EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK
2024

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 project of the Tides Center, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

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Front cover photo: A 14-year-old girl looks at her old school, which was damaged by conflict, in Dara'a Albalad, Syria, on February 7, 2022. © *UNICEF/UN0635253/Shahan*

Back cover photo: The Islamic University in Al-Rimal neighborhood, Gaza, Palestine, was damaged in October 2023. © *UNICEF/UNI452824/Islyeh*

ABBREVIATIONS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AFP	French Press Agency (Agence France-Presse)
AGC	Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia)
AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkey)
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
CAAC	Children and Armed Conflict
CAR	Central African Republic
CIMP	Civilian Impact Monitoring Project
CNN	Cable News Network
COALICO	Coalition Against Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia
CPC	Coalition of Patriots for Change
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)
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
FACA	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces Armées Centrafricaines)
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)

GADRRRES	Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education under Attack
GNS	Government of National Stability
GNU	Government of National Unity
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IRG	Internationally recognized government of Yemen
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra (Nigeria)
IS	Islamic State
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Iraq)
ISIL-K	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (Afghanistan)
ISWAP	Islamic State West Africa Province
JNIM	Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wal-Muslimeen) (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger)
LAAF	Libyan Arab Armed Forces
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines)
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science (Ukraine)
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPSR	Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration (Burkina Faso)
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NAS	National Salvation Front (South Sudan)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)

NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRF	National Resistance Front (Afghanistan)
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLA	Oromo Liberation Army (Ethiopia)
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBS	Public Broadcasting Service
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PLM-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces (Iraq)
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
RFI	Radio France Internationale
RSF	Rapid Support Forces (Sudan)
RULAC	Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts Project
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army In Opposition
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)
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TTP	Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Missions in Afghanistan
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Missions in Iraq
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UPC	Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique)
UXO	unexploded ordnance
VOA	Voice of America
YPG	People's Protection Unit (Syria)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Attacks on education were frequent and widespread in 2022 and 2023.** The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) identified **around 6,000** reported attacks on students, educators, schools, and universities, as well as cases of parties to conflict using educational facilities for military purposes. Attacks on education and military use increased by nearly 20 percent in 2022 and 2023 compared to the two previous years.

More than **10,000** students and educators were reportedly killed, injured, abducted, arrested, or otherwise harmed by attacks on education in 2022 and 2023. The number of students, teachers, professors, and education staff killed or injured increased by over 10 percent compared to 2020 and 2021, the period covered in the last *Education under Attack* report.

Attacks also damaged or destroyed hundreds of education facilities, forcing temporary or permanent closures and weeks or months of lost learning. Some students also required psycho-social support after attacks on their schools or universities or were afraid to return to school after attacks.

2. **In 2022 and 2023, the highest numbers of attacks on education were recorded in Palestine, Ukraine, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),** and **Myanmar**. In each country, hundreds of schools were threatened, looted, burned, targeted with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or hit by shelling or airstrikes.

During those same years, **India, Pakistan, Palestine,** and **Afghanistan** had high reported numbers of people harmed or killed in attacks on education. In some cases, students or educators were injured or killed in attacks on schools and universities, while in others they were targeted in abductions or arrests or harmed while en route to or from school or university.

3. **Two countries not included in the previous report are profiled in this one, Egypt and Kyrgyzstan.** Egypt was involved in a conflict with an Islamic State-affiliated armed group in its Sinai Peninsula, where more than ten cases of the military use of schools or universities were identified. Meanwhile, Kyrgyzstan was engaged in an international armed conflict along its border with Tajikistan, in which over 20 schools were damaged or destroyed during a brief escalation of hostilities in September 2022.

4. **Attacks on education increased in Ukraine, Sudan, Palestine, Syria, and Nigeria in 2022 and 2023, as compared to the previous two years.** The escalation of the war in Ukraine meant a significant increase in attacks on schools and universities after February 2022, many involving artillery shelling, rockets, and airstrikes. After conflict erupted in Sudan in April 2023, attacks on educational facilities and their military use rose. In Palestine, attacks on education peaked in October 2023, following the escalation of hostilities. In Syria, children were recruited while on their way to school, and schools came under increasing attack in 2023, and, in Nigeria, the military use of schools rose that same year.

5. In **Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Mali,** and **Mozambique,** among other countries, attacks on education decreased during this reporting period, as compared to 2020 and 2021. These countries experienced shifts in conflict dynamics, including conflict de-escalation.

6. **Globally, incidents of military use of schools and universities increased in 2022 and 2023**, as compared to 2020 and 2021, rising to over 1,000 incidents. Reports were most prevalent in **Afghanistan, Myanmar,** and **Nigeria,** where armed forces or non-state armed groups occupied schools and universities to use them as bases, barracks, and weapons stores, among other non-educational purposes.

7. **Girls and women were reportedly targeted because of their gender in attacks on education in at least ten countries.** In certain contexts, such as **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan,** female students and teachers or their education facilities were targeted in an effort to prevent them from receiving an education. In addition, parties to conflict perpetrated sexual violence against women and girls at, or on the way to or from, schools or universities. **Students with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students; and students from Indigenous and ethnic minority communities faced greater vulnerabilities and were uniquely impacted by attacks on education.**

8. **Explosive weapons were used in around one-third of all reported attacks on education in 2022 and 2023.** These attacks included airstrikes, rockets, and artillery shelling, as well as the use of IEDs and landmines. During the reporting period, GCPEA identified the reported use of explosive weapons in a significant number of attacks on education in **Colombia, Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine,** and **Yemen.**

9. Between the publication of *Education under Attack 2022* and February 2024, six new countries endorsed the **Safe Schools Declaration**, with a total of 119 countries now committing to protect education in situations of armed conflict. The Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, and other global leaders underscored the importance of the Declaration. The UN observed the third and fourth International Day to Protect Education from Attack on September 9, 2022, and 2023. Governments and UN agencies also made advances in implementing the UN Security Council's Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict.

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

Attacks on education were frequent and widespread in 2022 and 2023. GCPEA **identified around 6,000 reported attacks on schools and universities, students and educators, and cases of the military use of educational facilities during the reporting period. At least 10,000 students, teachers, professors, and education staff were killed, injured, abducted, arrested, or otherwise harmed in these attacks**. In comparison, in 2020 and 2021, GCPEA collected over 5,000 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use that harmed approximately 9,000 students, educators, and personnel.[1]

For instance, in **Sudan**, several shells hit the El Geneina University female dormitory and its vicinity in El Geneina, West Darfur, in June 2023. The shelling left a female student blind in one eye.[2] In **Myanmar**, Buanlung village, in Chin state, was attacked with explosives in October 2022, killing two primary school students who were on the way home from school, and injuring one other child.[3] In March and April 2022, Russian forces used a school in Yahidne village, Chernihiv region, **Ukraine**, as a military base and detention center, holding more than 350 villagers in the basement, including at least 70 children.[4] A school was hit in al-Maghazi refugee camp, in the Gaza Strip, **Palestine**, during Israeli airstrikes in October 2023; the strike caused structural damage to the school, which was run by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).[5] In **Colombia**, an armed group allegedly entered several schools in Cimitarra municipality, Santander department, threatening at least 20 teachers during their classes. In response, schools reportedly suspended classes for two weeks and transferred some teachers to schools elsewhere.[6]

These examples show the death, injury, and damage brought by attacks on education, as well as their impacts on learning. They also show that attacks are not exceptional. **On average, eight attacks on education or cases of military use were recorded daily over the past two years**.

The *Education under Attack 2024* report profiles the 28 countries in armed conflict that were most affected by attacks on education in 2022 and 2023. Although attacks on education increased globally during this reporting period, complex conflict dynamics occurred between and within countries, with rates of attacks rising in some places alongside declines elsewhere. The Global Overview and country profiles provide background on the contextual factors driving these attacks, along with annual trends and incident reports.

The Al-Fakhoora educational facility in Al Rimal neighborhood, Gaza, Palestine, was attacked on October 10, 2023, in an early morning bombing.

