In **South Sudan,** the UN reported that soldiers from South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO), both government forces, used a school in Kalyak to host police forces.[157]



A-19-year-old secondary student shows her finger wrapped in a bandage after she received medical treatment at a health facility in Buea, South-West region, Cameroon. Armed separatists had kidnapped her and cut off her finger.

© Private, January 2020, published in Human Rights Watch's report "They Are Destroying Our Future"

Countries with at least one report of military use of schools or universities, 2020-2021



Despite a global increase in military use of schools and universities in 2020 and 2021, as compared to prior years, GCPEA found that military use of educational facilities declined in most countries early to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. Overall reported incidents of military use of schools and universities declined between 2015 and 2020 in the 13 countries which endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015 and 2016 and which experienced at least one reported incident of military use during the same period (**Afghanistan, CAR, DRC, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan,** and **Sudan**). Based on UN, non-governmental organization, and media sources, GCPEA found at least 180 reported incidents of military use of schools and universities in 2015, as compared to some 70 reported incidents in 2020, among these countries.

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school in four countries: **Colombia, DRC, Mali,** and **Yemen.** In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified such reports in six countries; four of the countries where child recruitment had been reported between 2018 and 2019 had no new reports of school-related child recruitment in the 2020-2021 period: **Afghanistan, Burundi, Somalia**, and **Venezuela**. In **Mali,** GCPEA had not identified child recruitment in 2018 or 2019.

Prolonged periods of school closures due to Covid-19 meant that children were less likely to be recruited at school or along school routes, though child recruitment appeared to increase on the whole in some contexts, due to school closures.[158] Given the challenges of collecting data on this type of attack, these numbers should not necessarily be understood as a decrease in school-related child recruitment in armed conflict.

Some examples of child recruitment during the reporting period included:

- In **Colombia,** the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca denounced the recruitment of a 14-year-old and a 16-year-old student on their way to school in Las Mercedes indigenous reservation in Cauca department, in September 2021, according to media reports. One report alleged that FARC dissidents recruited the students.[159]
- In **DRC**, the Protection Cluster reported that six children were forcibly recruited from a primary school in Bweru, North Kivu province, and used to transport military items in October 2020. The children were released the next day.[160] In a similar incident recorded by the DRC Protection Cluster in December 2020, an armed group used 33 students, who were on their way to school, to transport supplies.[161]
- In **Yemen,** the UN reported on Houthi forces' use of schools to indoctrinate and recruit both male and female students between 2014 and mid-2020. Houthi authorities placed "volunteer" education personnel in schools who recruited children through activities such as weapon demonstrations and military trainings in school yards; mandatory speeches by both Houthi leaders and associated teachers who encouraged students to fight; classes on sectarian ideology; and requiring recitations of Houthi slogans. These activities were also documented and shared on social media.[162] While most activities were directed towards male students, female students were also recruited at schools, often to take roles such as educators, guards, or medics; some girls also were used to recruit other students at schools or universities.[163]



An education building in Macomia, Mozambique experienced significant damage during an attack by an armed group.

© Photo taken by local education authorities

Countries with reports of child recruitment occurring at, or on the way to or from, school, 2020-2021



Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school and university

In the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university, in seven countries, including six profiled in this report: **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, DRC, Nigeria,** and **Turkey.** GCPEA also identified an incident in **Rwanda**. GCPEA had not identified reports of sexual violence in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Turkey, and Rwanda in 2018 and 2019. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence in 9 countries; no new incidents were identified in **Burundi, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan** or **Zimbabwe** between 2020 and 2021. This reduction could be attributed to gaps in monitoring and reporting of this violation, to changing dynamics of conflict, or to periods of school closures during Covid-19.

Examples from the reporting period included:

- In **DRC,** on August 30, 2020, *AFP, Reuters*, and local media reported that unidentified armed men attacked a student dormitory in Isiro, Haut Uélé province, where around 30 students were lodging to take their primary school exit exam. In the night, the armed attackers entered the building and allegedly raped at least one female student, according to a local government official. They also robbed the students.[164]
- In **Colombia**, police reportedly detained a 15-year-old Indigenous boy while on his way to buy posterboard for a school project in Jambaló municipality, Cauca department, on September 10, 2020. Local media outlets including *El Tiempo* reported that the police accused the student of carrying camouflage and a radio and, once at the station, forced him to undress. The boy belonged to the Nasa Indigenous group of Pitayó and was released after his family and Indigenous authorities went to the police station to register their complaints.[165]
- In **Nigeria,** police officers reportedly detained three male and three female Abia State Polytechnic students after entering their off-campus student hostel in Aba city, Abia state, on September 22, 2021. Five of the students were released but an 18-year-old female student was allegedly raped by a police officer while in custody, as reported by local and international news outlets. The Abia State Police Command reportedly arrested an officer in response.[166]
- In **Cameroon,** on November 4, 2020, during an attack on Kulu Memorial College in Fako division, South-West region, members of a non-state armed group forced around 20 male and female students and four teachers to strip naked while filming them, poured petrol on them, and reportedly used force against some of them, according to Human Rights Watch.[167] They then chased the naked students away from school, according to Human Rights Watch, *BBC*, and local media.[168]
- In **Turkey,** police officers reportedly threatened to rape a transgender female student who had been detained for participating in a student protest on January 5, 2021, according to Human Rights Watch and local media.[169]

Sexual violence perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities, and non-state armed groups, at, or on the way to or from, school or university remained one of the most challenging areas to collect data. Stigma surrounding sexual violence means that survivors are unlikely to report events when they occur, and details on the locations of events are rarely provided in reports in order to protect survivors, making it difficult to determine whether or not incidents occurred at school or along school routes.

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 320 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in profiled countries. Of these, around 240 reported attacks were directed at university students and personnel and over 80 reported attacks targeted university facilities. Over 580 university students or personnel were injured, abducted, or killed as a result of attacks on higher education during this period, and another 1,450 were detained, arrested or convicted. By comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected around 340 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in conflict-affected countries profiled in the report.[170]

Countries with reports of sexual violence occurring at, or on the way to or from, school or university, 2020-2021



Attacks on higher education occurred in 23 of the 28 countries profiled in this report: **Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen.**

The profiled countries most affected by attacks on higher education facilities, with between 10-15 attacks during the reporting period, were **Myanmar, Palestine**, and **Yemen,** where many of the attacks involved explosive weapons. Afghanistan and Yemen were the countries most affected by such attacks in 2018 and 2019, which typically involved airstrikes, shelling, and improvised explosive devices.

India and **Turkey** were the profiled countries most affected by attacks on university students and personnel. In both countries, over 500 students were arrested during education-related protests or in relationship to their academic work. Overall, attacks on university students and personnel appeared to decline in the first half of 2020, which corresponded with a global decline in protest events, according to ACLED.[171] In 2021, incidents of attacks on higher education students and personnel reached rates similar to those of 2018 and 2019. For example, in Turkey, reported incidents of attacks on higher education students and staff more than doubled between 2020 and 2021.

Examples of attacks on higher education facilities during the reporting period included:

- In **Afghanistan**, armed groups attacked higher education buildings, students, and staff throughout the reporting period. On November 2, 2020, IS-affiliated gunmen stormed Kabul University campus where they detonated explosive weapons, engaged in a gunfight with state security forces, and held dozens of students and staff hostage in classrooms. At least 22 students were killed and over 40 wounded.[172]
- In **Libya,** university facilities were affected by attacks using explosive devices at least six times during the reporting period. In one instance, on April 22, 2020, shells reportedly landed near the back gate of Al-Fatah University in Al-Firnaj, Tripoli, according to a local media outlet.[173]
- In **Yemen,** on March 21, 2021, ground-launched explosives reportedly struck near the Taizz University Faculty of Arts, injuring at least four civilians, and killing one. Reports indicated that some of the injured people were students.[174] Media reported that the university stopped classes for a week following the attack.[175]

Examples of attacks on higher education students and staff during the reporting period included:

- In **India**, police detained more than 100 academics and higher education personnel who were peacefully protesting for payment of overdue salaries at Delhi University, in New Delhi, on September 5, 2020, according to Scholars at Risk and local media.[176]
- In **Pakistan**, in early 2021, police used force against students demonstrating to demand online exams during the Covid-19 pandemic. In one example reported by Scholars at Risk, on January 26, 2021, police used batons to disperse a student protest at the University of Central Punjab in Lahore, injuring several students. Police, who alleged that students had thrown rocks at them and burned the university gate, reportedly arrested at least 36 students.[177]
- In **Turkey**, authorities arrested hundreds of students who were protesting what was perceived as the undemocratic appointment of a rector to Boğaziçi University in Istanbul in January and February 2021, according to Human Rights Watch.[178]



Fighters occupied Renzi school in Tambura town, Western Equatoria state, South Sudan, for several weeks in 2021.

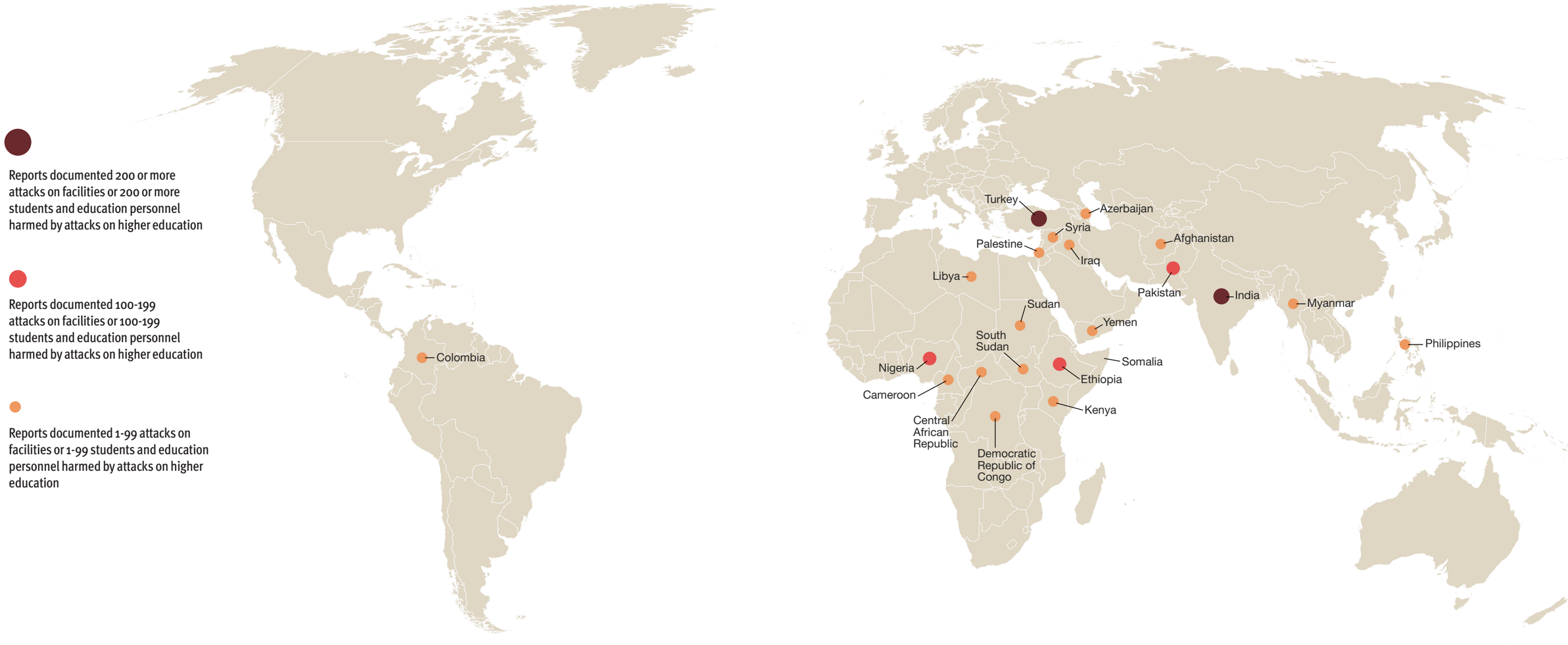
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Profiled countries with reports of attacks on higher education, 2020-2021

Reports documented 200 or more attacks on facilities or 200 or more students and education personnel harmed by attacks on higher education

Reports documented 100-199 attacks on facilities or 100-199 students and education personnel harmed by attacks on higher education

Reports documented 1-99 attacks on facilities or 1-99 students and education personnel harmed by attacks on higher education



Gendered dynamics of attacks on education

Both male and female students and educators, and their schools and universities, were impacted by attacks on education during the reporting period. In certain contexts, however, armed groups, armed forces, and other state security forces have specifically targeted girls and women. In some cases, girls' schools have been burned or bombed to suppress female education. In other instances, armed groups, military, or other security forces sexually abused or abducted women and girls at, or on the way to or from, school. GCPEA research has found that women and girls are differentially impacted by attacks on education.[179]

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified 11 countries where girls and women were reportedly targeted in attacks on education because of their gender: **Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey,** and **Yemen.** These include countries where girls and women were targeted in sexual violence incidents at, or on the way to or from, school or university. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified 11 conflict-affected profiled countries where targeted attacks on women and girls occurred.

For the first time, GCPEA identified targeted attacks on women and girls in **Burkina Faso,** detailed below. Of the countries profiled in this report that had experienced attacks on female students and educators in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA did not identify new reports of attacks targeting women and girls in **India, Libya, Myanmar, the Philippines, Somalia,** or **South Sudan.**

Examples of attacks targeted against girls' schools or female students and educators include:

- In **Afghanistan**, on May 8, 2021, media, Human Rights Watch and the UN reported that a non-state armed group targeted girls in a car bomb attack at a school in Kabul.[180] The attack occurred at an hour where students and families were coming and going to school. Around 85 people, mostly school girls, were killed in the attack and 147 people were injured.[181]
- In **Burkina Faso**, a witness reported to *France24* in 2021 that during an attack on a school, an armed group raped a female teacher inside a classroom.[182] The witness reported experiencing lasting psychological harm.
- In **Pakistan,** unidentified attackers allegedly shot and killed four female staff members of Bravo College Bannu who were in a car work trip in North Waziristan, on February 22, 2022. The educators had traveled to the area to lead workshops on women's empowerment and vocational training. Their male driver was also injured in the attack, according to the UN and media.[183]
- In **Iraq**, an unidentified armed group reportedly detonated two sound bombs in the Aisha School for Girls in Baghdad, on October 11, 2020; no injuries were reported.[184]

In other contexts, men and boys were targeted in attacks on education. GCPEA found that in **Palestine**, male students and staff were more often the target of, or otherwise affected by, the firing of teargas, stun grenades, and rubber-coated metal bullets between January 2019 and September 2021. Israeli security forces fired teargas and other weapons at male students before or after classes while they congregated near school entrances.[185]In **Somalia**, GCPEA received documentation that at least 146 schoolboys were abducted from schools in 2020, in some cases with their teachers.[186]

Profiled countries with reports of attacks on education that uniquely targeted girls or women, 2020-2021



Fear after May 2021 attack on girls' school in Kabul, Afghanistan

The short- and long-term impacts of attacks on education are differentially experienced by male and female students and educators. In Afghanistan, where armed groups specifically targeted girls' education, female survivors expressed distress after the Taliban took control of the government and placed restrictions on girls' and women's education. In September 2021, a female survivor of the May 8, 2021, attack on a girls' school felt fear following the Taliban's take-over:

"I thought of the explosion, and I thought they would come and kill every student [...] I can't concentrate in my studies. When we think about our future, we can't see anything."[187]



A 15-year-old female student whose former school was attacked and subsequently closed returned to school in Dori, Burkina Faso, in August 2021.

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POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN PROTECTING EDUCATION FROM ATTACK

Significant progress was made on protecting education from attack during the reporting period, including states' efforts to implement the commitments of the Safe Schools Declaration, a political commitment to protect education during armed conflict.

During this reporting period, GCPEA observed a growing awareness of the widespread prevalence of attacks on education, as well as sustained political action to end attacks, donor support to address key issues, and important legal developments at national and international levels.

In particular, the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration expanded during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment, championed by Argentina and Norway, that allows countries to express political support for the protection of students, teachers, schools, and universities during times of armed conflict. As of February 2022, 113 countries had endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration since its launch in May 2015. Since the publication of *Education under Attack* 2020, nine countries endorsed the declaration: **Algeria, Ghana, Maldives, Mexico, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Timor-Leste, Togo,** and **Senegal**.

Countries that endorse the Declaration commit to protect education from attack and prevent military use of schools and universities through implementing its six commitments. These include: using the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* to protect educational institutions, students, and personnel; facilitating the collection of, or collecting, data on attacks; investigating allegations of violations; providing assistance to victims; implementing conflict-sensitive approaches to education; ensuring continuity of education during conflict; supporting UN work on the children and armed conflict agenda; and meeting regularly to review the implementation of the Declaration and its Guidelines.

The Declaration received increased attention by multilateral bodies since the publication of *Education under Attack 2020*. Notably, the United Nations General Assembly declared September 9 as the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, mentioning the Declaration, and adopted a resolution on the right to safe education for all.[188] The resolution was introduced by the State of Qatar and co-sponsored by 62 states. Both in 2020 and 2021, the International Day was commemorated by a high-level event bringing together global leaders on education, peace, and conflict, including the Secretary General of the United Nations. In September 2020, The UN Security Council issued a milestone Presidential Statement solely focused on attacks on education. Following this statement, , on October 29, 2021, the UN Security Council adopted a stand-alone resolution on attacks on education, with Niger and Norway as penholders, and 99 co-sponsors.[189]

Furthermore, at the 47th session of the Human Rights Council, in July 2021, the Council adopted a resolution on the right to education, which referenced the Safe Schools Declaration and the *Guidelines* for the first time, and called on states to consider implementing them.

States, non-state actors, multilateral organizations, and non-governmental organizations took important steps towards protecting education and fulfilling different commitments of the Declaration in 2020 and 2021, examples of which are shared below.

Using the Guidelines to Protect Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict

In 2020 and 2021, some states, international and regional bodies, and non-state armed groups took concrete steps to prevent and reduce the military use of schools.



Displaced children play at a Child Friendly Space at an IDP settlement outside of Herat city, Afghanistan, in September 2021.

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- In **DRC,** the non-governmental organization Geneva Call supported negotiation efforts leading to the CMC/FDP (Coalition des Mouvements pour le Changement / Force de Défense du Peuple) signing unilateral declarations on the protection of healthcare and of children in armed conflict.[190]
- Also in **DRC,** the APCLS armed group (Alliance du Peuple Pour un Congo Libre et Souverain) published a statement asking their combatants to protect schools and refrain from attacking civilian objects. The statement also declared that APCLS combatants would be held responsible for violations to national law.[191]
- In **Thailand**, in January 2020, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) armed group signed the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, which includes protections for education and a commitment to not recruit children during military operations.[192]
- In **Syria**, in 2020, the Syrian Democratic Forces vacated ten schools and issued a command order prohibiting the military use of schools by its forces and calling on all parties to conflict to follow this example.[193]



A student waves a rainbow flag from the top of the entrance gate of BoğaziçiUniversity in Istanbul, on February 1, 2021, while Turkish police block the access during a demonstration outside the campus. A day earlier, police detained five students for their involvement in an art exhibition that involved artwork that mixed Islamic imagery with LGBT imagery.

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- The Declaration commitments have been translated into binding **African Union** Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) decisions on attacks on schools. For example, the AUPSC issued a communique on May 11, 2021, condemning attacks on schools and their use for military purposes by non-state armed groups, as well as the abduction of children from schools. The Council stated that these violations keep children from educational institutions, which they need to grow and develop.[194] Further, the principles of the Declaration are included in the AU Doctrine on Peace Support Operations, adopted in January 2021, which directly refers to the central commitment of the SSD, namely, to ensure that "schools are not attacked and used for military purposes". This is an important milestone which reflects the growing consensus within the African continent on the importance of protecting schools.

- **Mali** has made two significant advances. In March 2020, the Safe Schools Declaration Technical Committee launched an Action Plan that included concrete activities to disseminate the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* and incorporated the protection of schools and universities into national legislation. Further, in May 2020, Mali's Ministry of Education issued a letter to the Ministry of Defence asking them to respect the spirit of the *Guidelines* while schools were closed during Covid-19 and refrain from using schools for military purposes.[195]
- Article 180 of **CAR's** 2020 Child Protection Code criminalized attacks on schools and their occupation.[196]
- In June 2020, the Ministry of Defense of **Spain** released its new national defense directive stating that in their operations abroad, the armed forces will be supporting implementation of "the Safe Schools initiative."[197]

- In 2021, **South Sudan** launched "Safe Schools Declaration Guidelines" with support from Save the Children. The document aims to facilitate dissemination of the Guidelines and incorporate them into the South Sudan People Defense Forces' code of conduct.[198] Also in South Sudan, in 2020, all parties to conflict signed a comprehensive action plan covering all six grave violations against children, including attacks against schools, and have since progressed in its implementation.[199]
- In September 2021, **Nigeria** released its National Policy for Safety, Security and Violence-Free Schools, which draws on the *Guidelines*.[200]
- In August 2020, the **United Kingdom** published an updated policy paper on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The paper notes the country's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration and the need to improve accountability for violations of children's rights in conflict.[201] In 2021, the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence published a new policy on Human Security in Defence which contains advice and direction on cross-cutting themes including children affected by armed conflict. The policy includes instructions in line with the Safe Schools Declaration with regards to avoiding the military use of schools and universities.
- The government of **Ukraine** adopted an action plan for implementing the Safe Schools Declaration in August 2021. Civil society supported the government in training officers in the armed forces on the Safe Schools Declaration and the *Guidelines*. So far, at least 1,000 military officials have been trained.[202]

Collecting reliable, relevant data on attacks on education

Several positive developments took place around enhanced monitoring. GCPEA published the *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* and worked with several governments and organizations to strengthen the collection of data on attacks on education and military use of educational facilities. The Right to Education Initiative also published two guides to support journalists and photographers and civil society organizations to monitor the right to education in times of conflict.

In **Ukraine**, the Ministry of Education and Science established a Monitoring Mechanism on Attacks on Education and its Standard Operating Procedures. This involved the development of data collection tools and an integrated reporting system in line with other data collected by the Ministry of Education and Science.[203]

In **Nigeria**, in September 2020, the Education in Emergencies Working Group completed a draft of the "Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines Reporting and Assessment Forms for Conflict-Affected Areas." These forms allow for the detailed and systematic collection of data on attacks on education and military use with the aim of facilitating school re-openings after attacks. At the time of writing, plans were underway for piloting the forms.

Investigating allegations of violations and providing assistance to victims

Accountability for attacks on education is an important deterrence mechanism and is critical for delivering justice to victims, survivors, and their families and communities. National and international courts made efforts to prosecute perpetrators of attacks on education including the following:

- In **Afghanistan,** six perpetrators of the November 2, 2020, attack on Kabul University were tried a several months after the attack occurred. On March 4, 2021, an appellate court announced that five suspects were convicted of charges related to the attack and for their membership in the Islamic State; two were sentenced to death, one was sentenced to two years, and two were sentenced to 12 years in prison. The perpetrators were also fined around US$33,000 for damages to the university campus.[204]
- In **Burkina Faso**, in August 2021, two members of the armed group Ansaroul Islam were sentenced to 20 years in prison for an attack three years earlier, according to Human Rights Watch and media sources.[205] Human Rights Watch also reported that the defendants were detained for three years prior to their trial and that they were not informed of their right to legal counsel in court.[206]
- In **Nigeria**, on December 11, 2020, the International Criminal Court Prosecutor announced the completion of her preliminary examination of the situation in Nigeria, having concluded that there was a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed, including intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion and education which were not military objectives pursuant to Rome Statute article 8(2)(e)(iv), by members of Boko Haram and its splinter groups.[207]
- In **Colombia**, seven Army soldiers sexually abused a girl from the Embera Chamí Indigenous group in a school their unit was using for military purposes in Pueblo Rico municipality, Risaralda department, on June 21, 2020.[208] The soldiers admitted to the crime and the attorney general found them guilty, according to local media outlet *El Espectador*.[209] On September 28, 2021, the Supreme Court of Pereira sentenced six of the soldiers to 16 years of prison for aggravated abusive sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 14 and the remaining soldier to eight years of prison as an accomplice to the crime.[210]

GPCEA cannot verify to what extent the above trials and examination were conducted in a fair manner and according to international legal standards.

Implementing conflict-sensitive approaches to education and ensuring the continuity of teaching and learning

During this reporting period, the Covid-19 pandemic caused interruptions to teaching and learning for extended periods of time in nearly every country in the world. In conflict-affected countries, some governments and organizations ensured that distance learning innovations were extended to children impacted by conflict and those out of school due to attacks on education.

In **Burkina Faso**, the Minister of Education announced in May 2020 that Covid-19-related distance learning would extend to students affected by conflict.[211]

In **Nigeria**, in January 2021, the Education in Emergencies Working Group completed the "Safe Schools Declaration Security Agencies Trainers' Manual and Facilitators' Guide." This included forms to provide a situational checklist to guide decisions about when to close or reopen schools in conflict-affected areas. The Ministry of Defence and Education in Emergencies Working group launched the guide in October 2021.[212]

In the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the European Commission's key actions include "continue allocating 10 percent of humanitarian aid funding for education in emergencies and protracted crises, and promote the endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration.[213]

Support the Efforts of the UN Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, and Other Relevant UN Organs

Significant steps have also been taken to support UN work on the children and armed conflict agenda, including by supporting the Safe Schools Declaration. For example, the UN Secretary-General, in his 2020 and 2021 reports to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, urged all UN Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.[214] Other high-level officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, and the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights , also expressed their support, along with mentions by states and partners at high-level events. For instance, In September 2020, 26 country delegations highlighted the Declaration in their statements at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict, and 20 delegations referred to the Safe Schools Declaration in the debate held in June 2021.

During the UN Security Council open debates on the protection of civilians, sexual violence, and on women, peace, and security, as well as the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict during the Human Rights Council session of March, some states also referenced the Safe Schools Declaration in their statements, recognizing it as a tool to better protect education for women and girls in armed conflict, and to prevent sexual violence occurring at, or on the way to or from, school or university.

The continuity of education during armed conflict is an important component to foster women's empowerment, promote peace, and prevent war. **Italy's** fourth Action Plan on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, adopted in 2020, includes a commitment to protect children and education in armed conflict, and promote endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration.

On October 29, 2021, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the first stand-alone resolution on the protection of education in armed conflict. Sponsoring the resolution were 99 UN member states.[215] As the first thematic Security Council resolution to mention the Safe Schools Declaration, the text reaffirms the right to education and its fundamental contribution to the achievement of peace and security, urges Member States to develop effective measures to prevent and address attacks against schools and educational facilities, and condemns the military use of schools in contravention of international humanitarian law. The resolution built on a Presidential Statement adopted by the Security Council in September 2020 under Niger's presidency.

Meet on a regular basis to review implementation

In February and March 2021, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation and GCPEA held the first comprehensive training on implementing the Safe Schools Declaration. The virtual program brought together over 90 representatives from the ministries of defense, education, and foreign affairs from 20 countries. The sessions included practical exercises, discussions, and presentations on a range of themes, including data collection, accountability, and implementing the *Guidelines* in a gender-responsive manner.

On October 25-27, 2021, the government of Nigeria, together with Argentina, Norway, Spain, the African Union Commission, and GCPEA, hosted the Fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration, virtually and in-person, in Abuja. This was the first Safe Schools Conference to be held on the African continent, and in a country impacted by attacks on education. Some 2,000 participants from governments, international organizations, and civil society, attended in-person and virtually. With the theme of "Ensuring Safe Education for All: From Commitment to Practice," the overarching aim of the Abuja Conference was to take stock and review progress in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration, and to galvanize commitment and action to protect education from attack. The conference highlighted examples of good practice in implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, examined the role of ministries of defense in using the *Guidelines*, and explored lessons learned in the Sahel region on protecting education.



Conflict-displaced and host community students attended school in Niger in April 2021.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has found that attacks on education are on the rise in many armed conflicts around the world. These attacks cause acute and lasting impacts on teaching and learning, from physical injury and lasting distress on students and educators to damage and destruction inflicted on education infrastructure.

While the Covid-19 pandemic has not slowed the rate of these attacks, it has enabled education providers and donors to develop and fund innovative means of delivering distance and alternative education in highly constrained settings. Many of these innovations can and should be effectively harnessed to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning by those whose education is interrupted by attacks on education, in addition to the pandemic.

Beyond the lessons learned in ensuring access to education during the Covid-19 pandemic, states, non-state armed groups, international humanitarian and development actors, and local civil society have taken significant steps to protect education from attack in the last two years. This includes changes to national law and military doctrine, trying perpetrators of attacks in courts of law, and putting in place processes to assess and mitigate risks of attacks on education and military use.

However, GCPEA recognizes that much work remains to be done to protect students, educators, and personnel from attack, as well as educational institutions at all levels of learning. Civil society, international organizations, and donors play a key role in supporting this process. For states, non-state actors, donors, international organizations, and communities alike, the Safe Schools Declaration provides concrete actions that can be taken to protect education. Relevant parties should implement these commitments in a manner that accounts for the specific needs of female students and education personnel.

For a full list of recommendations for each commitment of the Safe Schools Declaration, tailored to specific actors, see the *Education under Attack 2020* report.

GCPEA's core recommendations include:

End attacks on education and Implement the Safe Schools Declaration and *Guidelines*

- Parties to armed conflict should immediately cease attacks on education.
- States should endorse, implement, and support the Safe Schools Declaration in a gender responsive manner to ensure that all students and educators can learn and teach in safety.
- Armed forces and armed groups should avoid using schools and universities for military purposes, including by implementing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.
- States should implement the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict.
- Parties to conflict should never target students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities. Never recruit or use children or commit sexual violence. Abide by the laws of war.
- State armed forces, parastatal armed forces, and other state actors, including law enforcement, should refrain from using excessive force on school and university students and personnel at protests that are either education-related or occur on campus.
- State armed forces, parastatal armed forces, and other state actors, including law enforcement, should respect academic freedom and refrain from using physical violence or threats of physical violence against education personnel and students in response to their academic work or status as teachers, students, or education staff.

Monitoring and reporting on attacks on education

- States and other monitoring bodies should strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, including disaggregating data by type of attack on education, sex, age, location, person or group responsible, number of days the institution was closed, and type of institution to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education.
- States, international humanitarian and development organizations, and civil society should promote more consistent disaggregation of data related to attacks on education, including disaggregation by type of attack, location, institution type, and whether the attack was targeted as well as information on the sex and age of victims and survivors of such attacks. For entities documenting recruitment and use of, or sexual violence against, children in conflict, ensure that the nexus between those violations and education is documented, including by documenting whether these violations occurred at or on the way to schools or universities, as appropriate.
- States, international humanitarian and development organizations, and civil society should use GCPEA's Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education to identify monitoring and reporting gaps and identify solutions to strengthen monitoring and reporting.

Holding perpetrators to account and providing assistance to survivors

- States and international justice institutions should systematically investigate attacks on education and prosecute those responsible.
- International organizations and donors should provide financial or expert support for investigations of alleged violations of applicable national and international law.
- States and other institutions should provide nondiscriminatory assistance and protection for all survivors of attacks on education, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or other attributes, while taking into account their distinct needs and experiences based on gender, and potential vulnerabilities such as disability and displacement.

Planning for and mitigating the impact of attacks on education

- Where feasible, states should maintain safe access to education during armed conflict, including by working with school and university communities and all other relevant stakeholders to develop gender-responsive strategies to reduce the risk of attacks, and comprehensive safety and security plans in the event of these attacks.
- Education providers should ensure that any post-Covid-19 "back-to-school" campaigns and catch-up classes include learners who previously ended their studies due to attacks on schools, insecurity, or displacement, with a specific focus on female students who may encounter additional barriers to education; they should also continue to expand distance-learning and other alternative education programs established in response to Covid-19 to benefit these learners.
- Education providers should ensure that education does not exacerbate conflict but promotes peace and provides physical and psychosocial protection for students, including by addressing gender-based stereotypes and barriers that can trigger, exacerbate, and result from attacks on education.
- Education providers should "Build back better" after attacks on education and ensure funding not only to repair but to improve schools and make them safer and more inclusive to all students and educators.



A 12-year-old student answers questions during a science class held in a tent at Al-Hamzi school, Hajjah, Yemen, in March 2021. The school was open despite the destruction of its second floor due to a missile strike years earlier.

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METHODOLOGY

***Education under Attack 2022* covers attacks on schools, universities, students, and educators in 2020 and 2021. The report includes a Global Overview as well as profiling 28 conflict-affected countries with a systematic pattern of attacks on education and military use of educational facilities. This sixth edition, *Education under Attack 2022,* follows the 2007 and 2010 editions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the 2014, 2018, and 2020 reports published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). This Methodology section explains the definitions used in *Education under Attack 2022* and the criteria for profiling a country. The report's sources, analyses, and limitations are also laid out.**

Education under Attack 2022 uses a similar methodology and country profile criteria as in past reports. However, GCPEA made two primary changes between the last report, *Education under Attack 2020*, and this one. First, the 2020 report profiled attacks on education in countries experiencing both armed conflict and insecurity; the 2022 report includes country profiles only for countries considered to have experienced armed conflict. This change was made to align the report with GCPEA's mission, which is to protect education from attack during armed conflict. Despite the change in profile criteria, GCPEA still tracks attacks on education and military use in all countries and reports this information to UNESCO Institute for Statistics to monitor Sustainable Development Goal 4 Quality Education.[216] Second, *Education under Attack 2020* had a three-year reporting period (2017-2019), the first year of which overlapped with the period covered in *Education under Attack 2018* to report on any incidents collected after publication. In the new report, only a two-year period (2020 and 2021) is covered without any overlap. As sources began to release data more regularly, GCPEA determined that a year of overlap with past reports was no longer necessary.

Definition of Attacks on Education and Military Use of Schools and Universities

Education under Attack 2022 covers attacks on students, teachers, and education facilities, as well as military use of schools and universities, during armed conflicts. This report examines violent **attacks on education**, defined as any threatened or actual use of force against students, teachers, academics, education support and transport staff (e.g., janitors, bus drivers), education officials, buildings, resources, or facilities (including school buses). It tracks intentional and indiscriminate attacks perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, state security entities, and non-state armed groups.

In more detail, **educational facilities** are defined as any site where students learn from a designated instructor, or where the learning process is supported, at any level of learning. In addition to primary and secondary schools, this includes preschools, kindergartens, universities, technical and vocational education training institutes, and non-formal education sites, as well as student or teacher dormitories, school buses, and warehouses or vehicles dedicated to storing or transporting educational materials. These facilities may be run by the state or other entities, including religious organizations. **Educational materials** include textbooks, school records, or teaching and learning supplies. **Education personnel** refers to anyone working professionally, or volunteering, in the education system, at any level of learning. Personnel may include teachers, academics, education officials, or education support and transport staff such as: education administrators, janitors, bus drivers, and librarians.

In terms of **perpetrators**, *Education under Attack 2022* includes violations committed by armed forces, law enforcement, and other state security entities, including state intelligence, as well as associated entities such as paramilitary groups or paramilitary police. Multinational forces include regional forces and United Nations (UN) peacekeeping forces. "Non-state armed groups" refers to any armed group in a given country. Non-state armed groups generally control territory, possess a chain of command or degree of internal organization, and seek political, social, or economic goals. The term "armed opposition group" applies only to non-state armed groups fighting against the government in power. The term "armed separatist group" or "separatists" is only used to refer to non-state armed groups seeking to establish autonomous territory.

Categories of attacks on education

GCPEA classifies attacks on education into five categories plus military use: attacks on schools; attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel; child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school; sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university; attacks on higher education; and military use of schools and universities.

Attacks on schools

Attacks on schools include targeted and indiscriminate violent attacks on primary and secondary schools, as well as kindergartens, preschools, and nonformal education sites. This category also includes attacks on related infrastructure, such as playgrounds, school libraries, storage facilities, and examination halls. Excluded from this category are attacks on higher education facilities, which are included in the higher education category. Common forms of attacks on schools include aerial bombardment, ground strikes, crossfire, arson, vandalism, and explosives such as suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices.

An incident is considered an attack on a school if it takes place in a school setting and if an armed force, other state security force, or non-state armed group damages the school facility or attempts or threatens to do so. This category also includes airstrikes, ground strikes, or explosions, whether indiscriminate or targeted, that occur in reasonable proximity to a school because of the risk that school infrastructure will be damaged, and students and teachers killed. Any unexploded ordnance or explosive remnants of war found on school grounds are considered attacks on schools, even if security personnel were able to defuse the explosives before they detonated. School closures due to targeted threats against one or more educational facilities are included as attacks on schools; however, school closures due to conflict in general are not.

Although students, teachers, and other education personnel may be harmed in attacks on schools, attacks on schools are distinct in that they involve an intent to damage infrastructure or a failure to take precautions to protect it. Accordingly, an incident of an armed conflict actor detonating an explosive device on school grounds is still counted as an attack on a school, even if students are harmed or killed, since the explosive was presumably intended to damage the school more generally, rather than harm specific students. In such cases, student or teacher casualties are recorded in relation to an attack on a school; such casualties are not recorded in the category of attack on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel include killings, injuries, torture, abduction, forced disappearance, or threats of violence, such as coercion or extortion, that occur in, or on their way to or from, school. Targeted attacks on students, teachers, staff, and education officials are included, even if the incident occurs off campus, if the person is attacked for their status as a student or educator. Attacks on school students and educators typically target, or directly affect, people, while attacks on schools generally target, or directly affect, infrastructure.

Attacks on school buses and vehicles carrying ministry officials, teachers, or students are included in this category when people are targeted in the attack, as opposed to the infrastructure. Cases of armed forces or armed group members entering a school and opening fire are included only when the incident does not involve a complex attack, such as one with explosives meant to damage the facility, in which case the incident would be classified as an attack on a school.

Specifically included are cases in which armed forces, law enforcement, or other state security entities arrest or use excessive force, such as live ammunition, teargas, or water cannons, against students or education staff during protests that either (a) occur on school grounds, regardless of their aim, or (b) are related to education, even if they occur off school grounds. This category does not include incidents in which students or staff were injured while participating in off-campus protests unrelated to education, even if the leaders of the protest were students. This category also does not include sexual violence, which is a distinct category.

Since it is often difficult to determine why a student, teacher, or staff member is targeted, this study excludes such attacks if they occur outside of the educational context unless the attack was attributed to a specific actor or there is an established pattern of attacks on education in that context.

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school occurs when armed forces or armed groups recruit children under the age of 18 from their schools or along school routes. International human rights law prohibits the recruitment or use of all children, setting the age of lawful conscription or use of a person by armed forces or groups at 18 years of age or older.[217] Recruitment for any purpose is included, such as serving as fighters, spies, or intelligence sources; for domestic work; or to transport weapons or other materials.[218] This category of attack on education does not include cases of recruitment for sexual violence, such as rape or forced marriage, which are included in the sexual violence category.

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university occurs when armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities, or non-state armed groups sexually threaten, harass, or abuse students or educators of all genders. Sexual violence includes rape, sexual slavery, forced marriage, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced circumcision, castration, genital harm, and any other non-consensual sexual act, as well as acts that may not require physical violence or contact but include humiliation or shaming of a sexual nature, such as forced nudity.[219] It also includes abduction for these purposes, which are counted as sexual violence, not child recruitment or attacks on students or personnel.

This category includes such violations if they occur while students or educators are traveling to and from, or are in, places of learning, or if a clear nexus with education otherwise exists, such as if individuals are explicitly targeted while away from places of learning, but because of their status as students or educators. This category also includes sexual violence that takes place in an educational institution by armed forces, other state security forces, or non-state armed groups, even if those abused are not students or educators. Sexual violence perpetrated by other educators and students is not included as an attack on education, unless the perpetrators belong to an armed force, law enforcement, other state security entity, or non-state armed group.

Attacks on higher education

Attacks on higher education include targeted or indiscriminate attacks on universities, technical and vocational education training institutes, and other higher education facilities, as well as attacks that target students, professors, and other higher education staff. Many of the violations included in this category are similar to those described at the pre-primary, primary, and secondary school levels, including bombings, airstrikes, or other methods of targeting university campuses, as well as killings, abductions, or threats directed at university students, faculty, or staff. Sexual violence committed against university students in an educational setting by armed forces, other state security entities, or non-state armed groups is categorized as sexual violence, not attacks on higher education. Although no such incidents have been identified, cases of children under the age of 18 conscripted in a higher education setting would be categorized as child recruitment, rather than an attack on higher education.

As with attacks on primary and secondary education, also included are cases in which armed forces, law enforcement, or other state security entities arrest or use excessive force, such as live ammunition, teargas, or water cannons, against students or education staff during protests that either (a) occurred on campus, regardless of their aim, or (b) are related to education, even if they occurred off campus. This category does not include students or staff who were injured during their participation in protests that occurred off campus and were unrelated to education, even if the leaders of the protest were students.

Attacks on higher education also include deliberate acts of coercion, intimidation, or threats of physical force that create a climate of fear and repression that undermines academic freedom and educational functions. Examples include a university professor arrested or threatened with physical violence for an academic publication. However, this report excludes violations of academic freedom that do not consist of either physical violence or the threat of physical violence; not included, for instance, are academic suspensions, censorship, travel bans, and revocation of citizenship.

Military use of schools and universities

Military use occurs when armed forces or non-state armed groups partially or fully occupy schools or universities and use them for purposes that support a military effort. Common examples include using educational facilities as bases, barracks, and temporary shelters; fighting positions, weapons storage facilities, and detention and interrogation centers; and for military training or drilling soldiers.[220]

The duration of military use of schools and universities varies significantly. Armed forces or armed groups may use a school or university for several hours, one night, months, or years. Different groups may use the same school at different times. The presence of an armed force or group in a school may trigger attacks by an opposing side or increase the likelihood of forced recruitment and sexual violence.

If an attack occurs on a school or university that is being used for military purposes, the incident is not counted as an attack on a school or university since, under international humanitarian law, the presence of armed actors can convert the premises into a legitimate military target; instead, military use of the facility is recorded. However, cases of forced child recruitment or sexual violence that occurred in the context of military use of schools or universities are counted as distinct attacks, namely military use *and* recruitment, or military use *and* sexual violence. The *Education under Attack* reports also record any damage that occurs to educational facilities during military use, when that information is available.

Other considerations in defining attacks on education and military use of schools and universities

Not all violence in and around schools constitutes an attack on education. Specifically, violence against students, educators, or education facilities perpetrated by criminal organizations, lone gunmen, or individuals without an affiliation to an armed force or group are not recorded as attacks on education or military use in *Education under Attack 2022*. Instead, the attacks or military use must have been carried out by armed forces, law enforcement, state security entities, or non-state armed groups. When determining whether an incident qualifies as an attack on education, GCPEA considers all available evidence including the perpetrator of the incident and their motivation, when that information is available. When the perpetrator and motivation are unknown, GCPEA relies on established patterns of attack in that context and other details from the incident to determine whether the event meets the criteria for inclusion as an attack on education or military use. Finally, although several sets of international legal norms apply to attacks on education, the *Education under Attack* reports include incidents that meet the above definitions of attacks on education and military use, regardless of whether the incidents violate international law.

For additional details about the considerations for determining attacks on education and military use, see the online methodological appendix.

Country profile criteria

Education under Attack 2022 includes in-depth profiles describing and analyzing attacks on education and military use in 2020 and 2021 for 28 countries. Countries were selected for a profile in the report based on two criteria. First, the report only profiles countries that experienced armed conflict during the reporting period. To make this determination, GCPEA referred to the Rule of Law in Armed Conflict (RULAC) project and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) classifications; in cases of disagreement between RULAC and UCDP classifications, the World Bank Group's (WBG) List of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations was consulted.[221] Second, the report only profiles countries that experienced a systematic pattern of attacks on education in 2019 and 2020, defined as ten attacks;[222] 28 countries met these two criteria. This approach excluded countries that experienced attacks on education but were not considered to be in armed conflict, as well as countries that experienced only a few incidents of attacks on education or military use. These criteria were similar to those used in past reports; for instance, *Education under Attack 2020* defined a systematic pattern of attack as ten attacks over two years, namely 2017 and 2018.

Data sources and data types

GCPEA collected data for *Education under Attack 2022* through three methods: (a) a review of relevant reports, (b) media searches, and (c) outreach to staff members of international and national organizations working in relevant countries. GCPEA cycled through the data collection methods several times as new information became available.

The first method was a desk review of relevant reports, datasets and documents from UN agencies, development and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights organizations, government bodies, and think tanks. GCPEA consulted with experts to compile a list of the most useful global and country-specific sources, then compiled reports and other documents from these sources through online searches or directly contacting the authoring organizations, reviewing each for relevant information in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. Relevant sources included the UN Secretary-General's annual and country-specific reports on children and armed conflict, although these reports are limited to country situations where there is an established UN-supported Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM);[223] reports from other UN agencies and bodies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC); reports by human rights organizations and humanitarian NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Save the Children; reports from scholar rescue organizations, such as the Scholars at Risk Network's Academic Freedom Monitor; Education Cluster reports and meeting minutes; and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) country-specific situation reports. Country-specific sources included UN missions, such as the UN Assistance Missions in Afghanistan (UNAMA), UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UN Assistance Missions in Iraq (UNAMI), and UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). Other resources included the monthly *Humanitarian Monitor* in Israel/Palestine published by OCHA and the Syrian Network for Human Rights' news updates on attacks on vital facilities. In addition, GCPEA conducted country-specific searches on OCHA's ReliefWeb to identify additional reports that might be useful. In general, the sources were similar to those cited in the previous editions of the report.