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The damaged playground of the town kindergarten in Bohdanivka, Ukraine, on June 25, 2022. In March 2022, Russian forces stored munitions and parked military vehicles at the kindergarten, which was later destroyed in unclear circumstances.

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TRENDS IN ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES IN 2022-2023

GCPEA tracks five categories of attacks on education and the military use of educational facilities. The following are global trends for the 2022-2023 reporting period for each of these categories.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

Attacks on schools were the most prevalent form of attack on education during the reporting period, making up more than half of all reported incidents of attacks on education and military use. In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected reports of over 3,250 attacks on schools in 27 profiled countries. These attacks included airstrikes, shelling, arson, looting, and threats; they caused the death or injury of over 725 students and educators, along with damage to hundreds of school facilities and significant lost learning.

In 2022 and 2023, **Ukraine** and **Palestine** were the countries most affected by attacks on schools, with Ukraine experiencing around 700 attacks and Palestine at least 640. In **Ukraine**, the majority of attacks on schools occurred in southern and eastern regions and involved explosive weapons, including airstrikes and shelling. In Palestine, between the escalation of hostilities in October and December 2023, the UN reported that at least 352 schools were damaged in the Gaza Strip, representing more than 60 percent of all schools.[7] **Burkina Faso**, **DRC**, **Myanmar**, and **Yemen** were also heavily affected by attacks on schools.

"She always said, 'Even if I am killed, let it be in the name of education.'"[8]

In **Afghanistan**, on September 30, 2022, an explosive attached to a suicide bomber detonated at the Kaaj private tutoring center in Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul, killing at least 54 people and injuring at least 114, most of whom were Hazara women and girls.[9] The father of a 19-year-old killed in the blast shared with *The New Humanitarian* that his daughter understood the risks but nonetheless attended classes at Kaaj tutoring center. The mother of another one of the students killed in the tutoring center blast told *The New Humanitarian*[10]:

"She wanted to be a doctor, but now she's under the dirt. My brilliant daughter was torn to pieces."

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA collected about 800 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in profiled countries in 2022 and 2023. Around 5,000 students or educators were killed or harmed in these attacks; around 1,100 of them were killed, injured, or abducted and over 3,850 were reportedly arrested or detained. These are in addition to students or educators killed or injured in attacks on schools and universities.

Myanmar and **Palestine** were the most impacted by attacks on students and educators during the reporting period, with more than 165 students or educators killed, injured, or abducted in each country, followed by **Cameroon** and **Iraq**.

In **India**, more than 2,700 students and teachers were arrested or detained for participating in education-related protests during the reporting period, and in **Pakistan** the number was over 540.

> **"We were terrified because it was the first time it happened, and most of the students there were traumatized because the bomb exploded right on the roof of the school,"** said a student from a school affected by armed clashes in the **Philippines**, as reported in local media.[11]

Clashes between military forces and a non-state armed group occurred near at least five schools in Masbate province in March 2023. In-person classes were reportedly suspended in many schools in the province, with some students moving to distance learning lessons. The clashes affected 112 schools and 31,764 students.[12]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified over 1,000 reports of military use globally. Armed forces, other state security forces, or non-state armed groups used schools and universities as bases, barracks, firing positions or for other non-educational purposes in 25 profiled countries. This represents a significant increase in reported cases of military use, as compared to 2020 and 2021 when around 570 reported cases of military use of schools and universities were identified.

GCPEA noted an increase in reports of military use of educational facilities in many countries, including **Afghanistan**, **Colombia**, **Mozambique**, **Nigeria**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, **Syria**, and **Ukraine**, compared to the previous reporting period. As in the last report, **Myanmar** experienced significant military use of schools and universities, with over 190 incidents reported in 2022 and 2023.

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA collected reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school in five countries, in 2022 and 2023: **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Somalia**, **Syria**, and **Yemen**. This is one more than in the last reporting period. Students may be recruited as fighters or spies, for domestic work, or to transport weapons or other materials.

In one example, at least two Indigenous students were recruited on their way to school in Caloto municipality, Cauca department, **Colombia**, in March 2022.[13] Fear of recruitment kept some students from attending schools in several affected areas of the country.[14]

> **"Students get depressed and scared if they are interrupted many times and, also, the fighting today is inside the University of Tripoli with fighters being killed in front of the university gate,"** a University of Tripoli professor told *University World News*. **"Academic performance, as well as other research activities, is largely affected, due to frequent interruptions and facilities damage."[15]**

In **Libya**, nearby armed clashes caused the University of Tripoli to close for several days in mid-August 2023. Deadly fighting reportedly occurred within the campus of the university, and at the university gate, which was also damaged by shelling.[16]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, and other security entities, or non-state armed group, at, or on the way to or from, school or university in eight countries. Seven of these countries are profiled in the report: **Cameroon**, **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Niger**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, and **Yemen**. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022*, which covered 2020 and 2021, included reports of education-related sexual violence in seven countries.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected over 360 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in profiled countries. Of these, around 100 were attacks on university facilities, while around 260 were attacks on university students and staff. More than 2,460 higher education students or staff were killed or harmed in these attacks; around 760 of them were reportedly killed, injured, or abducted, while over 1,700 were detained or arrested.

The country most affected by attacks on higher education facilities was **Ukraine**, with more than 35 reported attacks; **Palestine**, **Sudan**, and **Yemen** were also affected by attacks on higher education infrastructure, with ten or more reported incidents in 2022 and 2023. Many of these attacks involved the use of explosive weapons, including airstrikes or shelling.

The countries with the most attacks on higher education students and staff were **India**, **Türkiye**, and **Afghanistan**. In **India**, over 1,220 students and academics were reportedly arrested or detained during education-related protests or in relationship to their academic work. GCPEA collected reports of the arrest or detention of more than 200 higher education students and staff in **Türkiye**. In **Afghanistan**, more than 70 students and academics were reportedly killed, injured, or abducted while over 65 were also arrested or detained.

GENDERED DYNAMICS OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified ten countries where girls and women were targeted in attacks on education because of their gender. In some countries, such as **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan**, girls' schools were bombed or burned in an effort to limit their education. In other contexts, such as **Cameroon**, **Colombia**, **South Sudan**, and **Sudan**, armed groups, military, or other security forces committed sexual violence against girls and women at, or on the way to or from, school or university. In **Syria** and elsewhere, armed groups recruited girls from schools.

GCPEA research has found that women and girls are differentially impacted by attacks on education, including experiencing more difficulties in resuming education after an attack.[17]

> **"The children will be busy at school during the day,"** Muhawe, a mother, said about the opening of temporary learning centers. **"They will come home, do their homework and then go to bed. This routine gives us a bit of normalcy and it keeps the children out of harm's way."[18]**

Interruptions to education because of conflict and attacks on education have long-term impacts. In 2022, the conflict in North Kivu, **DRC**, forced Muhawe to flee her village with her son Isaac, aged seven, and he did not finish the school year. In 2023, temporary learning centers were set up at Bushagara displacement camp to enable displaced children to continue their education.[19]

A burned-out classroom in the government primary school in South-West Cameroon, destroyed by an alleged armed group on February 7, 2022.

© Private, February 8, 2022

An 8-year-old from Burkina Faso was shot in the arm during an attack on his village. His arm eventually had to be amputated. Now displaced, the boy is in school in the north central region of Burkina Faso.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

As attacks on education increase in several countries around the world, many students and educators face mounting risks to their lives. Students, teachers, and staff are injured and killed while schools are damaged or destroyed, with girls and women and students with disabilities differentially impacted. Whether through school or university closures or students remaining home from fear, education is under threat.

In this context, endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration is crucial. In line with the Declaration, GCPEA offers several recommendations to prevent, mitigate, and respond to attacks on education globally.

END ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENT THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION AND *GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTING SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FROM MILITARY USE DURING ARMED CONFLICT*

- 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 non-state 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*.
- In contexts in which armed parties have been listed by the UN Secretary-General, they should engage in dialogue with the UN toward an Action Plan with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to end and prevent attacks on education, including military use of schools, and other grave violations such as recruitment of children and sexual violence.
- States should implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict.
- Non-state armed groups should sign and implement Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, including as it relates to educational spaces.

MONITOR AND REPORT ON ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

- States, international humanitarian and development organizations, civil society, and other monitoring bodies should strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, while ensuring the protection of personal data and sources, to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education. This includes disaggregating data by type of attack on education, gender, age, disability, location, person or group responsible, number of days the institution was closed, and type of institution. Use GCPEA's *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education*.

HOLD PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT AND PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO SURVIVORS

- States and international justice institutions should promptly and impartially investigate attacks on education and prosecute those responsible.
- States and other institutions should provide non-discriminatory 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.

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 gender- and disability-responsive strategies to reduce the risk of attacks, and comprehensive safety and security plans in the event of these attacks.
- In the case of distance learning or catch-up classes, education providers should ensure that learners who previously ended their studies due to attacks on schools, conflict, or displacement are included, with a specific focus on female students and students with disabilities since they may encounter additional barriers to education.
- 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 universities and make them safer and more inclusive to all students and educators.

In Iraq, a mural on the wall of a school in Basra alerts children to the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordinance in March 2022.

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

A young student writes on a blackboard damaged by bullets in North Kivu, DRC, in September 2023.

© UNICEF/UNI481106/Vigné

A burnt-out kindergarten in Ak-Sai village, Kyrgyzstan. The village saw widespread looting and destruction while briefly under the control of Tajik forces on September 16, 2022.

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INTRODUCTION

Attacks on education were frequent and widespread in 2022 and 2023. GCPEA identified around 6,000 reported attacks on schools and universities, students and educators, and military use of educational facilities, marking a nearly 20 percent increase over the last report.

Attacks on education killed or harmed at least 10,000 school and university students, teachers, professors, and education personnel. This represented an increase of over ten percent compared to the last reporting period. Attacks also damaged hundreds of education facilities and caused schools to close and enrollments to drop.

Education under Attack 2024 tracks attacks on education and military use of education facilities in situations of armed conflict from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. Each of the 28 conflict-affected countries profiled in this report experienced a systematic pattern of attacks on education.[1] In addition to the 28 countries profiled in this report, GCPEA identified sporadic reports of attacks on education in 51 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.[2] Complete definitions of attacks and military use are included in the Methodology section of this report.

GRAVE IMPACTS ON LEARNING: SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN ATTACKS DURING 2022 AND 2023

In 2022 and 2023, **Palestine** and **Ukraine** were the countries where GCPEA recorded the highest incidence of attacks on education. During the same period, **India**, **Pakistan**, **Palestine**, and **Afghanistan** had the highest reported numbers of people harmed or killed. In these countries, high numbers of students or educators were either harmed as a result of attacks on education, such as in bombings of schools, or impacted in events directly targeting them, such as arrests or abductions.

Attacks on education increased in several countries, compared to the previous reporting period. In **Ukraine**, for instance, attacks shot up after the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, and in **Afghanistan**, non-state armed groups and the Taliban increased attacks on schools, students, and educators, including against girls and women. After conflict erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, attacks on educational facilities and their military use increased in **Sudan**. In **Palestine**, attacks on education peaked in late 2023, following the escalation of hostilities in October of that year, when Hamas-led fighters conducted a large-scale attack into Israel and Israeli armed forces launched an intensive military offensive in the Gaza Strip, including airstrikes and a ground incursion.[3] *Education under Attack 2024* also profiles two countries not included in the previous report, **Egypt** and **Kyrgyzstan**. Egypt was involved in a conflict with an Islamic State-affiliated armed group in its Sinai Peninsula,[4] whereas Kyrgyzstan experienced an international armed conflict along its border with Tajikistan.[5]

Several other countries experienced reductions in attacks on education. **Central African Republic (CAR)**, **Libya**, **Mali**, and **Mozambique** experienced drops in reported violations due to shifts in conflict dynamics, although they remained affected by attacks on education, and a large number of schools were closed due to insecurity in Mali. Of the countries profiled in *Education under Attack 2022*, the last edition of the report, two countries experienced a decline in attacks during the reporting period to below ten, alongside a decline in violence, and so are not included in this report: **Azerbaijan** and **Thailand**.

Attacks on schools remained the most prevalent form of attack on education during the reporting period, making up more than half of all reported incidents. However, military use of schools and universities increased in number and grew as a proportion of all incidents. Reports of military use were most prevalent in **Afghanistan**, **Myanmar**, **Nigeria**, **Syria**, **Ukraine**, and **Yemen**, where armed forces or non-state armed groups occupied schools and universities to use them as bases, barracks, and weapons stores, among other non-educational purposes.

Explosive weapons were used in around one-third of all reported attacks on education during the reporting period.[6] These attacks included airstrikes, rockets, and shelling, as well as the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and landmines. This is significant since the use of explosive weapons, particularly those with wide-area effects, led to increases in child casualties and damage to schools in 2022, according to the UN.[7]

Other common attack types included arson, threats, kidnapping, killing with small arms, and repression of education-related protests.

Attacks on education kill and injure students and educators and damage schools and universities, often leading additional educational facilities to close. For instance, suspected members of an armed group attacked and vandalized three schools in Ituri province, **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, in April 2023. In the context of increased violence, 21 nearby schools suspended classes, impacting around 1,200 students.[8] Attacks also create fear among students and parents and decrease enrollment. The longer students are away due to schools damaged by armed conflict, the less likely they are to resume formal learning.[9] Finally, attacks cause trauma for students and educators, impacting their ability to learn or teach once they return to classes.[10]

Attacks on education differentially impacted girls and women during the reporting period. Girls and women were specifically targeted in attacks on education in at least ten countries, including disproportionately with sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university, perpetrated by armed forces, state security forces, or non-state armed groups. Among other impacts, girl and women students experienced more difficulties resuming their education after an attack in many contexts.[11]

Students with disabilities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, and students from Indigenous and ethnic minority communities, were also uniquely impacted by attacks on education. For instance, at least 35 schools or institutions for students with disabilities, including blind students, were damaged or destroyed in attacks in **Ukraine** in 2022.[12] In **Türkiye**, LGBT students were detained while they marched for equality on the campuses of three universities in May and June 2022.[13] In **Colombia**, confrontations between armed actors occurred near schools in Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities,[14] and Indigenous students were reportedly abducted from schools in 2022 and 2023.[15] Targeted attacks on Indigenous or ethnically marginalized students were also reported in **the Philippines**,[16] **Afghanistan**,[17] and **Pakistan**.[18] In some contexts, students from these same groups also faced challenges accessing education. Students with disabilities contended with limited inclusive education opportunities and physical limitations to education buildings;[19] LGBT students, in some places, were monitored by security forces and faced removal from their schools or universities;[20] and Indigenous or ethnic minority students, in certain contexts, were disproportionately affected by forced community confinements and blockades, keeping them from schools.[21] (See the textbox on students with disabilities for more information on this topic).

Attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in profiled countries, 2022-2023

- **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

- **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

- **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

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FACE REDUCED ACCESS TO EDUCATION BEFORE AND AFTER ATTACKS

During armed conflict, students with disabilities may be differentially impacted by attacks on education. If unable to flee attacks independently, students with disabilities can be at greater risk of being killed or injured, if they are abandoned due to a lack of adequate support staff, according to the UN.[22] This can also impact parents' decision to send children to school, as reported by Human Rights Watch.[23] Conflict-related dangers are also compounded for students with disabilities who lack access to inclusive and accessible education: these can include not receiving mine risk education, or a heightened risk of recruitment and use by armed groups.[24] The UN reported that lack of access to education among students with disabilities during conflict can increase isolation and other psycho-social impacts, including depression.[25] Finally, students with disabilities are more likely than their peers to remain out of school if their education is interrupted.[26]

In **Myanmar**, conflict impacted access to education for students with disabilities, in particular as school buildings with accessibility features were destroyed in 2022 and 2023.[27] Children with disabilities in **DRC** faced additional barriers to returning to school following armed violence between national forces and armed groups, according to the DRC Education Cluster.[28] The UN reported that many of the institutional care facilities in **Ukraine**, where around 50,000 children with disabilities were living, have been destroyed or seriously damaged since the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, which led to increased risks during evacuations and education disruptions.[29]

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified a number of attacks affecting students with disabilities or the educational facilities where they learned. For example:

- In **Cameroon**, on February 22, 2022, ten teachers, including nine female teachers, were abducted from the Inclusive Government Bilingual Primary School, a school for children with disabilities, in Bamenda city, North-West region, as reported by international media VOA.[30]
- Human Rights Watch reported that on March 1, 2022, shelling damaged a boarding school serving blind students in Kharkiv city and region, **Ukraine**, during Russian bombing of the city. The attack injured one student and the director of the school.[31]

Some attacks on education result in disabilities. Although improved reporting is necessary to better understand these impacts, GCPEA has identified a number of attacks that led to surviving students living with a disability. For instance:

- Save the Children reported that on October 29, 2022, a shell struck an alley in Taizz city and governorate, **Yemen,** while three students were on their way home from school. The explosion caused two of the children to lose legs.[32]
- In **Afghanistan,** the UN reported that on September 30, 2022, an explosive detonated at a tutoring center in Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul, killing at least 54 people and injuring at least 114.[33] At least one girl student was blinded in one eye and deafened in one ear, according to international media *France24*.[34]

- In **Sudan,** on June 6, 2023, a female student was blinded in one eye when several shells hit the El Geneina University female dormitory compound and its vicinity in El Geneina, West Darfur, according to Amnesty International.[35]

Since some attacks on education result in disabilities, new and rehabilitated schools should be disability-inclusive, particularly those serving conflict-affected or refugee children.

In line with the Safe Schools Declaration and United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2601 (2021) and 2475 (2019),[36] governments, donors, humanitarian and development actors, and education providers should:

- Develop and implement disability-responsive risk assessments, education continuity plans, and comprehensive safety and security plans to prevent attacks on education and mitigate their differential impacts on students with disabilities.
- Rebuild or rehabilitate damaged and destroyed schools and universities to be disability-inclusive, in consultation with local educators and disabled-student-led groups.
- Ensure all mainstream educational programs and alternative education opportunities are accessible to and inclusive of children with different types of disabilities, including both physical and psychosocial disabilities.
- Ensure that education continuity in the context of armed conflict is provided for all children, including by providing disability-inclusive training for teachers and support staff.
- Collect and share disability-disaggregated data related to attacks on education.

After an explosion hit his school in Northeast Syria, Hussain (in first grade at the time) was left with severe visual impairment. Out of school for several years, Hussain was able to begin learning again in 2022.

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ATTACKS ON EDUCATION OCCURRED AGAINST A BACKDROP OF INCREASING CONFLICT

Attacks on education rose globally in 2022 and 2023 against the backdrop of increasing conflict in several regions. Compared to previous years, the number of armed conflicts increased slightly, while the number of deaths linked to conflict increased significantly.[37] The year 2022 saw more conflict-related deaths than any year in over two decades, according to a Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) report.[38] Civilians bore the brunt of this upswing; year-over-year violence targeting civilians increased more than ten percent in 2022, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[39] Conflict increased yet further in 2023, and civilian casualties from explosive weapons rose markedly.[40] The escalation of war in **Ukraine** in February 2022, alongside the outbreak of conflict in **Sudan** in April 2023 and escalation of hostilities in **Palestine** in October 2023, drove much of the uptick in conflict-related violence and deaths during the reporting period.[41] Other factors, such as the expansion of the Islamic State,[42] famine,[43] and climate change[44] also contributed to the increase in conflict.

Across conflicts, children were particularly impacted by violence. The UN Secretary-General's *Children and Armed Conflict* report recorded the highest ever annual number of grave violations against children in 2022.[45] In addition to an increase in attacks on schools and hospitals, these violations included upticks in the recruitment and use of children, abductions, and killing and maiming.[46]

However, the intensity of violence declined in several countries during the reporting period, including **Afghanistan**,[47] **Libya**,[48] and **Kenya**,[49] as well as **Azerbaijan**.[50] Ceasefires, advances in negotiations, or peace accords were reached in several countries in 2022 and 2023, including in **Colombia**,[51] **Ethiopia**,[52] **Thailand**,[53] and **Yemen**,[54] as well as between **Kyrgyzstan** and Tajikistan.[55] Despite advances towards peace, these measures were tenuous in several contexts.[56]

In Latin America, notwithstanding peace talks and temporary ceasefires between the government and several armed groups in **Colombia**, violence against civilians, particularly social and political leaders, peaked in 2022 before decreasing slightly in 2023.[57]

In Europe, the full-scale Russian invasion of **Ukraine** led to more than ten thousand civilian deaths in 2022 and 2023, particularly due to attacks with explosive weapons, such as airstrikes and shelling, according to the UN and PRIO.[58] Persons with disabilities and older persons faced heightened danger due to their inability to leave high-risk areas, according to Amnesty International and the UN;[59] meanwhile, women and children made up 90 percent of those fleeing conflict-affected areas.[60]

In south and central Asia, violence peaked in **Kyrgyzstan** in September 2022 during border clashes with Tajikistan, involving both government forces and civilians, that produced dozens of casualties and forcibly displaced over 140,000 people.[61] In **Afghanistan**, violence declined overall in 2022 after the Taliban's takeover from the previous government the prior year.[62] However, the Taliban engaged in fighting with at least 20 non-state armed groups, including the Islamic State Khorasan Province, and severely restricted the basic rights and

freedoms of women and girls, including by violently repressing peaceful protests, as reported by the UN.[63] Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, in **Pakistan**, experienced an increase in Islamist armed group attacks on government forces, including the deadly bombing of a religious building in a police compound in Peshawar city in January 2023, according to International Crisis Group.[64]

In the Middle East, child recruitment and use increased in **Syria** in 2022, despite a decrease in fighting that year, according to the *Children and Armed Conflict* report and media outlets.[65] In **Yemen**, violence decreased in 2022 and 2023, compared to previous years, during a UN-mediated ceasefire and even after its lapse.[66] Fighting and violations against civilians, including children, decreased during the six-month truce;[67] however, political violence, human rights abuses, and harm from landmines persisted, according to ACLED and a local human rights organization.[68] In **Palestine**, the UN reported an increase in grave violations against children in 2022.[69] Violence increased in the Gaza Strip in October 2023 after Hamas-led fighters conducted a large-scale attack into Israel and Israeli armed forces launched an intensive military offensive in the Gaza Strip, including airstrikes and a ground incursion.[70]

In Africa, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reported that all armed actors in the conflict in northern **Ethiopia** committed human rights violations and war crimes in 2022, such as extrajudicial executions and sexual violence.[71] Fighting in Tigray region was limited by a peace agreement at the end of that year,[72] but flared up again in Amhara region in August 2023.[73] In **Sudan**, fighting erupted in April 2023 in Khartoum between government and paramilitary forces, then rapidly spread to other regions of the country, such as Darfur;[74] thousands of civilians have been killed and millions displaced, according to the UN.[75] In northeast **Nigeria**, armed conflict continued between government forces and Boko Haram, and between Boko Haram and splinter groups such as the Islamic State in West Africa Province, throughout 2023.[76] Meanwhile, in northwestern and northcentral regions of the country, violence persisted between pastoralists and farmer communities, due in part to land scarcity linked to climate change.[77] In **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**, Islamic State and al-Qaeda-linked armed groups consolidated control over large swaths of territory, and fighting between these groups and government forces caused significant civilian casualties.[78] As conflict intensified between armed groups and government forces in **DRC** in 2022, particularly in Ituri and North Kivu provinces,[79] the UN verified an uptick in grave violations against children, including recruitment.[80]

In East Asia, fighting between armed resistance groups and the military intensified in **Myanmar** in 2022, after the military seized power the previous year.[81] The UN reported an increase in the death and injury of children, often attributed to indiscriminate attacks, including airstrikes and the use of other explosive weapons.[82]

Globally, demonstrations continued, particularly anti-government protests, with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace tracking new protests in 83 countries in 2023, including in **India** and **Türkiye**.[83] Police continued to violently repress protests in a number of countries, according to ACLED, and protest-related deaths were reported in several countries, including **DRC**, as well as **Sudan** before the outbreak of conflict.[84]

MOTIVES FOR ATTACKING EDUCATION DURING THE 2022-2023 REPORTING PERIOD

In 2022 and 2023, schools, universities, students, and teachers faced violence in armed conflicts for diverse reasons. In some contexts, parties to conflict intentionally looted or set fire to schools and universities, or targeted them with explosive weapons, because they oppose a certain type of instruction, such as girls' learning or education they perceive as secular or "Western." In other places, armed groups viewed schools and their staff as agents or symbols of a government they oppose. These education facilities and teachers were then targeted, including by arson, explosives, threats, killings, and abductions. These types of attacks frequently occurred in countries like **Afghanistan**, **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Mali**, **Myanmar**, **Nigeria**, **Pakistan**, and **Somalia** over the past two years.