The second method employed was media searches. To identify media reports of attacks on education or military use of schools and universities for *Education under Attack 2022*, GCPEA relied heavily on the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). The project compiles media and other reports of worldwide political violence and protest events into databases which GCPEA searches for relevant incidents.[224] ACLED has its own standards for achieving data reliability.[225] The 2020 edition of the report relied on ACLED database searches as well. In addition, GCPEA conducted online searches of local and international media outlets for relevant global and country-specific news articles in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.

The third approach was gathering relevant information from organizations operating in profiled countries and soliciting feedback on drafts of the country profiles. These activities aimed to (a) identify additional instances of attacks on education and military use not yet included in the report, and (b) verify and gather additional information on attacks and military use GCPEA had already identified from other sources. Through this outreach, GCPEA was able to access several additional datasets and reports compiled by local NGOs and international agencies working in the profiled countries, in line with past *Education under Attack* reports.

Each method yielded three types of data on attacks on education and military use: individual incident reports, tallies of attacks or military use, and qualitative information. GCPEA entered these data into country-specific Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Reports of individual incidents were categorized by type of attack on education or military use, as well as the date and location of the incident and, if known, the perpetrator, whether the violence was targeted, and details on the individuals and institutions affected, disaggregated by gender, level of education, and professional role. GCPEA carefully reviewed records of individual incidents to prevent duplication and double counting.

Next, GCPEA recorded relevant tallies of attacks on education and military use of education facilities then incorporated them into attack totals for countries where possible. Generated by UN agencies, governments, and NGOs, the tallies report a number of attacks or military use occurring in a particular location and time period, for instance the number of recorded attacks on schools in a country or sub-national region over six months or a year.

Finally, GCPEA collected qualitative information on attacks on education and military use from all data sources. This information helped to contextualize the individual incidents and tallies presented in the report, and to indicate the severity and impact of the attack on education or military use. Qualitative data were particularly important for determining whether child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, educational facilities occurred in a particular country during the reporting period, given the lack of incident-level data on these violations.

Data reliability

The reliability of the data in *Education under Attack 2022* varies. Some information comes from organizations such as UN agencies or Human Rights Watch, which maintain rigorous standards for verifying incidents before reporting them. Other incidents are compiled from media outlets that maintain reporting standards but ones that are typically lower than for the organizations mentioned. GCPEA corroborates reports whenever possible and relies on local partners to assess the reliability of sources. For transparency, *Education under Attack 2022* makes the information source clear for all incidents of attacks and military use.

For more details on data reliability, see the online methodological appendix.

Data analysis

The Global Overview of *Education under Attack 2022* analyzes global trends in reports of attacks on education, the categories of attacks on education, and military use of schools and universities. The Global Overview covers countries around the world focusing on trends in 2020 and 2021 and including a brief five-year analysis from 2017 to 2021 for comparison with past reports.

Analyses in the Global Overview include totals that GCPEA calculated from incidents collected, tallies from other organizations, or a combination of the two, taking precautions to prevent double counting. When more than one count of attacks on education was available for a country, GCPEA used whichever was most comprehensive and reliable for that context.

In the Global Overview, GCPEA categorized country situations according to three levels of severity, based on either the number of discrete incidents of attacks on education *or* the number of students and education personnel harmed by such attacks in 2020 and 2021. These criteria allowed the report to account for contexts in which many attacks on education were reported but relatively few people were harmed in these attacks, and for contexts in which fewer incidents were reported but the incidents that occurred harmed many people. This either-or method of accounting for severity also addressed some of the limitations posed by gaps in information.

For example, in some cases, significant information was available on the number of schools attacked but little information existed on whether these attacks harmed students and education personnel and, if so, how many. *Education under Attack 2022* uses equivalent thresholds to the 2018 and 2020 reports to determine levels of severity, except the 2022 report makes the determination over a two-year period, rather than five years as in past editions, to reflect more regular report releases.[226]

The three levels of severity, determined over a two-year period, are:

- *Very heavily affected:* 400 or more *incidents of attacks* on education or military use, OR 400 or more *students and education personnel harmed* by attacks on education or military use
- *Heavily affected:* 200 to 399 *incidents of attacks* on education, OR 200 to 399 *students and education personnel harmed* by attacks on education
- *Affected:* 10 to 199 *incidents of attacks* on education or military use, OR 199 or fewer *students and education personnel harmed* by attacks on education

In addition to the levels of severity in the Global Overview, this report also includes counts of the categories of attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in the country profiles. To produce the attack counts in the profiles, GCPEA summed the number of reported individual incidents collected within each category of attack on education, as well as military use. Where possible, GCPEA included tallies from other organizations in these summations, ensuring that events were not double counted, for instance by checking for overlaps in dates and geographic areas.

When individual incidents were summed to produce totals for the Global Overview or profiles, GCPEA maintained the following definitions of attacks and military use, and people harmed:

- *Incidents of attacks and military use:* the total number of discrete incidents of attacks on education and military use of schools and universities reported. For military use, the highest simultaneous number recorded during the two-year period was used, meaning that this number is likely an undercount.
- *Students and education personnel harmed:* the total number of students and education personnel killed, injured, detained, or threatened in any form of attack, whether it targeted the people or an institution.

For more details on data analysis, refer to the online methodological appendix.

Data limitations

GCPEA faced several challenges to reporting and analyzing attacks on education and military use due to data limitations. First, the media, NGOs, and other relevant organizations almost certainly do not capture all incidents of attacks on education and military use that occur in a country; depending on the context, they may be constrained by limited resources, restrictions on free press, security and pandemic lockdowns, and other factors. Since some attacks and incidents of military use likely go unreported, GCPEA is not able to collect them and so *Education under Attack 2022* almost certainly transmits an undercount of attacks and military use. Second, the UN and other sources sometimes only make available aggregate numbers of attacks or military use, meaning that some of the trend analyses in the report may be imperfect since dates or attack types may have been misclassified given that they could not be assessed in detail. Finally, since organizations release some data annually, GCPEA may not have the most up-to-date information when conducting analyses. These limitations affect both the Global Overview and the profiles.

Data for two categories of attack in particular are limited, namely sexual violence and child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, educational facilities. In addition to survivors' hesitation to come forward and general underreporting of these violations, when child recruitment and sexual violence are reported, the location of the violation is often not revealed, meaning a connection to education cannot be established, even if one exists. As a result, *Education under Attack 2022* almost certainly underrepresents school-related sexual violence and child recruitment.

When data on child recruitment and sexual violence at or en route to education facilities are available, they are often qualitative reports from news outlets or NGOs. As such, GCPEA is able to determine which countries experienced these attacks on education but is often unable to provide counts of these violations in *Education under Attack* reports.

For more details on data limitations, refer to the online methodological appendix.

Additional notes on data reporting

GCPEA takes several precautions when reporting potentially sensitive information concerning attacks on education. First, GCPEA generally follows Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility guidelines for how information on sexual violence incidents is reported in the *Education under Attack* series. The information provided by sources is carefully reviewed and edited so that no specific details are made public that could breach the dignity, confidentiality, safety, and security of the survivor, education facility, and community.

Additionally, GCPEA generally does not include the names of students, academics, staff, or education officials in the *Education under Attack* reports, even when media or NGOs report their names.

Finally, when discussing arrests and detentions of students, teachers, and academics, *Education under Attack 2022* typically uses the same language as reported by the media outlet. GCPEA recognizes that "detention" and "arrest" are different notions in some contexts, and that in a number of situations they may be conflated in the media reports.

COUNTRY PROFILES



Members of the Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron (ESMAD) fire teargas during a student protest in Medellín, Colombia, in February 2020. Students were protesting over ESMAD entering the University of Antioquia campus during past protests.

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AFGHANISTAN

GCPEA identified over 130 attacks on schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period, primarily in the northern, eastern, and central provinces, and most involving explosive weapons. Armed groups continued to attack schoolteachers and students during the reporting period, with over 25 reported incidents. Also, university students, staff, and facilities were affected in over 25 reported incidents of attack.

Context

Afghanistan's security context deteriorated in 2020 and 2021, with Afghan National Forces and international forces, the Taliban, the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), and other non-state armed groups battling for territorial control. Peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government from late 2020[227] until July 2021 failed to achieve a settlement.[228] Thus, as international forces, including the United States, began withdrawing troops in April 2021, the Taliban captured important administrative centers and finally took Kabul in August 2021.[229]

In 2020, the overall number of civilian casualties declined by 15 percent compared to 2019, according to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and reached the lowest number since 2013.[230] Contributing to a decrease in civilian causalities was a decline in both US military operations and major Taliban attacks after the two parties signed an agreement in February 2020.[231] However, violence and targeted attacks on civilians rose at the end of 2020[232] and into the first half of 2021: civilian casualties increased by 47 percent in the first six months of 2021 as compared to the same period in 2020.[233] ISKP and other armed groups targeted civilians, including women, minority groups, journalists, and activists in early 2021, according to Human Rights Watch.[234] Human Rights Watch also documented rights violations during and after the Taliban captured territories in 2021.[235]

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic and government measures to control it, amplified an already dire humanitarian situation. The UN reported that the Covid-19 pandemic drove the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance from 9.4 million in January 2020 to 18.4 million in January 2021.[236] After the Taliban takeover, the country's economic crisis worsened, in part due to the freezing of funds by international donors and partners[237]. This had consequences on health, including sharp increases in child malnutrition, according to Save the Children.[238]

Conflict continued to affect access to education during the reporting period. The UN reported that more than 4.2 million children were out of school before the pandemic, 60 percent of whom were girls.[239] An additional 7.5 million children from public schools and 500,000 from community-based education centers were affected by Covid-19 related school closures between March and September 2020.[240] In addition, the UN documented 258 school closures in 2020 due to threats against education, general insecurity, or military use.[241] In the first half of 2021, insecurity forced the closure of over 920 schools, according to the Afghanistan Education in Emergencies Working Group.[242] The Taliban restricted girls' education in many areas under its control, although Human Rights Watch found that the armed group permitted some girls to attend school and even university in certain localities; in addition, harmful social norms also prevented families from sending girls to school or local governments from allowing girls to access education.[243] In September 2021, following closures due to Covid-19 and conflict, the Taliban reopened boys' secondary schools but did not announce reopenings for girls' secondary schools, though some girls' schools did resume operating in certain regions;[244] furthermore, the Taliban announced that women and girls could only attend segregated higher education spaces;[245] all public universities remained closed at the end of 2021.[246]

Attacks on schools

GCPEA identified over 130 reported attacks on schools in 2020 and 2021. This represented an overall decline as compared to 2018 and 2019. Attacks on schools peaked in 2018 when the UN verified 192 attacks on schools and personnel, around half of which occurred when schools were used as polling stations in national elections.[247] In 2019, the UN verified 70 attacks on schools.[248] Though the overall number declined as compared to earlier years, GCPEA observed an increase in the proportion of attacks on schools using explosive weapons during the reporting period.[249]

In 2020, the UN verified 62 incidents of attacks on schools, students, and personnel that included both targeted or collateral attacks and threats, occurring most frequently in the eastern, northeastern, and northern regions of Afghanistan.[250] The UN verified that the Taliban, "ISKP," and undetermined non-state armed groups perpetrated at least 22 of the attacks, whereas Afghan government forces perpetrated about 20 incidents; the remainder of incidents took place during fighting between groups.[251] GCPEA could not determine how many UN-verified incidents were attacks on schools as compared with attacks on students or personnel.

In 2020, GCPEA also identified over 40 incident reports of attacks on schools from media, NGO, UN, and other sources.[252] These reports involved IED, UXO, or other explosives (23); airstrikes or ground-launched strikes (8); arson (6); looting (2); and gunfire (1), threats (1), and raiding (1). Takhar, Herat, Nangarhar, Wardak were the provinces most heavily affected.

Attacks on schools that used explosive devices occurred frequently in 2020. For example:

- The UN, *The New York Times*, and local media reported that an IED exploded inside a madrassa in Archi district, Kunduz on February 11 or 12, 2020. The blast killed five students and wounded three.[253]
- On October 9, 2020, an explosive device allegedly detonated inside a recently built school in Kandawalo, Zheray district, Kandahar region, according to local media. The explosion caused extensive damage to the school.[254]
- On October 24, 2020, an explosive attached to a suicide bomber detonated outside of the Kaswar-e Danish tutoring center in Kabul, killing at least 24 and injuring 57. The Ministry of Health reported to *Al Jazeera* that most of the victims of the attack were students between the ages of 15 and 26. The tutoring center prepared children and young adults, many of whom belonged to the minority Hazara group, for higher education. Reports did not indicate any damage to the facility.[255]

In 2020, some examples of attacks on schools involving air-launched or ground-launched bombs, shelling, and mortars included:

- On February 2, 2020, an air-launched strike by the Afghan Air Force in Kunduz damaged a school, according to the UN and local media.[256]
- The UN reported that in March 2020, "ISKP" launched rockets during the ceremony to swear in President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul. A rocket damaged a school.[257]
- On October 21, 2020, an airstrike by Afghan armed forces struck a madrassa in Hazara Qurluq town, Takhar province, and killed eleven students and an instructor, according to Human Rights Watch and international media. The Afghan Ministry of Defense claimed that the attack was an offensive that targeted the Taliban and not the school. [258]

In 2020, non-state armed groups also burned schools, primarily in Takhar province, but also in Baghlan and Nangarhar. One incident involved a girls' school:

- On February 3, 2020, local media reported that a non-state armed group suspected to be the Taliban burned the Bodala Girls School in Taloqan, Takhar province. The spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior reported to *Pajhwok Afghan News* that school equipment and books were destroyed in the fire.[259]
- The UN verified that the Taliban set a high school on fire in Takhar province on July 15, 2020, destroying the facilities including a library and laboratory.[260] The school had served 1,000 male and female students.[261] *Salaam Times* reported that on same day the Taliban had used a high school in Taloqan, Takhar province after allegedly using the building as a firing position in a battle against Afghan forces, after

which they burned the building which had been vacant due to Covid-19 restrictions. GCPEA could not confirm whether the two reports described the same school.[262]

- Early in the morning of August 13, 2020, unidentified armed assailants reportedly set fire to Abu Usman Taloqani High School in Taloqan city, Takhar province. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Education reported to *Pajhwok Afghan News* that six classrooms and three offices were completely destroyed. The school served around 3,000 students.[263]

In 2021, reported attacks on schools appeared to increase as compared to the previous year. This increase occurred as the Taliban forces took control of several key cities in the country. Over the year, GCPEA identified at least 76 reported incidents of attacks on schools from media, government, and NGO sources; around 40 attacks involved explosive weapons, three reports of threats, three reports of arson, one report of crossfire, and the rest undetermined.[264] The use of explosive weapons in attacks on schools harmed nearly 200 students and teachers, the majority of whom were women and girls. At the time of writing, UN data was only available between January and June 2021, when the UN verified 42 incidents of targeted or collateral attacks on schools and school personnel.[265]

Examples of attacks using explosive weapons in 2021 included:

- ACLED reported that around February 14, 2021, shelling struck a school playground in Khwaja Baha Wuddin, Takhar province, killing one student and injuring another.[266]
- On May 3, 2021, at least ten students were injured when a hand grenade reportedly detonated near the Mirman Nazo school in Farah city, according to international and local media sources.[267]
- On May 8, 2021, in one of the deadliest attacks on schools in Afghanistan in the reporting period, an armed group detonated three IEDs near Sayed-ul-Shuhada High School in Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, Kabul, as students exited the building at the end of the school day. As many as 90 people, were killed and another 240 were injured; reports indicated that the vast majority of casualties were female teenage students. Reports also indicated damage to school materials.[268]
- On or around May 15, 2021, unidentified gunmen allegedly burned a school in Nahr-i-Saraj district, Helmand province, according to local media and ACLED.[269]
- On August 8, 2021, airstrikes hit a school in Lashkargah city, Helmand province, according to the *Associated Press;* photographic evidence showed damage to the building and school materials, including computers.[270] Afghan armed forces acknowledged launching operations in the area but did not claim to have struck the school.
- On October 6, 2021, an explosive device detonated inside Mazharul Ulom religious school in Khost city, according to the UN and media sources. A student was allegedly attempting to defuse the bomb when it exploded. The attack killed one student and injured around 17 others.[271]

Examples of incidents involving arson, raids, or looting by alleged armed groups in 2021 included:

- On June 24, 2021, Save the Children reported that, in Kandahar province, dozens of schools had been burnt down, and an unexploded mortar shell had detonated,in Nangahar province, injuring six children.[272]
- On July 13, 2021, the Taliban allegedly burned down a girls' school in Ghazni city, according to local media.[273]
- Around September 5, 2021, the Taliban reportedly attacked the Afghanistan National Institute of Music,[274] The Institute was a specialized music school which also offered full academic instruction for students in Grades 4 through 14.[275]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 27 incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, five of which affected women and girls. These attacks appeared to remain somewhat constant with earlier years; GCPEA identified ten reported incidents of attacks on school students and teachers in 2019 and around 20 in 2018.[276] Reports included cases of targeted threats, abductions, or killings of education professionals by non-state armed groups, as well as improvised explosive devices along school routes.

In 2020, GCPEA identified reports of at least 16 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.[277] All of the incidents identified by GCPEA involved threats, abduction, or targeted killings of students or educators and over half of all reports took place between September and December 2020.This uptick at the end of 2020 corresponds with an overall increase in targeted assassinations by non-state armed groups coinciding with the beginning of intra-Afghan dialogue in September 2020. Examples included:

- On August 19, 2020, in Kabul, an explosive detonated, targeting a Ministry of Education car that was carrying the head of the Scientific Council of the Ministry of Education. Reports said that the explosion killed the official and his guard.[278]
- On August 28, 2020, ISKP detonated a remote-controlled IED that targeted a teacher who was on his way home from school in Nangarhar province, according to the UN. The explosion wounded the teacher, who was targeted for his perceived opposition to ISKP, and a student.[279]
- On October 17, 2020, a non-state armed group alleged to be the Taliban reportedly killed a school principal and teacher at Shemar Secondary School in Taloqan city, Takhar province. According to media reports, the Taliban had targeted religious scholars and school teachers perceived to be in support of the government.[280]
- The UN verified that on October 24, 2020, the Taliban shot and killed a teacher while he was on his way home from a mosque in Balkh province. The teacher was targeted for his work at the Department of Education as well as for expressing opposing views to the Taliban.[281]

In 2021, GPCEA identified at least 11 reported incidents of attacks against educators, including threats, killings, and abductions.[282] Several incidents directly targeted female educators or educators providing education to girls. Examples included:

- On February 3, 2021, local media reported that unidentified armed assailants killed the principal of a private school in Jalalabad city, Nangarhar province.[283]
- The Aid Worker Security Database reported that on August 8, 2021, Taliban fighters kidnapped and tortured an administrator of a girls' school operated by an NGO in Khoja Lakan, Paghman district, Kabul province. The Taliban released the educator on August 11, 2021.[284]
- On an unspecified date in 2021, the Taliban made death threats to a female high school teacher who formerly taught mixed-gender sports in school, according to reports received by Amnesty International. The teacher, who went into hiding after receiving the threats, had also received a court summons.[285]
- Local media reported that on December 25, 2021, the Taliban detained approximately 150 high school students who were protesting the appointment of a new principal at their school in Zaranj, Nimroz province. In one report, the Taliban confirmed the arrest of the students but denied any violence against them.[286]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified several reports of the military use of schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period, at a similar rate as in previous years. For example, the UN verified seven cases of military use of schools in 2019 [287]and five cases in 2018.[288]

In 2020, the UN verified five cases of military use of schools.[289] Also in 2020, GCPEA identified qualitative reports from the UN that both non-state armed groups and Afghan armed forces or police used educational facilities for military purposes.[290]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least nine reported incidents of military use of education facilities by Afghan security forces and non-state armed groups.[291] For example:

- On February 16, 2021, Afghan troops reportedly vacated Taliban forces from Babar school in Arghandab district, Kandahar region, according to the Ministry of Defense.[292]
- The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan reported in June 2021 that a resource center for teachers that it operated inside a government school in Qarabagh district, Ghazni province, had been occupied by the Taliban for at least two months.[293]
- Amnesty International received reports that the Taliban used four schools for military purposes during fighting for territorial control: two high schools in Sar-e-Pul city, one high school in Kunduz city, and one high school in Alishing district, Lagman province.[294] GCPEA could not determine the dates and duration of the use.
- *The New York Times* reported that the Taliban seized the American University in Afghanistan's campus on or shortly after August 15, 2021, and that it remained occupied at the end of September 2021.The Taliban allegedly replaced the university's own flag with the armed group's flag.[295]

Attacks on higher education

For the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 25 incidents of attacks on higher education in Afghanistan, 16 of which were attacks on higher education students and staff and nine of which were attacks on facilities. Non-state armed groups continued to attack scholars and students during the reporting period or used explosive devices or arson to damage tertiary education facilities. Attacks on higher education increased slightly as compared to the previous reporting period, where GCPEA identified six attacks on higher education in 2019 and ten in 2018.[296]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least ten incidents of attacks on higher education, which included four attacks on higher education students and personnel[297] and six incidents of attacks on higher education facilities. These incidents took place in Baghlan, Ghor, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Paktia, and Wardak provinces.

Examples of attacks on higher education facilities in 2020 included:

- On March 23, 2020, an explosive device attached to a motorcycle reportedly detonated outside the gates of Paktia University, in Gardez city, Paktia province, according to Scholars at Risk and *The New York Times*. A police officer was killed and a civilian was injured, though the reports did not state whether the civilian was a student or staff at the university.[298]
- On November 2, 2020, gunmen stormed Kabul University campus where they detonated explosives, engaged in gunfight with state security forces, and held dozens of students and staff hostage in classrooms. The attack, later claimed by the Islamic State, lasted over five hours; at least 22 students were killed and over 22 wounded.[299]

Examples of attacks on higher education staff in 2020 included:

- Scholars at Risk reported that on June 2, 2020, an explosive device was placed inside a mosque in Kabul, killing a professor at Kabul University who was a religious scholar and Imam at the mosque. According to Scholars at Risk, security professionals deemed the attack as targeted and following a pattern of other attacks on religious scholars and intellectuals.[300]
- On September 4, 2020, unidentified assailants reportedly shot and killed a professor of Pashto literature at the University of Nangarhar, in Khogyani district, Nangarhar province. According to Scholars at Risk, the professor was on his way to work at the university when the attack occurred.[301]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 15 incidents of attacks on higher education which included three reported attacks on university facilities and twelve reported attacks on higher education faculty and students.[302] Targeted killings of professors appeared to increase in 2021 as compared to 2020. GCPEA also identified reports of threats against female scholars and students after the Taliban gained control of the country in August 2021.

Attacks on higher education personnel in 2021 included.

- On February 18, 2021, a Kabul university lecturer was reportedly killed when an explosive device placed on his car detonated while he was driving near the university. Scholars at Risk noted that the identity of a second victim was not confirmed, with some reports alleging that the passenger was another lecturer and others claiming that it was a student. [303]
- On March 16, 2021, media reported that unidentified gunmen shot at a university bus traveling in Pol-e-Khomri district, Baghlan province. The bus driver and a student died, and six other students were injured. The students and teachers were traveling to Baghlan University where they were members of the Faculty of Agriculture.[304]
- Scholars at Risk and media sources reported that on May 29, 2021, an explosive device attached to a minibus carrying students and staff of Al-Beroni University exploded in Parwan province. The blast killed at least three university staff and injured several students who were traveling from Parwan province to the university in Kapisa province. The government claimed that the attack was targeted and carried out via a remote-control, however no group claimed responsibility.[305]
- On August 17, 2021, Taliban soldiers positioned themselves in front of Herat University and barred female students and educators from entering campus, according to Scholars at Risk and *The New York Times*.[306]
- In September 2021, an Afghan academic published a brief in the academic journal *Nature* on the potential implications of Taliban rule on maternal healthcare and named an Afghan university in her list of affiliated institutions. Following publication, colleagues at the Afghan university reported receiving threats.[307]
- On November 3, 2021, Taliban soldiers allegedly beat and opened gunfire on a professor of a Kateb Private University in Kabul. The professor told the media that the Taliban had targeted him for wearing a "Western" style suit and collaborating with foreign universities. Some reports also claimed that the university's dean was injured in the attack.[308]

Attacks on higher education facilities in 2021 included:

- Local media reported that on February 2, 2021, an unidentified armed group burned down the Peace and Freedom Business Institute in Daka town, Momandara district, Nangarhar province. The governor of Nangarhar reported that the fire damaged two classrooms and some equipment.[309]
- Local media reported that on April 18, 2021, a rocket fell next to the Sharia Faculty building at Kabul University, in Kabul city. No injuries were reported.[310]

AZERBAIJAN

During a six-week conflict in 2020, fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces and de facto Nagorno-Karabakh security forces, led to the reported damage or destruction of over 130 schools and kindergartens. In addition, armed forces and de facto Nagorno-Karabakh security forces reportedly used schools as barracks, both during and after hostilities. Two schools in Armenia were also damaged during the fighting.

Context

Hostilities between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and local authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated between September 27 and November 9, 2020. Conflict took place over control of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian-occupied Azerbaijani territories.[311] Nagorno-Karabakh is an ethnic-Armenian majority enclave located within Azerbaijan under to international law.[312] However, it was governed autonomously since 1994.[313]

On September 27, Azerbaijan launched a military offensive that escalated hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the de-facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh.[314] During a six-week period of hostilities, Human Rights Watch reported that all parties to the conflict used cluster munitions and carried out missile, rocket, and artillery strikes in heavily populated areas, causing significant damage to civilian infrastructure, and loss of life.[315] In all, over 5,000 soldiers and almost 150 civilians were killed during the conflict.[316]

The UN reported that hostilities caused the displacement of over 130,000 people in the Nagorno-Karabakh territory and surrounding areas,[317] with over 60 percent of the Nagorno-Karabakh population displaced within the first month of fighting, according to the Armenian Government.[318]

On November 9, 2020, Russia brokered a truce that ended the six weeks of fighting, with Armenia ceding control over several territories to Azerbaijan, and without defining the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh.[319] For example, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reported that Azerbaijan gained control of over 120 settlements including Shusha city (also called Shushi in Armenian), located in Nagorno-Karabakh.[320] In April 2021, Nagorno-Karabakh authorities and media reported that ceasefire violations occurred.[321]

Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh negatively impacted education during the reporting period. Azerbaijan's Education Minister reported in January 2021 that the war interrupted teaching and learning at around 1,150 schools and for over 300,000 students.[322] On October 15, 2020, Armenian media outlet *Lurer* reported that over 24,000 students in Nagorno-Karabakh and over 10,800 students in bordering areas of Armenia were out of school.[323] In addition, humanitarian agencies and international media reported that internally displaced persons took shelter in schools during the conflict.[324] Furthermore, since many schools had moved to remote learning in March 2020 due to Covid-19, some displaced children could not access online lessons in temporary shelters, according to YUVA, an Azerbaijani non-governmental organization.[325]

Azerbaijan was not profiled in *Education under Attack 2020* so no comparison can be made with previous reporting periods.

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, at least 130 schools and kindergartens were reportedly damaged or destroyed in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. GCPEA had not identified any incidents of attacks on schools in Azerbaijan in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*.

De facto Nargorno-Karabakh authorities reported that at least 71 schools and 14 kindergartens were damaged due to the hostilities.[326] In addition, during the conflict, a further 54 Azerbaijani schools were also damaged or destroyed, as well as several kindergartens, vocational schools, and art schools, according to Azerbaijani authorities.[327] All of these attacks took place within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. Many of these attacks involved shelling.[328] Furthermore, two schools in Armenia were damaged by explosive weapons during the fighting, according to media and Nagorno-Karabakh authorities;[329] Armenia did not have a sufficient number of attacks on education for a profile in this reporting period, as per the report's methodology which requires 10 attacks over a two-year period.

GCPEA identified around 30 reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2020, from Azerbaijani and Armenian media, Azerbaijani and Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Human Rights Watch, and other NGOs.[330] These attacks occurred in municipalities such as Askeran, Askipara, Ganja, Martuni (called Khojavend in Azerbaijan),and Stepanakert (called Khankendi in Azerbaijan), the administrative center of Nagorno-Karabakh. Many reports of attacks on schools described shelling and the use of explosive weapons. Human Rights Watch verified that both Armenian and Azerbaijani forces carried out attacks that struck schools or schoolyards during the conflict, some of which were indiscriminate. Examples of reported attacks included:

- Human Rights Watch verified that between September 27 and October 12, 2020, Azerbaijani forces struck the field surrounding School Number 10, in Stepanakert. In addition to leaving deep craters in the schoolyard, the attacks caused significant damage to dozens of classrooms, windows, doors, school equipment, the exterior, and the water and electricity.[331]
- On October 3, 2020, three artillery shells struck School Number 1, in Tartar, causing significant damage to the walls, windows, and courtyard, as well breaking the windows of a neighboring kindergarten. Around 1,300 students attended the school before the hostilities.[332]
- Human Rights Watch verified that on October 6 and 7, 2002, Azerbaijani forces repeatedly used explosive weapons to attack a military compound in Stepanakert (Khankhendi), leading to the damage of nearby School Number 12. The blasts damaged approximately 40 windows in the school.[333]
- Human Rights Watch reported that on October 8, 2020, Armenian forces carried out rocket artillery attacks, striking School Number 4 in Ganja. The attack did not injure or kill any civilians.[334]
- The Azerbaijani Ministry of Education reported that on October 17, 2020, Armenian forces launched an attack on Ganja, during which Secondary School Number 29 suffered extensive damage. The attack took place in the night and no students were in attendance, but the incident reportedly affected 1,006 students who attend the school.[335]
- Human Rights Watch received reports that shelling, including Grad artillery rockets fired by Azerbaijani forces, struck Martuni School Number 2, in Martuni (Khojavend) multiple times between October 1 and 15, 2020, on October 19, 2020, and again on November 8, 2020. The shelling also affected a kindergarten and art and music school.[336]

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA received several reports of military use of schools by both Armenian and Azerbaijani forces, de facto Nagorno-Karabakh security forces, and Russian peacekeepers.[337] Some cases of military use occurred after the November 2020 ceasefire. These included the following:

- A school principal reported to *The Armenian Mirror Spectator* on November 27, 2020, that Armenian forces had used two schools in Berzdor (called Lachin in Azerbaijan) beginning around October 19, 2020. In School Number 1, the principal reported that around 300 Armenian soldiers had used the school as barracks and had caused damage to the facilities. The school reportedly served 220 students.[338] Armenia controlled Lachin district until the end of November, according to media reports.[339]
- On November 8, 2020, Human Rights Watch observed an Azerbaijani military truck stationed behind School Number 1 in Tartar. [340]
- Human Rights Watch verified that on November 10, 2020, de facto Nagorno-Karabakh security forces were stationed inside a school and adjacent kindergarten in Martuni (Khojavend). The unit kept military vehicles and weapons on the school's grounds before vacating on December 19, 2020.[341]

- Human Rights Watch received reports that Russian peacekeepers entered a schoolyard in Martakert (called Aghdara in Azerbaijan) on January 20, 2021, while conducting military training while stationed at a neighboring stadium. The peacekeepers, who had not given the school advanced notification of their military drills, drove into the schoolyard in an armored vehicle and opened fire. The peacekeepers later provided new windows to the school to replace ones that were damaged by shelling.[342]

Attacks on higher education

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least three reported incidents of attacks on university students. These attacks occurred outside the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and involved the excessive use of force by police against university student protesters. These included:

- On June 1, 2020, Scholars at Risk reported that police arrested at least six students from student organizations who had gathered in front of the Ministry of Education to demand that authorities cancel exams due to inequitable access to higher education during Covid-19 closures. Police fined five students for violating quarantine mandates, before they were released.[343]
- On February 1, 2021, police detained four students of Lankaran State University, in Lankaran, who were protesting in front of the campus about exam scores, according to Scholars at Risk and local media.[344]
- Scholars at Risk and *BBC* reported that on May 3, 2021, police arrested around five students of Azerbaijan State Economic University, in Baku. The students, who belonged to an activist group, were protesting a new university exam policy.[345]

BURKINA FASO

Attacks on schools, school students and education personnel continued at a high rate during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Over 250 school students and personnel were abducted, injured, killed, or otherwise harmed by armed groups in 2020 and 2021. In addition, GCPEA identified over 145 reports of threatened or actual attacks on schools. State security forces used excessive force against student protesters in several cases.

Context

Burkina Faso confronted multiple security threats during the 2020-2021 reporting period. After reaching a peak in conflict-related deaths in March 2020, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) found that fatalities from conflict declined through mid-2021;[346] ACLED and media sources attributed the decline to fragile ceasefire negotiations between armed groups and the government.[347] In December 2021, the prime minister and government resigned amid violent protests criticizing the state's response to the armed conflict.[348]

The Central Sahel crisis, which affected the border areas between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, reached unprecedented levels of fighting and insecurity during the reporting period, according to the UN.[349] Non-state armed groups, such as the al-Qaeda linked Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), an IS affiliate, frequently fought each other and attacked civilians in Burkina Faso's northern and eastern regions.[350] In 2020, ISGS and JNIM, who were previously aligned, began battling each other.[351] On June 5, 2021, Burkina Faso experienced its most deadly attack since hostilities began, when an armed group killed at least 130 people in Solhan, Nord-Est region.[352]

In addition, state security forces killed or arbitrarily detained civilians whom they suspected of belonging to armed groups. Human Rights Watch documented summary executions of hundreds of civilians, many of whom were of the Fulani ethnic group, including mass killings in Djibo.[353] In 2020, Burkinabe authorities passed legislation formalizing support for self-defense groups (Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie, or VDP). These militias also perpetrated violence against civilian populations, according to Human Rights Watch.[354]

Burkina Faso was one of the fastest growing displacement crises in the world during the reporting period.[355] Over 1.4 million people were internally displaced in Burkina Faso by late 2021,[356] compared to around 149,000 in April 2019.[357] In December 2021, the UN estimated that 4.7 million Burkinabé needed humanitarian assistance, including 2.6 million children.[358]

Both conflict and Covid-19 impacted education during the reporting period. In mid-March 2020, prior to Covid-19 lockdowns, over 2,500 schools had already shut due to attacks or insecurity.[359] In December 2021, 3,280 schools were closed, or over 13 percent of the country's schools, affecting more than 510,000 learners; in some areas of Nord and Est regions, all schools were closed due to insecurity.[360] In the Sahel, Est, Nord and Centre regions, a REACH assessment in November 2020 found that the lack of teachers disrupted education services.[361] Only one-third of schools reported to have fully functioning remote learning in place in April and May 2020, according to an Education Cluster survey.[362]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 145 reported incidents of attacks on schools. In most incidents, non-state armed groups, generally suspected of belonging to either JNIM or ISGS, looted, burned, and vandalized schools, or threatened to do so. Attacks in 2020 occurred at a similarly high rate as in 2019, when GCPEA identified over 100 attacks on schools.[363] In February 2020, a local media source citing the Ministry of Education reported that over 600 schools had been destroyed by armed groups, though the report did not specify a time period.[364]

In 2020, the UN verified 70 attacks on schools, attributed to unidentified perpetrators, ISGS, and JNIM.[365] Also

in 2020, through government, media, and UN sources, GCPEA identified 41 reported incidents of attacks on schools;[366] at least 33 incidents took place in Est region,[367] four in the Sahel region,[368] three in Boucle de Mouhoun region,[369] one in Centre-Nord region,[370] and one in Loroum.[371] In addition, Human Rights Watch identified 25 news reports of school burnings between April and August 2020, primarily in Est, Nord, and Boucle de Mouhoun regions.[372] GCPEA could not determine whether the UN and Human Rights Watch reporting overlapped with each other, or with other reports collated by GCPEA.

Examples of attacks on schools in 2020 included:

- Between January 9 and 11, 2020, Human Rights Watch documented at least five attacks on schools in four villages in Logoubou commune, Tapoa province, Est region. In one incident on January 9, 2020, in Nagaré village, armed men set fire to the teachers' offices at a secondary school and burned school property, as well as threatening teachers.[373]
- Local media *Infowakat* reported that on March 13, 2020, members of an unidentified armed group reportedly vandalized and then burned down a primary school in Djibo, Soum province, Sahel region.[374]
- According to local media reports, on the night of July 27, 2020, gunmen allegedly set fire to 11 primary schools and one middle school in Tansarga department, Tapoa province, Est region.[375]
- The Burkina Faso Protection Cluster reported that, around October 15, 2020, unidentified armed assailants attacked a public primary school and destroyed its solar panels and batteries in Delga, Banh province, Loroum region. The group reportedly returned to the village, threatening the population to follow "Islamic doctrine."[376]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 78 reported incidents of attacks on schools. As in earlier years, many of the reports, which came from media, UN, government, and NGOs, described actual or threatened looting, arson, or other damage of schools.[377] In 2021, the UN verified 46 attacks on schools.[378] For instance, in Gnanga district, Est region, local media and government reported that around 12 schools were looted or damaged by armed groups in second half of May 2021.[379] Examples of attacks on schools also included:

- On February 2, 2021, unidentified armed assailants reportedly stormed Niagassi village in Sampelga district, Séno province, Sahel region, where they broke into the school and looted supplies, according to the Burkina Faso Protection Cluster.[380]
- The Burkina Faso Protection Cluster reported that on February 10, 2021, members of a non-state armed group looted the school in Koulfo, Manni district, Gnagna province, Est region, after threatening primary and middle school teachers.[381]
- On April 24, 2021, an armed group threatened nine primary schools in Bogandé, Gnagna district, Est region, causing them to close, according to the Ministry of Education.[382]
- The Ministry of Education reported that on May 22, 2021, four schools in Manni, Gnagna province, Est region were closed after an armed group threatened them.[383]
- On October 15, 2021, ACLED and local media *Net Afrique* reported that members of an armed group forced schools to close, and threatened violence if schools reopened, in four villages in Sourou district, Boucle de Mouhoun region. *Net Afrique* also reported that the armed group wrote a threatening message on the school's door.[384]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

For the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 33 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, harming over 250 students and teachers. In the majority of incidents, non-state armed groups threatened, abducted, or killed teachers or school staff, often at the same time as they attacked a school or the surrounding village. These attacks often caused schools to close or teachers to stop working. In some cases, insecurity also affected students on the way to or from school. GCPEA collected 18 reports of such instances in 2019, and five reports in 2018;[385] thus, numbers in 2020 and 2021 are consistent with the incline in recent years. However, the closures of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic may have caused fewer attacks than would have otherwise occurred.

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least ten reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel from UN, NGO, and media reports.[386] Between January and April 2020, 222 education workers were "victims of terrorist attacks," according to the Ministry of Education, as cited by Amnesty International.[387] Many incidents took place alongside attacks on schools and sometimes occurred while students were at school. For example:

- On January 4, 2020, a convoy of three public buses hit an IED on the road between Toéni and Tougan towns, in Sourou province, Boucle de Mouhoun region. The buses were carrying many students who were traveling back to Tougan from Toéni after holidays. Human Rights Watch reported that since schools closed in Toéni in 2018, hundreds of students had to enroll in Tougan.[388] Local education professionals reported to Human Rights Watch that they believed the attack had targeted students since it was the day that students had to return to school after holidays.[389]
- Human Rights Watch reported that, on an unspecified date in January 2020, around ten armed men forcibly entered a village school in Est region while students were in class. The men fired shots, temporarily detained two teachers beat and robbed them, and stole personal items from teachers and students, as well as school materials.[390]
- On October 15, 2020, armed assailants allegedly killed a primary school principal, whose body was found near Markoye, Oudalan province, Sahel region, according to the UN and local news. The attack occurred days after the school year began.[391]
- On November 20, 2020, an armed group threatened teachers at Tomonga primary school in Manni district, Est region. Following the threats, the school closed and the teachers fled the village.[392]

In 2021, GCPEA collected at least 23 reports of incidents of attack on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, from NGO and media reports. Of these, 16 were incidents of attacks on teachers and school personnel by armed groups.[393] Between January and September 2021, the UN verified five attacks on school personnel, including the abduction of two teachers.[394] Incidents of attacks by armed groups included:

- On January 18, 2021, the Protection Cluster reported that a 14-year-old female student was abducted while returning home from school in Diapangou, Gourma province, Est region.[395]
- Local media reported that on March 14, 2021, suspected members of an armed group abducted the treasurer of the parents-teacher association of the high school in Zoura, Koungossi district, Bam province, Centre-Nord region.[396]
- On October 21, 2021, according to local media *Minute*, armed individuals abducted several teachers during an attack on two schools near Namounou, Tapoa district, Est region. The teachers were released later the same day but had been stripped of their personal belongings.[397]

Additionally, in April and May 2021, high school students protested against government reforms to the baccalaureate exams and were met with excessive force by police.[398] Police arrested or used excessive force, including teargas, against school students in at least seven reported incidents in several cities including Ouagadougou, Koudougou, Boulsa, and Fada N'gourma.[399]

Incidents of use of force against student protesters included:

- On April 29, 2021, hundreds of students reportedly protested in front of the Ministry of Education in Ouagadougo against reforms to the exams system. Media sources reported that police used teargas to disperse the students, who retaliated by throwing stones at the officers.[400]

- On May 10, 2021, local media reported that students in Boulsa, Namentenga, Centre-Nord region, protested in front of the town's high commission. Police allegedly engaged in running battles and used teargas against students.[401]
- On May 17 and 18, 2021, high school students protested against exam reforms in Ouagadougou. A special security branch of the police allegedly used teargas and rubber bullets and arrested around eight students.[402] Students reportedly threw stones and damaged a high school building.[403]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified a number of reported incidents of the military use of schools between 2020 and 2021. In 2018 and 2019, both state armed forces and non-state armed groups used over a dozen schools in Centre-Nord and Sahel regions.[404]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least four incidents of military use of schools. In January 2020, Human Rights Watch documented that state security forces used a school in Pensa, Bam province, Centre-Nord region which then provoked an attack by an armed group.[405] In addition, Human Rights Watch received reports that state armed forces used at least three schools as bases between April and August 2020.[406]

In 2021, the UN verified the military use of two schools.[407] In the same year, GCPEA identified one reported incident of the military use of a school. Local media *Lefaso* reported that in Madou, Sanmatenga district, Centre-Nord region, between June 28 and July 1, 2021, Burkina Faso forces targeted a primary school where an armed group had established its base.[408] In addition, the UN verified one case of military use of a school between January and September 2021;[409] GCPEA could not determine whether this overlapped with the above report.

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from school or university during the 2020-2021 reporting period. During the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020,* GCPEA did not receive any such reports.

In 2021, a witness reported to *France24* that during an attack on a school, the armed group raped a female teacher inside a classroom on an unspecified date.[410] The witness reported experiencing lasting psychosocial trauma.

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected one reported incident of an attack on higher education. As in previous years, these attacks occurred sporadically and generally involved the use of force or arrest of students by state security forces. In 2019, GCPEA identified two reported incidents of attacks on higher education at the Polytechnic University of Dori.[411]

In 2020, GCPEA identified one media report of an attack on higher education. On March 31, 2020, local media reported that gendarmes entered Kossodo University campus in Ouagadougou and used force against students for not respecting a curfew imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19. Students reportedly barricaded the campus and clashed with gendarmes, who then used teargas against students.[412]

CAMEROON

Attacks on schools and school students, teachers, and other education personnel continued during the 2020-2021 reporting period. GCPEA identified over 55 reported incidents of attacks on school students and staff and over 65 incidents of attacks on schools, primarily in the North-West and South-West regions. Armed separatists and armed forces allegedly used schools for military purposes in the Far North, North-West, and South-West regions.