In other countries, like **Colombia**, teachers were targeted for their activism and participation in unions during the reporting period. Meanwhile, students and educators were targeted for ethnic reasons in other contexts, such as in **Afghanistan**, where Hazara students came under attack. In some countries, when schools serve as polling stations during elections, they become targets for armed groups attempting to disrupt electoral processes or damage voting materials, as was the case in **the Philippines** during this reporting period.

In other contexts, parties to conflict frequently targeted schools and universities with explosive weapons or used these weapons in populated areas where schools and universities were located. Such attacks included airstrikes and shelling, as well as planting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and anti-personnel mines. Explosive weapons that produce wide-area effects are particularly dangerous when used in populated areas, since they create a large blast, can spread fragments over a wide radius, and can cause indiscriminate harm to civilians. GCPEA found that explosive weapons were used in around one-third of all reported attacks on education during the reporting period, an increase in proportion compared to the previous two years. In 2022 and 2023, explosive weapons were reportedly used in a significant number of attacks on education in **Colombia**, **Myanmar**, **Palestine**, **Sudan**, **Syria**, **Ukraine**, and **Yemen**, damaging or destroying schools and universities and harming a significant number of students and educators.

Elsewhere, state police, military, or paramilitary forces arrested, or used excessive force against, school and university students and staff for holding on-campus protests or for protesting over education-related grievances, such as in **Afghanistan**, **India**, and **Türkiye**.

In yet other contexts, military use of schools or universities provoked rival armed forces or groups to target the educational facility. In 2022 and 2023, state military, police, and non-state armed groups used schools and universities for tactical purposes, for example as bases, barracks, fighting positions, or as detention or interrogation centers. GCPEA identified military use preceding attacks on educational facilities by rival forces or groups in a number of countries, including **Colombia**, **Ethiopia**, **Iraq**, **Myanmar**, **Syria**, **Egypt**, and **Ukraine**.

A school and an internally displaced people's refuge site were damaged in West Darfur, Sudan, on April 27 and 28, 2023.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SAHEL SPILLOVER VIOLENCE IMPACTING EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICAN COASTAL COUNTRIES

Spreading violence from the Central Sahel into neighboring West African coastal countries began impacting access to education during the reporting period. Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, and Togo were particularly affected by the spillover, according to the UN.[85] In the Central Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger profiled in this report, GCPEA identified at least 440 attacks on education during the reporting period; in addition, GCPEA identified a growing trend of non-state armed groups targeting education in Benin.

Attacks by non-state armed groups in West African coastal countries have been reported since 2018,[86] and in early 2021, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) claimed a number of attacks in Togo and on the Beninois army in northern Benin.[87] Of particular concern was northern Benin where, according to ACLED, non-state armed groups perpetrated 25 attacks against civilians and military targets in the second half of 2022, compared to two in the same period of the previous year.[88] In response, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, and Togo have been increasing military operations in northern regions that border Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.[89]

Schools increasingly closed in these West African coastal countries due to insecurity in 2022 and 2023.[90] For example, the UN reported in mid-2022 that four schools were closed in Matéri commune, northern Benin;[91] in the second half of the year, at least 17 schools closed in the country because of actual or threatened violence, including arson, affecting hundreds of students.[92] In Togo, the UN reported that seven primary schools and two kindergartens remained closed after school holidays in areas experiencing military operations in late 2022.[93]

Benin experienced a dozen attacks on education in 2022 and 2023. Although a significant number, Benin has not been profiled in the report based on GCPEA's criteria, which are set out in the Methodology section. Eleven were attacks on schools and one was an attack on a teacher and students. Attacks on schools included arson and threats. For example:

- In April 2022, suspected members of an armed group reportedly abducted a Quranic teacher and eight of his students from a village in Banikoara town, Alibori department, and allegedly killed the teacher, as reported by ACLED.[94]
- In October 2022, suspected members of an armed group reportedly entered a school in Banikoara town, Alibori department, and left a note demanding the closure of primary and secondary schools and threatening violence, according to local media.[95]
- On February 26, 2023, suspected members of an armed group reportedly looted the office of the director of the Public Primary School in Gama Founougo district, Banikoara, Alibori department, as reported by ACLED.[96]

In this context, governments, donors, and humanitarian and development actors should prioritize and fund measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to attacks on education. These include the development of risk assessments, education continuity plans, and comprehensive safety and security plans; the promotion of strong regional cooperation to monitor and report on attacks on education; and the exchange of good practices in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration and *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* to ensure policies are in place to prevent military use before the crisis potentially intensifies. All the West African coastal countries listed above have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.

GLOBAL TRENDS IN ATTACKS ON EDUCATION: 2022-2023

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GPCEA identified around 6,000 reports of attacks on education and military use globally. These attacks harmed at least 10,000 students and education personnel. This marked an increase in attacks on education and military use, as well as a rise in the number of students and educators harmed, as compared to the previous reporting period. In comparison, GCPEA collected more than 5,000 reported incidents of attacks on education and military use that harmed approximately 9,000 students and education personnel, in 2020 and 2021.
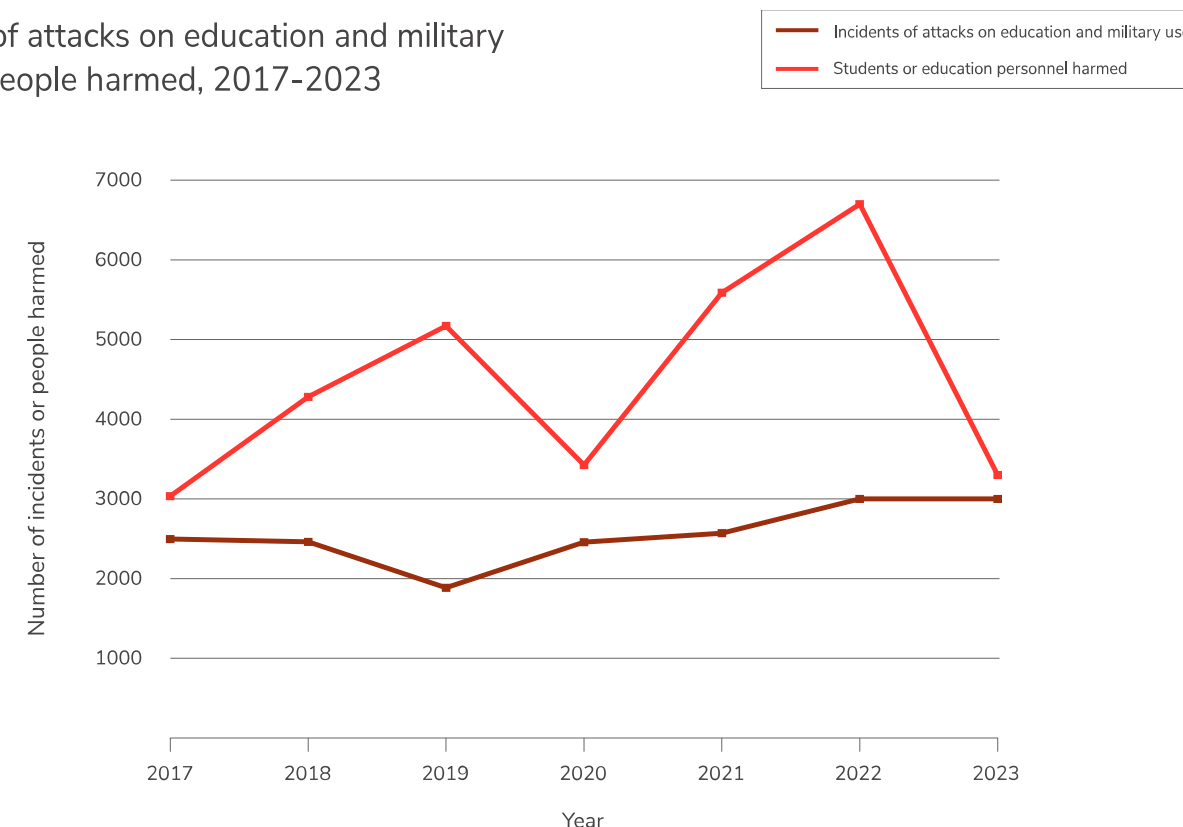
In 2022, the number of reported attacks on education and military use of schools increased 17 percent globally, as compared to 2021, with the number of attacks growing to over 3,000 from approximately 2,570. Meanwhile, the number of students and educators reported killed, injured, abducted, arrested, or otherwise harmed by attacks on education increased by 20 percent year-over-year, with the number of students and educators killed or harmed increasing to more than 6,700 from around 5,600.