Context

The 2020-2021 reporting period saw an escalation in violence in Cameroon's Far North region and North-West and South-West regions.[413] In the Far North region, Boko Haram and other non-state armed groups increased their operations during the reporting period; the African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) reported a 90 percent increase in violence by Boko Haram in 2020 as compared to 2019.[414] After the death of Boko Haram's leader in May 2021, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), a splinter faction from Boko Haram, became the dominant armed group in the Far North region.[415] International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in 2021 that over 3,000 Cameroonians had been killed in the conflict with Boko Haram.[416]

In the North-West and South-West regions, non-state armed groups attacked civilians and clashed with Cameroonian security forces, which also subjected civilians to human rights abuses, including unlawful killings and deprivation of liberty, during the reporting period, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.[417] At the end of 2021, armed violence had killed around 4,000 people in the North-West and South-West regions since fighting began in 2016.[418] The UN reported that armed groups used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against civilian populations, further evidence of intensifying conflict.[419] Attacks by non-state armed groups escalated in early 2020 after the government set a date for contested parliamentary elections.[420]

Conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic, and climate shocks augmented humanitarian needs during the reporting period.[421] The UN reported in 2021 that 4.4 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon, over half of whom were children.[422] In December 2021, the UN reported that almost one million people were internally displaced in Cameroon and over 65,000 Cameroonians had fled to Nigeria.[423]

Non-state armed groups continued to enforce a boycott on education in North-West and South-West regions which, along with ongoing violence, forced more than two-thirds of schools in the regions to close and affected over 700,000 school-aged children during the reporting period.[424] In October 2020, schools reopened after Covid-19 closures,[425] however, the UN reported that school attendance was less than 30 percent in North-West and South-West regions.[426] A study by Plan International found that both male and female adolescents in North-West and South-West regions feared attending school due to military presence near facilities, which heightened risks of arbitrary arrest and detention, sexual violence, and crossfire.[427] When schools reopened, there was a spike of attacks on students, teachers, and educational facilities in North-West and South-West regions, according to the UN.[428] Also, in the Far North region, authorities closed over 60 schools in October 2020 due to insecurity caused by Boko Haram.[429]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 65 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Cameroon. Most reports occurred in the North-West and South-West regions, with sporadic incidents taking place in the Far North region. Attacks on schools typically consisted of gunfire, raids, or arson. Reported incidents of attacks on schools appeared to increase slightly as compared to earlier years. In 2019, for instance, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on schools and 12 reports in 2018.[430] However, a multisectoral needs assessment by the Cameroon Education Cluster reported 157 attacks on schools in the North-West and South-West regions and over 2,300 school interruptions between January – August 2019; a comparable assessment did not take place in 2020 or 2021.[431]

In 2020, GCPEA identified around 40 reported attacks on schools. The UN verified 20 attacks on schools in 2020 in the North-West, South-West, and Far North regions.[432] In the same year, between January and October 2020, the UN reported 17 incidents of attacks on schools,[433] and at least 35 attacks on schools in North-West and South-West regions between October 1 and December 10, 2020.[434] However, GCPEA could not add these two aggregates due to the overlapping period. GCPEA also identified at least six reports of attacks on schools in North-West and South-West regions between June and December 2020 from media, NGO, and UN sources, some of which may have been included in the UN count.[435] Attacks appeared to escalate after school reopenings in October, according to the UN.[436] Examples in North-West and South-West regions in 2020 included:

- On October 24, 2020, a group of men armed with guns and machetes stormed Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, a private school in Kumba town, South-West region. According to Human Rights Watch and the UN, attackers forcibly entered a classroom and shot at students, killing at least six students, and injuring at least 13 others.[437] Both the government and armed separatists accused each other of perpetrating the attack.[438] OCHA called the incident the deadliest attack on education since the start of the conflict in 2017.[439] In 2021, a trial in a military court resulted in the sentencing of four people to death for the attack.[440]
- Local and regional media sources reported that four unidentified attackers fired at a high school in Bamenda town, Mezam division, North-West region on November 3, 2020.[441]
- On November 4, 2020, armed assailants attacked Kulu Memorial College in Limbe, Fako division, South-West region. After perpetrating sexual violence on students and teachers (below), the attackers burned several classrooms and materials, according to local media and the UN.[442]

In addition, GCPEA identified one reported incident in Far North region in 2020:

- On February 15, 2020, alleged Boko Haram members reportedly burned down a school, along with other buildings, in Mandoussa village, Mayo-Sava division, Far North region, according to Insecurity Insight.[443]

In 2021, the UN verified 18 attacks on schools in Cameroon.[444] Also in 2021, GCPEA identified at least nine reported incidents of attacks on schools in North-West and South-West regions.[445] GCPEA could not determine whether of any of these incidents were included in the UN's count.

- On January 22 and 23, 2021, in two incidents, unknown attackers reportedly burned down both the boys' and girls' dormitories at the Presbyterian Secondary School in Mankon area of Bamenda, Mezam division, North-West region, according to the UN and local media sources.[446] Media reported that the attack affected approximately 60 girls and 73 boys, who were removed from the dormitories at the time of the attack; three students were reportedly injured.[447]
- A local NGO and ACLED reported that on February 9, 2021, unknown attackers set a section of a school on fire in Nkambe town and division, North-West region. The fire allegedly destroyed several classrooms.[448]
- On June 29, 2021, members of a non-state armed group fired guns near three schools where General Certificate of Education exams were taking place in Mamfe, Manyu Division, South-West region. The attackers then destroyed materials used for the exams, which prevented students from finishing the academic testing.[449]
- On the morning of November 24, 2021, members of an unidentified armed group raided the Government Bilingual High School in Ekondo-Titi, Ndian Division, South-West region, according to Human Rights Watch, international media, and the UN.[450] A government official reported that an IED was detonated in the attack. The gunmen killed one female teacher and four students under the age of 18; in addition, at least five other students were injured. The school served around 1,000 students.[451]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified at least 58 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, which harmed over 150 individuals. Non-state armed groups in North-West and South-West regions continued to abduct, kill, harass, threaten, or otherwise harm school students and staff at, or on the way to or from, school. GCPEA identified more reported incidents during this reporting period but that harmed fewer people, as compared to earlier years; for example, GCPEA identified 20 incidents of attacks on school students and teachers in 2019 and 15 in 2018, which affected at least 535 people.[452] In addition, after the publication of *Education under Attack 2020*, the Cameroon Education Cluster reported that, between January and August 2019, 3,918 violent incidents against students and 1,124 violent incidents against teachers were reported; however, GCPEA could not determine whether all of the incidents constituted attacks as per GCPEA definitions.[453]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least 31 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, most of which occurred between August and December.[454] Of these, 27 incidents involved targeted attacks on students and school staff, including 14 abductions, and affected 83 students and educators in the Far-North (1), North-West (21), and South-West (5) regions; the remaining four incidents involved security forces arresting or using excessive force against teachers in Centre and Littoral regions. The actual number of attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel may be under-reported. For example, in October 2020, as authorities sought to reopen school in conflict-affected areas, *Voice of America* reported that at least 3,000 teachers had refused transportation to school by Cameroonian Armed Forces, claiming renewed threats against them and students.[455]

Examples of attacks school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2020 included:

- On January 30, 2020, Human Rights Watch reported that armed separatists kidnapped and maimed two 19-year-old secondary school students, one male and one female, in Buea, Fako division, South-West region, having targeted them for attending school. The female student reported that the separatists cut off her finger with a machete before releasing her on February 3, 2020, upon payment of ransom. Both students reportedly received medical treatment but had not returned to school as of March 2020.[456]
- On August 5, 2020, in Bafia, South-West region, members of a separatist armed group abducted a teacher after he refused to fly an "Ambazonia" flag outside the school where he worked, according to Human Rights Watch. The armed group released the teacher in early September 2020, after receiving a ransom payment. The teacher, who reported receiving beatings while held by the armed group, reported that he left the teaching profession after his abduction.[457]
- UN and local media reported that on October 23, 2020, suspected armed separatists abducted 15 students from Progressive Comprehensive College in Bamenda, Mezam, North-West region. On October 24, the kidnappers released six students who were subsequently hospitalized.[458]
- On November 3, 2020, suspected armed separatists abducted at least 11 teachers and school personnel from a Presbyterian school in Kumbo, Bui division, North-West region, according to the UN and *Al Jazeera*.[459]
- The UN reported that an armed group kidnapped nine children who were on their way to school on November 4, 2020, in Fundong, Boyo division, North-West region.[460]
- On December 8, 2020, OCHA and ACLED reported that members of a non-state armed group shot a student while he was on his way to school in Oku subdivision, Boyo division, North-West region. ACLED reported that the attack injured the student.[461]

In 2021, attacks on school students, teachers and education personnel continued at a similar rate, with GPCEA identifying at least 26 reported incidents, including 14 actual or threatened abductions affecting over 50 people.[462] All of the reported incidents occurred in North-West and South-West regions. Incidents appeared to escalate after the 2021-2022 academic year began in September 2021. Examples included:

- OCHA and local media sources reported that on January 9, 2021, alleged armed separatists shot and killed the principal of a school in Ossing, Manyu division, South-West region. The reports indicated that the victim had returned home after work at the time of the attack.[463]
- OCHA and local media reported that on January 28, 2021, armed separatists abducted seven students from Elak Government High School in Oku, Bui division, North-West region. The students were later released.[464]
- Around September 14, 2021, armed separatists abducted five teachers and five education administrators from Ndop, Ngo-Ketunjia division, North-West region; the educators had reportedly attended a meeting about the reopening of government schools. One school administrator was killed six days later, according to the UN and media reports, while others were freed on September 16, 2021.[465]
- The UN and local sources reported that armed separatists abducted eight students in Bamenda, North-West region on or around September 14, 2021. The students' families paid for their subsequent release.[466]
- The UN reported that on November 9, 2021, members of a non-state armed group abducted a principal and two teachers from the premises of the Government High School in Oku, North-West region.[467]

Also in 2021, GCPEA identified two incidents in which state security forces killed schoolgirls on the way to or from school.[468] For example, on November 12, 2021, police at a checkpoint shot a bullet that hit and killed an eight-year-old girl who was on the way home from school.[469]

Military use of schools and universities

The military use of schools continued in Cameroon during the 2020-2021 reporting period in both the Far North,-West and South-West regions. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified dozens of cases of military use of schools, primarily in the Far North region.[470]

In 2020, the UN verified 19 incidents of military use of schools in the Far North region.[471] In North-West and South-West regions, in 2020, GCPEA received various unverified or anecdotal reports of the military use of schools. For example, *Voice of America* reported in late September 2020 that Cameroonian armed forces had vacated over 100 schools that had been occupied by armed separatists over a weekend of fighting, in efforts to secure schools ahead of the 2020-2021 school year.[472] The UN also reported two incidents of non-operational school buildings used by the military, both of which were damaged, in North-West region, between January and September 2020.[473]

In 2021, the UN verified 21 cases of military use in Cameroon.[474] GCPEA also identified UN reports from 2021 that armed groups had used schools as bases, sometimes holding people hostage in or around them, and sometimes torturing people, in North-West and South-West regions.[475]

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least one report of sexual violence by a non-state armed group that occurred at a school. On November 4, 2020, during an attack on Kulu Memorial College (reported above) located in Limbe, Fako division, South-West region, an armed group forced around 20 male and female students and four teachers to strip naked while filming them, poured petrol on them, and reportedly used force against some of them, according to Human Rights Watch.[476] They then chased the naked students and teachers away from school, before burning parts of the school, according to *BBC*, Human Rights Watch, and local media.[477]

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified at least nine incidents of attacks on higher education during the 2020-2021 reporting period, affecting at least 45 students and personnel. As in previous years, alleged non-state armed groups killed or abducted student or faculty on or near campuses in North-West and South-West regions or attacked facilities. In addition, state security forces detained students from universities. Attacks occurred at a similar rate to the period covered in *Education under Attack 2020*, when GCPEA identified six reports of attacks on higher education in 2019 and five in 2018.[478]

In 2020, GPCEA identified at least four reported incidents of attacks on higher education students and staff.[479] Examples included:

- On May 17, 2020, two armed separatists killed a university professor in Bamenda, Mezam division, North-West region. Human Rights Watch reported that members of an armed separatist group had threatened the teacher multiple times to stop teaching and to adhere to the boycott, as well as demanding money. Witnesses reported to Human Rights Watch that the professor was killed outside of his home.[480]
- Insecurity Insight and *Le Gideon Magazine* reported that unidentified attackers kidnapped a female student near her dormitory at the University of Bamenda in Bamenda, Mezam division, North-West region on July 5, 2020.[481]
- On July 27, 2020, state security forces allegedly raided student residences in Ndongo town, Fako division, South-West region. Students alleged that the security forces had demanded money from them and detained those who did not pay the security forces.[482]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least three reported incidents of attacks on higher education students. The University of Bamenda was particularly affected by such attacks, causing its staff to declare a strike in October 2021, calling for authorities to finish roadwork on a section of the road that connected a satellite campus to the city. University staff alleged that armed men used the trenches in the construction area to hide in and abduct university teachers.[483] Incidents of attacks included:

- Garda reported that on January 7, 2021, suspected armed separatists abducted at least six university students in Bamenda, Mezam division, North-West region. The students were in a car on the way to university.[484]
- Local media reported that on May 17, 2021, armed separatists allegedly abducted 11 staff members, including teachers, from the Baptist Training School for Health Personnel in Kumbo town, Bui division, North-West region.[485]
- Local media reported that around July 22, 2021, military forces shot a student in front of his student hostel in Bambili, near Bamenda, Mezam division, North-West region. Reports did not specify whether the killing was targeted.[486]
- On September 24, 2021, armed separatists allegedly abducted two University of Bamenda staff members in Tubah sub-division, Mezam division, North-West region. The report noted that three other staff had been abducted in the month before.[487]

In addition, GCPEA identified one report of an attack on a higher education facility in 2021. Human Rights Watch, the UN, and international media sources reported that on November 10, 2021, an armed group allegedly placed an IED on the roof of a building, which detonated and injured at least 11 students at the University of Buea, in South-West region.[488]

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, there were at least 85 incidents of non-state armed groups, state armed forces, and pro-state allied groups occupying or attacking schools, mostly in the context of election-related violence. Police also used excessive force against school and university students and personnel during the reporting period.

Context

The security situation in Central African Republic (CAR) deteriorated during the 2020-2021 reporting period. A 2019 peace deal between the government and 14 armed groups collapsed in late 2020,[489] after the Constitutional Court invalidated former president Francois Bozizé's candidacy in the presidential elections.[490] In response, the newly formed Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement (CPC – Coalition of Patriots for Change), a group of non-state armed groups mobilized in part by Bozizé,[491] called for the elections to be postponed.[492]

The CPC attacked and occupied several cities and towns during the reporting period, causing an increase in violence nationally.[493] Between mid-December 2020 and late January 2021, violence affected at least ten of CAR's 16 prefectures, covering the western half of the country, as well as parts of the center and the south.[494] CAR armed forces (FACA), peacekeepers from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), bilateral allied forces, and private military personnel combatted the CPC.[495] In March and October 2021, the UN raised concerns over CAR's hiring of foreign fighters and found evidence of human rights abuses and violations of international law by private security forces operating jointly with FACA, and in some instances UN peacekeepers.[496]

Civilians suffered the worst effects of armed conflict during the reporting period. In 2021, 3.1 million people, or around two-thirds of the population, needed humanitarian assistance, including 1.3 million children, according to the UN.[497] Between December 2020 and February 2021, over 240,000 people were newly internally displaced by electoral violence[498] and over 110,000 fled the country.[499] Around 1.4 million people were internally displaced or refugees at the end of 2021.[500] The UN reported that almost 3,000 children were recruited by armed groups within the first seven weeks of 2021.[501] The number of incidents involving explosive weapons increased in 2021, with over 30 incidents reported in 2021, some of which affected civilians, including children, according to the UN.[502]

The UN reported that the increase in violence following the elections led to schools being used for military purposes, damaged, or forced to close in 11 out of 16 prefectures.[503] At least 999 schools were non-operational as a result of fighting, and half of the country's children were out of school because of the renewed fighting.[504] School closures in March 2020 in response to Covid-19 also disrupted the learning of more than 1.4 million students; in areas affected by violence, such as in the far north prefecture of Vakaga, in Haut-Mbomou in the southeast, and in parts of Ouham and Ouham Pendé in the west, school openings were delayed.[505] The UN reported that insecurity in these regions has displaced many teachers, destroyed schools, and caused children to stay home out of fear.[506] School closures led to increased risks of child recruitment and use, and sexual violence,[507] as well as being linked to an increase in pregnancy among girls.[508]

Attacks on schools

GCPEA collected reports documenting over 48 attacks on schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The UN verified four attacks on schools in 2019,[509] and 34 attacks in 2018.[510] While attacks increased in 2020 and 2021 as compared to 2019, rates remained lower than an earlier peak on attacks on schools reported in *Education under Attack 2018*.

The UN verified 23 attacks against schools and protected personnel in 2020.[511] The majority of these incidents occurred during and immediately following the elections on December 27, 2020, when the UN verified that the CPC attacked 17 schools serving as polling stations.[512] Of these, 14 such incidents occurred in Nana Mambéré, Mambéré-Kadei, Basse-Kotto and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures.[513] Throughout 2020, GCPEA collected reports documenting at least three attacks on schools but was not able to determine whether any of these were included in the UN's total.[514] These included:

- On March 27, 2020, an unidentified armed group set a school on fire in Ndele, Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture, according to a local media source.[515]
- On September 9, 2020, a non-state armed group reportedly raided classrooms in a school in Niem, Nana-Mambéré prefecture, forcing students to leave, and driving out teachers and the school director, according to a local media source.[516]

In 2021, the UN documented 25 incidents of attacks on schools; of these, 18 were verified and occurred between January and June[517] while the remaining seven were reported between September and November.[518] In addition, the UN verified 75 incidents of attacks on schools and military use of schools between December 2020 and July 2021.[519] While many of these incidents likely took place in 2021, GCPEA could not disaggregate the total by year, nor could GCPEA determine how many were attacks and how many were military use of schools. In addition, GCPEA identified two media reports of attacks on schools in 2021, which may be included in the UN count:

- *Radio Ndeke Luka* reported that on an unspecified date in early January 2021, a non-state armed group reportedly destroyed a primary school in Yassinda district of Bangui. According to locals, the group also burned and looted teaching materials.[520]
- Media sources reported that around April 14, 2021, alleged pro-government private security forces reportedly destroyed school furniture and looted private shops in Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, after taking over the city from a non-state armed group. Residents reported to a local media source they also destroyed school furniture or used it as firewood.[521]

Attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected two reported attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel. Both attacks were connected to education-related protests by students or teachers. In contrast, GCPEA identified seven such attacks in 2019 and four in 2018, most of which were perpetrated by armed groups.[522] This decrease may be due to under-reporting or a decline in such incidents during Covid-19 related school closures.

In 2020, GCPEA identified one reported attack on students. On March 2, 2020, thousands of secondary school students allegedly marched in the Fifth Arrondissement area of Bangui, demanding that authorities end school shift systems and calling for the regularization of non-permanent contractual teachers who were on strike. Demonstrators reportedly clashed with military and security forces, leaving several students injured.[523]

In addition, GCPEA collected one reported attack on teachers in 2020. On March 4, 2020, non-permanent contracted teachers went on strike in Bangui to demand employment. Several teachers protested in front of the Office of the Prime Minister in the Fifth Arrondissement area of Bangui, where police forces intervened and arrested at least 11 protesters.[524]

At the time of writing GCPEA had not identified any attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel in 2021.

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected at least 45 reports of military use of schools, an increase as compared to previous years. GCPEA identified six cases of military use in 2019 and 13 reports in 2018.[525] Some UN reporting for 2020 and 2021, described in the above section on attacks on schools, did not distinguish between attacks and military occupation, meaning that the total number of schools used may have been higher. Military use was likely under-reported during the reporting period due to challenges in data collection.[526]

The UN reported the military use of ten schools in 2020.[527] Over the year, GCPEA collected three media reports of military use of schools by armed groups. GCPEA could not determine whether any of the reports were included in the UN's tally. These included:

- On September 27, 2020, an armed group allegedly established a camp in a school in Nanga Boguila subprefecture, Ouham prefecture, according to a local media source.[528]
- On October 24, 2020, in Nanga Boguila subprefecture, Ouham prefecture, an armed group reportedly occupied a school, after MINUSCA instructed the group to vacate another school in the vicinity.[529]

In 2021, the UN reported that several dozen schools had been occupied during the year.[530] Military occupation of schools was reported in the context of state forces and allied forces retaking towns and villages from non-state armed groups. In some cases, schools were used for several weeks or months. For example, in February 2021, the UN reported that, following election-related violence, 26 schools remained occupied by armed groups,[531] and that 13 schools were still being used in June 2021.[532] In addition, GCPEA identified five reports of military use of schools in 2021:

- According to media reports, on March 17, 2021, FACA, with support from other security personnel, allegedly retook the town of Nanga Boguila, Ouham prefecture, which had been occupied by a non-state armed group and proceeded to occupy several classrooms and the director's office of the local school.[533]
- According to media reports, two schools in Boda, Lobaye prefecture, were occupied by private security personnel in March and April 2021, affecting the education of around 2,000 children.[534]
- On March 11, 2021, the UN verified the occupation of a school by private security personnel in Ouaka prefecture.[535]
- On April 14, 2021, after FACA and private security personnel retook Batangafo, Ouham prefecture, from a non-state armed group, private security personnel allegedly occupied the main school of the subprefecture, according to local media.[536]

Attacks on higher education

Between 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on higher education. No reported attacks on higher education were collected in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*. According to media reports, on April 3, 2020, students from the University of Bangui were protesting in Bangui to demand payment of their bursaries. Police arrested at least three students.[537]

COLOMBIA

Attacks on schools and against students and teachers increased in 2020 and 2021 as Colombia experienced a spike in armed violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, and Norte de Santander were among the most affected departments. In contrast, attacks on higher education declined compared to the prior reporting period.

Context

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, Colombia continued to experience armed violence despite peace accords signed in 2016 between the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army) (FARC-EP), which ended a five-decades-long conflict.[538] Although the majority of FARC fighters demobilized, multiple smaller groups, known as FARC dissidents, emerged from the demobilization process and continued to operate.[539] Fighting between FARC dissident groups, other armed groups, and government forces caused an increase in violence in 2020. The UN documented 76 massacres in 2020, in which 292 people were killed,[540] an increase over previous years.[541] Non-state armed groups and criminal groups also increasingly targeted demobilized FARC-EP members, human rights defenders, unionists, and student, Indigenous, and Afro-Colombian leaders.[542] The use of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continued to harm civilians in 2020 and 2021, as large parts of Colombian territory remained heavily mined, according to the UN and Humanity & Inclusion.[543]

Non-state armed groups remained active during the reporting period, including FARC dissident groups, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army) (ELN) and the Ejército Popular de Liberación (People's Liberation Army) (EPL), and successor groups to the paramilitary groups that officially demobilized in the mid-2000s, such as the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia) (AGC).[544] Armed groups imposed movement restrictions on civilians during Covid-19 in several departments, including by implementing curfews and lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus, and threatening and killing people who failed to comply, according to Human Rights Watch.[545]

Protesters organized nationwide marches between April and June 2021 against a proposed tax reform, police violence and health, education, and economic inequalities.[546] Police officers responded by dispersing peaceful demonstrations and using excessive force.[547] The government reported that 29 people died during the protests;[548] civil society groups placed the number higher.[549]

The UN reported that over 73,000 people were displaced in 2021.[550] That same year, 7.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.[551] Food insecurity, deepened by quarantine measures, disproportionally affected some Indigenous groups, such as the Wayuú and Awá.[552]

Access to education was impacted by Covid-19 and violence. Schools closed in March 2020 to prevent the spread of Covid-19, leading to an increase in the risk of armed group recruitment of children while they were not in class.[553] School closures especially affected Indigenous children and children from rural areas who lacked electricity or the technology to attend virtual classes, while teachers were afraid to deliver learning materials in areas under armed group control.[554]

Attacks on schools

Over the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 35 reported attacks on schools, primarily in rural areas. Many incidents involved IEDs installed at or near schools; confrontations in the vicinity of schools between armed groups, or an armed group and government forces, were also common. The number of reported attacks on schools per year increased this reporting period compared to 2019, when GCPEA identified nine reported incidents, but occurred at a similar rate compared to 2018, when 20 reported incidents were collected.[555]

In 2020, the UN verified four attacks on schools.[556] Separately, the Coalition Against the Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia (COALICO) documented five incidents of attacks on or military use of educational institutions in 2020, in Arauca, Córdoba, Nariño, and Norte de Santander departments, affecting at least 650 children, although schools were closed for in-person learning after mid-March 2020.[557] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports of incidents collected by GCPEA, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools in this report, to avoid double counting.

In 2020, GCPEA collected approximately 19 reports of attacks on schools, with Antioquia, Arauca, and Norte de Santander departments most heavily affected.[558] Approximately half of reported incidents involved IEDs or anti-personnel mines near schools, while over a quarter of incidents were armed confrontations in the vicinity of schools, and the remainder were lootings or vandalism of schools carried out by armed groups. Examples of IEDs and anti-personnel mines reportedly installed near schools in Colombia in 2020 included:

- On March 14, 2020, an explosive device allegedly detonated at a school in the Poblazón Indigenous reservation in Yanacona, Cauca department. The explosion killed a 13-year-old fifth grader on his way to the toilet, according to local media outlet *El Tiempo*. Classes were reportedly suspended as a result.[559]
- Around November 11, 2020, anti-personnel mines were found in two schools in Frontino, Antioquia department, according to local media outlet *El Espectador* citing the department's secretary of education. A public utility company discovered the mines when reconnecting water service at hundreds of schools in preparation for school re-openings after Covid-19-related closures. Due to the presence of mines and lack of running water, the schools reportedly remained closed for an additional week.[560]
- In a rural area of Tame municipality, Arauca department, a non-state armed group reportedly installed three explosive devices approximately 150 feet from both a school and a path transited by civilians sometime before mid-December 2020, according to local media. Colombian army troops reportedly performed a controlled detonation of the devices.[561]

Examples of reported incidents involving armed confrontations near schools in 2020 included:

- On March 5, 2020, alleged FARC dissidents and another non-state armed group reportedly engaged in combat near a school, in El Plateado town, Cauca department. The Office of the Ombudsman, an independent government body, reported that the school suspended classes as a result.[562]
- The Colombian army and a non-state armed group engaged in fighting in the vicinity of a school in a rural area of Ábrego municipality, Catatumbo department, in early March 2020, according to an interview with an army commander in local media outlet *Caracol Radio*.[563]
- COALICO reported that a shootout between two non-state armed groups occurred near a school in a rural area of Magüi Payan municipality, Nariño department, in June 2020. The school, which was the only one in the area,l was damaged in the armed confrontation, affecting the education of at least 150 students.[564]

In 2021, the UN verified six attacks on schools in Colombia.[565] Separately, COALICO documented six incidents of attacks on schools and military use, in Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, Cundinamarca, and Valle del Cauca departments, affecting at least 3,500 children.[566] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports that GCPEA collected, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools in this report, to avoid double counting. GCPEA identified more than 15 reported attacks on schools from media and NGO reports.[567] As in 2020, many of the reported incidents involved IEDs installed near schools or shootouts in the vicinity of schools. Examples of explosive weapons installed in or near schools in 2021 included:

- On January 29, 2021, alleged members of a non-state armed group detonated an explosive in El Palo town, Cauca department, according to local media outlets. Alongside several other buildings, the school was reportedly damaged in the blast, in which windows were broken and a part of the roof was destroyed. The school's security guard was also reportedly knocked unconscious by shrapnel from the blast and taken to the hospital.[568]

- In early February 2021, the National Army reportedly disactivated antipersonnel mines near a school, and on school routes, in an Indigenous community reservation in Murindó municipality, Antioquia department. Citing an Indigenous organization, local media outlet *Caracol Radio* reported that a non-state armed group installed the mines, threatening the lives of students and teachers on their way to and from school.[569]
- On September 6, 2021, two explosive devices were detonated five meters from a school in Saravena municipality, Arauca department, while 70 students were attending classes, according to Save the Children and local media. At least one student was harmed in the incident and, in the next days, structural damages and damages to the electrical system prevented the school's approximately 670 students from attending classes.[570]

Examples of armed confrontations near schools in 2021 included:

- In mid-January 2021, members of an alleged non-state armed group attacked civilian facilities in Providencia municipality, Nariño department, as reported by the department's police chief to local media. Bullets reportedly struck the school and several houses during the attack.[571]
- Local media outlets *Semana* and *El Tiempo* reported that on March 18, 2021, a non-state armed group opened fire on a police station for approximately 40 minutes in Toribío municipality, Cauca department. The nearby Eduardo Santos school was reportedly in the line of fire, forcing students and teachers to take cover to avoid being hit by bullets. During a break in the shootout, a member of the Indigenous guard evacuated the children from the school; no students were injured, according to reports.[572]
- Armed confrontations between FARC dissidents and the National Army reportedly occurred near a school in a rural area of Argelia municipality, Cauca department, on October 20, 2021. According to local media outlet *W Radio*, the conflict affected a group of students and their teacher, who had to flee the area.[573]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During 2020 and 2021, GCPEA compiled more than 60 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Killings and threats constituted the most commonly reported forms of attack and occurred most frequently in Antioquia, Cauca, and Huila departments. Non-state armed groups killed and threatened teachers for their involvement in teachers' unions, as occurred in the last reporting period.[574] Armed groups also threatened non-local teachers in this reporting period, in an attempt to keep out teachers and public servants from other regions, despite provisions under the peace accords to strengthen services in conflict-affected areas.[575] Attacks on school students and staff peaked in 2020 with more than 35 reported incidents, compared to previous years when GCPEA collected approximately 9 and 24 reports in 2019 and 2018 respectively.[576]

In 2020, COALICO reported that over 60 teachers registered threats from non-state armed groups in Córdoba department. Authorities transferred some of the teachers to other locations after a teachers' union met with the Office of the Ombudsman and other government agencies.[577] Similarly, in Chocó department, a local media outlet reported that 30 teachers were transferred to other locations that year after having received threats from non-state armed groups.[578] Due to limited details about each instance and to avoid double counting, these threats are not included in the total number of attacks on school students and staff. GCPEA collected more than 35 reports of attacks on students and education personnel in 2020.[579] For example:

- On February 7, 2020, all 25 teachers working at a school in El Salado town, Bolívar department, reportedly received messages threatening to kill and dismember them on their way to school. As a result, the school suspended classes, according to local media outlet *El Universal*.[580]
- On February 8, 2020, unidentified attackers shot at an official of the Colombian Federation of Educators while he was riding with his wife and bodyguards in a bulletproof car, as reported by local media outlets *Semana* and *El Espectador*. The incident occurred in Guamo town, Tolima department.[581]

- On June 17, 2020, the ELN threatened an Indigenous leader and teacher from the Buenavista Indigenous reservation, in Putumayo department, according to the Office of the Ombudsman.[582]
- On July 4, 2020, members of the ELN's Western War Front killed a teacher in the Birrinchao Indigenous community, in Bajo Baudó municipality, Chocó department, according to the Office of the Ombudsman, which also reported that the non-state armed group prevented the community from retrieving the body to hold a funeral.[583]
- A teacher from the Piguambi Palangala Indigenous community reportedly died after he was shot three times in early September 2020 while leaving the school where he taught in Tumaco municipality, Nariño department. Local media outlet *La Semana* reported that the teacher had requested protection from the government's National Protection Unit after receiving threats.[584]

In 2021, local media outlet *El Universal* reported that, in conflictive regions of Córdoba department, 633 teachers arriving from elsewhere were threatened against beginning to teach classes.[585] Due to limited details about each instance and to avoid double counting, these threats are not included in the total number of attacks on students and staff. GCPEA gathered 24 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2021.[586] For example:

- In early February 2021, a FARC dissident group threatened 121 teachers by distributing pamphlets and calling the education secretary in Ituango, Antioquia department, according to a letter from the mayor of Ituango's office, which was cited in local media. The armed group allegedly threatened teachers newly assigned to the area, stating that they could not enter the municipality from other regions.[587]
- In late March 2021, in Ituango municipality, Antioquia department, a FARC dissident group and other non-state armed groups reportedly threatened teachers again, which led to the internal displacement of ten teachers. Threats against teachers left more than 1,500 students without classes in the municipality, according to the mayor, as reported in *Noticias Caracol* and *El Espectador*. Due to a lack of internet connectivity in rural areas, distance learning was also not a possibility, the news outlets reported.[588]
- On June 9, 2021, an Indigenous teacher and leader and her husband were shot to death in Corinto town, Cauca department, allegedly by a non-state armed group, as reported by ACLED and international media outlet *Infobae*.[589]
- In Fuente de Oro municipality, Meta department, armed men assassinated a primary school teacher as he arrived at school on August 11, 2021, according to local media outlet *RCN*. The teacher was reportedly also a member of a teachers' union.[590]
- Five teachers, most of them women, reportedly received death threats in Huila department in October 2021, via telephone calls and pamphlets containing the logos of non-state armed groups. According to local media outlet *Caracol Radio,* teachers in Palestina, Pitalito, and La Plata municipalities were threatened.[591]

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified approximately six reports of military use of educational facilities. Military use of schools occurred sporadically during this reporting period, as it did in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*.[592]

In 2020, the UN verified one incident of the military use of a school by a FARC dissident group in March of that year.[593] Since it remained unclear whether this incident was among those identified by GCPEA, it is not included in the total number of incidents. GCPEA identified three reports of military use or military presence in the vicinity of educational facilities in 2020:

- For several days beginning on March 3, 2020, 50 members of an alleged FARC dissident group camped in the vicinity of a school near El Plateado town, Cauca department, according to the Office of the Ombudsman. On March 5, 2020, an armed confrontation occurred near the school between the suspected FARC dissident group and another non-state armed group, which resulted in several civilian injuries and the school being closed until March 10, 2020.[594]
- Local media outlet *Semana* reported that between June 11 and 22, 2020, a National Army platoon occupied a school in a rural area of Pueblo Rico municipality, Risaralda department, converting it into a base. The soldiers reportedly set up security posts and dwellings in the school, prepared meals, and made use of running water.[595] In January 2021, the Office of the Inspector General called three non-commissioned National Army officers to a disciplinary hearing for allegedly violating international humanitarian law when they occupied the school.[596] As detailed below, soldiers reportedly committed sexual violence against an Indigenous girl in the school while it was occupied.
- In September 2020, after a confrontation between the National Army and suspected members of a non-state armed group in La Isla, Antioquia department, explosive devices, logistics materials, and communications equipment were reportedly discovered hidden in the vicinity of a school.[597]

In 2021, the UN verified the military use of three schools.[598] Separately, GCPEA identified two incidents of military use from news sources and NGO reports:

- Around July 18, 2021, a non-state armed group reportedly occupied a school in Nuquí Arriba community, Chocó department, causing classes to be suspended.[599]
- On May 13, 2021, an National Army helicopter landed at a sports field at the National Training Service's Agricultural Center in Buga city, Valle del Cauca department, where it offloaded soldiers who later returned to the aircraft and were flown away, according to local media outlets *El Colombiano* and *El País*.[600]

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

GCPEA identified two reported incidents of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school during this reporting period. In comparison, approximately five instances of school-related child recruitment were identified in 2018 and 2019.[601]

Although COALICO reported that child recruitment generally rose in Colombia in 2020 due in part to prolonged school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic,[602] children were less likely to be recruited at or en route to school since they were primarily learning at home. The UN also verified recruitment and use of more children in 2020 than 2019.[603] According to COALICO reports, by 2021 the number of recruitment and use incidents began to decrease.[604]

In April 2020, two students were reportedly recruited into non-state armed groups from a school in Valle del Guamuez municipality, Putumayo department.[605]

On September 15, 2021, the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca reported the recruitment of a 14-year-old and a 16-year-old student on their way to school in Las Mercedes de Caldono indigenous reservation in Cauca department, according to international media outlet *Infobae*. The report alleged FARC dissidents recruited the students.[606]

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

GCPEA identified two reported incidents of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school during the 2020-2021 reporting period. *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017-2019, reported no incidents of school-related sexual violence by armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities or non-state armed groups in Colombia.[607]

In 2020, GCPEA collected two incidents of sexual violence at or on the wayto or from, schools:

- On June 21, 2020, seven National Army soldiers committed sexual violence against a girl from the Embera Chamí Indigenous group in the vicinity of a school in Pueblo Rico municipality, Risaralda department.[608]

The soldiers admitted to the crime and the attorney general found them guilty, according to local media outlet *El Espectador*.[609] On September 28, 2021, the Supreme Court of Pereira sentenced six of the soldiers to 16 years in prison for aggravated abusive sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 14 and the remaining soldier to eight years of prison as an accomplice to the crime.[610]

- On September 10, 2020, police reportedly detained a 15-year-old Indigenous boy who was on his way to buy posterboard for a school project in Jambaló municipality, Cauca department. Local media outlets including *El Tiempo* reported that the police accused the student of carrying camouflage and a radio and, once at the station, forced him to undress. The boy belonged to the Nasa Indigenous group of Pitayó and was released after his family and Indigenous authorities registered their objections with the police.[611]

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA collected approximately 19 reports of attacks on higher education between 2020 and 2021. During the reporting period, police reportedly responded with excessive force to several university student protests over perceived government underfunding of higher education, as well as to on-campus marches for safety provisions during the Covid-19 pandemic and for the dissolution of the Mobile Anti-Riot Squadron (ESMAD).[612] In addition, local media reported that non-state armed groups attacked higher education facilities and threatened university students and professors.[613] Attacks on higher education appear to have declined slightly compared to 2019, when more than 30 such attacks were identified during student protests over education funding and on-campus demonstrations for the dissolution of ESMAD. GCPEA identified 14 reports of attacks on higher education in 2018.[614]

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately 15 attacks on higher education.[615] Examples of repression of education-related protests in 2020 included:

- On February 20, 2020, students, professors, and their unions reportedly protested against the killings of social leaders in the country, along with several government policies, at the University of Antioquia, in Medellín, Antioquia department. ESMAD and other police forces reportedly entered the University campus and used teargas to disperse protesters in response to students' and hooded individuals' use of Molotov cocktails and potato bombs. Two police officers were injured after entering the campus, according to local media reports, as was one student while running from the violence.[616] The rector of the University said the police operation was not effective, risked greater violence, and that he had not approved the actions, according to local media outlet *El Tiempo*.[617] This was reportedly the first time ESMAD had conducted a security operation within the University in eight years; the mayor had recently updated security protocols authorizing security forces to enter campuses, in case of explosives on their campuses, without prior university approval.[618]
- On July 3, 2020, police reportedly shot firearms in the direction of students outside the University of Valle, in Cali, Valle del Cauca department, although no injuries were recorded. The students had been holding a sit-in for eight days, demanding a reduction of university fees for students in response to economic struggles caused by Covid-19 lockdowns, according to local media outlet *El Tiempo*.[619]
- On September 11, 2020, in Ibague, Tolima department, ESMAD police forces reportedly used a water-cannon and fired teargas at protesting students near the main entrance to the University of Tolima and on nearby streets, and detained 28 protestors. The students, who threw rocks at the police, were protesting the recent death of a law student in Bogotá due to the reported excessive use of force by two police officers there.[620]

Examples of reported attacks on higher education facilities and threats against students and academic staff in 2020 included:

- On January 7, 2020, 30 alleged members of the ELN reportedly sprayed graffiti in support of their cause on University of La Guajira walls, and installed an IED 300 meters from the University in Villanueva town, La Guajira department. The Colombian police and army diffused the explosive, according to local media.[621]
- On March 2, 2020, pamphlets were reportedly circulated in the University of Antioquia, in Medellín, Antioquia department, threatening ten campus organizations and unions, as well as the lives of five students and professors for their suspected leftist leanings. Local media outlet *Caracol Radio* alleged that the threatening materials were signed by AGC, however the armed group denied having issued them.[622]
- On March 4, 2020, a University of Antioquia professor and secretary of an association of professors was stabbed in her home, in Medellín, Antioquia department, as covered by local media outlets and Scholars at Risk. She was hospitalized for her injuries but recovered. A threatening pamphlet circulated on campus two days prior, reportedly mentioning the association of professors.[623]

In 2021, GCPEA identified four reports of attacks on higher education, including both conflict- and repression-related incidents.[624] For example:

- In early April 2021, the director of the Technological University of Chocó was reportedly threatened on social media by an alleged non-state armed group for supposed mismanagement of the academic budget.[625] His residence was also shot at that same month, although the director was unharmed.[626] The University is located in Quibdó city, Chocó department.
- Scholars at Risk and local media reported that on April 23, 2021, ESMAD police forces entered the University del Valle, in Cali, Valle del Cauca department, to forcibly remove protesting students from campus including by using teargas. Beginning April 15, 2021, the students carried out a sit-in on campus, which included blocking the entrance, to protest the partial return of in-person classes and demand adequate health protocols and necessary equipment for distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.[627]
- On July 19, 2021, security guards found two explosive devices in a garden inside Surcolombiana University in Neiva city, Huila department, as reported by local media outlet *La Nación*. Detonation experts reportedly later retrieved and disposed of the explosives.[628]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

GCPEA collected over 600 reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2020 and 2021, with Ituri and Tanganyika provinces particularly affected. In addition, armed groups reportedly recruited or used students at or near schools. GCPEA also collected reports of sexual violence by armed groups at schools. Reports of targeted killings and threats against teachers increased in North Kivu. Attacks on higher education students and staff continued at a similar rate to earlier years.

Context

Armed conflict continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In 2020, fighting involving non-state armed groups, which numbered over 130, and the Congolese national armed forces (Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo – FARDC), along with intercommunal violence, remained high in parts of the eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika.[629] In May 2021, authorities declared a state of siege in Ituri and North Kivu provinces, allowing military and police to take over civilian administration in the two provinces.[630]

Civilians continued to bear the brunt of hostilities throughout the reporting period. In 2021 and 2020, the UN reported that fighting in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces killed over 2,000 civilians each year.[631] The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) armed group, which operated in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, was responsible for one-third of all civilian deaths in DRC in 2020.[632] Attacks on civilians continued at high rates in 2021, despite martial law in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, according to Himan Rights Watch.[633]

In November 2021, the UN reported that 5.6 million people were displaced in DRC, nearly half of whom had been displaced since January 2021.[634] Ituri province was particularly affected, with over 1.7 million people displaced between January and November 2020, according to the UN.[635] At the end of 2021, the UN estimated that over 27 million people needed humanitarian assistance.[636] However, armed groups frequently prevented humanitarian actors from delivering assistance to people in need during the reporting period.[637]

In addition, the public health crises of both Ebola and Covid-19 severely strained an already fragile healthcare system and compounded humanitarian needs.[638] Along with conflict, Covid-19 contributed to a 40 percent increase in the number of people experiencing food insecurity in 2020, according to analyses by the non-governmental organization CARE.[639]

Access to education was severely constrained in DRC due to conflict and Covid-19 during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Over 26 million students did not attend school from April 19 to October 12, 2020 due to Covid-19-related school closures,[640] and again between December 2020 and late February 2021.[641] However, insecurity kept some schools closed; for example, in North Kivu, even when health measures permitted reopening in both October 2020 and February 2021, dozens of schools remained closed due to conflict, affecting thousands of students.[642] Furthermore, in areas where schools reopened in October 2020, attendance rates declined, with many families reporting that they were unable to pay school fees.[643] In addition, damage to schools from both conflict and flooding prevented thousands of students from returning to school in Eastern provinces of DRC in 2020 and 2021.[644] The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo volcano on May 22, 2021, also damaged seven schools and temporarily halted classes at all schools in Goma[645] and 40 universities. [646]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 600 reported attacks on schools from both verified and unverified data sources. Attacks on schools occurred at similarly high rates as in the previous reporting period. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified hundreds of reported incidents annually.[647] Between 2018 and early 2020, the UN reported that most attacks on schools occurred in Ituri province and were perpetrated by non-state armed groups including the Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO).[648]

In 2020, the UN verified 101 incidents of attacks on schools that affected 24,900 students, representing a five-fold increase from 2019, when the UN verified 20 attacks on schools.[649] Of these, the UN verified that Twigwaneho armed groups lead by a former FARDC colonel destroyed 15 schools in the Kamombo area of South Kivu province between mid-June and mid-September 2020.[650] GCPEA also identified unverified reports of attacks on schools throughout the year, some of which were higher than verified counts. For instance, in the whole of Tanganyika province in 2020, the UN reported that 342 schools had been destroyed due to hostilities.[651] Tanganyika province's Nyunzu territory was particularly affected, with armed violence causing the destruction of 69 schools between January and October 2020, according to the UN.[652] Also in Tanganyika province, schools were reportedly damaged during fighting between Zambian armed forces and the FARDC in 2020, according to the DRC Protection Cluster.[653] In Ituri province, the UN reported that 163 schools were attacked in 2020.[654]

GCPEA identified ten reported incidents of attacks on schools from media, conflict monitors, and the UN.[655] GCPEA could not determine whether these incidents were counted in the above totals reported by the UN. For example:

- The Kivu Security Tracker reported that on January 26, 2020, at least two schools were burned as a result of clashes between two armed groups in Uvira territory, South Kivu province.[656]
- In March 2020, Bantu militia members burned two schools in Nyunzu town and territory, Tanganyika province, according to the UN.[657]
- Between August 5 and 8, 2020, during fighting between Zambian armed forces and the FARDC, the primary school in Kalubmaba, Moba territory, Tanganyika province, was destroyed, according to the DRC Protection Cluster. During the same month, the DRC Protection Cluster documented two attacks on schools in Muliro, Moba territory, Tanganyika province. [658]
- On August 18, 2020, unknown attackers allegedly burned part of a school in Lengwe, Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika province, according to *Radio Okapi*.[659] A report from ACLED indicated that other school buildings may have also been set alight in the area.[660]
- On August 27, 2020, in Katanga village, Masisi Territory, North Kivu province, an armed group and FARDC battled each other near an exam center while students were taking the national exams for the completion of primary school. Two students were killed in the attack, according to the UN.[661] *Radio Okapi* reported that the attack prevented over 300 school students from finishing their exams.[662]
- The DRC Protection Cluster reported that during an attack on Irumu town, Ituri province, on October 21, 2020, an armed group burned down the Primary and Professional Education administrative building.[663]

In 2021, the DRC Education Cluster received reports that at least 250 schools were looted, destroyed, or burned in eastern DRC between January and September.[664] In 2021, the UN verified the UN verified 69 attacks on schools.[665] GCPEA also identified reports during the same period which may have been included in either the DRC Education Cluster or UN reports. For example, in March 2021, the DRC Protection Cluster reported that 36 schools had allegedly been attacked in Bijombo-Moranvia during fighting between armed groups.[666] In Walikale, Masisi, Rutshuru, and Beni territories of North Kivu province, 43 schools were reportedly destroyed between January and March 2021, according to the Education Cluster.[667] These attacks often caused interruptions to learning. In April 2021, the UN reported that attacks on schools had affected approximately 400,000 school-aged children in Ituri province.[668]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least six reported incidents of attacks on schools from media sources, UN, and NGOs, in North Kivu, Ituri, and Kasai Central provinces,[669] including:

- In January 2021, armed conflict damaged one school and destroyed two others in Batua Kadimba, Kasai Central province, according to an Inter-Cluster evaluation report.[670]
- In June 2021, the UN and media reported that two schools in Mutanga village, Dimbelenge territory, Kasai Central province, were burned down during conflict in the area.[671]

- On November 22, 2021, an explosive device was allegedly found in the yard of Bonaventure school in Mungwalu, Djugu territory, Ituri province, following clashes between FARDC and the CODECO armed group in the area. As a result, the school director reported to *Radio Okapi* that the school closed for three days, affecting 495 students.[672]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified at least 20 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Incidents involved the abduction, robbery, threatening, or killing of teachers and students by both military, non-state armed groups, or unknown perpetrators. In addition, state security forces used excessive force against student or teacher protestors. The number of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel increased as compared to prior years; GCPEA identified five incidents in 2019 and three in 2018.[673]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least 13 incidents of attacks on school students and teachers,[674] eight of which involved the killing or robbing of teachers or students by armed groups, and four of which involved the use of force by police against, or arrest of, students or teachers protesting education related issues. Armed groups threatened displaced teachers in North Kivu in October 2020, forcing them to return to work in their places of origin instead of in the community where they were displaced.[675] Other examples of attacks on school students and educators included:

- On August 10, 2020, a group of teachers in Bukavu, South Kivu province, gathered in a protest about salaries and pay rises, according to *Voice of America* and local media. Police allegedly used teargas and batons to disperse the demonstrators, injuring 20 teachers; teachers accused police of stealing cell phones. The report stated that the protest took place on the first day of classes since schools closed due to Covid-19.[676]
- On October 22, 2020, a girl who was on her way home from school was shot in the leg by a soldier at an FARDC checkpoint who had been aiming at passing vehicle, according to the DRC Protection Cluster.[677]
- On November 27, 2020, primary and secondary school students in Lusambo, Sankuru province, protested against the provincial governor's raising of school fees, according to local media. The police dispersed the students using tear gas, after which some student reportedly threw stones. One student was allegedly injured.[678]
- The DRC Protection Cluster reported that on December 10, 2020, an administrator of Institut Rwankeri voiced his opposition to the recent occupation of a nearby school courtyard. An armed group abducted the teacher for one day until a ransom was paid.[679]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 11 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.[680] GCPEA observed an increase in reporting on incidents of teachers being threatened or abducted, for payment of "security fees" in 2021. Examples of attacks included:

- Local media reported that on January 14, 2021, armed militiamen allegedly robbed four teachers in Lombana, Djugu territory, Ituri province. The teachers were returning home from the town where they lived after schools had closed again due to Covid-19 prevention measures, according to one report.[681]
- SOS Medias reported that on February 11, 2021, approximately 50 primary and secondary school teachers in a refugee camp in Lusenda, Fizi, South Kivu province, held a demonstration about salary payments. Police forces, along with the camp's security, allegedly used force to disperse the protest, and injured several teachers.[682]
- On March 3, 2021, an armed group blocked the entrances of multiple schools in Mweso district, Masisi territory, North Kivu province, and demanded that teachers pay a "security fee" before entering. The armed group abducted two teachers on March 4, 2021, releasing them the next day after receiving a ransom payment. Some schools shut down due to the presence of the armed groups, according to the DRC Protection Cluster.[683]
- On July 30, 2021, media sources reported that an FARDC soldier shot and killed a 16-year-old female student who was crossing a checkpoint on her way home from school in Laoshi, Masisi territory, North Kivu province. *Radio Okapi* reported that the FARDC had erected a checkpoint at 20 meters distance from the school. Six soldiers were allegedly arrested in relation to the incident.[684]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified reports of at least 25 schools used for military purposes during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Reported incidents of military use increased in comparison to earlier years. GCPEA identified around three reported incidents of military use in 2018 and five UN-verified incidents of military use in 2019.[685]

In October 2020, the UN reported that armed actors had occupied 12 schools in the north of Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika province.[686] Over the course of the year, the UN also verified that armed forces had used four schools in North Kivu and one school in Tanganyika for as long as four months before vacating them.[687] In addition, local media reported that on October 6, 2020, members of an armed group had set up a camp inside a school building in Ndjiapanda village, Lubero territory, North Kivu province.[688] The Protection Cluster also identified one case of military use of a primary school in Masisi territory, North Kivu Province, in December 2020 which led to the recruitment of children from a neighboring school, detailed below.[689]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 13 reports of military use in the provinces of North Kivu (5)[690] , Ituri (5), [691] South Kivu (1),[692] and Tanganyika (2).[693] The UN verified four such cases in 2021.[694] These included:

- The DRC Protection Cluster reported that on March 21, 2021, an armed group had occupied four primary schools and one secondary school in Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province. The armed group denied teachers and students entry to the schools. As a result, those schools, as well as nearby schools, suspended their activities.[695]
- The UN reported that between January and June 2021, armed groups occupied five schools in Ituri province.[696]
- As of August 9, 2021, unidentified armed groups were using at least two schools in Mukimbo and Ngombe-Mwana, Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika province, according to the UN. The report did not specify the duration of the use of the school.[697]
- In October 2021, the Protection Cluster verified that FARDC soldiers used a primary school for three days in Kirungu, Uvira territory, South Kivu province. The soldiers used desks for firewood and turned the classrooms into a dormitory.[698] The Protection Cluster also verified that sexual violence against children by FARDC occurred in the same village, although GCPEA could not determine whether the cases occurred at or near the school.