In 2023, the global number of attacks and military use remained more or less constant, as compared to 2022, with around 3,000 attacks reported. However, the number of students and educators reported killed, injured, abducted, arrested, or otherwise harmed by attacks on education decreased in 2023, with around 3,300 incidents reported. One reason the number of students and educators harmed or killed might have declined in 2023 is that schools and universities closed when hostilities escalated in countries such as Sudan and Palestine, meaning students and staff were less likely to be in education facilities during attacks. GCPEA also noted a decrease in the number of year-over-year arrests reported during education-related protests as compared to 2022.

From 2017 to 2023, over 2,000 attacks on education and incidents of military use of educational facilities have been reported per year, except in 2019 when attacks dipped below that threshold. Meanwhile, GCPEA has noted several year-over-year increases in the number of students or education personnel killed or harmed by attacks on education since 2017. The exception was a decline in 2020 when many students and educators were not in schools or universities and education-related protests decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 2023 also saw a reduction in the number of students and educators reportedly killed or harmed as compared to the two previous years.

GCPEA identified reports of attacks on education in 79 countries during the reporting period. This included the 28 countries profiled in this report as well as 51 countries where GCPEA identified reports of isolated or occasional attacks on education in 2022 and 2023 or that experienced attacks on education but were not in armed conflict. This number marks a slight decline compared to 2020 and 2021, when GCPEA identified a total of 84 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, attacks against schools involving explosive weapons or arson.

Incidents of attacks on education and military use, and people harmed, 2017-2023

Legend:
- Incidents of attacks on education and military use
- Students or education personnel harmed

VERY HEAVILY AFFECTED COUNTRIES

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified seven countries that experienced over 400 incidents of attacks on education and military use of educational facilities, or where more than 400 people were harmed, and were thus categorized as very heavily affected. **Afghanistan**, **DRC**, **India**, **Myanmar**, **Pakistan**, **Palestine**, and **Ukraine** met these criteria.

In **Afghanistan**, attacks on schools, school students, and education personnel continued during the 2022-2023 reporting period, including a number of attacks on higher education, particularly targeted at female students and staff. In addition, the Taliban used at least 54 schools for military purposes. In **DRC**, over 430 schools were attacked, with most damaged or destroyed, as armed conflict intensified. The number of reported attacks on education decreased slightly in 2022 and 2023, at over 500, compared to the previous reporting period, when more than 700 occurred. North Kivu, Ituri, and Mai-Ndombe regions were most heavily affected. Attacks on students continued in Jammu and Kashmir, **India**, while schools came under attack in some eastern states and repression of higher education protests continued in several states. As conflict between the military and non-state armed groups intensified in **Myanmar** following the 2021 military takeover, GCPEA identified over 245 reports of attacks on schools and at least 190 reports of military use.

In **Pakistan**, attacks on education increased during the reporting period, when over 620 students and staff were arrested by the police during education-related protests. The number of reported attacks in **Palestine**

also increased compared to the previous reporting period, with at least 640 attacks on schools and 385 attacks on school students, teachers, and staff. In **Ukraine**, attacks on schools and universities occurred in many regions, with the east and south of the country particularly affected; many of the attacks involved explosive weapons, including airstrikes and shelling. Kindergartens, schools, and universities were also used for military purposes there.

HEAVILY AFFECTED COUNTRIES

Heavily affected countries are 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. **Burkina Faso**, **Ethiopia**, **Nigeria**, **Türkiye**, and **Yemen** met these criteria.

In **Burkina Faso**, where armed groups were active across many regions of the country, GCPEA identified more than 270 reported attacks on schools, as well as incidents of military use of educational facilities. Attacks on schools were recorded in northern **Ethiopia;** students and educators were also reportedly harmed or killed in conflict-related violence and arrested during education-related protests.

Although **Nigeria** experienced a decrease in reported abductions of school students, cases of the military use of schools increased in 2022 and 2023, as compared to the previous reporting period. In **Türkiye**, in addition to a small number of attacks on schools, GCPEA collected reports of the arrest or detention of more than 200 higher education students and staff. Despite a six-month truce in **Yemen** in 2022, attacks on education facilities and their military use continued during the reporting period, alongside child recruitment at schools or along school routes.

AFFECTED COUNTRIES

The remainder of the countries profiled in this report were categorized as affected, with between 10 and 199

The 51 countries where GCPEA identified isolated reports of attacks on education or that experienced attacks on education but were not conflict-affected:

- Angola
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh
- Benin
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Burundi
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Eswatini
- France
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Greece
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Hungary
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Israel
- Italy
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mexico
- Morocco
- Nepal
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Peru
- Russia
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- United States of America
- Venezuela
- Zimbabwe

attacks on education and military use of educational facilities, or between 10 and 199 students, teachers, or other education personnel harmed. These countries were: **Cameroon**, **CAR**, **Colombia**, **Egypt**, **Iraq**, **Kenya**, **Kyrgyzstan**, **Libya**, **Mali**, **Mozambique**, **Niger**, **the Philippines**, **Somalia**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, and **Syria**.

Three countries categorized as very heavily affected or heavily affected in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022* experienced significant decreases in attacks, leading to their categorization as affected in this reporting period. For instance, **Mali** and **Cameroon** saw a decline in reported attacks on schools.

Several countries categorized as affected in the previous report, such as **CAR** and **Libya**, experienced a decline in reported attacks on education but not to such an extent that they no longer met inclusion criteria.

On the other hand, a few countries categorized as affected in the previous report experienced an increase in the reported number of attacks, although the number was not sufficient to move the country into a higher category. This was the case for countries such as **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, and **the Philippines**.