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified occasional reports of sexual violence by parties to conflict at, or on the way to or from, school. Such incidents appeared to have decreased since their peak during the Greater Kasai crisis in 2016-2017.[699]

In 2020, GCPEA identified one incident of sexual violence by armed groups at a school. On August 30, 2020, *AFP, Reuters*, and local media reported that unidentified armed men attacked the dormitory of Institut Rungu, in Rungu, Isirio territory, Haut Uélé province. Around 30 students were lodged at the school to undertake their final primary school exam. In the night, armed attackers entered the building and allegedly raped at least one female student, according to a local government official.[700]

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

GCPEA received reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school, affecting over 40 students during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA had not received any reports of this violation, though such occurrences may have not been reported.

In October 2020, the DRC Protection Cluster reported that six children were forcibly recruited from a primary school in Bweru, North Kivu province, and used to transport military items. The children were released the next day.[701]

On December 10, 2020, members of an armed group set up camp in the yard of a primary school in Lwama, Masisi territory, North Kivu province. While using the school, they abducted around 33 students from a neighboring secondary school and used them to transport their belongings.[702] Their headmaster was later abducted for condemning the military use of the primary school, as detailed above.[703]

The actual total number of children recruited at, or on the way to or from school, may be higher. For example, the UN reported that between 2018 and early 2020, 35 percent of the 980 children recruited to armed groups or forces were abducted from their home, schools, or from roads or fields.[704] Also in 2020, the United States State Department reported that some parents kept their children home from school due to fears of armed groups forcibly recruiting them.[705]

Attacks on higher education

For the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 12 incidents of attacks on higher education people. While attacks declined in 2020, likely due to university closures, in 2021 they rose again to rates similar to earlier years. For example, during the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA collected between six and 11 events annually; many of those events involved arrest or use of force against university students and staff during protests.[706]

In 2020, GCPEA identified three reported incidents of attacks on higher education students in North Kivu province:

- On March 17, 2020, local media reported that a university student was hit and killed by a stray bullet during confrontations between security forces and an armed group in Butembo city, North Kivu province.[707]
- The Kivu Security Tracker and local media reported that police used tear gas and gun fire to disperse student protesters in Butembo city and territory, North Kivu province, on Mach 17, 2020. The police reportedly shot and killed one student. The students were allegedly carrying the body of the student killed on March 17, 2020 (see above).[708]
- The Kivu Security Tracker reported that on July 2, 2020, students from Semuliki University marched in Beni city, North Kivu province, marched to demand reopening of classes and an end to Covid-19 related closures. The police dispersed the protest and allegedly arrested 12 students.[709]

In 2021, GCPEA identified nine reported incidents of attacks on university students and personnel.[710] In September 2021, the Minister of Higher Education barred over 70 universities from teaching medicine, due to failure to meet established standards, which provoked student protests across the country, some of which were met with excessive force by police.[711] Examples of attacks on higher education students and personnel included:

- Local media reported that a group of students from a number of higher education institutions demonstrated in Bukavu town, South Kivu province, on January 12, 2021. Police allegedly used teargas and live ammunition to disperse the students, who were demanding an end to Covid-19 related closures of universities.[712]
- On July 24, 2021, police shot dead a theatre student who was filming a school project with a teaching assistant and classmates in Kinshasa, according to local media. While some reports claimed that the police arrested the teaching assistant for not having a permit for filming, others claimed that the dispute was over a Covid-19 mask mandate.[713]
- In response to the incident of the killing of a student on July 24, 2021, students at the University of Kinshasa protested on July 26; police allegedly used excessive force against the students, injuring several, and arrested eight. The students reportedly damaged the campus and clashed with police.[714]
- On September 24, 2021, students at the Official University of Rwenzori in Butembo, North Kivu province, protested against the Higher Education Ministry's suspension of the institutions' medical school. Police allegedly used teargas to disperse the demonstrators.[715]

ETHIOPIA

Attacks on schools and universities increased in 2020 and 2021, with Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions particularly impacted. GCPEA also identified approximately 70 incidents of military use of schools and universities, an increase compared to the previous two years.

Context

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, armed conflict erupted in Tigray, Ethiopia's northernmost region, and spread south to Amhara and Afar regions; violence also continued in south-central Oromia region. In November 2020, the central government sent troops to Tigray after alleging that forces affiliated with the region's ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), attempted to seize control of a national military base.[716] The Ethiopian army, supported by Eritrean troops and militias from Amhara region, gained control of most of Tigray region in under a month.[717] Tigrayan forces counterattacked and the national government unilaterally declared a ceasefire. Tigrayan forces retook the regional capital, Mekelle, in June 2021.[718] The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch reported that all sides of the conflict committed abuses against civilians in Tigray region in 2020, including indiscriminate shelling on homes, hospitals, schools, and markets,[719] as well as massacres at Aksum and Mai-Kadra.[720] In mid-2021, the conflict expanded into neighboring Amhara and Afar regions, leading to abuses against civilians and displacement.[721] In Oromia region, intercommunal violence and fighting between the Oromo Liberation Army and government forces continued during this reporting period, according to media reports.[722]

The police and National Defense Force reportedly used excessive and lethal force against bystanders and protesters demonstrating against the imprisonment of community and political leaders in Oromia region and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' region in 2020, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.[723] In November 2021, arrests of Tigrayans also reportedly increased in Addis Ababa after a state of emergency was declared.[724]

In December 2021, the UN estimated that 9.4 million people required humanitarian food assistance in northern Ethiopia, where more than 2.1 million people were displaced by conflict.[725] However, the government restricted the delivery of humanitarian aid to areas of Tigray region, as well as suspending internet, phone, and banking services, during parts of 2021.[726]

Violence and Covid-19 restrictions impacted access to education. According to the UN, 48,500 teachers required psychosocial support after hostilities in Tigray region,[727] and more than 1.42 million students were out of school in northern Ethiopia due to hostilities, as reported by authorities.[728] In Tigray region, schools were also used as temporary shelters for displaced persons in Mekelle, Shire, and other cities in 2020 and 2021,[729] and the University of Aksum sheltered over 45,000 people in March 2021.[730] The government closed schools in March 2020 to limit the spread of Covid-19, affecting more than 26 million school students and around one million tertiary students in the first months of the pandemic.[731] Less than ten percent of school students accessed remote education during that period.[732] Schools reopened gradually beginning in late October 2020; however, schools closed again in Tigray region following the outbreak of fighting in early November, then began opening again in June 2021.[733]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 32 reports of attacks on schools. In comparison, GCPEA collected at least 15 reported incidents in 2018-2019.[734]

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, Ethiopian authorities, NGOs, media, and UN agencies reported on the widespread damage or destruction of schools during conflict in Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Benshangul-Gumuz regions. Much of the reporting did not specify the year in which damages occurred. Furthermore, it remained unclear whether damage to schools resulted from attacks by armed forces or armed groups rather than other violence, looting, the presence of internally displaced persons in schools, or another cause. As such, these reports are not included in the total number of attacks on schools for the 2020-2021 reporting period.

In August 2021, the *BBC* reported that 7,000 schools had been damaged during hostilities in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions, citing Ethiopia's Minister of Education; however, GCPEA could not confirm whether all the damages resulted from attacks and how many schools were damaged in each year.[735] GCPEA collected further reports that schools in Tigray region were extensively damaged and looted during the reporting period.[736] Citing the Ministry of Education, the UN reported in 2021 that at minimum 25 percent of schools in the Tigray region were damaged, including destruction of classrooms, sanitation facilities, and offices.[737] In the region's capital, Mekelle, the UN also reported in 2021 that fighting and looting had damaged a "large majority" of public schools.[738] Meanwhile, EHRC reported findings from the Ministry of Education that over 1,000 schools experienced damage, looting, or the presence of explosive weapons, in Tigray region.[739]

In Afar region, approximately 760 schools were damaged or destroyed during conflict across 21 woredas, or districts, affecting over 150,000 students, 45 percent of them girls, and more than 4,000 teachers in 2021, according to a needs assessment led by the Afar Regional Education Bureau, as cited by the UN.[740]

In Amhara region, approximately 1,660 primary and secondary schools were damaged or destroyed during conflict as of September 2021, equivalent to 17 percent of schools in the region, the UN reported, citing the Regional Education Bureau. The damage to schools affected more than 1.2 million children, approximately half of them girls.[741] The majority of the damaged schools were located in zones of Amhara region bordering Tigray region, namely, North Gondar, South Gondar, Waghemra, North Wollo and South Wollo.[742]

In addition, in western Ethiopia, approximately 194 primary and secondary schools were damaged during the reporting period, in conflict in Metekel zone, Benshangul-Gumuz region, according to the Regional State Education Bureau, as reported by local media in September 2021.[743]

In 2020, GCPEA collected at least eight reported incidents of attacks on schools.[744] For example:

- Human Rights Watch reported that on November 9, 2020, artillery shells detonated near schools in Humera town, Tigray region.[745]
- On November 17, 2020, mortar shells reportedly struck near Shire elementary school in Shire, Tigray region, according to Human Rights Watch.[746]
- Human Rights Watch reported that on November 28, 2020, shells hit and damaged a school in the Ayder area of Mekelle, Tigray region. Witnesses said the school was empty and that they had not seen military forces or fighters in the school when it was shelled.[747]

In 2021, GCPEA collected at least 24 incidents of attacks on schools in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions.[748] For instance:

- Around January 5, 2021, armed assailants reportedly burned down a school administered by the Development and Inter-Aid Church Commission in Shimelba refugee camp, in Tigray region, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council and a media report.[749]
- In August 2021, TPLF forces looted a primary and a secondary school, destroying learning materials and administrative records, in Gasay town, Amhara region, according to EHRC.[750]
- EHRC reported that between August 18 and 20, 2021, TPLF forces looted the Kimir Dingay Higher Secondary School in Kimir Dingay town, Amhara region. The forces took a laptop and six computers, a plasma tv, photocopier, and microphones, as well as damaging doors and lockers, and intentionally leaving administrative records exposed to the elements so they would be destroyed.[751]
- During the summer months of 2021, heavy weapon fire hit and damaged five schools in Afar region, namely, Ala Mohammed Secondary School and Askoma and Fluaruwa Primary Schools in Ewa district, Galikoma Primary School in Gulina district, and Eligolo Primary School in Yallo district.[752]

- International news outlet *Reuters* reported that between July and December 2021, TPLF forces looted and destroyed multiple schools in Gashena town, Amhara region, while the group controlled the area.[753]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified approximately 70 incidents of reported military use in 2020 and 2021, marking an increase compared to past years. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected only sporadic reports of military use of schools and universities. In addition to the significant increase in reports in 2020 and 2021, GCPEA also observed that cases more often involved the military use of schools, while previous years typically included instances of military presence on university campuses.[754]

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately ten incidents of military use from UN, media, and NGO sources.[755] For example:

- Beginning in June 2020, TPLF forces camped at Ullaga Kebele primary school in Bissober village, Tigray region, while it was closed due to the pandemic, according to EHRC, Human Rights Watch, and media outlets.[756] Approximately 250 troops camped at the school, according to international media outlet *Agence France Presse*; the troops dug trenches near classrooms and stored weapons in the principal's office.[757] After several months of military use, the school was damaged by heavy artillery fire in November 2020 during clashes between TPLF forces and the Ethiopian army, as reported by EHRC and Human Rights Watch.[758]
- Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reported that in 2020, the Federal and Addis Ababa Police used a school in Addis Ababa as a detention center.[759]
- Between September 6 and 13, 2020, a militia reportedly used a primary school as an execution site for civilians in Metekel zone, Benishangul-Gumuz region.[760]
- Amnesty International reported that suspected Oromo Liberation Army members used a school to detain and kill more than 50 civilians, including children, on November 1, 2020, in Gawa Qanqa village, Oromia region.[761]
- In November 2020, Eritrean forces reportedly occupied Basen primary school, in Axum city, Tigray region. According to Human Rights Watch, the Eritrean troops camped at the schools after Ethiopian and Eritrean forces took control of the area.[762]
- Human Rights Watch reported that Tigrayan forces occupied a secondary school in Shimelba, Tigray region, in late 2020 or early 2021.[763]

In 2021, GCPEA collected around 60 reports of military use. In Tigray region, in April 2021, the UN reported that the military was occupying 15 schools.[764] In the summer of 2021, TPLF forces used 42 schools in Afar region, with most cases occurring in areas bordering the Tigray region.[765] Also in 2021, GCPEA identified approximately five individual reports of military use of schools and universities.[766] Some of these may overlap with the above cases of military use in 2021; to avoid double counting, no individual incidents in Tigray or Afar regions were included in the total number of cases of military use for 2021. Examples of reported military use in 2021 included:

- Human Rights Watch reported that in September 2021, TPLF forces occupied a school in Chenna town, Amhara region.[767]
- Government forces used Atse Yohannes preparatory school as a barracks, in Mekelle, Tigray region, beginning in late November 2020, according to Human Rights Watch, the UN, and EHRC. After several weeks, the soldiers left the school, having looted computers and food. In February 2021, the soldiers reportedly returned to occupy the school, including using sandbags and stones to build walls, posting armed guards at the gates, and placing weapons on the roof. When troops left in mid-April 2021, classrooms, science labs, and offices in the school were damaged, as were student records, learning materials, and hundreds of chairs. The military occupation impacted approximately 2,000 students and 150 teachers and staff members who attended or worked at the school.[768]
- Around November 2021, TPLF forces reportedly used two Wollo University campuses, in Dessie and Kombolcha towns, Amhara region; the armed group allegedly used Kombolcha campus as a training ground and Dessie campus as a command post. Classes were suspended in late 2021 due to extensive damages, according to the University's Vice President, interviewed by *BBC Amharic*. Air-launched strikes that occurred while TPLF forces occupied the campuses also reportedly caused damage.[769]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately 14 reports of attacks on higher education. In *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA identified around five reports of higher education attacks in both 2018 and 2019. The Dembi Dolo University students abducted by unidentified assailants in November 2019, covered in *Education under Attack 2020*, remained missing during this reporting period.[770] While previous years primarily included incidents of repression of education-related or on-campus protests, this reporting period included shelling and looting of higher education facilities.[771]

In 2020, GCPEA identified six reported attacks on higher education.[772] For instance:

- On January 10, 2020, security forces reportedly fired at demonstrating students, allegedly causing one death and around 12 injuries, at Bule Hora University in Bule Hora town, Oromia region, according to local media outlets. The students reportedly protested the ongoing conflict in west Oromia.[773]
- On March 26, 2020, police officers reportedly used excessive force, including firing shots, when dispersing student protests at Hawassa University's extension campus in Yirga Alem town, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' region. According to media outlet *Addis Standard*, students demonstrated after administrators rescinded transportation assistance when the university closed due to Covid-19 precautions. Around 50 students, including women, were allegedly injured in the incident.[774]
- Human Rights Watch reported that mortar shells struck twice near Shire University's agricultural campus in Shire city, Tigray region, on November 17, 2020. At the time, displaced persons from towns in the region were staying in the university.[775]
- On November 19, 2020, an airstrike reportedly hit a university in Mekelle city, Tigray region, wounding over 20 students, according to international media outlets such as the *Associated Press*.[776]
- Human Rights Watch reported that in November 2020, Eritrean troops looted food and learning materials from Axum University, in Axum city, Tigray region.[777]
- In 2021, GCPEA collected approximately eight reports of attacks on higher education.[778] For example:
- On February 20, 2021, unidentified assailants reportedly fired on a bus of students in Adi Mesno town, Tigray region, who were returning from a graduation ceremony at Mekelle University. According to international media outlet the *BBC*, at least six students were killed and another ten injured as the bus travelled from Mekelle city to Addis Ababa. Two members of the Defense Forces escorting the students were also reportedly killed.[779]
- In late June 2021, Ethiopian soldiers reportedly fired on students at Mekelle University, in Mekelle city, Tigray region. International media outlet *NPR* reported that two students were killed and three wounded in the attack, which occurred while Tigrayan forces retook parts of Mekelle, causing Ethiopian forces to retreat.[780]
- On October 22, 2021, an airstrike hit near Mekelle University, in Mekelle, Tigray region, as reported by international news outlets *VOA* and *The Guardian*.[781]

INDIA

Attacks on schools continued in Jammu and Kashmir and some eastern states in this reporting period. GCPEA also identified over 55 incidents of attacks on school students and teachers, primarily involving the use of excessive force during education-related protests. Attacks on higher education appeared to decline in 2020 and 2021 compared to a peak in 2019.

Context

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, India continued to experience low-grade violence in Jammu and Kashmir, and the areas affected by the Naxalite insurgency, while tensions over state borders surfaced. The Bharatiya Janata Party retained majority power in parliament.[782]

Low-grade violence continued in Jammu and Kashmir in 2020 and 2021.[783] Cross-border shelling between Indian and Pakistani forces persisted, killing at least ten civilians in one day in November 2020, including an eight-year-old child.[784] After months of internet shutdown during the security lockdown in India-administered Kashmir, the Supreme Court ruled that the internet was a fundamental right in January 2020.[785] Although the government reinstated internet to the region as a result, only slow speed access was permitted until February 2021, limiting medical care and children's access to virtual classes, according to local media.[786] Human Rights Watch and the media also reported that the government arbitrarily detained politicians, activists, and journalists.[787]

Civilians were harmed during the reporting period in the decades-old conflict between the Naxalite opposition group and government forces, in the central and eastern states of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Jharkhand, among others, according to International Crisis Group and local media.[788] Separately, along the border between the states of Assam and Mizoram, tensions reemerged in October 2020 over disputed territorial boundaries,[789] with huts burnt down in alleged mob violence and stone pelting along the border.[790] In late 2020, volunteers temporarily established checkpoints to prevent travel between the two states.[791] The government sent central paramilitary forces to the region to ease tensions, as reported by local media.[792]

In addition to widespread farmers' protests, marches against the 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act continued in 2020 and students demonstrated against education-related grievances throughout the reporting period.[793] Human Rights Watch reported that many arrests of students and activists were attempts to silence political dissent.[794]

In July 2021, monsoon rains displaced thousands of families and 375,000 children in Bihar state, some of whom sought shelter in schools.[795] Southern Kerala also experienced flash floods in October 2021, causing the death of five children.[796]

In March 2020, the government closed schools to limit the spread of Covid-19, affecting over 290 million students, according to the UN.[797] State governments began to reopen schools in September 2021, although some schools remained closed through May 2021,[798] with most states providing alternative education programs.[799] Despite provisions, some students from marginalized communities faced barriers to accessing education, such as lack of awareness about the programs.[800] According to the UN, only about 15 percent of rural households and 42 percent of urban households had access to the internet, limiting access to virtual learning.[801]

Attacks on Schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least eight reported attacks on schools. Attacks appeared to decline in comparison to 2019, when GCPEA collected more than 25 reported incidents, some of which occurred in schools used as polling stations during elections for the lower house of parliament that year.[802] However, the rate of attacks on schools appeared to peak in 2019; in 2018, GCPEA gathered four such reports.[803] Across both reporting periods, schools used as polling stations were reportedly attacked, and impacted states or union territories included Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh.[804]

In 2020, GCPEA collected two reports of attacks on schools from local media reports:

- On January 13, 2020, unidentified assailants reportedly threw makeshift explosives at a school bus driving approximately 20 students from a public school home after classes in Allahabad city, Uttar Pradesh state. According to media reports, two students were injured and bus windows were damaged in the blast.[805]
- On February 18, 2020, alleged armed group members planted explosives in a school in Gaya, Bihar state, destroying the building. The school was reportedly closed at the time of the attack and no injuries were recorded. Local media reported that pamphlets left nearby mentioned that Indian security forces were occupying schools.[806]

In 2021, GCPEA identified six reported attacks on schools in Jammu and Kashmir union territory and Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal states:

- On February 20, 2021, an explosion reportedly occurred at a private school in Haril town, Jammu and Kashmir union territory, injuring a janitor. According to a police officer interviewed by local media outlet *Greater Kashmir*, the incident appeared to result from an unexploded shell on the school grounds.[807]
- On March 1, 2021, one child was killed and two others were injured when they picked up an explosive reportedly planted at the playground of Bhagwan High School, in Gogri Jamalpur area, Khagaria district, Bihar state, according to local media.[808]
- On March 16, 2021, police officers reportedly located and defused seven five-kilogram improvised explosive devices (IEDs) near a school in Chatra town, Jharkhand state. According to local media reports, members of a non-state armed group had planted the explosives there to target state security forces.[809]
- *Hindustan Times* and other local media outlets reported that on June 8, 2021, an explosive detonated at a Madrasa in Nautolia locality, Banka district, Bihar state, killing one teacher. The blast reportedly caused extensive damage to the school, which was closed at the time due to Covid-19 restrictions.[810]
- *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times* reported that on December 19, 2021, unidentified assailants threw bombs near Taki Boy's School and Khanna High School in Kolkata city, West Bengal state. At the time, the schools were used as polling stations in the Kolkata Municipal Corporation elections. Three people were reportedly injured in the Taki Boy's School incident.[811]

In addition, GCPEA identified four reports of explosions in schools along the Mizoram and Assam state borders in 2020 and 2021,[812] although it remained unclear whether the violence was related to armed conflict. For example:

- On October 22, 2020, unidentified assailants planted explosives at a school near Saihapui V village, in Mizoram state, according to media reports. No injuries were recorded from the blast, although the school building was reportedly destroyed.[813]
- Unidentified assailants reportedly planted explosives at a primary school in Dholai village, Assam state, destroying the school, on November 7, 2020, as reported by local media; no casualties were reported.[814]
- On February 3, 2021, unidentified assailants set off two explosives at a primary school in Hailakandi district, Assam state, according to local media reports. The blasts reportedly damaged the main building of the school and the partially built boys' toilet.[815]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least 55 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. These incidents involved the reported arrest or detention of more than 1,600 students or educators. In comparison, GCPEA identified at least 25 and 15 reports of attacks on school students and personnel in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[816] Incidents in 2020 and 2021 generally involved

the police using excessive force against student, parent, and teacher protesters, rather than reported injuries or killings perpetrated by non-state armed groups, which occurred with more frequency in *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017 to 2019.[817]

In 2020, GCPEA identified four reports of attacks on students, teachers, and personnel from media reports.[818] For example:

- On June 15, 2020, students reportedly protested outside the office of the Deputy Director of Education in Malappuram city, Kerala state, to demand textbooks which were supposed to be distributed at the beginning of the academic year, two weeks prior. Police charged at the students with lathis (martial-arts sticks) to disperse the protest, and arrested 16 students, according to local media outlet *The Hindu*.[819]
- On September 5, 2020, in Patiala city, Punjab state, parents of students reportedly protested against school authorities that were demanding full tuition fees during the Covid-19 pandemic, when students were only attending classes online. As reported in local media outlet *Times of India*, the police detained more than 30 protesters.[820]
- Approximately 150 unemployed members of a teacher's union reportedly marched on the Chief Minister's residence in Patiala city, Punjab state, to demand jobs, on December 20, 2020. As covered in local media, the police lathi-charged the protesters, injuring some, and detained more than 100 teachers.[821]

In 2021, GCPEA collected more than 50 reported incidents of attacks on students, teachers, and education personnel.[822] For example:

- On January 27, 2021, non-regularized teachers reportedly staged a protest at the gate of the West Bengal assembly to demand salary and pension equivalent to regular teachers in public schools, in Kolkata city, West Bengal state. Local media reported that the police detained some of the teachers.[823]
- According to *The Indian Express*, police reportedly used force to disperse a demonstration by out-of-work teachers in Agartala city, Tripura state, on January 27, 2021. The teachers had reportedly been demonstrating for over 50 days. Police allegedly used lathi charges, teargas, and water cannons, and arrested over 300 teachers. Seven police officers were also reported as injured in the clash and three public vehicles were damaged.[824]
- On March 28, 2021, unemployed teachers reportedly held a sit-in outside the Chief Minister's residence in Patiala city, Punjab state, demanding jobs. According to local media outlet *The Tribune*, the police detained hundreds of teachers and injured several with lathi sticks.[825]
- On October 7, 2021, militants shot and killed a principal and a teacher in a government-run school in Srinagar city, in Jammu and Kashmir union territory, as reported by international media outlet *The Guardian*.[826]
- On October 26, 2021, hundreds of teachers protested in Panchkula district, Haryana state, demanding higher salaries. In response, the police reportedly used water cannons and cane charges to disperse the protest and arrested several teachers.[827]
- According to *India Today*, students demonstrated against the new National Education Policy in Bhopal city, Madhya Pradesh state, on November 25, 2021. Police reportedly lathi-charged the students, injuring several.[828]

Military use of schools and universities

The UN verified the use of seven schools for military purposes by government security forces in 2020. The forces vacated the schools before the end of the year.[829] In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020* included sporadic reports of military use in 2018 and 2019.[830]

GCPEA did not identify any instances of military use in 2021.

Attacks on higher education

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified approximately 65 reported attacks on higher education. During the reporting period, the police reportedly detained or arrested more than 500 students and education personnel and otherwise used excessive force against higher education students and personnel in connection with on-campus or education-related protests. Attacks on higher education this reporting period continued a trend from *Education under Attack 2020*, when the majority of reported incidents also involved protest repression, rather than attacks on higher education facilities. Attacks on higher education appeared to decline in 2020 and 2021 compared to 2019, when GCPEA collected nearly 50 reported incidents.[831]

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately 28 reported incidents of attacks on higher education, almost all of which involved protest repression.[832] For instance:

- On January 16, 2020, students reportedly protested at the University of Hyderabad against the Citizenship Amendment Act, in Hyderabad city, Telangana state. Local media outlet *Times of India* reported that police detained several students at the university's main gate to prevent protesters from marching to a nearby statue, and one interviewee mentioned the presence of water cannons.[833]
- On February 11, 2020, blind students reportedly protested outside the Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens in Bengaluru city, Karnataka state, to demand laptops the government had agreed to distribute two years prior. Police detained 40 students for protesting without the necessary permit, according to *Times of India*.[834] Although the reports did not specify the education level of all students, at least one was a tertiary student.
- Police reportedly arrested approximately 60 students at the main entrance of Aligarh Muslim University, in Aligarh city, Uttar Pradesh state, on March 14, 2020. The students were protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act and holding a vigil for a student who was recently shot during an off-campus protest over the Act, according to Scholars at Risk.[835]
- Police detained more than 100 academics and higher education personnel peacefully protesting for payment of overdue salaries at Delhi University, in New Delhi, on September 5, 2020, according to Scholars at Risk and local media.[836]
- On October 5, 2020, students protested at the main gate of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, in Hyderabad city, Telangana state, to demand the administration cancel semester exams during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to local media. Police reportedly took several students into preventive custody and charged at others with lathis to disperse the protests.[837]
- On December 15, 2020, police reportedly entered Jamia Millia Islamia University and detained several students, in New Delhi. The students and several family members were holding a candlelight vigil to commemorate the anniversary of a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act held at the same university one year prior, during which police entered the campus and detained students. Students and their family members were released after several hours, according to Scholars at Risk and local media.[838]

In 2021, GCPEA identified more than 35 reported attacks on higher education from media reports, involving both protest repression and attacks on education facilities.[839] For instance:

- On February 4, 2021, students reportedly protested outside Guru Nanak Dev University where they clashed with police, in Amritsar city, Punjab state. The students demanded the University hold exams online since courses during the Covid-19 pandemic had been online. Due to obstacles such as poor internet connectivity, the students also contended that it was unfair to test everyone on material that was not equally accessible to all, according to local media. Police reportedly charged at students with lathis, injuring several.[840]

- Local media reported that on April 23, 2021, unidentified assailants threw an IED in a bag towards a police car at Degree College in Shopian district, Jammu and Kashmir. The explosive was later defused, according to reports.[841]
- On June 8, 2021, members of an unidentified armed group threw a hand grenade at a student union office on the Dhanamanjuri University campus in Imphal city, Manipur state, according to *Times of India*. The grenade reportedly exploded but caused no casualties among the students present.[842]
- Local media outlet *The Hindu* reported that on November 8, 2021, Sri Sai Baba National Degree College students peacefully protested the administration's decision to privatize rather than continuing to receive public financial aid, in Anantapur city, Andhra Pradesh state. Police used lathi charges to disperse protesters, injuring three students, one of them female.[843]
- On November 17, 2021, the police detained approximately 150 students from various universities protesting in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu state, against in-person examinations during the Covid-19 pandemic.[844]

IRAQ

Attacks on education persisted in Iraq during the 2020-2021 reporting period in the context of decreased armed conflict but increased protest repression. Attacks on schools involving explosive weapons continued and military use of schools increased, compared to the last reporting period. Police also used excessive force during education-related protests.

Context

Although hostilities subsided compared to previous years, low-level fighting continued in 2020 and 2021 between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant ("ISIL") and the Iraqi armed forces, supported by the US-led international coalition.[845] The Turkish military also carried out air and ground strikes targeting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) (PKK), a non-state armed group active in parts of northern Iraq.[846] In addition, anti-government and anti-corruption protests continued in Baghdad and the Kurdistan region while the parliament approved a new prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, in May 2020.[847] The country held parliamentary elections in October 2021 but had yet to form a new government by the end of the year.[848]

Conflict continued during this reporting period. The International Crisis Group reported that "ISIL" engaged Iraqi forces in Salah al-Din governorate in May 2020, killing ten individuals.[849] "ISIL" claimed responsibility for two bombings in Baghdad in January and July 2021, which killed over 60 and injured at least 160 people in total, according to the UN and media outlets.[850] US and Iraqi forces carried out air and ground operations against "ISIL" during the reporting period.[851] Turkish forces and the PKK also engaged in fighting in northern Iraq, with notable escalations in June 2020, and May and June 2021.[852]

Protests over corruption, public service delivery, low wages, and a growing wealth gap took place in 2020 and 2021 in Baghdad, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and other areas, according to Human Rights Watch and international media.[853] In some cities, civil servants and teachers joined the protests to demand payment of delayed wages.[854] In Sulaymaniyah governorate, the marches grew violent in December 2020, when protesters set fire to government buildings and security forces used teargas and live bullets; six protesters and one security officer were killed in the clashes, with twelve others wounded, as reported by *CNN*.[855]

The UN reported that at the end of 2021, over 1.18 million people remained displaced in Iraq, following conflict in previous years.[856] Iraqi security agencies denied many of the still displaced families, including women and children, the security clearances necessary for the renewal of identity cards and other essential civil documents, due to perceived "ISIL" affiliations, meaning they could not access social services, medical care, or education.[857] *Reuters* reported that many children born in "ISIL"-controlled territories lacked birth certificates, making enrolling them in school impossible.[858] By the end of 2021, the UN reported that 2.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance in Iraq, of which 1.1 million were children.[859]

The government closed schools in late February 2020 to limit the spread of Covid-19, affecting approximately ten million students, many of whom were unable to access remote learning due to power outages and lack of internet connectivity or access to computers.[860] According to the UN, many schools in Iraq were closed for approximately 62 weeks between 2020 and 2021.[861]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at 11 eleven reports of attacks on schools. This number is consistent with *Education under Attack 2020,* when reported attacks also occurred sporadically in 2018 and 2019.[862] During both reporting periods, many of the incidents involved improvised explosive devices (IEDs) installed in or near schools. During elections in both 2018 and 2021, schools used as polling centers were reportedly attacked, to disrupt elections or to target the police guarding the polling center.

In 2020, GCPEA collected approximately five reported incidents of attacks on schools, most involving explosive weapons.[863] For example:

- Local media outlet *Al-Sharq* reported that on January 8, 2020, in al-Atshanah area, Nineveh governorate, an explosive device planted in Qutaiba bin Muslim school exploded. According to the news report, seven students were injured in the blast.[864]
- On May 12, 2020, two IEDs were reportedly detonated near Balen Primary School in Kirkuk city, Kirkuk governorate, according to a local media outlet.[865]
- On October 11, 2020, an unidentified armed group reportedly detonated two sound bombs in the Aisha School for Girls in the Al-Baladiyat area, east of Baghdad; no injuries were reported.[866]
- On December 20, 2020, a grenade was found near a school in Baghdad. According to local media outlet *Shafaq News*, an anti-explosives force removed the explosive device and no injuries occurred.[867]

In 2021, the UN verified one attack on a school.[868] Separately, GCPEA identified approximately six reported attacks on schools from media reports. Many of these attacks reportedly occurred while schools were used as polling centers.[869] For example:

- Local media outlet *Shafaq News* reported that on February 2, 2021, an assailant on a motorcycle shot and injured a police officer guarding a school in Kirkuk city, Kirkuk governorate.[870]
- *Shafaq News* reported that on October 9, 2021, four mortar shells struck near the Tigris School in Zanqar village, Kirkuk governorate, while the school was being used as a polling center. No casualties were reported.[871]
- On October 10, 2021, election day, the police reportedly clashed with members of a tribal mobilization force outside Al-Yaqoubi School, used as a polling center, in Qarah Tabah district, Diyala governate. According to media reports, the mobilization force supported a candidate in the elections.[872]
- That same day, also in Diyala governorate, armed assailants attacked Al-Muhtadi Billah School in Al-Saadiya district, while it was being used as a polling center. *Shafaq News* reported that one soldier guarding the school was killed, and another was injured.[873]

Attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel

In the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least 14 reported incidents of attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel. This number represents a slight increase compared to the last reporting period, when GCPEA identified one and six reported attacks in 2019 and 2018 respectively.[874] In 2020 and 2021, attacks on students, teachers, and staff occurred in both the contexts of conflict violence and protest repression.

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least ten reported attacks on students and education staff, including the repression of several teachers' protests over unpaid salaries.[875] For example:

- On February 2, 2020, teachers reportedly protested in Saraa square, Sulaymaniyah city, Sulaymaniyah governorate, over several months' unpaid salaries. According to local media outlet *Rudaw*, police used teargas to disperse protesters from the area.[876]
- Amnesty International and local media reported that on May 16, 2020, local police and members of the Kurdish security forces, known as Asayish, arrested a teacher without a warrant for using social media to organize protests in Duhok city, Duhok governorate. A long-time education activist and teacher for more than 25 years, the educator had recently been involved in protests against late payments of teachers' salaries.[877]
- On September 26, 2020, an unidentified non-state armed group reportedly shot and killed a school security guard in al-Qahtaniya town, Sinjar district, Nineveh governorate.[878]
- Local and international media outlets reported that on December 3, 2020, police used teargas and arrested approximately 20 teachers during a protest over delayed payments of teachers' salaries in Sulaymaniyah city, Sulaymaniyah governorate.[879]

In 2021, GCPEA collected approximately four reported attacks on school students and staff. For example:

- On January 15, 2021, unidentified assailants reportedly threw a grenade into the yard of a teacher's house in Nasriya city, Thiqar governorate. According to local media outlets including *Al-Nasiriyah*, Explosive Control Directorate officers diffused the grenade.[880]
- Local media outlet *Rudaw* reported that on March 18, 2021, grade 12 students protested the recent reduction of the study period for exams and other education-related grievances in Sulaymaniya city, Sulaymaniyah governorate, including by throwing stones and attempting to break into the Education Directorate building. To disperse the protesters, security forces reportedly fired live ammunition into the air and struck students with the butts of their weapons, injuring one.[881]
- On May 31, 2021, unidentified armed assailants shot and killed a teacher in the Balour area of Al-Muqdadiya district, Diyala governorate, as reported by local media outlet *Shafaq News*.[882]
- On October 27, 2021, local news outlet *NRT* reported that police arrested students at a protest organized against the results of university placement examinations in Soran city, Erbil governorate.[883]

Military use of schools and universities

Between 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified over 33 incidents of military use. This is an increase compared to past years; *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017 to 2019, reported 21 instances of military use in 2017 and approximately four incidents in both 2018 and 2019.[884]

In 2020, the UN verified 27 cases of military use perpetrated by the Iraqi police and army, as well as the Peshmerga, the Kurdish branch of the armed forces.[885] Separately, GCPEA identified one report of military use from a news outlet in 2020:

- Local media outlet *Sotaliraq* reported that around October 4, 2020, the PKK occupied a primary school in Sinjar town, Ninewa governorate, for use as a military headquarters, while community members asked the armed group members to leave.[886]

In 2021, the UN verified the military use of 33 schools.[887] Separately, GCPEA identified one case of military use that year:

- In 2021, the Iraqi police continued to use a kindergarten for military purposes in Diyala governorate, which officers had already occupied for approximately four years.[888]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA received approximately ten reports of attacks on higher education students and personnel. In comparison, GCPEA received three and zero reports of attacks on higher education in 2019 and 2018 respectively.[889]

In 2020, GCPEA collected approximately eight reports of attacks on higher education students and personnel, several of which were targeted killings of university personnel and scholars while others were instances of protest repression.[890] For instance:

- On January 12, 2020, security forces arrested students during a sit-in at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, according to Scholars at Risk and media outlet *Al-Fanar* in Baghdad. Some students were reportedly injured. The students reportedly gathered to protest the government's recent decision to resume university classes, which the students viewed as an effort to curtail their participation in marches against corruption and high unemployment.[891]

- On December 15, 2020, unknown assailants reportedly detonated an explosive device near the house of the president of the University of Maysan in Amarah city, Maysan governorate, causing damage to the house. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research referred to the attack as one of several in a campaign against academics, as reported by Scholars at Risk and local media outlets.[892]
- On December 16, 2020, unidentified assailants reportedly shot and killed a professor at Al-Manara University College in Amarah city, Maysan governorate. According to Scholars at Risk and media outlet *Al Jazeera*, the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights released a statement referring to the incident and a "series of assassinations" targeting academics in the country.[893]

In 2021, GCPEA collected two reports of attacks on higher education:

- On April 4, 2021, security forces reportedly used excessive force when dispersing a student protest over the quality of conditions and services at the Shawkat Sheikh Yazid dormitory in Erbil city, Erbil governorate. According to local media outlet *NRT*, the students blocked the Erbil-Kirkuk road during their protest.[894]
- For several days in late November 2021, security forces fired teargas and rubber bullets and deployed water cannons against students demonstrating at the University of Sulaymaniyah and on main roads in Sulaymaniyah city, Sulaymaniyah governate, injuring at least one student, as reported by *Al Jazeera* and other media outlets.[895] According to *AFP*, police fired warning shots in the air near protesters, on November 23, 2021.[896] The students were reportedly protesting the reduction in financial resources provided in past years by the Kurdistan Regional Government. Demonstrators threw rocks and teargas canisters, and set fires in the city, according to media reports.[897]

KENYA

Attacks on school students and teachers persisted at a similar rate in 2020 and 2021 as compared to the previous two years; in early 2020, the targeted killings of teachers in the northeast led to the closure of hundreds of schools. Police continued to use excessive force during higher education protests.

Context

The decade-long conflict between government military forces and the non-state armed group al-Shabaab continued in northeastern Kenya during the reporting period.[898] Based in Somalia, al-Shabaab carried out cross-border attacks. In January 2020, al-Shabaab attacked a U.S.-Kenyan military base in Lamu county;[899] in November 2021, the armed group reportedly targeted a military vehicle in that same county by detonating an improvised explosive device (IED), which killed one civilian and injured two, including a student.[900] Alleged al-Shabaab members also killed non-local teachers in Garissa county in early 2020, targeting them as outsiders and Christians, according to media reports. As a result, hundreds of schools reportedly closed, thousands of teachers fled, and the government transferred all non-local teachers away from the region.[901] Attacks on teachers and the government's response severely hindered education in the northeast in 2020, according to International Crisis Group and media reports.[902] Between 2014 and mid-2020, more than 40 teachers died in the conflict with al-Shabaab in northeastern Kenya, *The New Humanitarian* reported.[903]

In Baringo and Laikipia counties, insecurity led to the closure of at least ten schools from May to July 2021, preventing approximately 3,000 students from attending classes.[904] In September 2021, a criminal organization, referred to as bandits, burned down a school in Laikipia county.[905]

Kenyan police officers continued to use excessive and extrajudicial force during the reporting period, including shooting and injuring people without identifiable cause when enforcing Covid-19 curfews, according to Human Rights Watch.[906] *The New Humanitarian* reported that police violence had risen in recent years, including violence and sexual abuse against women.[907]

Kenya hosted over half a million refugees in 2020 and 2021 from Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, among other countries, according to the UN.[908] The Ministry of Education recorded 150,000 refugee students in 2020.[909] The UN reported 7.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Kenya in 2021, including 4.8 million children, due to drought, food insecurity, disease outbreak, and the socioeconomic effects of Covid-19.[910]

Beginning in March 2020, the Kenyan government suspended the academic year for pre-primary through secondary public schools, to prevent the spread of Covid-19.[911] According to the Ministry of Education, the country had more than 18 million students at home from over 90,000 closed schools that year.[912] However, some private schools, which made up about a quarter of all schools,[913] still held online classes, as did many universities.[914] Girl students were particularly impacted by the school closures, according to Plan International and media reports; rates of female genital mutilation, forced early marriage, forced pregnancy, and sexual abuse appeared to rise.[915] Schools resumed classes in January 2021, although the media reported that thousands of students were absent in some counties, with girls particularly affected.[916]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected five reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and staff. In *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA similarly identified sporadic reports of attacks on school students and staff, namely one and three reported incidents in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[917] As in past years, media outlets alleged that al-Shabaab members carried out the attacks on students and teachers in the 2020-2021 reporting period.[918]

In 2020, GCPEA identified two reported attacks on school students, teachers, and staff:

- On January 7, 2020, alleged members of al-Shabaab killed four students and one teacher, at Saretho Primary School, in Dadaab town, Garissa county, according to international media outlet *Al Jazeera*.[919] 250 students attended the boarding school where ten teachers taught, nine of whom were non-local. The remaining teachers reportedly fled the region after the attack and the school was closed, as were several others in the area.[920]
- Alleged al-Shabaab members killed three teachers and injured another at Kamuthe primary school, in Kamuthe, Garissa county, on January 13, 2020, according to international media outlet *The Guardian* and local outlet *The Star*.[921] The suspected non-state armed group entered teachers' quarters at the school where they reportedly shot the teachers at close range.[922] Due to targeted violence against teachers, hundreds of schools reportedly closed in the northeast in early 2020 and thousands of teachers reportedly left the area.[923]

In 2021, GCPEA collected three reports of attacks on students, teachers, and staff:

- On March 2, 2021, alleged al-Shabaab members abducted a secondary school student in Shallete village, Wajir county, as reported by local media.[924]
- On August 3, 2021, parents from local primary and secondary schools reportedly protested outside the county commissioner's office in Kinamba town, Laikipia county, over insecurity in the area caused by banditry. Police used teargas to disperse the protesters, according to local media outlet *The Star*.[925]
- Local media reported that on September 10, 2021, primary school teachers, who were refugees from South Sudan, protested about their delayed salaries at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana county. To disperse the demonstration, police officers fired teargas into the crowd and arrested at least two demonstrators, although it was unclear whether educators or students were among those arrested.[926]

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified one report of the military use of a school. *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017-2019, included no reported incidents of military use of educational facilities.[927]

In January 2020, international media outlet *AllAfrica* reported that the Kenyan Navy had erected a fence on the land of neighboring Mweza Primary and Secondary School in Mombasa city, Mombasa county.[928] The school community reportedly protested the construction of the fence designed to encircle Navy base housing, describing it as a land grab and claiming it would affect the playground and several classrooms.[929] Although GCPEA had not identified the incident at the time, the land invasion appeared to first receive news coverage in 2017.[930]

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified approximately ten reported incidents of attacks on higher education during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The rate of attacks on higher education remained similar to previous years, when GCPEA recorded 13 total incidents in 2018 and 2019.[931] As was most often the case in previous years, reported incidents in 2020 and 2021 involved police arresting students or repressing higher education protests.[932]

In 2020, GCPEA collected five reported attacks on higher education:

- On January 12, 2020, students reportedly protested at Egerton University, in Njoro town, Nakuru county, over the administration preventing some students from entering campus without paying fines for university property damage in 2019. Scholars at Risk and local media reported that students threw stones at police officers; police officers reportedly used teargas and fired shots into the air.[933]
- The next day, protests continued at Egerton University with police reportedly continuing to use teargas to disperse students. On January 12 and 13, 2020, local media outlet *The Standard* reported that the police arrested around ten students.[934]
- On March 6, 2020, students protested overcrowding, neglect, and the administration's refusal to allow students who had not yet paid fees to take exams at Sang'alo Technical Institute in Bungoma town, Bungoma county, according to local media. Police reportedly fired teargas into dormitories, injured students using batons, and arrested 40 students.[935]
- On December 2, 2020, police reportedly used teargas on protesting students at Karatina University, in Karatina town, Nyeri county. According to local media outlet *Nation*, students demonstrated against having to pay fees despite studying at home, and their exam schedule, among other grievances. Students reportedly broke windows at the university and vandalized a police car.[936]
- On December 3, 2020, police used teargas to disperse students protesting near the University of Nairobi, in Nairobi, over a government plan to increase tuition fees three-fold in 2021, according to Scholars at Risk.[937]

In 2021, GCPEA identified approximately five reports of attacks on higher education students and staff. For example:

- Local media reported that on May 25, 2021, police fired teargas and arrested five protesting students at the main entrance to Maasai Mara University, in Narok town, Narok county. The students demonstrated against local drivers after a student was reportedly killed in a recent traffic accident.[938]
- On June 21, 2021, police fired teargas at protesting students from the Kenya Water Institute and arrested at least three, in Tharaka town, Nithi county, according to local media outlet *Nation*. The students reportedly demonstrated against admissions fees.[939]
- Local media reported that on July 14, 2021, students from the University of Nairobi demonstrated against an increase in tuition fees. After students blocked local roads, police officers reportedly fired teargas at the demonstrators and arrested three students.[940]
- According to local media source *The Star,* students attending Kisii University demonstrated against high fees and vandalized campus property on October 12, 2021, in Kisii town, Kisii county. To disperse the crowd, police reportedly fired teargas at the students.[941]

LIBYA

Attacks on education persisted in Libya, particularly before the UN-brokered ceasefire agreement in October 2020. Compared with previous years, attacks on schools and universities increased in 2020, while attacks on school students and teachers declined.

Context

After nearly a decade of intermittent conflict in Libya, the United Nations (UN) brokered a ceasefire agreement in October 2020 between the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), supported by armed groups in the west, and the Interim Government, supported by the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), formerly known as the Libyan National Army (LNA), in the east.[942] Foreign governments also provided political support, military equipment, and supported foreign fighters in the conflict; Turkey and Qatar supported the GNA while the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Russia supported the LAAF, according to Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group.[943] The armed conflict in Tripoli and its environs ended in June 2020 after the GNA drove LAAF forces east.[944] Despite the ceasefire in October 2020 and formation of a Government of National Unity in March 2021, low-level violence persisted in several parts of Libya, including Sirte, while local and foreign-backed armed groups remained active in 2021.[945]

Conflict-related violence harmed and killed civilians and damaged civilian objects in 2020.[946] The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) documented more than 485 civilian deaths and injuries between January and June 2020, with civilians living in western Libya most affected.[947] Ground fighting in populated areas was the leading cause of civilian casualties in mid-2020, followed by explosive remnants of war and airstrikes.[948] Human Rights Watch also reported that all sides of the conflict continued to shell indiscriminately in 2020.[949]

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that there were 179,047 internally displaced persons in Libya in November 2021.[950] In addition, the UN reported that the country hosted over 41,404 asylum-seekers and refugees from various countries, including Syria, Eritrea, and Sudan.[951] According to the UN and Human Rights Watch, armed groups arbitrarily detained migrants and refugees and forced them to work.[952] In October 2021, Libyan security forces arrested over 5,000 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.[953]

Fighting in Tripoli closed more than 200 schools in early 2020, many of which were later used to shelter displaced families.[954] In the first half of 2021, 23 schools across the country sheltered displaced persons.[955] Conflict also impacted the provision of health services as well as access to water, forcing families to drink bottled or unsafe water, according to the UN.[956]

In January 2020, the UN reported that nearly 200,000 children in Libya were out of classes due to the proximity of violence and attacks on schools.[957] Two months later, in March 2020, schools closed in both GNA- and LAFF-controlled territories to prevent the spread of Covid-19, disrupting the education of at least 1.3 million children.[958] In January and February 2021, more than two-thirds of schools reopened after several postponements.[959] During closures, many institutions turned to online teaching, including the University of Tripoli.[960] However, conflict-related electrical outages and damage to infrastructure limited students' internet access.[961]

Attacks on Schools

GCPEA identified at least 22 attacks on schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020* included 14 and five reported attacks in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[962] Shelling, crossfire, and explosive weapons attacks affected schools during both reporting periods.[963]

Shelling closed schools during the reporting period. According to the UN, in early 2020, ten schools in Ain Zara, Tripoli, and some schools in Misrata city closed due to hostilities, but reopened around March 4, 2020, affecting more than 127,000 students. In addition, eight schools near Mitiga Airport, in Tripoli, closed due to risk of shelling on March 8, 2020.[964] Shortly thereafter, on March 15, 2020, schools across the country closed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.[965] In addition, the UN reported that, between 2019 and 2021, 700 schools were closed in the West due to their proximity to areas of conflict.[966]

The UN verified 22 attacks on schools in 2020.[967] In the first three months of 2020, UNSMIL recorded eight incidents of crossfire and artillery shelling between LNA- and GNA-affiliated forces affecting schools and one incident of the detonation of an improvised explosive device (IED), which injured three male students and was attributed to LNA-affiliated forces.[968] Between April and June of that same year, UNSMIL documented nine attacks impacting schools, none of which were attributed to a particular conflict actor.[969] Separately, between April 2019, when the LNA's offensive on Tripoli began, and April 2020, the UN documented attacks on 16 schools in the area, affecting over 15,000 students.[970] Since the number of attacks occurring in 2020 compared to 2019 remains unclear, and may overlap with the count from UNSMIL, these attacks are not included in the total number of attacks on schools for the 2020-2021 reporting period.

GCPEA identified nine incidents of attacks on schools in 2020 from media sources, [971] which may have been included in the above UN counts and so were not included in the total number of attacks on schools. Most attack reports were concentrated in and around Tripoli. For instance:

- On January 28, 2020, shells reportedly landed near Rajab Al-Naeb School in Al-Hadba Al-Badri, Tripoli, killing three children and injuring others, aged between nine and 12, while on their way to school, as reported in local media.[972]
- A backpack containing a bomb was reportedly detonated in a school in al-Zawiya city, Zawiya district, on February 10, 2020, according to local media outlets. Three students reportedly sustained minor injuries in the blast.[973]
- A rocket hit the Nour Al-Maaref School in Tripoli's Al-Akwakh neighborhood on February 29, 2020, as reported by a local media outlet. No casualties were reported.[974]
- On March 9, 2020, two shells reportedly stuck the playground of Al-Fida School in Abu Salim, Tripoli. According to local media outlet *Libya Observer*, the school was closed at the time, since it was in the line of fire, and no casualties were reported.[975]
- In late March 2020, a local media outlet reported that three shells struck at Al-Ghazali School in Qasr Bin Ghashir, Tripoli district.[976]
- On April 17, 2020, shells reportedly struck at Bir Diab School in Qasr Bin Ghashir, in Tripoli district, according to a local media outlet.[977]

In 2021, GCPEA identified one report of an attack on a school. In June, unidentified assailants engaged in crossfire near a school in Al-Ajeilat municipality, Zwara city, Nuqat al Khams district, injuring two students.[978]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified one reported attack on school students. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017-2019, included eight reported attacks on school students and personnel, several occurring in 2017 and 2018 with none in 2019.[979]

UNSMIL and local media reported that on December 2, 2020, one 16-year-old boy was killed, and two other students were injured, while leaving a school in Al Ajaylat city, Nuqat al Khams district.[980]

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, military use of schools occurred sporadically. This trend is similar to previous years; GCPEA identified one or two reports per year in *Education under Attack 2020*.[981]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least two reports of military use:

- In November 2020, *All Africa* news outlet reported that armed groups near Tripoli used schools to store weapons and as observation posts.[982]
- Around the same time, the government army reported the presence of Russian private security forces in a primary school in Sirte city, Sirte district, according to *Anadolu News Agency*.[983]

GCPEA did not identify any incidents of military use in 2021.

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately eight reported attacks on higher education. This represents an increase compared to previous years, when GCPEA gathered one and two reports of attacks on higher education in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[984] As in the last reporting period, attacks involved reported abductions of university staff and indiscriminate shelling near higher education buildings.

In 2020, GCPEA collected approximately seven reports of attacks on higher education personnel and facilities.[985] For example:

- On January 26, 2020, the police department's explosive ordinance disposal unit reportedly located and defused an explosive device planted by an alleged armed group at Sirte University, in Sirte city and district, according to local media.[986]
- On March 10, 2020, unidentified assailants allegedly entered a council meeting at Almargeb University in Al-Khums city, Murqub district, to abduct a member of the university council, who they later killed, as reported by local media.[987]
- On April 22, 2020, shells reportedly struck near the back gate to Al-Fatah University in Al-Fernaj, Tripoli, according to a local media report.[988]
- *Al Jazeera* and other outlets reported that shells fell on a University of Tripoli dormitory in Al-Fernaj, Tripoli, where displaced persons were staying, on May 16, 2020, killing at least six civilians.[989]

On July 3, 2021, members of a militia entered a university in Ejeilat city, Nuqat al Khams district, indiscriminately fired, and abducted one student from the Faculty of Arts building, according to local media outlet *Libya Review*.[990]

MALI

Reported attacks on schools and school personnel increased during the 2020-2021 period in north and central Mali, and also spread to southern regions. GCPEA identified over 620 threatened or actual attacks on schools or educators during the reporting period, which peaked in June 2020, when armed groups reportedly threatened or attacked over 500 teachers and schools.

Context

Fighting between armed groups, self-defense groups, state security forces, and international forces increased during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reported that in 2020, Mali experienced the highest number of civilian fatalities as a result of fighting since casualty recording of the conflict began,[991] and hostilities intensified again in the first half of 2021.[992] In August 2020, a coup ousted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta;[993] nine months later, a second coup deposed an interim civilian-military government.[994] In late 2021, the transitional government announced further delays to elections that had been scheduled for February 2022, resulting in sanctions from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).[995]

In central Mali, International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that fighting between Fulani armed groups and Dogon self-defense groups, such as Dana Ambassagou, escalated through mid-2020.[996] Human Rights Watch reported that at least 400 people were killed during violence between Dogon and Fulani groups in 2020.[997] Also in 2020, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) reported that armed groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Eddine, Katiba Macina, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), and similar groups, attacked Malian security forces and civilians, and sometimes battled each other, in the north, center, and south of the country, including at the borders with Burkina Faso and Niger.[998] Flare-ups of such fighting continued in 2021 and spread to areas of southern Mali, according to the UN and ACLED.[999]

Civilians suffered the worst effects of conflict, further compounded by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. In late 2021, the UN reported that over 400,000 Malians were internally displaced and another 46,000 were refugees.[1000] In addition, the UN identified over 7.1 million Malians, including 3.9 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021.[1001]

Direct attacks on education and general insecurity severely impacted education during the reporting period. School closures due to insecurity rose in 2020 and 2021, and also began in areas of central and southern Mali,[1002] where almost 300 schools were affected by attacks and insecurity.[1003] At the end of August 2021, the UN reported over 1,664 schools closed in Mali due to insecurity, affecting 499,200 children,[1004] an increase from November 2020.[1005] During the reporting period, the regions most affected by school closures were Mopti region, where 44 percent of schools were non-operational as at August 2021, Ménaka, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu.[1006] In most regions affected by fighting, the majority of school closures were caused by attacks or direct threats from armed groups, according to the Education Cluster.[1007] The UN reported that some schools in Timbuktu region reopened in the first half of 2021, following an agreement with a JNIM-affiliated armed group.[1008]

Between March and June 2020, the government closed all educational institutions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting 3.8 million children[1009] and prolonged reopening until January 2021.[1010] Several teachers' unions went on strike in June and August 2020, to demand better pay and heightened measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in schools.[1011]

Attacks on schools

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified over 620 reported incidents of actual or threatened attacks on schools in Mali. This signified an increase in attacks on schools compared to 2019 when the UN verified in 55 attacks on schools and education personnel in Mali, [1012] and 2018 when the UN verified 81 attacks on schools.[1013] This increase may also reflect improved reporting on attacks on education, particularly on threats made against schools.

In 2020, the UN verified 36 attacks on schools.[1014] In addition, in June 2020, the Mali Education Cluster received 516 reports of attacks on schools by armed groups, including 489 threats against schools, 11 schools burned, 2 school administrative offices burned, two incidents of looting, and 12 other attacks.[1015] Of these 489 threats, 415 took place in Mopti region. The attacks took place after the government reopened schools for exams following Covid-19 closures. GCPEA was unable to confirm how many of the threats targeted teachers, or whether any of these incidents were verified.

Also in 2020, GCPEA collected eight reported incidents of attacks on schools from media sources and international organizations, which included seven alleged arson attacks.[1016] These reports may have been included in the above reporting from the Mali Education Cluster and UN. For example:

- Local media *Studio Tamani* reported that on February 12, 2020, unidentified armed men raided Tinhama village, in Ansongo district, at 11:40am. Local sources informed *Studio Tamani* that the armed group burned administrative documents from the school, as well as other public structures.[1017]
- *Studio Tamani* reported that on or around July 29, 2020, unknown militants set off explosive devices in Tonou village, Koro district, Mopti region, destroying a school.[1018]
- On November 17, 2020, 22 members of an armed group raided Sokoura village, Bankass district, Mopti region, and set fire to the administrative offices of the secondary school, according to the Mali Protection Cluster and ACLED.[1019]

In 2021, GCPEA identified over 110 attacks on schools in Mali from NGO and UN sources.[1020] Mopti, Sikasso, Timbuktu, Ménaka, and Kidal regions were particularly affected by threats to schools by armed groups in 2021, according to both Protection and Education Cluster reports.[1021] According to the Education Cluster, many of these threats led to school closures affecting thousands of students. The Mali Education Cluster reported 55 threats to schools in April 2021, the majority of which occurred in Sikasso.[1022] Furthermore, the UN verified 20 attacks on schools between April and June in Mopti and Timbuktu regions,[1023] and another 26 attacks on schools nationwide between October and December 2021.[1024] In addition, GCPEA collated 33 incident reports from ACLED, media, NGO, and other sources in 2021, although it is unknown whether some of these are included in the UN or Cluster counts[1025] Examples of attacks on schools included:

- On or around January 20, 2021, the Mali Protection Cluster, the Mali Education Cluster, and ACLED reported that unidentified armed individuals looted school canteens and destroyed school materials in three schools in Sodon, Dindan, and Siratintin villages, Bankass district, Mopti region.[1026]
- In March 2021, the Mali Education Cluster reported that unidentified armed individuals threatened three schools (Kony, Djassa, and Bouna) in Nongon-Souala commune, Sikasso region. The schools subsequently closed.[1027]
- The Mali Education Cluster and ACLED reported that on or around May 3, 2021, armed groups burned a school in Gossi village, Goruma-Rharous, Timbuktu region, allegedly ordering local officials to close all schools in the surrounding area.[1028]
- Local media *Studio* Tamani reported that on June 9, 2021, unidentified armed individuals attacked a school and burned materials in Zon village, Koro, Mopti region.[1029]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 18 incidents of attacks on teachers and school personnel in Mali from media and international organizations. In addition, some of the reported and verified attacks on schools from the UN and Mali Education Cluster may have included attacks against teachers or other education personnel. The rates of incident reports on this violation increased slightly as compared earlier years: GCPEA identified at least three of such attacks in 2019 and four in 2018.[1030] Also in 2018, the UN verified that at least 40 schools closed after armed groups directly threatened teachers.[1031]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least eight reported incidents of armed groups attacking school teachers or other education personnel.[1032] Attacks took the form of threats, kidnappings, and assassinations. In some cases, attacks against teachers took place alongside attacks on school buildings. These attacks typically aimed to prevent teachers from continuing their work or targeted prominent community members. For example:

- *MaliJet* reported that on February 6, 2020, armed assailants entered Ouatagouna village, Ansongo district, Gao region, and killed the Treasurer of the School Management Committee, who also held the position of adviser to the village chief, along with the Secondary School's director.[1033]
- *Studio Tamani* reported that members of an unidentified armed group attacked a teacher in Alwalidji village, Diré district, Timbuktu region, on August 2, 2020. The gunmen allegedly shot the teacher in the leg and stole his motorbike. The report did not specify the teacher's location at the time of the attack.[1034]
- On November 16, 2020, unidentified armed men threatened teachers and burned two schools in Ménaka city and region, according to the Protection Cluster.[1035]

In addition, GCPEA identified one reported incident in which state security forces used excessive force against teachers. According to local media sources, on March 11, 2020, teachers reportedly demonstrated in Bamako after negotiations between unions and authorities stalled. The teachers then marched toward the prime ministry calling for the resignation of prime minister. Police reportedly fired teargas at the protestors, who threw stones at the police, resulting in injuries in both groups.[1036]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least nine reports of attacks on school teachers from the Protection Cluster, media sources, the UN, and ACLED.[1037] In several incidents, armed groups attacked teachers or stole their personal items after attacking or threatening a school. There were also incidents of striking teachers being arrested. For example:

- The UN verified that on April 23, 2021, armed fighters entered Tongorongo village, Socoura commune, Mopti region, where they threatened teachers, ordered them to close the school and stole their motorcycles and telephones.[1038]
- On April 27, 2021, members of an unknown armed group entered a school in Konna, Mopti region, and threatened teachers to close the school, after which they stole the teachers' telephones and other valuable personal affects, according to the Protection Cluster.[1039]
- On August 9, 2021, amid widespread teacher strikes, teachers demonstrating in Sikasso clashed with police who fired teargas and arrested twelve teachers.[1040]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA collected four UN-verified cases of military use in Mali during the 2020-2021 reporting period. By comparison, the UN verified eight schools used for military purposes in 2019[1041] and one in 2018.[1042] In 2018 and 2019, both state armed forces and non-state armed groups were responsible for the use of schools.

In 2020, the UN verified the use of four schools by unidentified armed groups and Dozo hunters in Mopti region.[1043]

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

GCPEA collected anecdotal evidence that actual or threatened child recruitment at, or en route to or from schools, occurred in Mali. For example, a multisectoral needs assessment of IDPs in Timbuktu revealed that some displaced parents did not send their children to school due to fears of child recruitment. These fears were reportedly based on prior experiences in their place of origin.[1044] This indicates that child recruitment by armed forces or groups may occur in, or near, school settings in conflict-affected areas.

MOZAMBIQUE

In Cabo Delgado province, over 100 educational facilities were damaged or destroyed due to armed conflict during the reporting period. In addition, GCPEA identified sporadic reports of attacks on school teachers in Cabo Delgado province. In Manica and Sofala provinces, an armed opposition group threatened or attacked schools and schoolteachers in 2020.

Context

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, armed conflict escalated in Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province, and continued in central Manica and Sofala provinces, where armed groups attacked civilians and engaged in hostilities with state armed forces, police, and private security contractors.[1045]

A non-state armed group, known locally as "Al-Shabab"[1046] or Al-Sunna wa Jama'a (ASWJ), which was reportedly affiliated with Islamic State (IS), began attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure in Cabo Delgado province in 2017 and increased its activity in 2019 and 2020, according to the UN and other international organizations.[1047] In 2020, Cabo Delgado experienced its deadliest year of conflict, with 1,600 fatalities, three times more than in 2019, according to ACLED.[1048] "Al-Shabab" violently captured the town of Mocímboa da Praia in August 2020; the government regained control of the town one year later.[1049] Human Rights Watch reported in 2021 that the armed group had abducted and used hundreds of women and children, using boys[1050] and sexually abusing or enslaving girls.[1051] Amnesty International reported that in efforts to combat insurgents, Mozambican security forces harassed, tortured, or killed civilians accused of cooperating with the non-state armed group, and that a government-contracted security company conducted aerial attacks which affected civilians.[1052]

In 2021, the UN reported that more than 744,900 people were internally displaced in Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala and Zambezia provinces due to insecurity,[1053] and that 1.6 million people required humanitarian assistance, around half of whom were children.[1054] Mozambique continued to experience extreme weather events which further compounded the humanitarian situation.[1055]

In addition, the Renamo Military Junta, a splinter group from the Renamo armed opposition group, continued to perpetrate attacks on civilians in 2020, despite a peace agreement between the government and Renamo in 2019, according to Human Rights Watch and international media.[1056] The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported that, at the end of 2020, the Renamo Military Junta had closed its bases in Sofala and that the leader had announced a ceasefire.[1057]

In 2021 alone, the government reported that over 120,000 students had been affected by violence in Cabo Delgado province.[1058] In March 2021, education authorities in Cabo Delgado announced that, as a result of violent attacks, 214 schools were non-operational and would remain closed during the academic year.[1059] In October 2020, school closures due to armed violence reportedly affected around 5,000 students and 131 teachers in Manica province.[1060] In addition to conflict, education in northern and central Mozambique was affected by both Covid-19 and natural disasters during the reporting period. The government closed schools in March 2020 due to the pandemic; schools reopened in March 2021.[1061]

Mozambique was not profiled in *Education under Attack 2020* so no comparison can be made with previous reporting periods.

Attacks on schools

In the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified reports of over 100 incidents in which schools were damaged or destroyed in Mozambique, primarily in Cabo Delgado province. GCPEA identified two reported incidents of attack on schools in Cabo Delgado in 2019[1062] and one incident in 2018.[1063]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least 19 reported incidents of attacks on schools.[1064] In addition, in 2020, the government began reporting data on the number of schools damaged and destroyed since the beginning of the conflict; in February 2020, the governor of Cabo Delgado province reported that 76 schools had been destroyed, affecting 16,760 students and 285 teachers,[1065] although GCPEA could not determine how many of these incidents occurred in 2020. In most incidents of attacks on schools identified by GCPEA, attackers either alleged or verified to be part of the "Al-Shabab" armed group set fire to schools. Furthermore, Amnesty International reported in February 2021 that private security forces, working for the Mozambican government and using armed helicopters, had indiscriminately attacked civilian infrastructure between March and June 2020, including schools and hospitals, according to interviews conducted on the ground.[1066] Examples of reported attacks included:

- On January 29, 2020, gunmen allegedly burned four schools, including the Agrarian Institute of Bilibiza, in Bilibiza, Quissanga district, Cabo Delgado province, according to *Club of Mozambique*, *Reuters,* and *Deutsche Welle*.[1067] While 11 students and seven teachers were present at the Agrarian Institute at the time of attack, none were harmed. The Institute, which served 400 students, was run by the Agha Khan Foundation and was the only technical high school in Cabo Delgado.[1068]
- Amnesty International reported that on March 25, 2020, an armed group attacked Quissanga city, Quissanga district, Cabo Delgado province. The group burned a school, along with at least 386 other structures.[1069]
- Amnesty International and *All Africa* media reported that an armed group attacked Macomia town, Macomia district, Cabo Delgado province, on May 28, 2020. *All Africa* reported that the primary and technical schools were burned down, and an eyewitness informed Amnesty International that an unspecified number of schools were destroyed, and that all schools in the town were closed due to Covid-19 and the conflict.[1070]
- *Club of Mozambique* reported that on June 27, 2020, a school was burned during armed clashes in Mocimboa da Praia, Cabo Delgado province.[1071] Amnesty International also reported that an armed group attacked Mocimboa da Praia on June 27, 2020, and targeted government infrastructure.[1072]

According to UN reporting, at least 220 schools were attacked in Cabo Delgado by early 2021, although it remained unclear whether all these attacks occurred in the reporting period.[1073] Similarly, the Cabo Delgado Provincial Department of Education reported in March 2021 that 46 schools, or a total of 104 classrooms, had been destroyed due to attacks.[1074] Later, in April 2021, the government, as cited in local media, reported that 375 schools had been destroyed due to conflict.[1075] As these reports may have contained incidents from earlier reporting periods or could have included other types of damage during conflict such as being used as IDP shelter, they were not included in the total number of attacks. Given the escalation of conflict in 2020, however, it is likely that many attacks took place during the reporting period.

In addition, in Manica and Sofala provinces, *Deutsche Welle* reported that in January 2020, a member of the Renamo Military Junta threatened to attack the education system when students resumed school after vacation in February 2020. The militia member made the threat in retaliation against government forces, claiming that Mozambique Defence and Security Forces had abducted his family in December 2019.[1076]

GCPEA did not identify any incident reports of attacks on schools in 2021.

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020-2021, GCPEA identified occasional attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, in both Sofala and Cabo Delgado provinces. In some instances, armed groups attacked teachers because of their association with the government.[1077]

In 2020, Mozambique's National Teachers' Organization reported that more than 750 teachers from primary and secondary schools in Cabo Delgado province had fled from their posts to Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado, to avoid attacks by armed groups.[1078] The organization did not state whether the teachers had received direct threats or were fleeing general insecurity. Education authorities in the province of Cabo Delgado reported in

March 2021 that seven teachers had been killed[1079] and, as of June 2021, 2,074 had been displaced as a result of terrorist attacks since the conflict began,[1080] likely due to generalized violence.

In 2020, GCPEA collected two incidents of attacks on teachers:

- *Moçambique Media Online* reported that on June 14, 2020, the body of the director of Marrongamissi II Primary School was found in Chizizira town, Búzi district, Sofala province. The report claimed that the Renamo Military Junta had abducted the teacher in May 2020.[1081]
- Local media sources reported that on either October 31 or November 1, 2020, members of a non-state armed group killed a school teacher in Muidumbe district. The teacher had recently escaped a surge of violence in the area, according to the reports. The article also noted that the Matambalale Primary school where he worked had been attacked on an unspecified date.[1082]

In 2021, GCPEA identified anecdotal evidence that teachers had received threats of violence in Cabo Delgado. For example, in July 2021, displaced teachers from Macomia district, Cabo Delgado province, voiced concerns about their safety and protested against government orders to return to school. Teachers told *Deutsche Welle* that they could not work effectively while "living in fear of being beheaded" and that they would be exposed like "shields of war."[1083] The Ministry of Education reported that eight teachers had been killed in Cabo Delgado province within the context of armed conflict in 2021, although GCPEA was unable to verify whether these deaths were in relation to their status as educators.[1084]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified sporadic reports of attacks on higher education. General insecurity in Cabo Delgado province limited the academic activities of higher education students and staff during the reporting period according to *World University News* in October 2020, although armed groups reportedly had not targeted university students and academics at the time of writing.[1085]

In 2020, GCPEA received a report that a teacher training college in Bilibiza, Quissanga district, Cabo Delgado province, was attacked on January 29, 2020.[1086] According to *Reuters*, an armed group torched the college's building, but no students or staff were harmed.[1087]

At the time of writing GCPEA had not identified any attacks on higher education in 2021.

MYANMAR

Attacks on schools and universities, as well as the military use of educational facilities, significantly increased during the reporting period, in particular following a military coup in February 2021. In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified reports of over 200 attacks on schools by state armed forces and non-state armed groups, as well as over 220 cases of military use of education facilities.

Context

Political violence and insecurity increased in Myanmar during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Myanmar's military (Tatmadaw) overthrew the civilian government on February 1, 2021 and declared a yearlong state of emergency,[1088] which was later extended for an additional six months.[1089] In response, millions of people in Myanmar participated in anti-coup protests and general strikes, known as the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM).[1090] According to Human Rights Watch, security forces used excessive and lethal force to disperse demonstrations, killing over 900 protesters, including at least 75 children, and arrested several thousand people between February and July 2021.[1091] Teachers, students and university faculty who actively participated in the CDM were particularly targeted.[1092] Human Rights Watch documented widespread and systematic abuses, including murder, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and other sexual violence, and severe deprivation of liberty.[1093]

Political upheaval also affected the dynamics of ongoing conflicts between the Tatmadaw and non-state armed groups, some of which had significantly reduced in late 2020.[1094] In 2021, ACLED found that, following the coup, certain groups, such as the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Kachin Independence Army (KIA), supported anti-coup protesters and escalated their activities, whereas violence between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine state remained low.[1095] The Tatmadaw also reportedly increased their attacks on civilians, while unidentified armed groups and local self-defense groups perpetrated attacks including bombings and targeted killings of civil servants working for the junta.[1096]

Conflict and political violence further constrained the humanitarian situation. Between February 1 and December 1, 2021, the number of people internally displaced in Myanmar nearly doubled, to 666,000, and another 25,000 people sought asylum in neighboring countries, according to the UN.[1097] In December 2021, the UN reported that 14.4 million people, including 5 million children, were in need of humanitarian aid, an increase of more than 12 million since February 1, 2021.[1098] The military junta's restrictions on movement and aid access compounded the existing humanitarian needs.[1099]

Both the Covid-19 pandemic and violence hindered children's access to education in Myanmar throughout 2020 and 2021. School closures due to Covid-19 containment measures affected 12 million school-aged children from March 2020[1100] through May 2021.[1101] However, only a quarter of school-aged children reportedly returned to school in June 2021, due to insecurity, attacks on schools, and the dismissal of teachers.[1102] By late May 2021, the military had suspended around 19,500 university professors and staff and over 125,000 school teachers, according to the Myanmar Teachers Federation (MTF).[1103] The MTF also reported that as many as 90 percent of parents and students had boycotted education ahead of re-openings in June 2021.[1104] The boycott provoked violence and threats against both boycotting teachers and teachers who returned to work.[1105]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 200 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Myanmar. This represented a sharp increase as compared to the previous reporting period. In 2019, the UN verified twelve attacks on schools and five attacks on schools in 2018.[1106] While attacks continued to occur conflict-affected areas of the country and were often attributed to state security forces, the reporting period saw a spread of violence to previously unaffected areas including Mandalay and Yangon regions.

In 2020, the UN verified 10 attacks on schools in Myanmar which were attributed to the Tatmadaw and uniden-

tified perpetrators;[1107] the UN also reported that artillery shelling had damaged some schools.[1108] In addition, GCPEA collected at least six reported incidents of attacks on schools in Rakhine, Kayin, and Chin states from the UN, local and international media, and non-governmental organizations.[1109] Attacks consisted of threats, arson, airstrikes, and shelling. Examples included:

- The UN and media sources reported that on February 13, 2020, an artillery shell struck the Basic Education Post-Primary School in Kha Mhwe Chaung village, Buthidaung township, Rakhine state. The blast injured around 20 school children, some of whom were reportedly playing in the school yard at the time of the attack.[1110]
- An eyewitness reported to Amnesty International that on March 29, 2020, Tatmadaw soldiers burned a school building and ten houses in a village in Minbya township, Rakhine state.[1111]
- On May 16, 2020, an unidentified armed party burnt down a middle school and around 200 houses, in Let Kar village in Mrauk-U township, Rakhine state, according to Human Rights Watch and *Radio Free Asia*. The military accused the Arakan Army (AA) of perpetrating the attack, whereas villagers reported that the Tatmadaw had attacked the village.[1112]

In 2021, GCPEA collated at least 190 reported incidents of attacks on schools from local and international media and NGOs,[1113] an increase of 1,800 percent as compared to the previous year. At least 160 of these incidents involved the reported use of explosives.[1114] Similarly, between February 1 and September 22, 2021, the UN reported at least 192 attacks on both schools and school personnel; however, GCPEPA could not determine how many were attacks on schools and whether any of the UN's count overlapped with GCPEA's.[1115] Around half of the attacks in 2021 occurred in May, the majority of which involved explosive weapons used by unknown armed groups and which caused numerous injuries as well as damage to education facilities, according to GCPEA and Save the Children.[1116] The State Administration Council in Myanmar reported that 444 schools were allegedly damaged or destroyed between February 1 and November 15, 2021, although this was unverified.[1117] While parties to the conflict rarely claimed responsibility for attacks, armed groups often pointed to the Tatmadaw or pro-junta militias, while the Tatmadaw frequently accused non-state armed groups of perpetrating attacks on schools.[1118] While attacks largely consisted of improvised explosive devices, GCPEA also identified reports of arson, shelling, and airstrikes. Following the February 2021 coup, GCPEA identified reports of attacks on schools in states and regions previously less affected by conflict, such as Mandalay, Magway, Mon, Sagaing, and Yangon.

Examples included:

- International media and local media and civil society reported that on March 9, 2021, armed forces raided a vocational school in Shwepyithar township, Yangon, and looted equipment and motorcycles from the building. The director and three trainees were reportedly arrested. According to his family, the director died the same day and had signs of torture on his body.[1119]
- Save the Children reported that airstrikes hit a school in the south-eastern state of Kayin on or around March 27, 2021, destroying the building which was empty at the time of the attack.[1120]
- On June 2, 2021, airstrikes allegedly conducted by the Tatmadaw struck a school in Da Lu village, Tanai township, Kachin state, according to media sources.[1121]
- Local media sources reported that on June 2, 2021, a bomb exploded at a high school in Ta Loke Htaw village, Twantay district, Yangon.[1122]
- On June 22, 2021, a bomb exploded under a table in a high school in Moemauk, Bhamo district, Kachin state, according to local media sources. The explosion injured a teacher, a school guard, and the guard's son.[1123]
- Local media reported that on December 13, 2021, the Myanmar army fired shells at Ke Bar village, Sagaing region, and then set fire to more than 100 houses as well as destroying a school.[1124]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 12 reported attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in Myanmar. In the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA identified occasional reports of such attacks, with only one incident in each 2018 and 2019, along with anecdotal evidence of shelling affecting students on the way to and from school.[1125]

In 2020, GCPEA collected two reports of attacks on school students and teachers, both of which involved explosive weapons:

- Local media sources reported that on January 7, 2020, an explosion killed or injured around 10 school children and one teacher near Htate Htoo Pauk village Buthidaung township, Rakhine state. The children, aged eight to ten, were gathering firewood.[1126]
- On September 8, 2020, artillery shelling hit two seven-year-old children and a teacher in Nyaung Kan village, Myebon Township, Rakhine state, according to a local media report. The two children were on their way to school at the time of the attack, whereas the teacher's location was not reported.[1127]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least ten reported incidents of attack on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.[1128] While many school students and teachers were affected by the military's crackdown on participants of the CDM, students and teachers appeared to be targeted for their political activity and were not targeted at or on the way to or from school. Some examples included:

- On June 7, 2021, Boarder Guard Forces allegedly threatened to prosecute students and their families if they did not to attend school in Wepyan village, Hpa-an district, Kayin state.[1129] According to the media report, some families in the village had not yet sent children back to school.
- On June 16, 2021, a deputy education officer was allegedly shot and killed in front of a high school in Thanlyin-Kyauktan township, Yangon region, by unknown perpetrators.[1130]
- On November 5, 2021, a female high school teacher was reportedly shot and killed in a taxi while on her way to work in North Okkalapa township, Yangon region; an armed group claimed responsibility for the attack.[1131]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified over 220 cases of military use during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The military use of schools and universities increased sharply in 2021 as compared to earlier years. By comparison, the UN verified in 51 cases of military use of schools in 2019 and reported 30 cases in 2018.[1132]

In 2020, the UN verified 30 cases of military use in Myanmar.[1133] In the same year, GCPEA collected six reports of military use of schools as bases or detention centers in Rakhine state from media and human rights organizations, some of which may have been included in UN tallies.[1134] example:

- A local human rights monitor reported that on January 4, 2020, Tatmadaw forces used a school in a village in Ann township, Rakhine state, to detain a woman and her son. The troops, who reportedly accused her husband of storing weapons for AA, allegedly tortured the detained woman.[1135]
- *Radio Free Asia* received eyewitness reports that on March 13, 2020, Tatmadaw soldiers instructed residents of Tin Ma Thit village, Kyauktaw township, Rakhine state, to gather at the village's school where they proceeded to arrest eight residents and transported them to an unknown location.[1136]
- *Radio Free Asia* reported that around May 5, 2020, Tatmadaw soldiers placed heavy weapons in front of the primary school in Min village, Minbya township, Rakhine state, and allegedly launched an operation. The report also claimed that the soldiers used the school and houses around it as temporary lodging.[1137]

In 2021, the military use of both schools and universities sharply increased and spread to new areas of the country, as a part of the military's response to the CDM. Between February and September 2021, the UN reported that

176 education facilities had been used for military purposes.[1138] The UN had also received information that security forces had injured teachers in at least one school while taking over the building.[1139] In addition, GCPEA identified over 80 reported incidents of the military use of schools and universities in 2021 from NGO and media sources.[1140] These reports described the military occupation of schools in eleven states and regions, including Yangon and Mandalay, beginning in March 2021. It was unclear if these incidents overlapped with the number of incidents reported by the UN. According to media sources, the Tatmadaw occupied several schools, universities, and other public buildings on March 7, 2021, as part a coordinated military act.[1141] Reports often described community and student resistance to the use of education buildings. Examples included:

- On March 7, 2021, soldiers forcibly entered Mandalay Technical University in Mandalay city and shot teargas and rubber bullets to vacate students and staff from the campus, according to Scholars at Risk and local media. The report also mentioned that soldiers intended to halt anti-coup protest activities.[1142] Media sources reported on March 8, 2021, that security forces had occupied all universities in Mandalay city;[1143] at least seven universities operated in Mandalay in 2021.[1144]
- Local media reported that on March 9, 2021, in Dawei township, Dawei district, Tanintharyi region, state security forces occupied Dawei Computer University, Dawei Technological University, and Dawei University as base camps, along with a hospital and other civilian buildings. The military allegedly fired gunshots at local residents who opposed the occupations.[1145]
- Media sources reported that on March 17, 2021, Tatmadaw soldiers stayed in an unspecified number of schools and monasteries in villages in Pekon township, Taunggyi district, Shan state, at the border of Shan and Kayah states. Media reported that that military arrested 20 villagers who protested the use of the civilian buildings, later releasing 18.[1146]
- On April 9, 2021, Tatmadaw conducted a violent crackdown on anti-coup protesters in Bago city, killing more than 80 people, according to media sources,[1147] after which they reportedly stacked dead bodies in a school compound.[1148]
- The *BBC* and local media reported that on December 23, 2021, in Natchaung village, Sagaing region, soldiers stationed in the village school carried out a military operation. Local media reported that an armed resistance group attacked the school and that around 100 soldiers were stationed inside.[1149]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected over 20 reports of attacks on higher education students, staff, and facilities, most which occurred in 2021. Some of these attacks occurred as Tatmadaw took over university campuses. Attacks on higher education appeared to increase as compared to earlier years. GCPEA collected around four incidents of attacks on higher education students in 2018 and 2019 combined.[1150]

In 2020, GCPEA collected one reported attack on higher education. On September 27, 2020, police reportedly arrested several students inside a student union office on campus at Pakokku University, Magway Region. The students had reportedly participated in peaceful protests.[1151]

In 2021, GCPEA identified eight reported attacks on higher education students and staff,[1152] along with 12 reported attacks on university facilities.[1153] After the military coup in 2021, armed forces began a violent crackdown against dissidents that included the targeting of student leaders and the storming and occupation of universities, amongst other public buildings (See above).[1154] These attacks appeared to escalate in March 2021. Examples included:

- Scholars at Risk and local media reported that on February 14, 2021, 20 soldiers raided Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University in Meiktila city, Mandalay region. Over the course of 30 minutes, the soldiers allegedly threatened students and staff to comply with military orders.[1155]
- Scholars at Risk and media sources reported that security forces wearing civilian attire arrested a faculty member of University of Yangon, in Yangon city, on March 2, 2021. The arrest allegedly occurred at the campus gates where students and staff had met to protest; police also used force to disperse the remaining protesters.[1156]
- On March 7, 2021, students gathered to protest the occupation of Yenangyaung University by military forces, in Yenangyaung, Magway region, according to *Radio Free Asia*. Police allegedly used force, fired teargas, and shot rubber bullets, injuring at least two students; four students were also reportedly arrested.[1157]
- On May 14, 2021, a bomb exploded at Taunggyi Technological University in Taungyii town, Shan state, according to local media reports. Students were allegedly in class at the time of the explosion; reports identified that one civilian was injured and another was killed but did not specify their status as students or personnel.[1158] A local people's defense group had allegedly taken responsibility for the attack, according to media sources.[1159]

NIGER

Attacks on education and military use in Niger continued in the 2020-2021 period, particularly in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. Various non-state armed groups reportedly threatened schools and teachers, and burned and looted schools in over 60 incidents. Diffa region experienced sporadic attacks during the reporting period.