Two countries profiled in the last report were not profiled in this one. **Azerbaijan** and **Thailand** were not covered due either to a reduction in attacks on education or because the country was no longer considered to be in armed conflict. Meanwhile, **Egypt** and **Kyrgyzstan** did not appear in *Education under Attack 2022* but are in this report due to upticks in attacks on education or the military use of educational facilities.[97]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

Attacks on schools were the most prevalent form of attack on education during the reporting period, making up more than half of all reported incidents. In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected reports of over 3,250 attacks on schools in 27 profiled countries. These attacks included airstrikes, shelling, arson, looting, and threats; they caused the death or injury of over 725 students and educators, along with damage to hundreds of school facilities and the loss of associated learning. In comparison, attacks on schools made up a greater proportion of all attacks on education and military use during the periods covered in *Education under Attack 2020* and *2022* as compared to this reporting period.
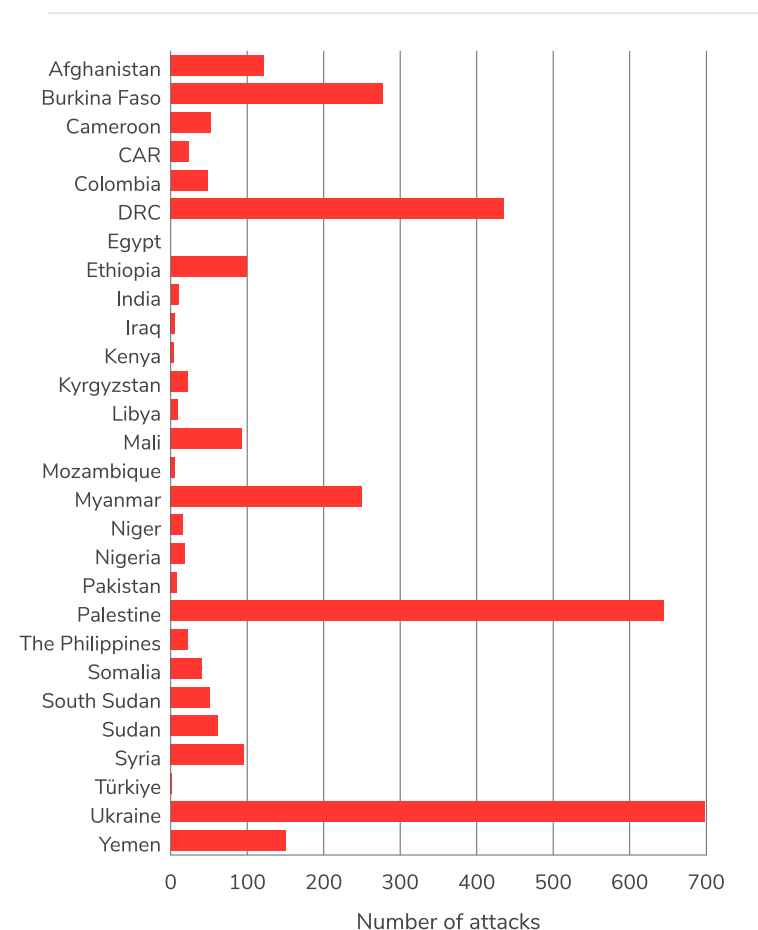
In 2022 and 2023, **Ukraine** and **Palestine** were the countries most affected by attacks on schools, with Ukraine experiencing around 700 attacks and Palestine at least 640. The majority of attacks involved explosive weapons, including airstrikes and shelling. **Burkina Faso**, **DRC**, and **Myanmar** also experienced a significant number of attacks on schools.

Examples of attacks on schools during the reporting period included:

- In **Ukraine**, two schools and several apartment buildings were destroyed in Chernihiv city and region, on March 3, 2022, likely due to airstrikes by Russian forces, according to the UN. 47 civilians were killed in the strikes.[98]
- In **Ethiopia**, the Education Cluster determined that as of December 2022, the country had more than 9,000

damaged or destroyed schools, mostly due to conflict, many in Tigray and Amhara regions.[99] Not all the damage or destruction of schools was due to attacks by parties to the conflict, since some resulted from displaced persons using schools as shelters, and other causes. In one example that met the criteria of an attack on education, an airstrike hit a kindergarten in Mekelle city, Tigray region, on August 26, 2022, killing several children and injuring others, according to the UN.[100] *The New York Times* and other international media outlets reported that the children who were hit in the attack appeared to be in a playground next to the kindergarten.[101]

- In **Libya**, sporadic attacks on education occurred during the reporting period, particularly involving explosive weapons. For instance, a war remnant reportedly detonated in a school in Sirte city and district, in late March 2022, according to local media outlets. The explosion of the shell injured one student.[102]
- In **Somalia**, Al-Shabab detonated two car bombs outside the Ministry of Education, in Mogadishu, on October 29, 2022, according to human rights organizations and the UN. The attack occurred while secondary students and their families collected diplomas; it killed at least 121 civilians and wounded over 300 more.[103] The prime minister reportedly ordered schools and universities to temporarily close after the attack.[104]
- In **Burkina Faso**, GCPEA identified at least 270 attacks on schools during the reporting period. For example, on February 19, 2022, members of an alleged armed group burned a school in Kikideni village, Fada Ngourma province, Est region, affecting the education of at least 450 students, as reported by local media.[105]
- In **Mozambique**, on September 6, 2022, members of an armed group reportedly set fire to a primary school and a secondary school in Chipene village, Memba district, Nampula province, disrupting education for at least 78 students, as reported by Human Rights Watch, ACLED, and media outlets. Local Islamic State-linked group "Al-Shabab" claimed responsibility for the attack.[106]
- In **Palestine**, GCPEA identified at least 642 attacks on schools and interferences to education during the reporting period. Between the escalation of hostilities in October and December 2023, the UN reported that at least 352 schools were damaged in the Gaza Strip, representing more than 60 percent of all schools.[107] For example, on October 17, 2023, in al-Maghazi refugee camp, Gaza Strip, during Israeli airstrikes in the area, an UNRWA school was hit, causing extensive structural damage.[108]

Reported attacks on schools in profiled countries, 2022-2023

Number of attacks

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA collected around 800 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2022 and 2023 in 25 of the 28 profiled countries. Around 5,000 students or educators were killed or harmed in these attacks; around 1,100 of them were killed, injured, or abducted and over 3,850 were reportedly arrested or detained. These numbers were in addition to students or educators killed or injured in attacks on schools and universities.

Myanmar and **Palestine** were the most impacted by attacks on students and educators during the reporting period, with more than 165 students or educators killed, injured, or abducted, in each. Other countries that were heavily impacted included **Cameroon** and **Iraq**.

In addition, at least 665 students or educators were threatened globally, with **Colombia** and **Cameroon** the countries most heavily affected. For example:

- In **Nigeria**, abductions of school students and teachers continued during the reporting period, although the rate of such attacks declined compared to previous years. For example, in April 2022, the head teacher of Shuwari primary school was abducted in Buni-Yadi town, Yobe state, according to Save the Children.[109]
- In **Mali**, the UN reported that, in January 2022, armed men threatened students at a school in Timbuktu region and demanded the closure of the school. They reportedly forced the children to leave, and set fire to school equipment.[110]
- In **Myanmar**, some school students and teachers were targeted as education became increasingly politicized during the reporting period. For example, on July 3, 2022, in Tigyaing township, Sagaing region, local media reported that two female volunteer teachers were arrested.[111]
- In **Palestine**, on May 11, 2022, a 16-year-old student was reportedly shot and killed as he was leaving school in Al Bireh, Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate, West Bank, during confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli forces, according to OCHA.[112] Between January and June 2023, the Education Cluster recorded a sharp increase from 2022 figures in attacks on students and teachers in Palestine, with over 235 attacks.[113]

In **India**, more than 2,700 students and teachers were arrested or detained for participating in education-related protests during the reporting period, and in **Pakistan** the number was over 540. Examples of education-related protest repression included:

- In **India**, police reportedly used a lathi (long stick) charge to disperse a group of teachers demanding the regularization of their jobs on July 1, 2023, in Sangrur city, Punjab state, according to local media outlets.[114]
- In **Pakistan**, on July 12, 2023, in Karachi city, Sindh province, police allegedly used batons and water cannons to disperse a teacher demonstration; over 200 primary school teachers were protesting work conditions, including regularization of contracts, as reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn*.[115]

Profiled countries with reports of attacks individually targeting school students, teachers, and other education personnel, 2022-2023

Ukraine
Türkiye
Syria
Palestine
Iraq
Egypt
Pakistan
Afghanistan
Mali
Niger
Sudan
Yemen
India
Myanmar
Burkina Faso
South Sudan
Ethiopia
The Philippines
Nigeria
Somalia
Cameroon
Kenya
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo

● **Affected**

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

● **Heavily Affected**

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

● **Very Heavily Affected**

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

Two men inspect a school reportedly used for military purposes by armed group M23 in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, in April 2023.