Context

The security situation deteriorated in Niger during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Nigerien Armed Forces confronted armed groups in the western Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, as well as in the eastern Diffa region, and faced growing insecurity in the southeastern Maradi region, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).[1160]

The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and other IS affiliates, armed groups affiliated with Al Qaeda, Boko Haram affiliated or splinter groups, self-defense groups, and Niger's military fought each other and attacked civilians during the reporting period.[1161] Violence increased in 2021, when ACLED recorded the highest number of civilian fatalities since it began collecting data in Niger.[1162] Following run-off presidential elections in February 2021,[1163] Mohamed Bazoum of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism was elected and peacefully took power.[1164]

In Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, ISGS, which the International Crisis Group called Niger's "most potent security threat," increased its activity in 2020 and 2021.[1165] Human Rights Watch documented that armed groups, in particular IS affiliates, killed 420 people in 2021.[1166] In addition, the military was implicated in violence against civilians, including forcibly disappearing at least 115 men during a security operation in Tillabéri region in March and April 2020, according to Amnesty International.[1167]

During the reporting period, violence perpetrated by Boko Haram and affiliated or splinter groups continued to affect civilians in Diffa region.[1168] On December 12, 2020, Niger also experienced one of its most deadly attacks by Boko Haram, in Toumour village, Diffa region.[1169] The attack killed at least 28 civilians and injured 100 others and led to the destruction of at least 800 homes.[1170]

Niger's humanitarian situation further deteriorated during the reporting period, due to climatic shocks, Covid-19, and conflict.[1171] In the second half of 2021, OCHA reported that over 3.8 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.[1172] In 2020 and 2021, around 530,000 people were internally displaced, refugees or returnees, an increase of 21 percent in comparison to 2019.[1173] Insecurity prevented the provision of necessary assistance to communities during the reporting period.[1174]

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted education in Niger during the reporting period, when schools were closed for more than three months in 2020, affecting at least 3.5 million children's access to education, on top of 2.5 million children who were already out of school.[1175] In addition, during the 2020-2021 school year, insecurity forced 377 schools to close, affecting over 34,400 students.[1176] By the end of 2021, the UN estimated that 579 schools were closed in Tillabéri region, or 24 percent of all schools in the region, affecting 53,562 children.[1177] Fires of unknown cause affected 89 schools across the country between April and November 2021, including two that killed at least 45 primary and pre-school children in total.

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 40 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Niger. In most reports, non-state armed groups set fire to schools or threatened to attack schools, with Tillabéri region most affected. Attacks on schools occurred at a similar rate to earlier years, but with a slight decline. In 2019, for example, the UN reported over 43 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Niger, and GCPEA identified around 20 reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2018.[1178] The decline in 2020 may be due either to fewer attacks while schools were shut due to Covid-19, or to fewer monitors in the field due to public health restrictions.[1179]

In 2020, the UN recorded 29 attacks on schools in Niger.[1180] In the same year, GCPEA identified at least 20 reports of attacks on schools from UN, media, and NGO sources, the majority of which took place in Tillabéri region, although GCPEA was unable to determine which of these overlapped with the UN's count;[1181] the collated reports involved arson (14), threats (2), and looting (2), and all were suspected to have been perpetrated by non-state armed groups. Examples included:

- Between February 10 and 13, 2020, armed groups burned three schools in Famale, Sakoira, and Taroum, Tillabéri region, according to the UN and ACLED.[1182]
- The UN and ACLED reported that on the night of May 13, 2020, an unidentified armed group burned down classrooms in Tolba village, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region. The attack occurred the day after officials announced the reopening of schools in June following two months of Covid-19-related closures.[1183]
- In June 2020, unidentified armed assailants set fire to two schools in Tera and Djagourou communes, Tillabéri region, as reported by the Niger Protection Cluster. Community members also reported that government officials had been inside the schools during a political visit to the area prior to the attack.[1184]
- In December 2020, armed men on motorbikes threatened to force the closure of all the schools in Inelou, near Tebaram, Tahoua region, according to the Niger Protection Cluster. Following the attack, the teachers fled the area.[1185]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 11 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Niger.[1186] In addition, in February 2021, the Protection Cluster reported that 36 schools had closed due to threats by armed groups in Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, although the Cluster did not specify the month and year that the threats took place.[1187] Examples of reported incidents included:

- In January 2021, armed assailants allegedly tore down a Nigerien flag from a school and destroyed documents in directors' offices in four schools (Innaridan, Adidan, Innoussoukou, and Dogondagi) in Takanamatt commune, Tahoua region. The attackers also directly threatened teachers (reported below), as reported by the Niger Protection Cluster.[1188]
- On March 24, 2021, armed assailants attacked three villages in Anzarou commune, Tillabéri region. The attackers allegedly burnt down two schools, in addition to killing at least 11 civilians, looting a health center, and stealing livestock, as reported by *Agence France Presse* and Amnesty International.[1189]
- On November 11, 2021, a non-state armed group allegedly burned a school in Ouro Djaladjo, Tillabéri region, after they had reportedly preached to the village.[1190]
- On November 12, 2021, a non-state armed group allegedly attacked a school in Adaré, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region, and destroyed learning materials, furniture, and parts of the school building. This attack led to the closure of 13 schools in the area.[1191]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified at least 17 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, from media, NGO, and UN sources. As in earlier years, armed groups threatened, abducted, killed, or otherwise injured students. In 2019, GCPEA identified five incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel, in Tillabéri and in Niamey, which included one incident of police using excessive force against student protesters.[1192] In 2018, GCPEA identified four incidents of attacks on teachers in Diffa region, and one in Tillabéri.[1193] The data indicates two opposing trends: a rise in attacks in Niger's western regions and a decline in Diffa region.

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least ten reported incidents of attacks on school students and educators.[1194] Of these, five occurred in Tahoua region, three in Tillabéri region, and one each in Agadez and Diffa regions. For example:

- In January 2020, the Niger Protection Cluster reported that armed groups threatened teachers in five villages in Tillia commune, Tahoua region, ordering teachers to close all schools in the area and to leave the schools before the armed groups returned. After the threat, three schools in Agando, Assagaygay, and Chinzigaran villages officially closed, and teachers fled from two schools in Eknewane and Tabatol, causing the schools to stop operating.[1195]
- The UN and ACLED reported that members of an armed group shot and injured two teachers in Dessa, Famale commune, Tillabéri region, on February 7, 2020.[1196]
- On an unspecified date between April and May 2020, members of a non-state armed group attacked the director of a school in Bolso, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region, according to the Danish Refugee Council. The director sustained injuries, and the attack caused local authorities to close surrounding schools.[1197]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least seven reported incidents of attacks on school teachers in Niger.[1198] GCPEA also received qualitative information that armed groups threatened teachers in Tillabéri and Tahoua, causing teachers to flee or stop working.[1199] Examples included:

- On January 7, 2021, armed groups threatened teachers in four separate schools in Dargol commune, Tillabéri region, according to the UN. The schools subsequently closed.[1200]
- The Protection Cluster reported that in January 2021, armed assailants threatened to kill teachers if they returned to work at four schools in Takanamatt commune, Tahoua region. After making threats, they then attacked the schools, as reported above.[1201]

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified isolated reports of the military use of schools in Niger. During the previous reporting period, GCPEA received anecdotal evidence, as well as at least one report in 2018, that state armed forces had used schools as campsites in villages across Tillabéri region.[1202]

In 2020, GCPEA identified one report of the use of a school by state armed forces in Tankama village, Tibiri commune, Maradi region, in November 2020. The school closed as a result of the use of the facility, according to the UN.[1203] Following advocacy efforts by the UN, state armed forces departed, allowing for the resumption of classes in this school in January 2021.[1204]

NIGERIA

Nigeria continued to experience armed conflict in northeastern states due to the presence of Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups as well as armed violence in northwestern and northcentral states due to pastoralist-farmer tensions. Over 1,400 school students were abducted, and GCPEA identified at least ten attacks on schools, as well as several cases of military use.

Context

Armed conflict continued in Nigeria's northeast between government military forces and two main Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis Sudan (Group of Partisans for Muslims in Black Africa) (JAS). Boko Haram has explicitly targeted Western education for over a decade.[1205] During the 2020-2021 reporting period, violence between pastoralists and farmer communities persisted in Nigeria's northwestern and northcentral regions, while also spreading to new regions.[1206]

Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups continued to carry out attacks against Nigerian security forces and civilians in the northeast.[1207] In March 2020, a Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter group ambushed an army convoy, killing at least 47 troops in Yobe state, as reported in the media.[1208] Suspected fighters from one of these groups also killed more than 100 civilians, many of whom were farmers working in a rice field, in a November 2020 attack in Koshobe village, Borno state.[1209] Meanwhile, the Nigerian military restricted the access of humanitarian aid agencies in the northeast in early 2020, according to Human Rights Watch, and continued to detain children for suspected membership in Boko Haram.[1210] Gender-based violence also intensified in the northeast owing to the ongoing insurgency and conflict, according to the UN.[1211]

In the northwestern and northcentral regions, violence between mostly Fulani pastoralists and mostly Hausa farmer communities continued, driven by population growth and water and grazing land scarcity linked to climate change.[1212] International Crisis Group reported that, between 2011 and 2020, more than 200,000 people fled violence in the north-west and more than 8,000 people were killed.[1213] According to media reports and Amnesty International, militias in Kaduna state increased attacks and violence in 2020 and 2021, resulting in fatalities and displacement.[1214] In response to violence, the government launched several military operations, as well as programs to promote dialogue between pastoralists and farmer communities.[1215]

Armed conflict and violence impacted access to education. The UN estimated that 1.4 million girls and over 1.2 million boys were out of school in early 2020 due to the crisis in the northeast.[1216] Higher education institutions there also experienced declines in enrollment due to conflict, or students' fear of attacks.[1217] Before the Covid-19 pandemic and after in-person learning resumed, insecurity, including abductions, prevented schools from remaining open.[1218] Families displaced by conflict also struggled to send their children to school due to associated fees and transportation costs or school closures in displaced persons camps.[1219]

Approximately 37 million students from preprimary through tertiary were affected by the closure of education institutions for at least five months in 2020 due to Covid-19.[1220] The UN reported that many women and girls had additional caretaking duties during the pandemic, compared to men and boys, making it more challenging to continue distance learning.[1221]

Attacks on Schools

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected at least ten reported incidents of attacks on schools. In comparison, in *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA reported four attacks on schools in 2019 and more than five in 2018.[1222] As in the prior reporting period, GCPEA identified reports of attacks on schools related to both armed conflict and inter-communal tensions.

The UN verified five attacks on schools in 2020, attributed to Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups.[1223] Separately, GCPEA identified at least five reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2020 from media and other sources,[1224] although it remained unclear if any of these incidents were included in the UN count. Several reported attacks were related to the conflict in the northeast, while at least one was related to inter-communal tensions. For instance:

- On January 31, 2020, a Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter group allegedly attacked an open-air Islamic school on the outskirts of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, reportedly by sending a 12-year-old girl to detonate a person-borne IED, also known as a suicide bomb. Three boy students and the girl were killed in the attack and four boy students were injured, according to local media.[1225]
- On February 25, 2020, a militia reportedly damaged the Government Secondary School during an attack on Agila town, Benue state. A church was also damaged in the attack, as reported by *Daily Post*.[1226]
- The UN reported that non-state armed groups set several community schools on fire on December 24, 2020, in Hawul Local Government Area, Borno state, and Gombi Local Government Area, Adamawa state.[1227]

In 2021, the UN verified four attacks on schools.[1228] Separately, GCPEA collected approximately six reported incidents of attacks on schools from media outlets.[1229] For example:

- On April 9, 2021, Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups reportedly attacked Kopre village, Adamawa state, burning down schools, houses, centers of worship, and markets, according to local media outlet *Vanguard*.[1230]
- In late July 2021, unidentified armed assailants reportedly threatened a school administrator and stole National Examination Council exams from a government secondary school in Ungwar Sarki town, Kaduna state, as students sat for the test. According to media outlets, the assailants mistook the learning materials for money.[1231]
- On September 13, 2021, members of the separatist group the Indigenous People of Biafra reportedly entered a secondary school and prevented an exam in Nkume town, Imo state, after imposing a stay-at-home order in the area, according to local media source *Daily Trust*.[1232]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 21 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. At least 1,850 students and educators were injured, abducted, or killed, and more than five were arrested or detained. This marks a slight increase as compared to *Education under Attack 2020*, which included approximately seven reported attacks on students and education personnel in 2019 and one attack in 2018.[1233]

Due to several high-profile abductions of hundreds of students from schools, government authorities temporarily closed more than 600 schools across seven northern states between December 2020 and April 2021, according to International Crisis Group and *The Washington Post*. The closures occurred only months after schools were reopened for in-person learning after Covid-19 lockdowns.[1234]

Criminal organizations, rather than non-state armed groups, were reportedly responsible for several high-profile abductions of school and university students in the northwest during the reporting period.[1235] The Nigerian government generally referred to these groups as "bandits," although the Federal High Court in Abuja ruled in late 2021 that several of these groups are "terrorist organizations."[1236]

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately seven reported attacks on students, teachers, and personnel, including the abduction of hundreds of students in the northeast and northwestern regions.[1237] For instance:

- On February 9, 2020, a Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter group allegedly kidnapped three students, two of them girls, who were travelling on Maiduguri-Gubio Road, near Maiduguri city, Borno state. According to an army officer interviewed by local media, the students were identified by their school uniforms. Local media outlet *Vanguard* reported that the army rescued the students after an armed clash with the insurgents.[1238]
- On August 24, 2020, an unidentified armed group reportedly abducted seven students and their female teacher from Prince Academy secondary school in Damba-Kasaya town, Kaduna state. The students were attending lessons to prepare for their Junior Secondary School exams. According to local media outlet *The Post*, a civilian was also killed in the attack.[1239]
- Armed assailants abducted more than 330 male students from the Government Science Secondary School and killed a security guard in Kankara town, Katsina state, on December 11, 2020, as reported by *the Associated Press*, *Al Jazeera*, and *Sahara Reporters*.[1240] More than 600 students reportedly attended the school, but many were able to flee the grounds.[1241] As a result of the attack, all public schools in the state were ordered to be closed,[1242] which according to an education sector plan published in 2010, would have been approximately 2,500 schools.[1243] Government army, air force, and police reportedly launched a joint mission in the Zango/Paula forest, resulting in the students' release.[1244] Although JAS released a video claiming responsibility for the kidnapping, as reported by the media, security experts cast doubt on the armed group's direct involvement in the attack, and the government referred to the kidnappers as "bandits."[1245]
- A week later, armed assailants abducted over 84 students also in Katsina state, on December 19, 2020, according to local and international media outlets *Premium Times* and *France24*.[1246] The students, who attended an Islamic school, were reportedly abducted in Dandume local government area on their way back from a celebration. Police and a community self-defense group reportedly engaged the assailants in an armed confrontation, after which the school children were released.[1247]

In 2021, GCPEA identified approximately 14 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel, primarily in Nigeria's northcentral and northwestern regions.[1248] Separately, the UN reported that 1,436 children were abducted from schools in Nigeria between January and September 2021.[1249] Examples of incidents GCPEA collected from news reports include:

- On February 17, 2021, three teachers, 27 students, two staff, and nine others were abducted from the Government Science College in Kagara town, Niger state, according to Amnesty International.[1250] According to media reports, the unidentified armed assailants wore military fatigues and killed at least one student before abducting students and staff from the public boarding school's quarters. Schools in the region were closed temporarily after the attack, as reported by Human Rights Watch and local and international media outlets *Premium Times* and *CNN*.[1251]
- *The Associated Press* reported that armed assailants abducted 136 students and three teachers from Salihu Tanko Islamic School in Tegina town, Niger state, on May 30, 2021. Some of the abducted students were reportedly as young as five years old. Schools in the area closed in response to the attack due to safety concerns, according to media reports.[1252]
- On June 17, 2021, armed assailants abducted at least 80 students, mostly girls, and five teachers from the Federal Government College Birnin-Yauri, in Bin Yauri town, Kebbi state, according to media outlets *Al Jazeera* and *Premium Times*. A police officer was reportedly shot dead in the attack and one student was injured.[1253]
- On July 5, 2021, armed group members kidnapped 121 students and at least one teacher from a secondary school in Kaduna state, according to ACLED and international media outlets *France 24* and *The Guardian*.[1254]

- On September 1, 2021, gunmen reportedly kidnapped 73 students from a government secondary school in Kaya town, Zamfara state, according to local media sources *Vanguard* and *KESQ News*.[1255]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified approximately eight reported incidents of military use during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020*, included four and 18 reports of military use in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1256]

Amnesty International and international media outlet *France 24* reported that on August 23, 2020, the separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra held a meeting in a community school in Emene neighborhood in Enugu city, Enugu state. Nigerian police, army, and air force officers, along with Department of Security Services agents, reportedly responded to the scene and opened fire. Several civilian deaths and deaths among separatist group members and Nigerian security forces were reported.[1257]

In 2021, GCPEA gathered reports of the Nigerian military using approximately seven primary and secondary schools for military purposes in Borno state.[1258]

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected one report of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university. *Education under Attack 2020* included two reports of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, universities in 2019.[1259]

On September 22, 2021, police officers reportedly detained three male and three female Abia State Polytechnic students after entering their off-campus student hostel in Aba city, Abia state. Five of the students were released but an 18-year-old female student was allegedly raped by a police officer while in custody, as reported by local and international news outlets. The Abia State Police Command reportedly arrested an officer in response.[1260]

Attacks on higher education

During 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified more than 20 reported attacks on higher education in which over 100 students and academics were reportedly injured, abducted, or killed. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately 12 and eight attacks on higher education in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1261]

In 2020, GCPEA collected approximately six reports of attacks on higher education facilities, students, and academics.[1262] For example:

- In January 2020, members of a Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter group allegedly abducted and killed a student while he was returning to the University in Maiduguri, in Maiduguri city, Borno state, as reported by local and international media outlets *Xinhua* and *Premium Times*.[1263]
- Scholars at Risk reported that on April 29, 2020, police arrested a political science lecturer and an administrator at Akwa Ibom State University in Mkpat-Enin town, Akwa Ibom state, for statements made on a Facebook page concerning unpaid salaries to university personnel.[1264]
- On December 16, 2020, police fired teargas to disperse students protesting the government's closure of Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education and other institutions in the middle of semester examinations, Scholars at Risk and local media reported.[1265] The students reportedly demonstrated and blocked traffic along Kano-Zaria Expressway, in Kano Municipal local government area, Kano state.[1266] Local media outlet *Daily Post* reported that police actions injured several students.[1267]
- In 2021, GCPEA collected approximately 15 reported incidents of attacks on higher education.[1268] For example:
- On February 1, 2021, Nigerian army and police officers used teargas and batons to disperse students protesting tuition increases at the main gate of the University of Abuja, as covered by local media and Scholars at Risk.[1269] International media outlet *Sahara Reporters* wrote that army and police actions injured several students during the demonstration.[1270]
- On April 20, 2021, armed assailants abducted 20 students and killed one staff member from Greenfield University in Kasarami village, Kaduna state, according to Scholars at Risk and local media outlets. The assailants reportedly killed five of the abducted students in the weeks after the attack.[1271]
- Scholars at Risk and media outlet *Reuters* reported that armed assailants killed one student and abducted eight students and two professors from Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic in Zaria city, Kaduna state, on June 10, 2021. Three students were reportedly shot in the attack; two were injured and one was killed.[1272]
- On September 20, 2021, Nigerian army soldiers reportedly fired live ammunition and teargas at students protesting at Plateau State University Polytechnic, in Barkin Ladi local government area, Plateau state, killing one student and injuring several others. According to Scholars at Risk and local media sources *Daily Trust* and *Sun Nigeria*, the students were engaged in a nonviolent protest over the suspension of several academic activities and a delay in exams due to a faculty strike.[1273]

PAKISTAN

GCPEA found at least seven attacks on schools by non-state armed groups during the reporting period, a decline as compared to prior years. Armed groups targeted girls and women in several incidents. Security forces arrested at least 170 university students and personnel and 240 school students and personnel for participating in education-related protests in 2020 and 2021.

Context

The security context in Pakistan deteriorated during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Contributing to this was a spike in clashes between India and Pakistan that escalated in 2020, with the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) reporting 2020 to be "the most violent year of conflict" between the two countries since it began recording in 2016.[1274] In February 2021, Pakistan and India agreed to observe all peace and ceasefire agreements,[1275] an accord which both parties largely upheld throughout the year, according to conflict monitors and media.[1276] In Pakistan, attacks by armed groups targeting security forces and civilians increased in both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces in 2020, according to ACLED; moreover, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan security forces carried out attacks on armed groups. [1277]

Pakistan also experienced political tensions during the reporting period. A newly formed alliance of opposition parties, the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), was formed in September 2020. PDM led anti-government demonstrations, focused on unemployment and high inflation rates, which gained mass support.[1278] The Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) party organized mass protests against the government across the country in 2021, resulting in street violence, attacks on security forces, and a ban on the party.[1279]

At the end of 2020, 12.3 million people were reportedly in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.4 million children.[1280] Heavy monsoon rainfall caused flooding and damages in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.[1281] In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, limited access to social services and employment affected social and economic development, stability and governance, according to the UN.[1282] In addition, the UN estimated that at least 5,300 Afghans had newly arrived in Pakistan in 2021, with numbers steadily increasing in August 2021.[1283] In response to the influx of Afghan arrivals, Pakistan added border restrictions and increased deportations.[1284]

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, over 5 million children at the primary school level were out of school, the majority of whom where girls; school closures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 affected around 45 million students in 2020.[1285] Widespread inequities in access to quality education existed during the reporting period across both gender and socioeconomic status, with the poorer students having lower completion rates than wealthier students, according to the UN.[1286] Furthermore, adolescent girls experienced high dropout rates.[1287] Although armed groups did attack education, and particularly girls' education, the majority of attacks on education in Pakistan involved the violent repression of education-related protests by security forces throughout the 2020-2021 reporting period.

Attacks on schools

Between 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified seven incidents of attacks on schools including two attacks on girls' schools. This is a decrease in attacks as compared to 2018 and 2019, when the UN verified 34 attacks[1288] and two attacks,[1289] respectively. However, the sole attack reported in 2020 led to more fatalities and injuries than all attacks in 2018 and 2019.[1290]

On October 27, 2020, a bomb attack targeting the Jamia Zubairia religious school in the Dir Colony Area of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killed at least seven people and injured at least 130,[1291] including four children under the age of 13.[1292] The UN verified one attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in 2020, which may have been the same as the report identified by GCPEA.[1293]

In 2021, GCPEA identified six reports of attacks on schools from media sources, two of which targeted girls' schools.[1294] Five of the incidents involved reported use of explosive weapons and one incident involved a raid of a school used as a polling station. Examples included:

- On July 12, 2021, unidentified armed men reportedly threw a grenade at a girls' school in Mir Ali, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, while examinations were in progress. No injuries or fatalities were reported.[1295]
- On July 27, 2021, unidentified armed men allegedly threw a grenade into a school for Afghan children in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The school was empty at the time.[1296]
- On September 22, 2021, armed assailants reportedly targeted a girls' school that was undergoing construction in Tank district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governorate. The explosion reportedly destroyed parts of the school building. No casualties occurred.[1297]
- On November 17, 2021, a bomb reportedly detonated at a government girls' school in Kohlu district in Balochistan governorate. According to local media, the school was damaged, however no fatalities occurred.[1298]
- On December 10, 2021, a mortar shell reportedly struck a school in North Waziristan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governorate. The attack injured two children.[1299]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified 11 reported attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel, in which over 250 students or educators were arrested. This is a similar rate as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA collected 11 incidents in 2019, and two in 2018.[1300] As in the previous reporting period, many attacks involved police arresting or using excessive force against students or teachers involved in education-related protests.

In 2020, GCPEA identified two reported attacks on students, teachers, and personnel. These were:

- On July 15, 2020, as many as 120 teachers and owners of schools working under the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) were reportedly arrested for protesting the government's non-payment of funds, outside the Punjab Assembly on the Mall in Lahore city, Punjab province.[1301]
- Pakistani media outlet *Dawn* reported that, on December 19, 2020, seven teachers were injured and 44 were arrested when police used baton charges and tear gas to control contract teachers demonstrating outside the Prime Minister's residence in Banigala in Islamabad city Federal Capital Territory, after teachers pelted police with stones, according to ACLED.[1302]

In 2021, GCPEA identified nine reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel, including three attacks by a non-state armed group and six attacks by state security forces.[1303] For example:

- On January 6, 2021, police reportedly charged and fired tear gas on teachers, and arrested 20 teachers, when they staged a demonstration to demand that authorities honor a prior agreement to increase their salaries, in Muzaffarabad city, Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Teachers allegedly responded by pelting stones, according to local media. [1304]
- On January 13, 2021, police reportedly charged hundreds of teachers protesting in Muzaffarabad city, Pakistan-administered Kashmir, against the government for not receiving regular salary payments.[1305]
- Pakistani local media outlets reported that, on March 22, 2021, around 950 teachers staged a protest near the Chief Minister House in Karachi, Sindh province, demanding regularization of their jobs; a number were reportedly baton charged and detained by the police outside the Sindh Assembly.[1306]

In 2021, GCPEA identified three incidents that involved an attack by a non-state armed group.

- On June 20, 2021, unidentified armed gunmen reportedly shot a school vehicle transporting eleven female teachers in Mastung district in Balochistan governorate. The attack injured at least four teachers, according to media sources.[1307]
- On July 27, 2021, in Peshawar district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governorate, an unidentified group allegedly threw a grenade at a school for Afghan children. No students or teachers were at the school at the time of the attack and the school did not sustain damaged.[1308]
- On December 30, 2021, a bomb reportedly exploded outside of the Government Science College in Quetta City, Balochistan governorate. The attack allegedly killed at least four people and injured at least fifteen. In addition, the attack damaged several buildings.[1309]

Attacks on higher education

During 2020 and 2021,[1310] GCPEA identified at least 18 attacks on higher education, in which four female vocational trainers were killed and over 140 students and personnel were reportedly arrested. This was a slight increase compared to 2019 and 2018, when at least seven and two incidents occurred, respectively.[1311]

In 2020, GCPEA collected five reports of attacks on higher education facilities, students, and staff.[1312] All were incidents of protest repression against staff and students. For example:

- Pakistani media *Daily Times* (Pakistan) reported that on February 12, 2020, dozens of protesters were detained by police after unarmed students, employees from the Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences and the All-Pakistan Clerks Association demonstrated. They were baton charged by the police at GPO Chowk in Quetta city, Balochistan province. The protesters were calling for a decrease in the varsity's fees and the expulsion of the vice chancellor.[1313]
- Scholars at Risk reported that, on June 24, 2020, police beat and arrested dozens of students in the Balochistan province during nonviolent protests across several universities in which the students demanded internet to participate in online classes. According to local media sources, police arrested at least 80 students. [1314]
- Local media sources *The Express Tribune* and Dawn Pakistan reported that, on September 11, 2020, police allegedly beat and arrested contractual employees of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) whose contracts had been terminated and who were holding a peaceful demonstration in Islamabad, Federal Capital Territory.[1315]

In 2021, GCPEA collected 13 reported incidents of attacks on higher education, 10 of were incidents of protest repression, sometimes in the context of education policies related to Covid-19. The remaining two reports involved attacks by armed groups on female educators and on a university.[1316] At least 85 students were arrested and another 25 were arrested during attacks on higher education in 2021. For example:

- Scholars at Risk reported that, on January 6, 2021, during a protest, outside the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC), police used batons and water cannons against medical school students and recent graduates. The protesters called for the Commission to undo its decision to not recognize medical school diplomas issued by 21 universities in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The protesters claimed that the universities that the PMC blacklisted were acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO).[1317]
- Scholars at Risk reported that, on January 26, 2021, at University of Central Punjab in Lahore, police baton-charged student protesters and arrested at least 36 students. Protesters were demanding online exams rather than on-campus exams amid the coronavirus pandemic. Police reported that the demonstrators set fire to the campus gate and pelted stones at security guards.[1318]
- On July 1, 2021, Scholars at Risk reported that police forcibly detained protesting students. Students demanded that institutions cancel in-person examinations due to Covid-19.[1319]

- On July 7, 2021, Scholars at Risk reported that police targeted student protesters with tear gas and batons at Islamia College Peshawar in Peshawar district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governorate.[1320]

Also in 2021, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks by armed groups, one that involved the killing of female educators and the other that involved an explosive weapons attack near a university:

- On February 22, 2021, four female vocational trainers of Bravo College Bannu were travelling to North Waziristan, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Newly Merged Districts (KPMD) when they were attacked and killed in a village near Mirali. Unidentified assailants allegedly fired at their vehicle. Their driver was reportedly injured in the attack.[1321]
- On October 18, 2021, a bomb reportedly exploded near a police bus located outside a university in Quetta City in Balochistan governorate, according to media sources. The explosion allegedly killed a police personnel and injured 13 policemen and 4 civilians.[1322]

PALESTINE

Over 420 attacks on, or interferences to education occurred in Palestine in 2020-2021. Attacks peaked in May 2021, when bombardments affected over 290 kindergartens, schools, and higher education facilities in Gaza. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, demolition or stop-work orders, teargas or other weapons firing at or near schools, military presence near schools, and checkpoint delays affected thousands of students and educators.

Context

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, Palestinians in the West Bank continued to be affected by the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.[1323] In addition, Israel continued to enforce a closure of the Gaza Strip, including a travel ban and heavy restriction on the entry and exit of goods, as it had for the past 14 years.[1324] According to Refugees International, the combined effect of Covid-19 restrictions and the blockade caused the Gaza population to experience a "double quarantine," and exacerbated already high unemployment rates.[1325]

Although fighting between the Israeli armed forces and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza decreased in 2020 as compared to previous years, [1326] an 11-day escalation of hostilities in 2021 saw the heaviest fighting in Gaza since 2014. Between May 10 and May 21, 2021, Palestinian armed groups launched over 4,000 rockets towards Israel, while Israeli armed forces carried out over 1,500 airstrikes, according to the UN.[1327] The fighting caused the deaths of over 260 Palestinians, including 67 children, and the injury of over 2,200 people; in Israel, 13 people were killed, of which two were children, according to the UN.[1328] Furthermore, 15,000 housing units in Palestine were damaged, along with water, sanitation, and other civilian infrastructure.[1329] Around 113,000 internally displaced people took shelter at schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).[1330]

Israel continued to occupy the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and permitted Israeli settlement expansion during the reporting period, according to Human Rights Watch.[1331] The UN reported that demolitions increased during the pandemic, with Israeli authorities demolishing roughly 65 Palestinian-owned buildings per month.[1332] In 2021, the UN recorded the highest number of demolitions in West Bank and East Jerusalem since 2016.[1333]

Quality of education, insufficient infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, conflict, and poverty all negatively impacted Palestinian children's access to education during the reporting period.[1334] The Covid-19 pandemic caused the closure of Palestinian schools from March 2020 until early August 2020 in Gaza, and until early September 2020 in the West Bank,[1335] with schools intermittently shuttering throughout the 2020-2021 school year.[1336] In the Gaza Strip, over 50 percent of the school-aged population lacked access to a computer, a reliable power supply, and internet in 2020 which inhibited remote learning.[1337] In 2020, the UN estimated that 100,618 Palestinian children did not have safe access to schools.[1338] By the end of 2021, the UN estimated that 579,173 Palestinian children needed humanitarian assistance to access education.[1339] In East Jerusalem, Israel applied pressure on Palestinian schools to use the Israeli curriculum instead of their own, which threatened academic freedom and the right to education, according to the UN.[1340]

Attacks on schools

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified over 429 reported attacks on schools and interferences to education in Palestine, with both the West Bank and Gaza affected. The rate of attacks on schools declined in 2020 as compared to 2019, largely due to Covid-19 related school closures and hybrid online learning, as well as a decrease in fighting in Gaza,[1341] however attacks rose sharply in 2021. For instance, in 2019, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) Education Cluster reported 328 education-related incidents in 2019.[1342] In 2018, the UN verified 118 incidents of attacks on education and interference with education.[1343]

In 2020, the UN verified over 119 incidents of attacks on schools and interferences to education in Palestine that affected 7,757 students and 615 education personnel.[1344] These include incidents of targeted attacks on schools by both Israeli armed forces and settlers, threats of attacks or demolitions, and teargas fired at or near schools. Four incidents occurred in Gaza and 115 incidents occurred in the West Bank.

According to the reports identified by the oPt Education Cluster, 53 schools in the West Bank were under threat of being demolished by Israeli authorities in 2020,[1345] with schools in the Israeli-administered Area C of the West Bank particularly vulnerable to this form of violation, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the oPt Education Cluster.[1346] NRC reported that Israeli authorities systematically denied Palestinian applications for building permits and frequently demolished or issued stop-work orders on primary or pre-primary schools without necessary permits throughout Area C, with Hebron especially affected in 2020.[1347] NRC also found that the threatened or actual demolition of schools negatively impacted children by both inflicting psychosocial harm and affecting access to education, since many families reported not being able to pay for transportation costs to attend schools in other villages.[1348]

Examples of threatened or actual demolitions or stop-work orders in 2020 included:

- Local media reported that on or around February 5, 2020, Israeli armed forces issued a stop-work order to a pre-school in Susiya, Yatta municipality in Area C of the West Bank.[1349]
- On February 19, 2020, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) and OCHA reported that in Susiya, Yatta municipality, West Bank, Israeli armed forces, accompanied by military construction vehicles and Israeli authorities, confiscated a mobile classroom.[1350]
- Between August 31 and September 10, 2020, Israeli armed forces seized school property and materials, including the roof, desks, and chairs, and construction materials, from Ras-at-Tin, a herding community east of Ramallah.[1351] The attacks forced the school's 50 students to study outside in extremely hot weather conditions, according to B'tselem, an Israeli human rights organization.[1352] The European Union (EU), several EU member states, and the United Kingdom had provided humanitarian funding for the school.[1353]

Also in 2020, Israeli security forces stormed or fired teargas inside or near school buildings. The oPt Education Cluster verified 21 incidents involving Israeli security forces firing teargas at or near education facilities or students, affecting 2,850 students and 217 education personnel.[1354] While these incidents occurred less frequently, as compared to 2019 due to school closures, they injured student dozens of students:

- NRC, PCHR, and OCHA reported that on February 2, 2020, Israeli armed forces fired teargas into the schoolyard of a co-educational high school in Burin village, Nablus governorate. Students had allegedly clashed with armed Israeli settlers at the school's gates prior to the arrival of Israeli soldiers. A teargas cannister wounded the head of an 11-year-old student, who required treatment at a nearby hospital, according to NRC. The school closed for a day.[1355]
- *The Palestine Chronicle* reported that on December 20, 2020, Israeli armed forces fired teargas into a school in Anin village, Jenin governorate. Dozens of students were allegedly injured, and learning was interrupted.[1356]

In 2020, Israeli settlers in the West Bank also attacked schools. For instance:

- On January 28, 2020, alleged Israeli settlers set a classroom on fire and vandalized the school walls in Einabus village, Nablus governorate, according to the UN, the Education Cluster, and local media.[1357]
- In March 2020, OCHA reported that Israeli settlers attacked a school in H2 area of Hebron city.[1358]

In 2020, in Gaza, schools came under fire during attacks between Palestinian armed groups and Israeli security forces. GCPEA identified at least two reported incidents, including the following:

- OCHA and the oPt Education Cluster reported that in mid-August 2020, during fighting between Palestinian armed groups and Israeli armed forces, attacks by Israeli forces on open areas and military positions led to the minor damage of two UNRWA schools and other surrounding civilian property.[1359] In one school, an explosive remnant of war (ERW) was found after the fighting, causing the school to close for three days and affecting 1,781 students.[1360]
- In Gaza city, on December 26, 2020, three schools, including one facility for disabled students, one elementary school, and one UNRWA-run school, were reportedly damaged during an Israeli airstrike on Gaza, according to PCHR. At the UNRWA-run school, the strike damaged 52 windows and six doors. Around 1,500 students were allegedly affected by the attacks.[1361]

In 2021, the oPt Education Cluster recorded 183 education-related incidents affecting 12,070 students and 501 personnel, marking an approximate 50 percent increase in incidents as compared to 2020.[1362] Driving this increase was the 11-day escalation in Gaza in May 2021, during which over 265 education facilities, including private, public, and UNRWA schools and kindergartens, were damaged due to fighting, according to the oPt Education Cluster.[1363] The escalation interrupted the education of around 600,000 children as schools were closed for the safety of students and teachers.[1364] Additionally, sporadic conflict-related incidents in Gaza affected schools during 2021. Examples of attacks on schools in Gaza included:

- On January 23, 2021, a store of explosive weapons exploded in Beit Hanoun, Gaza, according to the UN. The blast damaged three schools, along with other civilian infrastructure.[1365]
- On May 11, 2021, airstrikes hit the al-Sayedah Khadijah Girls' School and the Ahmed Harb al Kurd school near Deir al-Balah, Gaza. The Ahmed Harb Al-Kurd School, which served 550 students, was fully destroyed and the Sayedah Khadija school, which served 400 girls, sustained damages, according to PCHR.[1366]
- On May 11 and 12, 2021, the UN and media reported that Israeli airstrikes hit two UNRWA schools in Gaza. The strikes inflicted severe damage to at least 29 classrooms and the schools' compound wall.[1367]
- PCHR reported that on May 13, 2021, airstrikes targeted at the Ministry of Interior's security headquarters in al-Sheikh Zayid area of Gaza led to the damage of the Ministry of Education building and a boys' secondary school.[1368]

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2021, the oPt Education Cluster reported 111 education-related incidents including 31 cases of teargas or weapons firing near or at schools, and nine cases of military entry in schools.[1369] At the end of 2021, 54 schools had demolition or stop-work orders against them, according to the oPt Education Cluster.[1370] GCPEA also identified at least 11 reports of attacks on schools in the West Bank in 2021 from UN, media, and human rights organizations.[1371] Examples included:

- The UN reported that on January 17, 2021, the Umm Qussa school in Hebron, which was recently constructed, received a demolition order under Military Order 1797.[1372]
- On May 14, 2021, Israeli settlers from Yitzhar settlement, accompanied by Israeli military forces, allegedly entered Urif village and engaged in clashes with Palestinian residents, according to *Palestine News and Information Agency*. During the fighting, Israeli settlers allegedly destroyed solar panels on top of a school.[1373]
- On August 29, 2021, Israeli military forces allegedly raided two schools and fired stun grenades and teargas canisters towards two schoolyards in Al-Khader, according to *Palestine News and Information Agency*. The two schools were evacuated as Israeli soldiers entered the school complex and no injuries were reported.[1374]
- On October 15, 2021, Israeli forces partially demolished a donor-funded school in Hammamat Al Maleh, Tubas, according to the West Bank Protection Consortium and the oPt Education Cluster.[1375]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 85 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel in Palestine. Attacks on students and staff declined during the reporting period, in part due to the prolonged closure of schools in 2020 which limited movements along school routes where students and staff were frequently targeted in earlier years. By comparison, in 2018 and 2019, GCPEA collected dozens of reports of incidents that harmed hundreds of school students and staff, primarily in the West Bank.[1376] In 2019 alone, the UN verified 37 incidents of detention of children commuting to or from school.[1377]

In 2020, the oPt Education Cluster verified eight incidents in which students were detained at school, or on the way to or from school, 32 cases of delays at checkpoints, and five cases of intimidation while commuting to school that impacted 110 male students.[1378] Multiple incidents of weapons firing at students who were en route to or from school also occurred during the reporting period, according to the oPt Education Cluster.[1379] In 2020, Save the Children documented the arrests of students on the way to or from school, some of whom were detained for months.[1380] In some cases, arrests happened when clashes or protests occurred near school.[1381] GCPEA also identified three incidents of arrest, or threats of arrest, of students and teachers in 2020:

- *Wafa News Agency* reported that on February 2, 2020, Israeli armed forces allegedly detained and took the fingerprints of several students from a school in Tuqu town, Bethlehem governorate. The report claimed that soldiers were frequently present near the school, but did not specify a reason for the arrests.[1382]
- Two days later, on February 4, 2020, Israeli armed forces allegedly arrested two Palestinian teachers on their way to the same school in Tuqu, Bethelem governorate, according to *Wafa News Agency*. The soldiers also reportedly threatened to storm the school.[1383]
- *Wafa News Agency* reported that on December 8, 2020, Israeli armed forces blocked teachers on their way to work at Susiya school in Yattah municipality, Hebron governorate. The soldiers allegedly threatened to detain the teachers after stopping them on the road.[1384]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least four reported incidents of violent attack with rubber bullets, ammunition, or teargas, on school students while they were on their way to, or outside, schools in 2020.[1385] These included:

- On February 15, 2020, OCHA and PCHR reported that a rubber bullet fired by Israeli police struck an 8-year-old student on his way home from school in Al Isawiya neighborhood of East Jerusalem. The attack caused severe injury and the loss of an eye.[1386]
- On May 30, 2020, Israeli security forces shot and killed a 32-year-old disabled student who was walking to his school for special needs students in East Jerusalem, according to Human Rights Watch, *The New York Times*, *BBC*, and PCHR. Police officers reported that they had wrongly assumed that the student was carrying a gun, and opened fire.[1387]
- OCHA reported that in mid-October 2020, in Al Jalazun, Ramallah governorate, Israeli armed forces allegedly fired teargas at school children who allegedly threw stones at the soldiers. Soldiers then followed students into the school and reportedly locked students into classrooms.[1388]

In 2021, the oPt Education Cluster verified at least 23 cases of arrests or detention of students at, or on the way to or from, schools, and 27 cases of intimidation or delays at checkpoints or on the way to or from school, and three threats of violence to students and staff, among others.[1389] In addition, GCPEA identified 19 reported incidents attacks on school students and education personnel in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem;[1390] some

of these incidents may be included in the oPt Education Cluster's count. GPCEA observed that most of the reported incidents occurred between September and December 2021, with the town of Al-Lubban Al-Sharqiya, near Nablus, particularly affected. In some cases, both Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces perpetrated attacks.

Examples of arrest or detention in 2021 included:

- On March 14, 2021, local media reported that Israeli soldiers arrested two male Palestinian high school students who were on their way home from school in Zabbouba village, near Jenin, West Bank.[1391]
- PCHR reported that on May 31, 2021, Israeli armed forces arrested a 15-year-old male student as he was leaving school in the al-Tur area of East Jerusalem.[1392] The oPt Education Cluster verified that Israeli soldiers detained a male student who was on his way home from Al Khader Secondary School in Jenin, West Bank, on October 12, 2021. The soldiers hit and handcuffed the student, forced him inside a vehicle, and sprayed gas inside the vehicle; soldiers detained the student for around six hours and threatened to arrest him.[1393]

In 2021, examples of teargas or weapons firing on students included:

- On September 22, 2021, the *Foundation for Middle East Peace*, along with local media sources reported that a Palestinian youth was injured by an Israeli rubber-coated steel bullet after a confrontation between Israeli military forces and residents broke out near the al-Tur Secondary Boys' School in East Jerusalem.[1394]
- On November 16, 2022, Israeli security forces reportedly fired teargas at dozens of female school students who were on their way to school in Al-Lubban Al-Sharqiya village, Nablus, West Bank. Media sources reported that around 70 students were injured due to teargas and that one student was hospitalized after being beaten with the butt of a rifle.[1395]
- On November 25, 2021, five military vehicles carrying 30 Israeli military forces stationed on the route to As-Sawiya Al Lubban Secondary School, in Nablus, West Bank while students were on their way to class. Students and the soldiers clash, resulting in the injury of one student who was struck in the eye by a piece of a rubber-metal coated bullet.[1396]

Israeli settlers and armed forces also threatened students and teachers or prevented them from accessing schools in 2021:

- On August 18, 2021, Israeli armed forces blocked the entrance of Tayasir Boys School in Tubas, West Bank and prevented students from entering. engaged in clashes according to UN and media sources. On the same day, the UN reported that two students were injured in clashes that erupted near the school.[1397]
- On November 28, 2021, Israeli settlers, alongside Israeli security forces, entered Al-Lubban Al-Sharqiya, Nablus, West Bank, and harassed and chased students and blocked them from entering the school, according to ACLED and local media.[1398]

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified several reports of military use of schools annually in Palestine, as in previous years. For instance, in 2019, the UN verified four cases of military use of schools.[1399] While the oPt Education Cluster monitored military presence near schools, GCPEA could not determine how many of these met GCPEA criteria for military use.

The oPt Education Cluster identified 17 incidents of Israeli military presence around schools in the West Bank in 2020, with Tuqu, H2-Hebron, and south Nablus most affected.[1400] Also in 2020, GCPEA identified one reported incident of military use of schools. On May 8, 2020, PCHR reported that Israeli armed forces entered al-Aroub refugee camp in Hebron and positioned themselves near the camp's UNRWA schools. During the operation, they also allegedly raided homes and arrested two children.[1401]

In 2021, the oPt Education Cluster verified 16 cases of military presence around schools in the West Bank.[1402] In addition, GCPEA identified five cases of military use of schools, some of which may have been included in the oPt Education Cluster's count. Of these, three occurred in the West Bank and involved Israeli armed forces positioning themselves near schools to launch operations in surrounding communities, as reported by local human rights monitors.[1403] For example, according to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, Israeli troops reportedly engaged in training near a school in Tayasir, Tubas, West Bank on August 24, 2021.[1404]

The other two cases of reported military use occurred in Gaza in May 2021 and involved Palestinian armed groups reportedly building underground tunnels underneath schools to support their operations. For example:

- The UN and Israeli media reported that Palestinian armed groups had built a tunnel around 7.5 meters beneath an UNRWA compound housing two boys' schools. The tunnel was discovered after an Israeli airstrike hit the school courtyard and uncovered the tunnel on an unknown date between May 13 and 15, 2021, according to the UN.[1405]
- Israeli media made an unverified report that on May 15, 2021, Palestinian armed groups had allegedly stored rocket launchpads underneath a school courtyard in Gaza.[1406]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA received reports of at least 19 attacks on higher education. Attacks on higher education occurred at a similar rate to the 2017-2020 reporting period when GCPEA identified between five and eight reported incidents annually. In 2020, Scholars at Risk reported that sources at Birzeit University estimated that over 80 of its students were detained by Israeli authorities.[1407]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least four incidents of attacks on university students and staff. These cases involved the arrest or detention of Palestinian scholars, often in direct relationship to their scholarship or roles as campus leaders. For example:

- On March 6, 2020, Israeli armed forces reportedly arrested five university students after conducting a raid on student dormitories at Birzeit University in Ramallah, West Bank. *International Middle East Media Center* reported that Israeli authorities accused the students of belonging to the Islamic Bloc, a student branch of Hamas movement.[1408]
- Scholars at Risk and local media reported that on June 4, 2020, Israeli security forces arrested the secretary of Birzeit University Student Council's planning committee from his home in Tulkarm. Few details about the student's detention were available at the time of writing; however, Scholars at Risk reported that students of Birzeit University had been increasingly targeted by Israeli security forces since 2019.[1409]
- On July 9, 2020, Israeli security forces reportedly detained a female student of Birzeit University from her home in Ramallah, West Bank, according to Scholars at Risk and local media. Few details of the arrest were available; however, Scholars at Risk reported a recent pattern of arrests of university students.[1410]
- Scholars at Risk and the Scientific American reported that on July 16, 2020, Israeli security forces detained an Al-Quds University professor at a checkpoint while he was returning home from work. The scholar was allegedly targeted for his posts on social media.[1411]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least one reported attack on a higher education facility. PCHR reported that on December 26, 2020, in Gaza City, airstrikes hit on or near the Eastern Gaza Directorate of Education training center, damaging its windows.[1412]

In 2021, GCPEA collected at least three reports of attacks on higher education students in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and Gaza City. The Birzeit University, located in the West Bank, reported in August 2021 that Israeli armed forces had repeatedly targeted its students throughout the 2020-2021 academic year and disrupted learning and violated academic freedom.[1413] For example:

- PCHR reported that on February 7, 2021, Israeli armed forces detained a male student at a checkpoint near Tulkarm while he was on his way to Abu Dis University.[1414]
- Local media sources reported that on July 14, 2021, Israeli armed forces arrested 33 students from Birzeit University who were traveling by bus near Turmas Aya.[1415] Birzeit University reported in early August 2021 that 14 students remained in detention without a hearing in military court.[1416]
- *The Al Mezan Center for Human Rights* reported that on September 22, 2021, Gaza Strip police forces allegedly assaulted Palestinian students who attended Al Azhar University in Gaza, as well as campus security. Some students were taken to the hospital for their injuries.[1417]

Attacks on higher education facilities increased in 2021, particularly within the context of renewed hostilities in Gaza. In May 2021, a human rights monitor reported that 12 higher education facilities were damaged within the context of renewed fighting in Gaza.[1418] GCPEA also identified four incident reports of attacks on university facilities during the hostilities, two occurring in the West Bank and two in Gaza. These were:

- On May 13, 2021, an airstrike damaged al Quds University and a vocational center located in al-Sheikh Zayid area of northern Gaza, according to PCHR.[1419]
- Local media sources reported that early on the morning of May 14, 2021, Israeli armed forces fired teargas and stun canisters at Al Quds University in Abu Dis, Al Quds, West Bank, resulting in a fire in one of the university's buildings.[1420]
- On May 14, 2021, *Reuters* and local media reported that airstrikes hit a multi-level building in Gaza city that housed education centers belonging to the Islamic University and other institutes. The building also had a bookstore and printing press.[1421]
- Scholars at Risk and media reported that around 100 Israeli security forces forcibly entered Birzeit University on December 14, 2021, where they damaged learning materials, physically assaulted campus security guards, and confiscated students' personal items.[1422]

THE PHILIPPINES

Attacks on education occurred in the context of continued armed conflict in several regions of the Philippines in 2020 and 2021. As in previous years, attacks on schools, students, and educators occurred sporadically, with Lumad schools and teachers in Mindanao particularly targeted.

Context

Armed hostilities continued in the Philippines in 2020 and 2021 in Mindanao and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), in the south, and in Negros and the Central Visayas region, in the center of the country, according to the UN and International Crisis Group.[1423] Meanwhile, violence related to the government's anti-illegal drug campaign increased nationwide.[1424]

Conflict between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and non-state armed groups, notably the New People's Army (NPA), continued to forcibly displace people in Mindanao in 2020 and 2021.[1425] The effects of the fighting, which continued during the Covid-19 pandemic, differentially impacted women and girls due to traditional gender roles and families prioritizing other members, according to *The New Humanitarian*.[1426] Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the UN reported that violence against human rights leaders and Lumad and other Indigenous communities rose in the context of the anti-communist insurgency campaign in Mindanao.[1427]

Throughout the reporting period, the Philippine government and armed forces labeled some individuals and organizations as "communist," which limited freedom of expression and led to harassment and attacks, according to rights organizations and the UN.[1428] In January 2021, the government named 18 universities and colleges as recruitment sites for the NPA.[1429] In the same month, the Department of National Defense ended a 32-year accord with the University of the Philippines which had prohibited military and police presence on campuses without prior notification, a policy ostensibly aimed to safeguard academic activities.[1430] Additionally, the July 2020 Anti-Terrorism Law allowed police or military detention without a warrant for 14 days; Amnesty International described the law as overly broad and a risk to human rights activists.[1431]

Violence and conflict affected children and hindered access to education.[1432] Between June 2016 and April 2020, 73 children were killed in the anti-illegal drug campaign, according to the Commission on Human Rights,[1433] although local human rights organizations reported over 100 children killed.[1434] Human Rights Watch found that the health and wellbeing of thousands of children deteriorated due to the anti-illegal drug campaign, which included the killing of parents. The trauma and loss of family caused many children to leave school.[1435] Children from the indigenous Lumad group were particularly affected in 2020; 23 Lumad schools were forcibly closed, by closure orders, permit non-renewal, or destruction by presumed paramilitaries, according to the Save our Schools (SOS) Network.[1436]

The government closed primary and secondary schools in March 2020 in response to Covid-19.[1437] In October 2020, schools initiated distance learning for more than 24.7 million students, but in-person learning did not resume.[1438] In November 2021, the Department of Education announced that 100 public schools located in low-risk areas started conducting classes in person.[1439]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least eight attacks on schools. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020* included two reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2019 and five such incidents in 2018.[1440] In addition, the UN verified 62 attacks on schools and education personnel between 2017 and 2019, most of which occurred in 2017.[1441]

Between July 2016 and September 2020, SOS Network documented 1,030 attacks on schools, students, and education personnel in Mindanao, including the forced closure of schools, aerial bombardment, threats, and indiscriminate firing.[1442] Since some of the attacks do not meet GCPEA's definitions, and the timeline spans several

years, the number is not included in the total attacks on schools in this report.

In 2020, the UN verified two attacks on schools in Bukidnon and Agusan del Sur provinces, committed by the NPA and an unidentified perpetrator.[1443] Separately, GCPEA identified three incidents of attacks on schools in 2020:

- Ten members of the Philippine Army and National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, dressed in civilian clothes, reportedly threatened village officials to close a school in Kisante barangay, Cotabato province, on May 26, 2020.[1444]
- On March 31, 2020, Philippine Army soldiers reportedly entered the grounds of the Community Technical College of Southern Mindanao's school farm, in Maco, Davao de Oro province. The institution's administration alleged the soldiers were trespassing.[1445]
- On August 26, 2020, around 50 members of a paramilitary group reportedly attacked a Lumad school in Sitio Laburon, Bukidnon province; they knocked down school walls and tore up textbooks.[1446] According to SOS Network, two school buildings and a teachers' cottage were destroyed.[1447]

In 2021, the UN verified five attacks on schools.[1448]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected approximately five reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately ten and nine reported attacks in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1449]

GCPEA identified four reported attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2020.[1450] For example:

- On April 5, 2020, Philippine military personnel and police officers reportedly stopped a student and his parent at a Covid-19 checkpoint, in Maco municipality, Davao de Oro province, then detained them at a police station for six hours, where they were threatened not to enroll in any Lumad schools next school year.[1451]
- Around May 2020, student-teacher volunteers associated with a Lumad education organization at the University of the Philippines Diliman reportedly received death threats via text and on social media claiming the volunteers were supporters of the communist NPA.[1452]
- On October 16, 2020, suspected non-state armed group members fired on teachers in Awasian barangay, Surigao del Sur province. According to local media, the primary school teachers were travelling to deliver distance learning modules to their students at the time of the attack; no teachers were reported harmed in the attack.[1453]

In 2021, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on students and teachers. On February 15, 2021, police detained 19 Lumad students and seven others including two teachers, after raiding a Lumad school, in Cebu City, Cebu province, according to Human Rights Watch and SOS Network.[1454] The school, located inside a Catholic university, had hosted displaced Lumad students through its "Bakwit" program for nearly a year after they fled conflict on Mindanao and were reportedly unable to return home during Covid-19 travel restrictions. Meanwhile, the government reported that the police and the Department of Social Welfare and Development rescued the children from NPA recruiters.[1455]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected sporadic reports of attacks on higher education. GCPEA collected no reported attacks on higher education in 2018 and 2019.[1456]

In 2020, GCPEA identified one reported attack on higher education. On June 5, 2020, police reportedly arrested at least three students holding a protest over the Anti-Terrorism Act on the campus of the University of the Philippines, in Cebu City, Cebu province, as reported by Scholars at Risk and local media. Police said the protesters violated Covid-19 restrictions on mass gathering, according to the news reports.[1457]

GCPEA collected one report of an attack on higher education in 2021. On October 3, 2021, two grenades were reportedly detonated at Bicol University in Legazpi City, Albay province. No injuries were reported; however, the campus was slightly damaged, including an administration building.[1458]

SOMALIA

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, the UN verified at least 78 attacks on schools in Somalia. In addition, at least 146 male students were abducted from schools, in some cases alongside their teachers. GCPEA observed a decline in the number of reported incidents of attacks on education as compared to prior reporting periods.

Context

Somalia's security context remained volatile during the reporting period due to continued armed conflicts between the non-state armed group Al-Shabaab, other armed groups, and Somali and international forces.[1459] Somalia's presidential and parliamentary elections, originally set for 2020 and postponed in 2021, caused tensions to escalate between the Somali National Army, armed clans, and militias, as well as causing mass protests and public upheaval.[1460]

Attacks on civilians and government workers continued during the reporting period. Al-Shabaab killed and injured civilians with improvised explosive devices and shelling in populated areas or in targeted assassinations of public officials.[1461] The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) reported at least 899 civilian casualties from late November 2020 to late July 2021, with Al-Shabaab responsible for the majority; this constituted a rise as compared the same period the prior year.[1462]

Conflict was compounded by other acute crises, including seasonal floods and a locust infestation during the 2020-2021 period.[1463] Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the government's public health measures, further increased economic insecurity and food instability.[1464] The UN reported that over 885,000 Somalis were newly displaced between January and August 2020, an increase of nearly 70 percent as compared to the same period in 2019.[1465] Approximately 3 million Somalis were internally displaced at the end of 2021, according to the UN.[1466]

Somali children were particularly affected by the continued conflict and humanitarian crisis in the country during the reporting period. In 2020, Al-Shabaab, government security forces, regional security forces, and clan militias recruited and used 1,716 children, an increase as compared to the prior year.[1467]. The UN also found that verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by nearly 80 percent in 2020 from 2019.[1468]

School closures in March 2020 in response to Covid-19 negatively impacted children in Somalia.[1469] Before the pandemic, over 3 million children were out of school due to conflict, poverty, and other barriers.[1470] After schools closed due to the pandemic, one million more children were left without access to education.[1471] Save the Children reported that school closures, along with limited awareness-raising activities, particularly impacted girls and may have led to an increased risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic labor, rape, and forced marriages.[1472] In March 2021, the Somali government launched an online learning program to support school students who had experienced extended periods of disruptions to their learning.[1473]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 84 reports of attacks on schools in Somalia from the UN, media, and ACLED. Several attacks involved the use of explosive weapons at or near schools. Verified attacks on schools declined slightly from earlier years. For example, the UN verified 64 attacks on schools in 2019[1474] and 77 attacks on schools and education personnel in 2018.[1475]

In 2020, the UN verified 53 attacks on schools in Somalia, of which 51 were attributed to Al-Shabaab, one to the Somali Police Force, and one to a clan militia.[1476] In addition, GCPEA identified three reported incidents of attacks on schools involving explosive devices but could not confirm whether these three attacks were included in the UN's reporting:

- On June 18, 2020, a roadside explosive device reportedly detonated around 150 meters from a Turkish-run school in the Hodan area of Mogadishu city, Banadir region. A member of the school's board reported to *Daily Sabah* news outlet that the facility was closed due to Covid-19 and that no students or staff were present at the time of attack meaning no injuries.[1477]
- *Voice of America* reported that on June 23, 2020, a suicide bomber allegedly detonated an explosive device outside a primary school in Mogadishu city, Banadir region. The primary school was located next to a military training academy and received support from the military academy, though the report did not further explain the relationship between the two institutions.[1478]
- On November 12, 2020, an IED planted by unknown actors reportedly exploded near 21 October school in Waberi district of Mogadishu, Banadir region. The attack targeted a local government official, according to reports by Garda and ACLED.[1479]

In 2021, the UN verified 30 attacks on schools.[1480] Media sources and the UN also reported an attack on a school in November 2021. On November 25, 2021, a bomb targeting a UN convoy detonated near Mocaasir Primary and Secondary School while class was in session.[1481] At least 13 students and four educators were injured during the attack and the school building and buses sustained significant damages. One student reported a brick hitting his head during a history lesson.[1482]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified sporadic reports of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel and at least 146 students and educators were abducted. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified over a dozen incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other personnel, some of which involved Al-Shabaab militants threatening or killing teachers who refused to use their curriculum.[1483]

In 2020, the UN verified that 146 boys were abducted from schools, sometimes along with their teachers.[1484] In addition, the UN verified two incidents of direct attacks on education personnel.[1485] In addition, GCPEA identified two reported incidents of attacks on school students and teachers:

- Airwars and *Al-Jazeera* reported that on March 10, 2020, an airstrike hit a mini-bus that was carrying a 13-year old student to school in Janaale, Lower Shabelle region. The blast allegedly killed him.[1486]
- ACLED reported that on May 3, 2020, an armed group shot a Quranic school teacher in Hawo-Cabdi village, Afgooye district, Lower Shabelle region.[1487]

GCPEA identified one reported incident of attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel in 2021. On October 16, 2021, in Hargeysa town, Woqooyi Galbeed region, students at a secondary school demonstrated against a change in school administration. The local police shot in the air to disperse the group and arrested students after they threw stones at police officers.[1488]

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, armed forces and armed groups sporadically used schools for military purposes. This trend remained constant with the period covered in *Education under Attack 2020*, when the UN verified only one incident of the military use of a school in 2019.[1489]

In 2020, the UN reported one case of the military occupation of a school between February and May.[1490] In 2021, the UN verified the military use of three schools.[1491]

SOUTH SUDAN

Fighting continued in South Sudan in 2020 and 2021, despite the signing of peace accords and formation of a transitional government. Attacks on, and military use of, schools declined slightly compared to previous years. GCPEA also identified two reports of attacks on higher education.

Context

In February 2020, the South Sudanese government and main armed opposition group, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), established a transitional government under the 2018 peace accords.[1492] That same month, President Salva Kiir announced the return to the ten-state system, including three Administrative Areas, which eased a stalled peace process but led to the removal of local government officials from their posts and created disruptions in political, social, and economic relations across South Sudan.[1493] Despite the peace accords and formation of the transitional government, fighting periodically surged in 2020 and 2021.[1494]

In 2020, the UN documented over 1,100 violent events, an increase compared to the previous year, and which affected over 5,800 civilians, and included sexual violence and the killing of children.[1495] In 2021, the UN reported a decrease in the number of violent events and harm against civilians generally, but identified an increase in violence perpetrated by militias against civilians in the Tambura area of Western Equatoria.[1496] In the Equatoria region, in the south, the National Salvation Front (NAS), a non-signatory to the peace process, fought against the government's South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF), demanding increased political autonomy for Equatoria, according to the International Crisis Group.[1497] In that context, the UN found that NAS abducted men, women, and children to serve in their ranks in Central Equatoria state, and SSPDF soldiers committed sexual violence against women and girls.[1498] In the northeast, *The New Humanitarian* reported increased inter-communal violence in Pibor and Jonglei states in 2021, tied to national politics and disputes over resources including grazing land.[1499]

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reported that the National Security Service arbitrarily detained, tortured, and forcibly disappeared journalists, activists, and government critics during the reporting period.[1500] Amnesty International also reported that security service agents maintained networks at Juba University.[1501]

South Sudan experienced several humanitarian crises during the reporting period, including flooding, food insecurity, and the Covid-19 pandemic.[1502] Flooding damaged, prevented access to, or caused the closure of around 400 schools in 2020 and over 500 schools in 2021.[1503] The UN reported that over 8.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including more than 4.5 million children.[1504]

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, approximately 2.2 million children were out of school in South Sudan.[1505] The education of two million additional students was disrupted during school closures which began in March 2020 to prevent the spread of the virus.[1506] The government resumed candidate classes in October 2020,[1507] then reopened all schools in May 2021.[1508] Oxfam found that girl students, many of whom were subjected to forced marriage, gender-based violence, or domestic work during school closures, experienced difficulties returning to school after they reopened.[1509]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected 11 reported incidents of attacks on schools. The number of reported attacks declined slightly compared to previous years, when GCPEA identified approximately ten and 18 reported attacks on schools in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1510]

In 2020, GCPEA identified three reported incidents of attacks on schools, consisting of arson and looting. In addition, the UN Mine Action Service assessed primary schools in Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, in 2020, to remove and destroy explosive ordnance and ammunition, as well as turn over the land around the schools for safe use.[1511] Examples of attacks included:

- On August 16, 2020, a school vehicle was burned in Lobonok area, Central Equatoria.[1512]
- In August 2020, assailants reportedly looted Salaam Primary School in Yei tow, Central Equatoria state, and burned down the school's office. According to media reports, textbooks and other learning materials were taken from the school, which was closed at the time due to Covid-19 prevention measures.[1513]
- On December 31, 2020, unidentified assailants reportedly raided a primary school in Rombur village, Central Equatoria state. According to local media outlet *Juba Monitor*, school materials were looted in the attack.[1514]

In 2021, GCPEA gathered eight incident reports of attacks on schools, from media, UN, and NGO reporting.[1515] Attacks involved, arson, looting, crossfire, and explosive weapons. For instance:

- According to Save the Children and news reports, unidentified assailants looted a school in Eastern Equatoria State on June 20, 2021, killing a security guard and stealing learning kits. No children were present at the time of the attack.[1516]
- On July 4, 2021, an armed group looted Liech Primary School in Rubkona internally displaced people camp in Unity state, stealing learning materials and damaging six classrooms.[1517]
- On July 8 and 9, 2021, at least two schools were damaged and looted in Marial Lou town, Tonj North county, Warrap state, during fighting between groups of armed youth, according to the UN and news reports.[1518]
- On November 3, 2021, a grenade explosion at an out-of-use school in Ayod county, Jonglei state, killed three children and wounded seven others, according to local media outlet *Radio Tamazuj*.[1519]

Military use of schools and universities

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified at least ten reported instances of the military use of schools. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2020* included 20 and 35 reports of military use in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1520]

The UN verified the use of ten schools by SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO in 2020.[1521] Also in 2020, the UN Mine Action Service surveyed a primary school in Bentiu, Unity state, which had been used as a military garrison, in order to remove explosive ordnance.[1522] Separately, GCPEA gathered four reports of the military use of schools in 2020, some of which may overlap with the UN-verified incidents:

- Around January 1, 2020, government forces which had been occupying Jambo primary school in Mugwo County, Yei River state, reportedly vacated the institution, according to the county commissioner in an interview with local media outlet *Radio Tamazuj*.[1523]
- The UN reported that, on January 7, 2020, SSPDF and Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition soldiers used a school in Kalyak, Unity, to host police forces.[1524]
- Sometime between June 1 and early August 2020, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction occupied a school in Maban county, Upper Nile state, according to the UN.[1525]
- In an offensive on Lasu town, in Yei River state, in December 2019, SSPDF soldiers occupied Lasu primary school, as well as injuring civilians and burning churches, according to the UN.[1526] The soldiers reportedly continued to partially occupy the primary school through 2020 and into late 2021, creating fear in students who attended classes there.[1527]

In 2021, the UN verified the use of nine schools.[1528] Between June and August of that year, the UN verified the occupation of two schools, one in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state by SPLM/A-IO, and another in Central Equatoria state by SSPDF.[1529] In September and October 2021, GCPEA identified two cases of military use, which may overlap with the UN-verified incidents:

- For several weeks around September and October 2021, SSPDF soldiers occupied a primary school in Tambura town, Western Equatoria state. Amnesty International documented that the soldiers used the school as a barracks during fighting, until government representatives negotiated with them to vacate the premises.[1530]
- SSPDF forces used a primary school in Yei town, Central Equatoria state, as a barracks in October 2021. Parents and the community transferred their children from the school for fear of the soldiers harassing students.[1531]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on higher education. Higher education attacks appeared to remain constant with 2018 and 2019, when GCPEA identified one attack each year.[1532].

In 2020, GCPEA identified two reported attacks on higher education. Of these, one event directly targeted a higher education facility and the other affected university students:

- On June 20, 2020, alleged SSPDF soldiers looted non-governmental organizations housed inside a Christian college in Romogi, Central Equatoria state, as reported by local media outlet *Radio Tamazuj*.[1533]
- On November 23, 2020, security forces reportedly injured ten students and arrested four students protesting at the University of Juba, in Juba, Central Equatoria state. International media outlet *Voice of America* reported the students protested over the expulsion of some of their peers from the university.[1534]

SUDAN

Sporadic violence continued to impact education in Sudan during the 2020-2021 reporting period. GCPEA identified at least ten reports of both attacks on schools and the military use of schools, consistent with the previous reporting period.

Context

In 2020, Sudan began a transition to democratic rule following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019.[1535] In October 2020, the transitional government signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the Sudan Revolutionary Front,[1536] an alliance of armed political groups, although the Sudan Liberation Army led by Abdul Wahid Al-Nur (SLA-AW) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz El Hilu withheld from signing the agreement.[1537] Both armed groups maintained soldiers and weapons and were opposed to the dominance of the military in the transitional government.[1538] SPLM-N continued to control areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, although United Nations humanitarian agencies were able to enter them for the first time in a decade.[1539] Sporadic violence continued in several areas despite the peace agreement, such as in Darfur where inter-communal fighting killed at least 250 people in January 2021, including three humanitarian workers and at least ten children,[1540] and forced at least 100,000 civilians to flee from internally displaced person camps.[1541]

On October 25, 2021, the military led a coup to remove Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, terminating the transitional government and putting the 2020 peace agreement at risk, according to the UN and media reports.[1542] Human Rights Watch reported that protests broke out across the country, which lasted until the end of the reporting period.[1543]

Protests continued during the reporting period, many related to the cost of living in 2020 and 2021, and then related to the coup.[1544] Human Rights Watch reported that the Central Reserve Police, the Rapid Support Forces, and the Sudan Armed Forces used excessive and lethal force against protesters in October 2020 in eastern Sudan, killing seven and injuring around 25,[1545] and again in May 2021, killing two and injuring over 30, when protesters were commemorating victims of past repression.[1546] In late 2021, Sudanese security forces used teargas and grenades against protesters in Khartoum and other cities including Omdurman and Bahri, during several months of nationwide anti-coup protests in which protesters were killed.[1547]

Several humanitarian crises affected children and their access to education during the reporting period, including flooding and food insecurity. According to the Sudan Education Cluster, severe flooding damaged 559 schools and another 63 were used by flood-affected displaced persons as shelter, in mid-2020.[1548] In 2021, the UN reported that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased to 13.4 million, representing over a quarter of the population;[1549] 7.4 million of those in need were children.[1550] In December 2021, the UN reported more than 3 million internally displaced persons in Sudan.[1551]

The government closed schools in March 2020 to prevent the spread of Covid-19, affecting 8.1 million students; in addition, 3.6 million were out of school before the pandemic.[1552] School reopenings began in January 2021 but were delayed in some states due to insecurity.[1553] At least seven Sudanese universities suspended classes after October 2021 citing safety concerns.[1554]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least ten reports of attacks on schools. In comparison, the UN verified six attacks on schools in 2019 and 14 attacks in 2018.[1555]

In 2020, the UN verified four attacks on schools in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei, and six in Darfur; in most cases, the perpetrator was unknown.[1556]

In March 2021, the UN reported that 20 schools had been recently damaged or destroyed in West Darfur,[1557] al-

though it was not clear whether the destruction was conflict-related and so the number was not included in the total count of attacks on schools for this reporting period.

Separate from attacks on schools, 26 schools were used as shelters by persons displaced due to communal conflicts in West Darfur in January 2021.[1558] The schools had chairs, teachers' office furniture, doors, and windows damaged, as well as school meals and learning materials looted. Some schools were damaged beyond repair.[1559]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately six reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, all in 2021. After the decline in reports in 2020, the number of reported attacks on school students and staff in 2021 returned to a similar level as in *Education under Attack 2020*, which included six attacks in 2019 and three in 2018. In both reporting periods, most of the attacks were related to protest repression by police or paramilitary forces.[1560]

In 2021, GCPEA collected approximately six reports of attacks on school students and education personnel from news sources.[1561] For example:

- Around February 23, 2021, police used teargas to disperse demonstrators, including teachers and disabled persons, in Kassala city, Kassala state. Demonstrators were protesting that schools for the disabled had still not reopened after Covid-19 closures, even though other schools had opened two months earlier, as reported by local media outlet *Radio Dabanga*.[1562]
- After the military coup on October 25, 2021, government officials reportedly detained directors from the Education Ministry, in addition to directors from the Ministries of Health and Social Development, Finance, and Urban Planning, in Ed Daein city, East Darfur state.[1563]
- On November 7, 2021, teacher committees reportedly protested outside the Ministry of Education in Khartoum city and state, demanding the reinstatement of former education officials, who were removed after the coup. Local media outlet *Radio Dabanga* reported that military forces used teargas against protesters and detained at least 36.[1564]
- On November 11, 2021, government authorities detained 14 teachers affiliated with the South Darfur Teachers' Committee and the Education Ministry, including several directors of secondary schools, according to local media outlet *Radio Dabanga*.[1565]

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least 11 incidents of military use of schools during the reporting period. This number represents a slight increase compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified four and two reports of military use in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1566]

In 2020, the UN verified eight instances of military use of schools by government security forces, seven of which occurred in Darfur.[1567]

On June 14, 2020, Human Rights Watch and local media reported that Sudan's Rapid Support Forces occupied a girls' school to use it as a training base. The school was closed at the time to limit the spread of Covid-19. The soldiers reportedly continued to use the school after the new term began on July 2, 2020, preventing students from resuming classes.[1568]

In 2021, GCPEA received reports of three schools occupied by Rapid Support Forces which were later vacated.[1569]

Attacks on Higher Education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on higher education, all in 2021 and all attacks on students and personnel rather than higher education facilities. This is a reduction in reported attacks as compared to *Education under Attack 2020*, which included 15 and 11 reported attacks on higher education in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1570]

In 2021, GCPEA identified three attacks on higher education students and academics:

- On August 31, 2021, Central Darfur state security forces reportedly shot live ammunition at protesting students from the University of Zalingei in Zalingei town, Central Darfur state. According to Scholars at Risk and international media outlet *University World News*, the students demonstrated against the government's refusal to turn over a former UN peacekeeping force building to the University to use as a dorm. The forces allegedly killed one student and injured four others.[1571]
- On October 7, 2021, students protested over the lack of electricity and water at the University of Khartoum, in Khartoum city and state. Police allegedly fired teargas into the crowd. No fatalities were reported.[1572]
- On October 26, 2021, military forces allegedly stormed female dormitories at Khartoum University in Khartoum city and state. The forces allegedly beat the students and expelled them from the dorms.[1573]

SYRIA

GCPEA identified over 85 reported attacks on schools during the 2020-2021 period, with most incidents reported in Idlib and Aleppo in early 2020. In northeast Syria, de facto authorities detained dozens of teachers for using the national curriculum, or for the purposes of forced conscription. Attacks on education declined during the 2020-2021 reporting period as hostilities declined.

Context

Armed conflict continued in Syria during the 2020-2021 reporting period. Hostilities decreased early in the reporting period as the Syrian government regained significant territorial control,[1574] and following a March 2020 ceasefire agreement between Turkey and Russia.[1575] However, shelling and airstrikes continued in Idlib governorate throughout 2020 and 2021[1576] and escalated from June 2021, which led to civilian causalities[1577] and the largest population displacement in northwest Syria since the start of the ceasefire. In 2020-2021, Idlib governorate remained primarily under the control of non-state armed groups.[1578] Human Rights Watch documented that in battles for control over Idlib, Syrian and Russian armed forces deliberately attacked civilian objects using banned weapons in early 2020.[1579]

In northeast Syria, the Kurdish-led armed group Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), supported by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), controlled areas in Deir-ez-Zor, Raqqa, and Al Hasaka governorates and continued to fight against the Islamic State (IS) during the 2020-2021 reporting period.[1580] ACLED reported an increase in alleged IS attacks in eastern Syria in late 2020.[1581] In addition, SDF battled Syrian government forces and Turkish-backed pro-government armed groups in the region.[1582] The Independent International Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Syria reported that parties to conflict had arbitrarily arrested tens of thousands of Syrians and subjected detainees, including children, to torture and sexual violence since the beginning of the conflict and through 2020.[1583]

In 2020, the Syrian pound plummeted in value, deepening the economic crisis.[1584] Rising food prices and unemployment due to Covid-19 contributed to a record high number of 12.4 million Syrians facing food insecurity in 2020, according to the World Food Program.[1585] The UN reported that conflict, economic crisis, and the pandemic disproportionately affected women and girls, including an increase in gender-based violence.[1586] Over half of Syria's population remained internally displaced or were refugees in 2021, according to the UN.[1587]

In 2020, the UN estimated that 2.5 million children were out of school in Syria, and that more than one-third of schools had been damaged or destroyed due to attacks since the beginning of the conflict.[1588] In an assessment conducted in December 2020, Save the Children found that two out of three children in northern Syria were out of school, many forced to abandon their studies so they could support their families by working.[1589] In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19, schools in Syria closed from March 14 to September 13, 2020, though localized closures occurred after September 2020 and throughout the reporting period.[1590] In northeast Syria, de facto authorities enforced a local curriculum in some schools, affecting students' ability to obtain diplomas recognized in government-controlled areas, according to the UN.[1591] In the northwest, teachers' strikes in early 2021 further destabilized the education system; over 6,000 teachers had not received salary payments for over a year at the time of striking.[1592]

Attacks on Schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 85 incidents of attacks on schools in Syria. This marked a decline from previous years. For example, in *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA identified over-260 incidents of attacks on schools in 2018 and 2019.[1593]

In 2020, the UN verified 61 attacks on education, 90 percent of which occurred in northwest Syria, and most in the first quarter of the year, which were largely perpetrated by government or pro-government forces.[1594] UN-verified reports of attacks on schools and school personnel declined by nearly half in 2020 as compared to 2019.[1595] Similarly, GCPEA collated around 60 reported incidents of attacks on schools in Syria from UN, NGO, and media sources. As in 2019, Idlib continued to be the governorate most affected by attacks on schools in 2020; GCPEA identified over 35 reported incidents of shelling or airstrikes there, most of which occurred during a period of intense fighting between January and March 2020.[1596] However, the frequency of attacks in Idlib sharply declined compared to 2019, when over 130 reported incidents of air-launched or ground-launched strikes were recorded.[1597] This decrease may have occurred due to the abovementioned reduced fighting after a ceasefire between Turkey and Russia in March 2020. In 2020, GCPEA also identified reports of at least 15 attacks on schools in Aleppo,[1598] most of which involved airstrikes or ground-launched shelling.

Reported incidents of attacks on schools in Idlib and Aleppo governorates in 2020 included:

- On February 3, 2020, an airstrike hit Atarib School for Boys in Atarib, Jebel Saman district, Aleppo governorate, according to the UN and a local human rights monitor.[1599] The attack reportedly damaged the building and furniture.
- On February 4, 2020, OCHA, Airwars, and a local human rights monitor reported that heavy shelling struck a school in Afrin town, Aleppo governorate, while classes were taking place.[1600] OCHA, ACLED, and the human rights monitor reported that the attack allegedly injured eight students, and Airwars and the human rights monitor reported that the school's building and furniture were damaged during the attack. Two schools were damaged in the attack, according to Airwars, however GCPEA could not confirm this at the time of writing.[1601]
- Save the Children and local organization Hurras Network reported that on February 25, 2020, shelling struck ten schools in Idlib governorate, killing at least three teachers and injuring dozens of children and around seven teachers.[1602] The UN verified eight attacks on schools and seven teacher casualties in Idlib city on that day.[1603] Several of the schools sustained damage and reportedly closed following the attacks, affecting the education of thousands of students; for instance, Human Rights Watch reported that cluster munitions struck the yards of Bra'am secondary school and Khalid Sha'ar primary school in Idlib city at around 8:30 a.m., killing three teachers and injuring six, and damaging both schools. The schools, which served a total of 1,400 students, closed for several days.[1604] Human Rights Watch and the UN also reported that the shelling destroyed Mounib Qamisheh primary school, a facility that served 1,200 students.[1605]
- Save the Children and the UN reported that on November 4, 2020, shelling and fragments struck Al Hikmah Education Complex in Kafraya, Ariha district, Idlib governorate, while approximately 150 students were in attendance. No students or teachers were injured or killed.[1606]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least nine reported incidents of attacks on schools in Al Hasaka, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs, and Quneitra governorates, most of which involved improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or other explosives.[1607] For example:

- On May 1, 2020, an explosion occurred outside Homs Palestine Refugee Camp, in Homs governorate. Fragments from the blast hit the Al Shajara school, located inside the camp and operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), damaging part of its roof, according to UNRWA.[1608]
- The UN, ACLED, *RT* News, and a local human rights monitor reported that on June 21, 2020, a roadside IED detonated next to Mahattah al-Thaniyah school in Dar'a city and governorate. The blast allegedly damaged the school's building and fence and killed two children, though the report did not specify whether the children were students at the school.[1609]

In 2021, the UN verified 28 attacks on schools.[1610] In the same year, GPCEA recorded at least 25 reports of attacks on schools in Syria.[1611] These reports, which came from the UN, NGOs, media, and a human rights monitor, oc-

curred primarily in Idlib governorate and involved 19 reports of airstrikes or ground-launched strikes, three reports of small arms fire, and three reports of an IED or UXO affecting a school, and one raid by an alleged armed group. Examples of incidents included:

- On January 14, 2021, the UN verified that a rocket struck Al-Sabbagh school in Ariha city, Idlib governorate, damaging the building. The UN, and a civil society monitor, did not report any casualties.[1612]
- The UN and a human rights monitor reported that on March 21, 2021, fighting in Ariha city, Idlib governorate, affected a school. The human rights monitor reported that artillery shells struck in the yard of the Jeel al Ghad school and damaged its yard, fence, and building.[1613] The UN reported that the attack caused all schools in Ariha to close for a day and subsequently move to distance learning for an unspecified duration.[1614]
- On June 9, 2021, the UN verified that three rockets struck Abrar camp in Suwwaghiya city, Idlib governorate, destroying Abrar school.[1615]
- On July 3, 2021, a local human rights monitor reported that shelling hit Tishreen School in Ariha city, Idlib, and partially destroyed buildings and furniture.[1616] ACLED reported that the attack killed four children.[1617]
- On September 2, 2021, a local human rights monitor reported that a shell allegedly hit the Rasem al Omar Secondary School Ein Laruz town in Idlib governorate. and partially destroyed the external fence, as well as furniture inside the building.[1618]
- On September 5, 2021, the UN verified that more than one rocket struck an educational establishment in Ma'arrat Misrin town in Idlib governorate. The rocket destroyed the school building. This attack reportedly killed six children.[1619]
- On October 20, 2021, shelling in Ariha city, Idlib governorate allegedly landed near Abdulhamid Ghunaymi school and destroyed some of the school buildings. The attack reportedly occurred when students were traveling to school. ACLED reported that the attack allegedly killed 12 people, including students and teachers.[1620]
- On December 13, 2021, ACLED and a local human rights monitor reported that armed forces shelled a school in the village of Maarzaf in Idlib governorate. The school allegedly sustained damages including to its fence and gate.[1621]

Although incidents of attacks on schools declined during the reporting period, explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to affect schools, according to the UN. In March 2021, the UN reported that ERW affected safe access to schools and other civilian infrastructure across conflict-affected areas of the country.[1622] The ICRC also noted that in Syria, children faced a high risk of landmines and ERW on the way to and from school.[1623] In addition, Syrian government forces reportedly established checkpoints in Manbij city, Aleppo governorate, and prevented educational supplies from reaching displaced students north of Aleppo.[1624]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 17 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Attacks increased slightly as compared to 2018 and 2019, when GCPEA identified around three attacks on school students and staff per year.[1625] In particular, GCPEA identified an increase in arrests, threats, or intimidation of students and teachers, primarily in Al Hasaka, Deir-ez-Zor, and Raqqa governorates.

In 2020, GCPEA identified three incidents of attacks on school teachers and students, as well as anecdotal evidence of similar attacks.[1626] In one example, the UN reported that armed groups in Raqqa and other governorates threatened and harassed students traveling from conflict affected areas to government-controlled areas to take exams in June 2020.[1627] For example, Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ), a local human rights monitor, reported that on June 17, 2020, an armed group beat and detained students traveling from Idlib governorate to Hama governorate to take exams. At least two students were held for several hours during which the armed group shaved their heads.[1628]

In addition, on September 13, 2020, *Syria Times* reported that members of an armed group beat and threatened students and teachers who were protesting the group's use of Martyr Hanna Atallah High School in Al Hasaka town and governorate.[1629]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 14 incidents of attacks on school students, teachers and other education personnel.[1630] Of these, two involved the alleged targeted killing of teachers and nine incidents involved the arrest of school teachers in Al Hasaka governorate. According to media reports and the UN, local authorities that controlled areas of Al Hasaka governorate mandated the use of their own curriculum in place of the Syrian government's program.[1631] Between January 1 and February 15, 2021, local authorities reportedly detained dozens of teachers who continued to teach the government curriculum, according to a local human rights monitor.[1632] The UN reported that in February 2021 alone, de facto authorities arrested 23 teachers for teaching the government curricula.[1633] Some teachers and students who protested the detention of teachers were also reported to be arrested or attacked. Examples included:

- On January 19, 2021, local human rights organizations and media reported that SDF security forces detained seven teachers from Darbasiyah town, Ras al Ain district, Al Hasaka governorate, for teaching the Syrian government curriculum.[1634]
- A local human rights organization and a media outlet also reported that on January 20, 2021, in response to the arrest of teachers the previous day, school teachers and students held a protest in Darbasiyah, Ras al Ain district, Al Hasaka governorate. Local security forces reportedly dispersed the protesters, beat several students, and arrested 17 students, some of whom were allegedly minors.[1635] The UN reported that all but one of the detained teachers were released.[1636]
- A local human rights monitor and ACLED reported that local authorities arrested five teachers from Amuda city, Quamishli district, Al Hasaka governorate, on February 6, 2021.[1637] Also in Amuda city, the UN reported that on February 7 and 8, 2021, armed parties arrested and released nine teachers who were accused of teaching the government curriculum.[1638]
- On August 7, 2021, local authorities arrested five teachers in al-Malikeyyeh, Al Hasaka governorate, for allegedly teaching the government curriculum, according to local media.[1639]

Also in 2021, the Syrian Democratic Forces began to explicitly target and forcibly conscript teachers, according to local media reports. A local human rights organization reported that SDF allegedly arrested 34 teachers in order to conscript them into the armed group between January 1 and February 15, 2021. The organization also estimated that around 550 teachers had been removed from their posts after refusing to join the ranks of the armed group.[1640]

In 2021, school students also experienced interferences to their education that may have constituted threats. In June 2021, the UN reported that many students in northwest Syria did not travel across front lines to take final exams in areas under government control out of fear of harassment, conscription, or arrest.[1641] Also in northwest Syria, on September 16, 2021, local authorities used force to disperse a student protest in Ain al Arab, Aleppo; students were demanding that local authorities permit teaching of the government curriculum, according to ACLED and local media.[1642]

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified over 35 incidents of military use of schools and universities. In 2019, the UN verified reports of 32 incidents of military use of schools in Syria, primarily by non-state armed group People's Protection Units (YPG), government forces, or factions of SDF,[1643] and in 2018 the UN verified 24 incidents of military use of schools.[1644]

In 2020, the UN verified 31 cases of military use of schools in Syria, three-quarters of which occurred in northeast Syria.[1645] Also in 2020, the UN verified that government forces had vacated 12 schools previously used in 2019 or the first half of 2020.[1646] Among other military purposes, the UN documented that parties to conflict used some schools as detention centers throughout Syria between 2011 and 2020.[1647]

In 2020, GCPEA identified four reports of military use of schools, including the following:

- In May 2020, the UN reported that SDF used the Yarmouk School, located in Karayji, Deir-ez-Zor governorate, for military purposes while it was closed during Covid-19 confinement measures.[1648]
- STJ reported that in July 2020, an armed group was using a primary school in Gharanij town, Abu Kamal district, Deir-ez-Zor governorate, as an office for its Anti-Terrorism Department.[1649]
- A local human rights organization reported that state security forces raided Abdul Fattah Qazziz school in Ma'aret al Numan city, Al Ma'ra district, Idlib governorate, on September 10, 2020. The forces allegedly looted the school and used it as a training center.[1650]
- In September 2020, *Syria Times* and ACLED reported that an armed group occupied Martyr Hanna Atallah High School in Al Hasaka city and governorate and barred students and staff from entering.[1651]

In 2021, the UN verified 17 cases of military use of schools.[1652] Also in 2021, GCPEA identified at least six reported incidents of military use of schools by armed groups in Daraa. In October 2021, local news sources reported that armed groups continued to use six schools in Lajat district, Daraa governorate as military headquarters, schools which they have been using since 2018. The reports noted that at least one of the schools was partially operational for education purposes while the military occupied another part of the building.[1653]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least five incidents of attacks on higher education. During the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA also identified sporadic incidents of attacks on higher education, with only two reported incidents in 2019 and three in 2018.[1654]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least three incidents of attacks on higher education facilities in Aleppo and Damascus governorates, from the UN and a human rights monitor. These incidents involved shelling or other explosive weapons and damaged at least two of the facilities:

- A local human rights organization reported that a shell struck near Ittihad Private University in Aleppo city, Jebel Saman district, Aleppo governorate, on January 12, 2020, damaging the facility's building and furniture.[1655]
- The UN reported that on February 1, 2020, several ground-launched strikes hit the University of Aleppo in Aleppo governorate .[1656]
- On February 25, 2020, the UN reported that an IED detonated inside a car near Al-Sham Private university in Damascus city and governorate. The report listed two civilian casualties but did not specify whether they attended or worked at the university.[1657]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least two attacks on higher education personnel and one on a higher education facility:

- Local media and a human rights monitor reported that on April 7, 2021, residents near al Tawama village, Idlib governorate, recovered the dead body of university professor who also served as the Minister of Higher Education for the de facto administration in northwest Syria. The professor had gone missing on April 3, 2021, while he was on his way to work. His body showed signs of torture. [1658]
- On July 21, 2021, artillery shells struck a compound housing a teacher training institute in Bara town, Jabal al Zaweya, Idlib governorate, according to a human rights monitor. The building sustained minor damages.[1659]

In 2021, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative also released a report documenting direct violence against medical and nursing educators and students in northwest Syria.[1660] These attacks, along with the conflict's other effects on the healthcare education and provision system, caused a reported shortage in medical professionals in non-government-controlled areas.

THAILAND

Attacks on education continued in 2020 and 2021. Non-state armed groups targeted soldiers guarding teachers and schools in the conflict-affected southern provinces, placing educators, students, and education facilities at risk. The police also arrested student protesters during this reporting period.

Context

Armed conflict in Thailand's southern Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkhla provinces continued during the reporting period despite peace dialogues and decreasing violence in recent years, according to International Crisis Group and *The New Humanitarian*.[1661] In April 2020 the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), an ethnic Malay Muslim armed group with separatist ambitions, declared a unilateral ceasefire to allow humanitarian access and healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic.[1662] The Thai military did not accept the ceasefire and continued to carry out counter-insurgency operations. The unilateral ceasefire ended after Thai security forces killed three suspected BRN members in Pattani province in late April 2020.[1663] Since then, armed violence increased as insurgents attacked military and police convoys and posts in late 2020 and 2021, according to Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group.[1664] For instance, a roadside improvised explosive device (IED) was detonated in Chanae district, Narathiwat province, in September 2021, killing two police officers and injuring four others;[1665] in December 2021, an IED was installed outside an army base in Rueso district, Narathiwat province.[1666]

Thai police responded with excessive force to some protests demanding political reforms held by secondary and university students and youth, during this reporting period. In February 2020, Thailand's constitutional court dissolved the Future Forward Party and banned party executives from politics for ten years due to allegations of violating election laws, according to media and the Council on Foreign Relations.[1667] The party was popular among young people and gained 80 seats in parliament in the 2019 election.[1668] After the party's dissolution, Thai youth led protests against Prime Minister Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha's government, including on university campuses, demanding the government revise the constitution, hold new elections, reform the monarchy, reduce corruption, and end intimidation of government critics.[1669] Thai organization Thai Lawyers for Human Rights reported that police officers entered schools to intimidate students for participating in protests, including by photographing and questioning them.[1670] During off-campus protests, the police arrested student and youth leaders and used teargas and other measures of excessive force against protesters.[1671]

In March 2020, the government closed schools to limit the spread of Covid-19.[1672] Schools reopened in July 2020,[1673] but many closed again in January and April 2021 due to high virus rates.[1674]

In January 2020, BRN signed the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, which includes protections for education and a commitment to not recruit children during military operations.[1675] However, in early 2021, Human Rights Watch reported that the commitments had not yet been fulfilled.[1676]

Attacks on Schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately five reported attacks on schools. In comparison, GCPEA collected five reports of attacks on schools in 2019 and two in 2018. As in *Education under Attack 2020*, which covered 2017-2019, attacks on schools routinely involved explosive weapons.[1677]In 2020, GCPEA collected two reported incidents of attacks on schools in the southern provinces of Pattani and Yala:

- On February 17, 2020, unknown assailants reportedly detonated an IED at a school in Moo 3 village, Nong Chik district, Pattani province. According to *Bangkok Post*, the explosion left a hole in the concrete wall in front of the school but caused no injuries.[1678]
- *Thaiger* reported that on July 8, 2020, unidentified assailants shot a ranger volunteer in front of a school in Wang Phyaya sub-district, Yala province. The ranger was reportedly returning to the 41st paramilitary battalion and appeared not to be guarding the school or teachers at the time of the attack.[1679]

In 2021, GCPEA identified three reported attacks on schools, all in southern Narathiwat province:

- On February 13, 2021, unknown assailants reportedly entered Rueso Withaya School to throw a grenade over the wall into a police station parking area, where it exploded and damaged several vehicles, in Rueso Ok, Rueso district, Narathiwat province.[1680]
- On June 1, 2021, suspected non-state armed group members shot and killed an army ranger as he set up a checkpoint near a school in Tue Ngo village, Si Sakhon district, Narathiwat province, as reported by local media outlets. The assailants reportedly hid behind the school before carrying out the attack.[1681]
- On October 4, 2021, an unidentified assailant reportedly detonated a bomb near Su-Ngai Padi High School in Chue Rae village, Narathiwat province. No fatalities were reported.[1682]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected approximately six reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and staff. This is a decrease compared to *Education under Attack* 2020, which included five and ten reported attacks in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1683] As in the previous reporting period, many attacks affecting students and teachers involved the targeting of police or volunteer defense guards tasked with protecting teachers, students, and schools. Although these attacks targeted the police or guards, they put teachers and students at risk.

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately five reported attacks on school students, teachers, and staff.[1684] For example:

- The *Bangkok Post* reported that on July 14, 2020, unidentified assailants detonated an IED on a dirt road in Lapho village, Mae Lan district, Pattani province, targeting and killing an army ranger who was guarding teachers employed at Ban Khuan Plaeng Ngu School. No other casualties were reported.[1685]
- On August 13, 2020, alleged non-state armed group members reportedly detonated an IED along the road leading to Pakaluesong Primary School in Nong Chik district, Pattani province, targeting soldiers as they escorted teachers and students to the school. According to media outlets *Benar News* and *Bangkok Post*, one soldier was killed while others were wounded.[1686] Teachers and army rangers at the school have been threatened in the past as well, according to Human Rights Watch.[1687]
- On the same day, in a reportedly coordinated attack with the above-mentioned incident, an alleged non-state armed group detonated an IED along the road leading to Kalisa Primary School in Rangae district, Narathiwat province. Local media reported that the explosion targeted and killed one soldier and injured at least three others while they were guarding teachers en route to school.[1688] The two attacks on August 13, 2020, were reportedly the first such attacks since schools in the southern provinces reopened for in-person classes after Covid-19 closures.[1689]
- On October 9, 2020, alleged non-state armed group members reportedly fired at a group of soldiers and volunteer patrols guarding teachers in Bang Kao Thale village, Sai Buri district, Pattani province. A soldier and volunteer guard were reportedly injured in the attack.[1690]

In 2021, GCPEA collected one reported incident of an attack on school students. On January 16, members of the Bad Student group reportedly protested in front of the Ministry of Education in Bangkok. According to local media outlets, the students protested on Teachers' Day to draw attention to teachers' use of violence against students in classrooms. The police reportedly arrested at least two students then later released them that same day.[1691]

TURKEY

Attacks on higher education declined in 2020 but rose in 2021; over 500 students were arrested or detained for their involvement in education-related protests, many of which occurred at Boğaziçi University. Authorities detained dozens of school teachers during the period for accused links to "terrorist" organizations. In addition, several schools in southeast Turkey were used for military purposes and later attacked.

Context

Throughout the 2020-2021 reporting period, the Justice and Development (AKP) party, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, maintained its parliamentary majority in the country.[1692] During this time, authorities further consolidated power and targeted perceived opponents, according to Human Rights Watch.[1693] In some cases, Turkish authorities detained their perceived opponents, including members the Fethullah Gülen movement, sometimes through transnational renditions, according to Freedom House and the UN.[1694] As reported in *Education under Attack 2020*, the Turkish government accused Gülen, a US-based religious leader, of orchestrating a coup and designated his followers, including educators, as belonging to a "terrorist" organization.[1695]

In March 2021, the Turkish government withdrew from the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women And Domestic Violence, which protected women's rights and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LBGT) rights, according to Human Rights Watch.[1696] Some higher education students demonstrated in defense of LGBT rights on campuses during the reporting period.[1697]

In southeast Turkey and Iraq, Turkish forces engaged in military operations, including airstrikes and drones, against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) during the reporting period, according to ACLED.[1698] In addition, Turkish forces continued to occupy areas of northern Syria, according to Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts project (RULAC).[1699] In 2020 and 2021, Turkey continued to host over 3.6 million Syrian refugees, according to the UN.[1700]

The Covid-19 pandemic affected education during the reporting period, with some Turkish primary and secondary schools experiencing over a year of closures.[1701] A UN 2020-2021 Back To School Survey for refugee parents found that only 51 percent of respondents had access to distance learning platforms during school closures.[1702] Furthermore, during the reporting period, 400,000 refugee children remained out of school.[1703] At the university level, Turkish authorities continued to dismiss, investigate, or suspend academics, according to Scholars at Risk,[1704] and appointed rectors, instead of following established democratic campus election procedures.[1705]

Attacks on Schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified three reported incidents of attacks on schools. This trend remained consistent with previous years. GCPEA identified at least two reported attacks on schools in southeast Turkey in 2019.[1706]

In 2020, GCPEA identified at least three reported incidents of attacks on schools from media sources that were quoting the statements non-state armed groups.[1707] Reports attributed the attacks, which occurred in Istanbul and Batman provinces, to non-state armed groups. Examples included:

- Media sources reported that on May 2, 2020, members of an armed group detonated a remote explosive device at a girls' school dormitory in Esenyurt district, Istanbul. The dormitory, which sustained damages, was empty at the time of attack due to Covid-19 restrictions. A women's branch of the Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement militant group claimed the attack.[1708]
- On May 7, 2021, a militant group allegedly set fire to a private school dormitory in Gediz, Kütahya province. The attack damaged the building, which was not operational due to Covid-19 school closures.[1709]
- On August 6, 2020, an armed group allegedly set fire to a primary school in Bağlar neighborhood of Batman city. The attack damaged the building, according to media sources.[1710]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified three reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel that affected 30 educators and students.[1711] By comparison, GCPEA did not identify any such attacks in 2019, and three in 2018.[1712] Attacks on school teachers typically involved the arrest or detention of teachers working at schools associated with the Gülen movement, or who were members of opposition groups.

In 2020, GCPEA identified one reported incident of an attack that affected 26 school teachers. On November 26, 2020, Turkish authorities allegedly detained 26 teachers, and searched their homes and classrooms, in Diyarbakır province.[1713] The teachers, who were members of the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen), were allegedly held on "terrorist" charges.[1714]

In 2021, GCPEA identified two further reports of attacks on school teachers and students:

- Human Rights Watch and media sources reported that on May 31, 2021, Turkish and Kyrgyz authorities abducted an educator of Turkish-Kyrgyz nationality who directed a network of Gülen schools in Kyrgyzstan, and subsequently extrajudicially transferred him to Turkey; on July 5, 2021, Erdoğan released video footage of the teacher in detention in Turkey and announced that Turkish intelligence services had brought him to Turkey.[1715]
- Local media reported that on November 6, 2021, police allegedly arrested three school students who were protesting against the Council of Higher Education in Uskudar, Istanbul.[1716] Similar protests involving higher education students are described below.

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least seven cases of military use of schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period. This marked an increase as compared to previous years when GCPEA did not identify any such reports.

In 2020, GPCEA identified five reported cases of military use of schools from media sources quoting the statements of non-state armed groups.[1717] In the majority of cases, armed groups attacked Turkish police or security forces positioned at schools in Diyarbakır province in the southeast. Examples included:

- On January 15, 2020, a unit of special operations police officers were allegedly stationed inside a primary school in Baglar, Diyarbakır province. According to a statement to local media, members of an armed group attacked the police with improvised explosive devices (IEDs).[1718]
- On February 16, 2020, Turkish police forces were reportedly positioned in a primary school in Sur town, Diyarbakır province, when an armed group attacked them with three IEDs, according to a media source.[1719]
- Local media reported that on March 18, 2021, police were occupying the garden of a school in Bağlar town, Diyarbakır province, when an armed group attacked them with handmade explosives and small weapons. The attack allegedly killed or injured three police officers.[1720]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least two reported incidents of military use of schools in southeast Turkey:

- On February 14, 2021, special operations police stationed in a school in Yibo, Silvan, Diyarbakır province, were reportedly attacked by an armed group with sound bombs, according to a media source.[1721] Police allegedly retaliated with gunfire.
- A media source reported that on March 6, 2021, an armed group attacked a police unit that had stationed in a school in the Pazayeri area of Batman city.[1722]

Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified one report of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA did not collect any reports documenting such attacks.

Human Rights Watch and media sources reported that on January 5, 2021, police raided the home of two transgender female students who had joined student protests at Boğaziçi University a day earlier. Following violent arrest by the police, one student reported that police officers threatened her with rape during her detention and also stayed in a hospital room during a mandatory medical exam.[1723] As described in the following section, LBGT students prominently participated in higher education protests in January and February 2021.

Attacks on higher education

In 2020 and 2021, GCPEA identified over 30 reports of attacks on higher education that led to the injury or arrest of approximately 600 university students and personnel. By comparison, GCPEA identified reports indicating that around 150 university personnel and students were detained in 2018, and over 50 university students or personnel had been detained in 2019.[1724]

In 2020, GCPEA identified seven incidents of attacks on higher education students and one incident of an attack on a university building.[1725] The majority of these incidents involved the excessive use of force by police against student protesters, and led to the arrest or detention of nearly 80 students:

- Scholars at Risk and media sources reported that on January 2, 2020, university students peacefully protested against a new university policy reducing the number of subsidized student meals in front of an administrative building at Istanbul University, Fatih district, Istanbul. While some reports note that students followed police orders, police allegedly used batons and physical violence to disperse the protest.[1726]
- Local media sources reported that on March 4, 2020, students demonstrated against difficult living conditions for students, and to demand student loan forgiveness. Police allegedly dispersed the demonstration and arrested around 30 protesters.[1727]
- On December 23, 2020, university students held a protest in Çankaya, Ankara, demanding that authorities prioritize education funding in the 2021 annual budget, as well as decrying student loans during the pandemic. Police allegedly dispersed protesters and detained around five students.[1728]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least one reported incident of an attack on a university building. On July 11, 2020, a media source reported that a militant group carried out an arson attack on a car in the parking lot of a university in Izmir.[1729]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least 25 reported attacks on higher education affecting at least 440 students and personnel.[1730] In the majority of these incidents, police used excessive force against, or arbitrarily detained, university students and staff who were protesting education-related policies. Many protests related to the presidential appointments of two rectors at Boğaziçi University (BU) in January and August 20201 – Melih Bulu and Mehmet Naci İnci respectively – which bypassed established democratic norms for electing university rectors.[1731] Human Rights Watch noted that the lack of consultation in Bulu's appointment undermined academic freedom and university autonomy.[1732] Following Bulu's appointment, students and personnel of BU, along with other universities across the country, engaged in mass protests. In the protests, students and personnel expressed concern about his views on LGBT rights, and protests often involved students from BU's LGBT community.

On February 7, 2021, the Boğaziçi Solidarity Platform reported that at least 560 students had been detained, 25 sentenced to house arrest, and 10 arrested; charges included "degrading or provoking the public to hatred and hostility" and "resisting to prevent the fulfilment of duty."[1733] On April 19, 2021, prosecutors reportedly indicted 97 people who had participated in student protests in February, with prison terms of up to three years.[1734] Media sources reported in November 2021 that authorities had detained two BU students in solitary confinement for 49 days following a protest against Naci İnci in early October, and that another 12 students were on trial.[1735]

Examples of related protests include:

- Local and international media and Scholars at Risk reported that on January 4, 2021, hundreds of students and staff of BU protested in front of the campus against Melih Bulu's appointment. Police reportedly clashed with demonstrators and fired rubber bullets and tear gas. In the night following the demonstration, police arrested at least 24 students from their homes.[1736]
- On January 30, 2021, police arrested five students at BU for their involvement in an art exhibition that involved a piece of art that mixed Islamic imagery with LGBT imagery, and texts and imagery on gender norms. Police also raided a room used by a BU LGBT club and removed flags and books.[1737]
- On March 25, 2021, BU students, including LGBT students, held a demonstration outside campus, according to media reports and Scholars at Risk. Police detained at least 12 students, reportedly for holding LGBT flags. On March 26, 2021, a group of students then assembled to protest the earlier detentions, when police again dispersed the protest and arrested at least 25 students.[1738]
- Scholars at Risk and media sources reported that on August 23, 2021, police arrested eight students in Istanbul who were protesting the government's appointment of Naci İnci as the new rector of BU.[1739]
- On October 22, 2021, police allegedly arrested over 45 students at BU when they dispersed a protest of students and academics against the university's rector.[1740]

Police also used excessive force on students protesting a proposed policy to create gender-segregated universities. On February 16, 2021, female university students reportedly gathered in Cankaya, Ankara, to demonstrate against the government's proposal to create women's universities. Police intervened and detained ten female students, according to media reports.[1741]

Finally, GCPEA identified police interventions in two university student protests against the country's Council of Higher Education in Istanbul and Ankara in early November 2021. At least 20 students were arrested, and others injured due to the use of tear gas.[1742]

UKRAINE

Attacks on education continued in eastern Ukraine during the reporting period. Shelling and small arms fire damaged dozens of schools, and attacks on students and education staff continued, although at a reduced rate compared to previous years.

Context

The eight-year-old armed conflict in eastern Ukraine continued during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The 427-kilometer "contact line" divided Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts into Ukrainian government-controlled areas (GCA) on the west side, and non-government-controlled areas (NGCA), on the east side.[1743] The UN and International Crisis Group reported that fighting and casualties, already reduced relative to previous years, declined further after a strengthened ceasefire was negotiated in July 2020.[1744] However, ceasefire violations increased again throughout 2021, with five times as many violations in December 2021 than during the same month in 2020, according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM).[1745] In 2021, Russia positioned soldiers and equipment near the Ukrainian border.[1746]

Conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions affected 3.4 million people, including one million children, during the reporting period.[1747] The OSCE SMM confirmed 129 civilian casualties in 2020, including children, involving shelling, small arms fire, and mines.[1748] The same organization recorded 91 civilian casualties in 2021.[1749] According to the UN, mines and explosive remnants of war along the contact line put approximately two million people at risk,[1750] and harmed many children during the reporting period.[1751] Checkpoints and Covid-19 closures also severely restricted movement, sometimes dividing families between sides of the contact line, and preventing access to essential services.[1752] In 2021, the UN reported that approximately 1.5 million people were internally displaced in Ukraine.[1753]

Authorities closed schools and universities throughout the country in March 2020 to limit the spread of Covid-19,[1754] which affected over 600,000 children in the east, according to the UN.[1755] After intermittent openings in late 2020, schools reopened completely in January 2021; however, a rise in Covid-19 cases in September 2021 caused some schools to close or shift to distance learning.[1756]

Conflict affected access to education in Donetsk and Luhansk regions during the reporting period.[1757] The UN reported that children and teachers at 3,500 educational facilities in eastern Ukraine were affected by ongoing violence.[1758] While many schools were repaired after attack, some in close proximity to the contact line remained closed due to the risk of further damage in 2020,[1759] requiring some students to travel farther distances to attend class.[1760] According to the Ukraine Education Cluster, attacks on schools and closures due to military confrontations in 2020 negatively impacted students' mental health and wellbeing.[1761] Right to Education Initiative also reported that authorities on both sides attempted to use education to impart in children particular military, ideological, and patriotic points of view.[1762] Additionally, education records of students in the NGCA were not recognized in the GCA, which hindered further study, despite a nationwide campaign by universities to grant admission to students without education certificates from the GCA.[1763]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 30 reported incidents of attacks on schools. Shelling and small arms fire reportedly damaged approximately 25 schools. In comparison, in *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA collected reports of 16 attacks on schools in 2018, followed by an increase in 2019, with over 35 incidents.[1764]

The Education Cluster reported 15 instances of damage to schools in 2020, as well as the temporary closures of five schools due to conflict proximity in Tryokhizbenka and Novotoshkivske, Luhansk region (GCA) and Zolote-5, Luhansk region (NGCA).[1765] Of these, at least five incidents occurred in April 2020.[1766] These attacks were not included in the GCPEA total, however, to avoid double-counting. OSCE SMM also identified 2,500 ceasefire violations within one kilometer of schools in 2020.[1767] Finally, The UN reported that between the start of the conflict in March 2014 and September 2020, more than 750 schools were destroyed or damaged, including kindergartens.[1768]

In 2020, GCPEA identified approximately 17 reports of attacks on schools from the Education Cluster and OSCE SMM.[1769] The majority of attacks occurred in the first half of the year, for instance:

- The Education Cluster and OSCE SMM reported that around March 1, 2020, machine gun fire hit and damaged a school approximately 1.5 kilometers from the contact line in Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region (NGCA).[1770]
- On March 21, 2020, a blast from an unidentified weapon reportedly hit and damaged the same school in Oleksandrivka, Donetsk region (NGCA). According to the Education Cluster, fragments from the attack injured a 17-year-old girl in the schoolyard.[1771]
- On April 2, 2020, shelling damaged School No. 67 in Donetsk region (NGCA) along with several nearby houses, as reported by the Education Cluster.[1772]
- The Education Cluster reported that on April 28, 2020, shelling hit and damaged a school in Zolote 5, Luhansk region (NGCA), including a computer classroom, doors, and 32 windows.[1773]
- On April 30, 2020, fragments from shelling hit and damaged a school, including two windows, in Zolote 4, Luhansk region (GCA), according to OSCE SMM and the Education Cluster. The school was reportedly closed at the time due to Covid-19 precautions.[1774]
- OHCHR reported that on October 6, 2020, two boys, aged 15 and 16, were harmed when they picked up a hand grenade which detonated near a school in Makiivka city, Donetsk region (NGCA).[1775] GCPEA was not able to confirm whether the boys were students.

In 2021, GCPEA identified approximately 14 reported incidents of attacks on schools from media, the Education Cluster, and OSCE SMM.[1776] For example:

- On February 7, March 25, May 31, and around June 1, 2021, small arms fire hit and damaged an operational school in Zolote-5/Mykhailivka, Luhansk region (NGCA), including breaking windowpanes on all four occasions, according to the OSCE SMM.[1777]
- On or around May 8, 2021, bullets damaged a functional school in the Trudivski area of Donetsk city (NGCA), according to OSCE SMM.[1778]
- On or around July 12, 2021, a functioning school in Holmivskyi, Donetsk region (NGCA), sustained damage to windows, walls, and the playground, from unrecorded weaponry, according to OSCE SMM.[1779]
- On September 21, 2021, shelling damaged the roof and windows of an operational boarding school in Yasynuvata, Donetsk region (NGCA). According to the director of the school, when the shelling started, all 85 children and school staff were evacuated to the school's shelter.[1780]

Attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately five reports of attacks on students, teachers, and education personnel. This marks a decrease compared to *Education under Attack 2020,* when GCPEA identified ten and five reported incidents in 2019 and 2018, respectively.[1781]

In 2020, GCPEA identified five reported attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Between January 1 and May 4, 2020, the Education Cluster reported four incidents of threats, killings, or injuries of students, teachers, or parents.[1782] In addition, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on students:

- On July 17, 2020, hundreds of protesters reportedly marched in Kyiv against draft legislation to postpone Russian-language schools shifting to teaching in Ukrainian. According to media reports, the police used teargas to disperse protesters.[1783]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2021.

YEMEN

Shelling, airstrikes, or looting affected over 40 schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In addition, teachers in Houthi-controlled areas were reportedly threatened, arrested, or abducted. State forces and non-state armed groups used at least 38 schools for military purposes, including to recruit both male and female students. GCPEA also identified at least 25 reports of attacks on higher education.

Context

Yemen's seven-year conflict escalated during the 2020-2021 reporting period.[1784] Houthi forces (also known as Ansar Allah), which controlled much of northern Yemen, and the internationally recognized government of Yemen (IRG) with the support of the Saudi Arabia and Emirati-aligned coalition continued to battle for territorial control.[1785] In early 2020, the IRG supported by the Saudi and Emirati-aligned coalition, waged military campaigns to prevent Houthi forces from entering Ma'rib city, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED);[1786] battles for Ma'rib re-escalated in the first half of 2021, with frontlines shifting frequently, according to Human Rights Watch, the UN, and media sources.[1787] In September and October 2021, Houthi forces took several key districts of Ma'rib, Shebwa, and Abyan governorates, further consolidating their control.[1788]

In southern Yemen, clashes continued in 2020 between the internationally recognized government (IRG) of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), an Emirati-backed group.[1789] The STC fought for sovereignty from Hadi's government;[1790] fighting between the two groups slowed following a December 2020 power sharing deal.[1791]

During the reporting period, the use of explosive weapons by parties to conflict caused a significant number of civilian casualties, including children.[1792] In 2020 alone, at least 2,087 civilians were reported as killed, with children making up a quarter of reported civilian casualties.[1793] While the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) reported a 35 percent decrease in the overall number of civilians killed in 2020 as compared to 2019, some governates in the north experienced increases in civilian casualties.[1794]

During the 2020-2021 period, Yemen was among the world's worst humanitarian crises,[1795] with the UN reporting that over 24 million Yemenis needed humanitarian aid in 2020.[1796] In 2021, at least 4 million Yemeni people were internally displaced, around half of whom were children,[1797] and at least 153,000 of whom were newly displaced in during the year, according to the UN.[1798]

According to the UN, over two million children were out of school due to the conflict in Yemen in 2021.[1799] School closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic affected a further 5.8 million children between March and October 2020.[1800] Furthermore, a survey conducted by Mwatana for Human Rights found that over 60 percent of children whose schools had been attacked subsequently dropped out of education.[1801] The UN reported in 2021 that two-thirds of Yemeni teachers had not received regular salary payments for four years.[1802] In 2020, the UN concluded that the Houthi's military use of schools, violations against education personnel, and propaganda activities at school seriously inhibited quality education.[1803] In areas under Houthi control, authorities sought to control higher education and use universities as recruitment centers by enforcing new curricula and overtaking university boards.[1804]

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 48 reported attacks on schools in Yemen. Schools were damaged by airstrikes, shelling, or other explosives, or were caught in crossfire. Attacks on schools decreased in frequency over the two years, a trend that began during the period covered in *Education under Attack 2020*. For instance, GCPEA identified over 30 reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2019, as compared to 40 reported incidents in 2018.[1805] Yemen was one of the most heavily affected countries by attacks on education in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*, with nearly 1,800 incidents of damage or destruction to schools due to conflict between March 2015 and December 2018, as reported in a Yemen Education Cluster assessment.[1806]

In 2020, the UN verified 16 attacks on schools.[1807] Separately, in 2020, GCPEA collected reports of at least 28 incidents of attacks on education from the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP), the Yemen Data Project, ACLED, NGO, and media reports.[1808] Many attacks involved the use of explosive weapons (19), with shelling and ground-launched strikes the most common form of attack. Taizz (9) and Al Hudaydah (6) governorates were most affected by attacks on schools. In 2020, the Yemen Education Cluster reported that, in most governorates, 50 percent of schools were physically affected by conflict.[1809] Examples included:

- Local media and conflict monitors reported that on February 25, 2020, shelling struck al-Salah School in Majzar district, Ma'rib governorate.[1810]
- *The New Arab* reported that on August 1, 2020, an explosive device detonated near Neama Rassam school in Taizz city. The school was located near a military headquarters; while one soldier was reported killed, no children were harmed in the attack.[1811]
- On September 25, 2020, CIMP and *Arab News* reported that a missile struck Al-Mithaq School in Ma'rib city and governorate. No fatalities were reported; however, hundreds of students had allegedly left the school prior to the attack.[1812]
- On October 11, 2020, artillery shells struck May 22 School in Salh district, Taizz governorate, according to Yemen Data Project and CIMP. The strike killed one child and injured three children and two adults, according to CIMP.[1813]
- In early December 2020, media sources reported that militia members raided five religious schools in Sana'a and forced them to close. The report also noted that the militia members forced other religious centers to close outside Sana'a; however, GCPEA could not determine whether the incidents involved threats against schools.[1814]

The UN verified 18 attacks on schools in 2021.[1815] Separately, in 2021, GCPEA identified at least 20 reported incidents of attacks on schools,[1816] most of which involved the use of explosive weapons. For example, Save the Children reported that in March 2021, attacks on four schools in Taizz and one school in Sana'a interrupted the education of over 30,000 children.[1817] Other examples included:

- Save the Children and Yemen Data Project reported that on March 7, 2021, artillery shells struck near a school in Taizz city, injuring seven students as they left the building in the afternoon.[1818] Save the Children reported that artillery shells had also hit the area three days earlier.
- On March 11, 2021, an unknown armed group detonated an explosive device near a school in Al Hamra, Tuban district, Lahij governorate, as reported by *Yemen News Agency* and other local media.[1819]
- The Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) reported that on May 27, 2021, a drone strike hit a school in Tuhayat city, Al Hudaydah governorate. The blast injured four school students who were in the schoolyard.[1820]
- On July 20, 2021, a ballistic missile allegedly hit Ath Thawra school in Jabal Murad district, Ma'rib governorate. No fatalities occurred, according to local media sources.[1821]
- According to Yemen Data Project, on August 8, 2021, dynamite reportedly detonated at Al Wai Basic School in the village of Ar Ribat, Al Hudaydah governorate.[1822]
- On September 19, 2021, an explosion allegedly occurred in Qard al Maafari school in Al Azariq district, Ad Dali governorate. The explosion damaged the school building, according to local news sources.[1823]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

For the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified 13 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel. These incidents involved the abduction or assault of over 100 school students and personnel. Compared to 2018 and 2019, attacks occurred at a similar rate, with three reported incidents oc-

curring annually. However, attacks in 2020 and 2021 appeared less fatal than in earlier years; for example, over 60 students were killed or injured by such attacks in 2018.[1824]

Information on attacks on students and teachers covering 2020 and earlier years was released in 2020 by both media and UN sources. For instance, the Yemen Teachers Syndicate alleged that Houthi forces had killed at least 1,579 educators and wounded 2,642 between September 2014 and October 2020.[1825] In addition, in the period between September 2014 and June 2020, the UN Group of Experts found that Houthis had attacked educators who opposed or did not carry out activities such as child recruitment or indoctrination in schools. The group collated 55 reports of threats, attacks, unlawful dismissals, financial, and administrative sanctions against teachers. In addition, on unspecified dates, they verified the detention and abuse of a school principal and a principal's son, and 26 other reports of educators detained and abused for refusing to recruit students.[1826]

In 2020, GCPEA collated at least six reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel, which harmed around 40 people.[1827] In some instances, women and girls appeared to be directly targeted. These attacks, which consisted off arrests, abductions, and assault, took place in several governorates throughout the year. In addition, in 2020, Mwatana for Human Rights reported that children described experiencing airstrikes or armed clashes on their journeys to or from school; 45 percent of children surveyed by Mwatana reported military presence on the way to or from school.[1828] For example:

- On February 1, 2020, the UN reported that dozens of students protested the military use of a school in Al-Khubar, Habba district, Shabwa governorate. On February 2, 2020, special security forces allegedly raided the town in search of students who had demonstrated, and arrested two teenage boys, accusing them of being affiliated with STC forces.[1829] The security forces later opened fire on a group of men that attempted to negotiate the students' release.
- On March 16, 2020, armed assailants allegedly abducted seven female school principals in Sana'a, according to Yemen Data Project.[1830] No reason was given for the abduction.
- Local media reported that on November 12, 2020, members of an armed group stormed a Salafi Mosque in Al Mashannah district, Ibb governorate, and fought with and abducted several students of the mosque. The attackers allegedly carried light and medium weapons and took photos of the students without their consent.[1831]

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least seven reported incidents of attacks on school teachers and other education personnel, affecting over 60 staff and students in Aden, Sana'a, and Taizz governorates.[1832] As in prior years, armed groups allegedly abducted or detained staff or otherwise targeted them. Furthermore, GCPEA identified at least one report of a student affected by armed violence on the way home from school. Examples included:

- A local civil society organization reported to local media that, on January 20, 2021, an armed group raided homes in Al-Ta'iziyah district, Taizz governorate and allegedly abducted the principal of Oqba bin Nafeh school, the representative of Al-Amal school, and six teachers. They were reportedly detained in a school, as described in the following section.[1833]
- Around February 4, 2021, Houthi armed actors allegedly abducted around 50 educators and staff from the main office of the Ministry of Education in Sana'a, according to local media reports. Media stated that Houthi forces had waged a campaign to remove education staff that refused to implement their new curriculum.[1834]
- On December 8, 2021, armed parties reportedly shot the head of the Aden Ministry of Education near a school in Aden city. According to local media sources, the head of the Ministry of Education survived the attack.[1835]
- On December 27, 2021, an alleged Houthi fighter reportedly shot and killed a 12-year-old student while he was walking home from school in the Usayfarah area of Al Qahirah district, Taizz governorate, according to media reports.[1836]

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at that at least 49 schools were used for military purposes. Many cases occurred in Taizz governorate, according to media and NGO reporting. Schools were used as barracks, bases, or to launch attacks, and several of the schools were later attacked. The UN verified the use of 37 schools in 2019[1837] and 32 schools in 2018,[1838] most of which were attributed to Houthi forces.

In 2020, the UN verified the military use of 34 schools, with around 30 attributed to the Houthis and the remainder to the Yemen Armed Forces.[1839] The UN also reported that during school closures in 2020, the Houthis occupied empty schools and used them for barracks and training.[1840] In the same year, GCPEA identified UN, media, and government reports of 14 cases of military use of schools, primarily in Taizz governorate (9),[1841] and with single cases in Ad Dali, Al Jawf, Lahij, Ma'rib, and Shabwa governorates.[1842] Some of these incidents may overlap with the UN's count. For example:

- The UN reported that in early January 2020, Special Security Forces of the IRG began using Al-Aram secondary school near Al-Khubar village, Haban district, Shabwa Governorate, as military barracks. In February 2020, as noted above, security forces arrested students accused of protesting the use of the school.[1843]
- Around May 5, 2020, officials working in the Office of Education in Taizz allegedly allowed an armed group to transform several schools into barracks, according to ACLED.[1844]
- On December 9, 2020, the Al Jawf governorate's Office of Education issued a statement saying that Houthi forces allegedly burned down Mubarraz school in al Hazm district, Al Jawf governorate, the day before, after reportedly using the school as barracks for three months.[1845]

In 2021, the UN verified the military use of 49 schools.[1846] Separately, in 2021, GCPEA identified four reported incidents of military use of schools in Taizz governorate. Parties to conflict allegedly used schools for bases, detention centers, and weapons depots. State forces also used a school for an operation. Examples included:

- A local human rights monitor informed *Al Masdar News* that an armed group had kidnapped eight teachers and education personnel and had detained them in a school in Al-Ta'iziyah District, Taizz governorate, on January 20, 2021.[1847]
- In early March 2021, pro-government forces took control of a school from alleged Houthi forces in Kadha district, Taizz governorate, during a campaign to regain control over the district. On March 14, 2021, missiles allegedly fired by Houthi forces struck the school and killed 15 government soldiers who were inside the building, and three children nearby, according to *Reuters* and *Arab News*.[1848]
- On March 10, 2021, an armed group allegedly detonated weapons that it had stored in Al Anwar School in Maqbanah district, Taizz governorate, according to local media sources. Reports indicated that government, or pro-government, forces had advanced in the area, which caused the group to destroy their weapons store.[1849]

Between July 2020 and June 2021, the UN also reported that armed forces attacked two schools that had been used for military purposes since approximately 2018.[1850] Also in 2021, GCPEA identified anecdotal evidence that Houthi forces had used schools as detention centers during a nearly month-long siege of Abedia district, Ma'rib governorate.[1851]

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA received reports of the recruitment of children from schools in Yemen. In 2018, the UN documented that Houthis had used 20 schools to recruit and train children, including girls.[1852]

In 2020, the Group of Experts released a report on human rights abuses from 2014 to mid-2020, which included detailed accounts of Houthi forces' systematic use of schools to recruit both male and female students. The

Group noted that the practice of child recruitment at school became more common after 2017, when the government stopped salary payments to over 100,000 teachers in Houthi-controlled governorates, causing many teachers to vacate their positions, which Houthis later filled with "volunteer" education personnel. These "volunteer" teachers conducted weapon demonstrations and military trainings in school yards and required students to listen to speeches mobilizing them to "go to the frontlines," and taught a curriculum with classes on sectarian ideology. These activities were also documented and shared on social media.[1853] While most activities were directed towards male students, female students were also recruited at schools, often to take roles such as educators, guards, or medics; some girls were also used to recruit at schools or universities.[1854]

Furthermore, in January 2020, the UN verified that in Sahar District, Sa'dah Governorate, Houthi authorities used a primary school to convene a political meeting, after which a recruitment committee remained on site at the school building for three days. Fearing attacks on the school due to the military presence, parents kept their children home from school.[1855]

The UN reported that from May 2015 to June 2020, Houthis had recruited children from 34 schools and had recruited 49 boys and nine girls.[1856] Between June 2015 and June 2020, the Euro-Med Monitor estimated that 150 schools in Yemen had been used for child recruitment.[1857]

In 2021, GCPEA received anecdotal evidence that Houthi forces used schools as sites of indoctrination of children.[1858]

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 24 incidents of attacks on higher education. Of these, ten were attacks on higher education facilities and 14 included attacks on higher education students or staff. Attacks on higher education appeared to occur at similar rates to earlier years. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified 28 reported incidents of attacks on higher education;[1859] however, the majority (24) of these were attacks on university facilities, as compared to this period, when GCPEA identified an equal number of reported attacks on students and staff.

In 2020, GCPEA collected reports of at least eight incidents of attacks on higher education facilities.[1860] Attacks on university facilities primarily involved shelling, with CIMP reporting several incidents of shelling on the Hudaydah University Faculty of Engineering, which was located on a frontline.[1861] Examples included:

- On January 1, 2020, an armed group allegedly looted medical equipment from Ibb University, in Al Mashannah district, Ibb governorate, according to local media.[1862]
- On July 1, 2020, an airstrike allegedly hit the Faculty of Engineering at Sana'a University, according to Scholars at Risk and media sources.[1863]
- CIMP reported that on July 17, 2020, and August 17, 2020, artillery shells hit the Faculty of Engineering in Al Hali District, Al Hudaydah governorate.[1864]

Also in 2020, GCPEA identified reports of ten incidents of attacks on higher education students and staff.[1865] These attacks typically occurred in Sana'a governorate or in areas under Houthi control. The involved the arrest, abduction, threat, injury, or killing of students and staff, with reports indicating that individuals were targeted for not supporting the Houthi authorities. For instance:

- Scholars at Risk and *News Yemen* reported that on February 2, 2020, armed Houthi forces raided a classroom at Sana'a University and attacked a member of the university's sociology department. Scholars at Risk noted that the faculty member had been accused of speaking out against a recent appointment of a Dean of the Faculty of Arts who was related to a military commander. After the assault, the lecturer was taken away from campus and reportedly banned from returning to the campus.[1866]
- The UN reported that on April 6, 2020, alleged STC forces killed a 19-year-old male student who was on his way home from Al-Mimlah Technical Institute in Al-Mualla district, Aden governorate. The student had been stopped at a checkpoint with another female student in his car.[1867]
- On April 28, 2020, Houthi armed forces allegedly detained at least 20 students from Dhamar University, according to Scholars at Risk. They were taken to an undisclosed location and few details were known about the reason for their abduction.[1868]
- Yemen Data Project and Scholars at risk reported that Houthi forces abducted a professor of psychology as he was entering Sana'a University, on September 9, 2020. The forces released him on October 6, 2020.[1869]

In 2021, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on higher education facilities, marking a decline as compared to 2020. Attacks on facilities included ground and air-launched explosives:

- On March 21, 2021, shelling struck the Faculty of Arts of Taizz University, according to CIMP, local media, and *Al Jazeera*. *Al-Sharea* local media reported that mortar shells landed near the entrance to the university, killing a civilian and wounding others. The university closed for a week following the attack.[1870]
- On December 7, 2021, ACLED reported that air strikes hit Sana'a-Iman University in Aththaorah district, Amanat al Asimah governorate.[1871]

In 2021, GCPEA collected four reports of attacks on higher education students and personnel.[1872] Examples included:

- On August 4, 2021, militia members allegedly shot and killed a Yemeni professor at Sana'a University in Amanat al Asimah governorate, according to ACLED. This incident occurred hours after the professor posted on social media to request that the government distribute and increase salaries for public employees.[1873]
- On September 1, 2021, militia members allegedly attacked female students at Ibb University in Ibb governorate, during a celebratory party that the students hosted. According to local media sources, no fatalities occurred.[1874]
- Media sources reported that on October 23, 2021, militia members raided and looted university residences for retired faculty or family of deceased faculty, and threatened to use force against residents.[1875]

[1] *Afghan Voice Agency; Afghan Islamic Press News Agency*; GardaWorld; *AP; Anadolu Agency*; *New York Times*; *Shamshad TV*; *Afghanistan Times*; *Xinhua*; *Kabul Now*; *AFP*; *TOLO News*, as cited in Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), Event ID AFG54302. "Urgent to Protect Girls & Education in Conflict Said UN Officials After Deadly Attack in Afghanistan," SRSG Virginia Gamba and SRSG Dr Najat Maalla M'jid, Office of SRSG CAAC, May 12, 2021. Heather Barr, "Killing Schoolgirls in Afghanistan," Human Rights Watch dispatch, May 10, 2021. Jennifer Deaton and Sheena McKenzie, "Death toll rises to 85 in Afghanistan girls' school bomb attack," *CNN*, May 10, 2021.

[2] "Afghans hold funeral for victims of Kabul school bomb blasts," *Al Jazeera*, May 9, 2021.

[3] GCPEA, "Measuring the impact of attacks on education in Palestine," March 2022.

[4] *Mimi Mefo,* as cited by ACLED, Event ID CAO5150. Mimi Mefo Info, "Kumbo: Teachers, school staff kidnapped," *Mimi Mefo Info*, May 18, 2021. Insecurity Insight, "Attacks on Health Care Monthly News Brief - May 2021," May 31, 2021, p. 1.

[5] *Radio Free Asia*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID MMR16976. RFA, "Waw Township Nyaung Kha Shay village blocked by army More than 20 people arrested," *Radio Free Asia*, May 19, 2021. *Democratic Voice of Burma,* as cited in ACLED, Event ID MMR16732 (data downloaded July 26, 2021). DVB, "Hand grenades explode in Mogok ," *Democratic Voice of Burma,* May 17, 2021.

[6] "Public Forces denounced as firing on demonstrators in Caucasia (Denuncian que la Fuerza Pública disparó contra manifestantes en Caucasia)," *Caracol Radio*, May 20, 2021. Office of the Ombudsman, *Ombudsman's report CIDH visit Colombian social protests April-June 2021 (Informe defensorial visita CIDH Colombia protesta social abril-junio 2021),*(Bogota: Government of Colombia, 2021), p. 43.

[7] "Monthly Protection Monitoring Report Mali, No 5 - May 2021 (Rapport Mensuel de Monitoring de Protection No 5 - Mai 2021)," Mali Protection Cluster, p. 3.

[8] *Al Amaliqah*; Yemen Data Project, as cited in ACLED, Event ID YEM65049. Xinhua, "Yemen: 5 people, including 4 children, were injured in a Houthi drone strike on a school in Hodeidah," *Arabic China,* May 27, 2021.

[9] Information received from an NGO respondent, May 26, 2021.

[10] "Democratic Republic of the Congo Humanitarian Situation Report No. 12," UNICEF, December 2020, p. 2.

[11] "Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip," Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, July 2021, p. 2.

[12] Information received from UNRWA via email on May 13, 2021. Tovah Lazaroff, "Two UNRWA schools hit during IDF air strikes on Gaza," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 13, 2021. UNRWA, "UNRWA installations in Gaza hit during hostilities," UNRWA Press release, May 13, 2021.

[13] For example: OCHA, oPt *Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022 Working Draft*, OCHA, December 2021, p. 46.

[14] United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council," S/2020/1257, December 30, 2020, p. 18.

[15] AP, "Gunmen kidnap more than 70 students from high school in northwestern Nigeria," *France24*, September 1, 2021. "First day of school 'indefinitely postponed' for at least 1 million Nigerian students," UNICEF press release, September 16, 2021.

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[17] UNICEF, " Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6, September 2021 ," UNICEF, September 28, 2021, p. 2.

[18] "Occupation of schools by security forces in Myanmar is a serious violation of children's rights," Joint Statement of Save the Children, UNESCO and UNICEF, March 19, 2021.

[19] "Myanmar: More Than 100 Attacks on Schools in May," Save the Children press release, June 11, 2021.

[20] The total number of reported attacks on higher education for all insecure and conflict-affected profiled countries was 491 in 2018 and 2019.

[21] "'Act of terror': At least 22 killed in Kabul University attack," *Al Jazeera,* November 2, 2020.

[22] UNAMA, *Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Annual Report 2020*, (Kabul: UNAMA and OHCHR, February 2021), p. 28.

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[25] "2 Sentenced to Death for Kabul University Attack," *Afghan Voice Agency*, March 4, 2021.

[26] "Nigeria's Zamfara school abduction: More than 300 Nigerian girls missing," *BBC News*, February 26, 2021.

[27] "Nigerian official says 279 schoolgirls released 4 days after mass-abduction," *CBS News,* March 2, 2021.

[28] See the 2018 and 2020 editions of the *Education under Attack* report series for details on incidents at Chibok and Dapchi.

[29] In *Education under Attack 2020*, GCPEA analyzed trends over a five-year period and found over 11,000 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use.

[30] A systematic pattern was defined as ten reported attacks on education or military use of educational facilities in 2019 and 2020 combined.

[31] GCPEA tracks five categories of attacks on education and military use: Attacks on schools; attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel; military use of schools and universities; child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school; sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university; attacks on higher education.

[32] Ten other countries were no longer profiled in this edition of the report due to a change in methodology which limited the report to situations of armed conflict as opposed to armed conflict and insecurity. Those countries were: Burundi, China, Iran, Guinea, Nicaragua, Nepal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Venezuela. See the Methodology chapter for further details.

[33] Global Education Coalition, "#LearningNeverStops: Covid-19 education response," UNESCO.

[34] "Secretary-General's Appeal for Global Ceasefire," UN Statement, March 23, 2020.

[35] ACLED, *ACLED 2020: The Year in Review* (ALCED: Madison, WI, March 2021, p. 1.

[36] Håvard Strand and Håvard Hegre, "Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2020, Conflict Trends," PRIO *Conflict Trends Vol. 3*, p. 2. "Organized Violence During the Pandemic: Insights from the UCDP Candidate Events Dataset covering the first three quarters of 2020," UCDP Bulletin, 2020.

[37] Melissa Pavlik, "Great and Sudden Change: The Global Political Violence Landscape Before and After the Covid-19 Pandemic," August 4, 2020.

[38] OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021*, (Geneva: OCHA, 2021), p. 25.

[39] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2021: Events of 2020*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 2021).

[40] "Idlib between September 2015 and May 2020: a timeline," International Crisis Group, May 15, 2020. "Additional Protocol to the Memorandum on Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-Escalation Area," S/2020/187), Letter from the representatives of the Russian Federation and Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, March 6, 2020.

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[42] ACLED, *ACLED 2020: The Year in Review* (ALCED: Madison, WI, March 2021), p. 1.

[43] For more information on the ceasefire see: Rustad et al (2020) The Strategic Use of Ceasefires in the Coronavirus Crisis, PRIO.

[44] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021*,(Geneva: IDMC, April 2021, p. 7.

[45] UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of civilians in armed conflict," S/2021/423, May 3, 2021, para. 10.

[46] ACLED, *ACLED 2020: The Year in Review* (ALCED: Madison, WI, March 2021.

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[222] To be profiled in *Education under Attack 2022*, countries had to be considered to be in conflict and have experienced ten or more attacks on education or incidents of military use in 2019 and 2020. The lagged year (2019) keeps this report in line with past reports, which also included lagged years, and allowed GCPEA to determine which countries would be profiled before the end of the reporting cycle so that drafting and review could begin.

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EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2022



(Cover) A survivor of the May 8, 2021, bombing of Sayed Al-Shuhada school in Kabul, Afghanistan, looks inside a classroom days after the attack.

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