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MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified over 1,000 reports of military use globally. Armed forces, other state security forces, or non-state armed groups used schools as bases, barracks, firing positions, or for other non-educational purposes in 30 countries, 25 of which are profiled in the report.[116] Compared to the previous reporting period, this represents a significant increase in reported cases of military use, as well as a rise in the number of countries experiencing such use. In 2020 and 2021, around 570 reported cases of military use of schools and universities occurred in 24 countries.

In some contexts, military use of schools and universities placed students and educators in close proximity to armed forces or groups, increasing their exposure to munitions and their risk of child recruitment, sexual violence, and injury or death. GCPEA also found that military use at times led rival armed forces or groups to target schools or universities for attack.

Compared to the previous reporting period, GCPEA noted an increase in reports of military use of educational facilities in many countries, including **Afghanistan**, **Colombia**, **Mozambique**, **Nigeria**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, **Syria**, and **Ukraine**. As in the last report, **Myanmar** was particularly affected by military use of schools and universities, with over 190 incidents reported in 2022 and 2023. A significant number of incidents were also reported in **Afghanistan**, **Nigeria**, and **Yemen** during the same period.

Examples of military use of schools and universities in 2022 and 2023 included:

- In **Iraq**, on May 2, 2022, Sinjar Resistance Unit snipers used a school as a firing position in Sinjar district, Nineveh governorate. In response, the Iraqi armed forces shelled the school, killing the snipers, as reported by International Crisis Group, ACLED, and a local media outlet.[117]
- In **Afghanistan**, the UN verified the military use of 54 schools by the Taliban in 2022.[118] GCPEA found many cases of military use in Panjshir province, in particular. For example, around February 3, 2022, a girls' school was used for military purposes in Dehkalan village, Panjshir region, as reported by ACLED and local media.[119]
- In **Egypt**, GCPEA received reports of a primary school in North Sinai governorate allegedly occupied by military and police forces between 2016 and December 2022, when the school was vacated; according to reports, the school was used as a military base and fortifications were added to the structure for that purpose.[120]
- In **Niger**, on February 18, 2022, an airstrike hit near a school in the vicinity of the hamlet of Nachambé, Maradi region, where members of an armed group were allegedly sheltering, according to NGO Medecins Sans Frontiers and international media. Four children were killed in the airstrike, although GCPEA was unable to determine whether or not they were attending school at the time of the attack.[121]
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, Tajik armed forces used a school as a military base in Ak-Sai in Batken district and region, for two days in mid-September 2022, as reported by Human Rights Watch and local media.[122]
- In **CAR**, the UN reported that armed forces used a primary school in Lady village, Ouham prefecture, disrupting students' access to education in February 2023.[123]

Profiled countries with at least one report of military use of schools or universities, 2022-2023

● Affected Countries

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA collected reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school in five countries in 2022 and 2023: **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Somalia**, **Syria**, and **Yemen**. This is one more than in the last reporting period. Given the challenges of collecting data on school-related child recruitment, the number of countries may be underreported.

Examples of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school in 2022 and 2023 included:

- In **Colombia**, reports of school-related child recruitment increased in 2022 and 2023 compared to last reporting period, with Cauca and Antioquia departments most affected. Several incidents involved FARC dissident armed groups, according to the Office of the Inspector General and International Crisis Group.[124] For example, in January and early February 2023, the Office of the Inspector General received reports of indoctrination and recruitment of students by FARC dissident forces in rural schools in Yarumal municipality, Antioquia department.[125] Fear of recruitment also kept some students from attending schools in affected areas.[126]
- In **Yemen**, two boy students were abducted from their school in Sana'a in mid-January 2022 to be used as fighters, as reported by ACLED and a local news outlet.[127]
- In **Syria**, on June 22, 2022, members of a non-state armed group allegedly abducted a 14-year-old boy for recruitment as he was leaving a school in Aleppo city and governorate, according to local media reports.[128]
- In **DRC**, the UN reported that on November 5, 2022, 15 students and two teachers from a school in Kisimba, North Kivu province, were abducted for recruitment into an armed group. A teacher seeking to escape was reportedly shot and was subsequently treated at a local health facility.[129]

Countries with reports of child recruitment occurring at, or on the way to or from, school, 2022-2023

● Affected Countries

Profiled countries with reports of sexual violence occurring at, or on the way to or from, school or university, 2022-2023

- Niger
- Sudan
- Yemen
- South Sudan
- Colombia
- Cameroon
- Democratic Republic of Congo

● Affected Countries

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified reports of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university in eight countries, perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, other state security entities, or non-state armed groups. Seven of these countries are profiled in the report, **Cameroon**, **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Niger**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, and **Yemen**, while one is not, the **United States of America**.[130] GCPEA identified reports of education-related sexual violence in seven countries in the previous reporting period.

Examples of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, university during the reporting period included:

- In **South Sudan**, the UN reported in 2022 that a Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) soldier attempted to rape a girl student while she was on her way to school in Yambio county.[131]
- In **Yemen**, a member of an alleged warring party abducted a girl student as she returned home from school in Sana'a with the purpose of forcing her to marry him in December 2022, as reported by local media.[132]
- In **Cameroon**, Human Rights Watch reported that, on June 12, 2022, armed separatists threatened and humiliated 11 students, who were on their way to school in South-West region, forcing them to strip naked. One student was also reportedly shot in the leg.[133]
- In **Sudan**, on May 14, 2023, alleged armed group fighters raided a dormitory for teaching staff at the Ahfad University for Women, took two women to another building, and raped them, according to a legal activist group as reported by *University World News.*[134]

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 attack types on which to collect data. Stigma surrounding sexual violence means that survivors or their families are unlikely to report events when they occur and, if they do, details on the location of events are rarely provided in reports, making it difficult to determine whether incidents occurred at school or university or along school routes.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected over 360 reported incidents of attacks on higher education in profiled countries. Of these, around 100 were attacks on university facilities, while around 260 were attacks on university students and staff. More than 2,460 higher education students or staff were killed or harmed in these attacks; around 760 of them were reportedly killed, injured, or abducted, while over 1,700 were detained or arrested. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022* included over 320 reports of attacks on higher education in profiled countries for 2020 and 2021, affecting more than 2,000 university students and staff.

Attacks on higher education occurred in 22 of the 28 countries profiled in this report. The country most affected by attacks on higher education facilities was **Ukraine**, with more than 35 reported attacks; **Palestine**, **Sudan**, and **Yemen** were also affected by attacks on higher education infrastructure, with ten or more reported incidents in 2022 and 2023. Many of these attacks involved the use of explosive weapons, including airstrikes or shelling, and some harmed students.

The countries with the most attacks on higher education students and staff were **India**, **Türkiye**, and **Afghanistan**. In **India**, over 1,220 students and academics were reportedly arrested or detained during education-related protests. GCPEA collected reports of the arrest or detention of more than 200 higher education students and staff in **Türkiye**. In **Afghanistan**, more than 70 students and academics were reportedly killed, injured, or abducted, while more than 65 were also arrested or detained. Other countries affected by attacks on university students and staff included **Pakistan**, where over 130 students were abducted or arrested in education-related protests by the police, and **Palestine**, where more than 160 students and staff were killed or injured, including by live ammunition, rubber bullets, and teargas.

Examples of attacks on higher education facilities in 2022 and 2023 included:

- In **Ethiopia**, on January 11, 2022, the Ethiopian air force allegedly carried out an airstrike on the Technical Vocational Education and Training institute, killing three men and injuring 21 people, many of them women, in Mekelle city, Tigray region, as reported by the UN.[135]
- In **Ukraine**, Russian forces damaged a building of the Kyiv National Shevchenko University during missile strikes in Kyiv city and region, on October 10, 2022, as reported by Amnesty International and local media outlets.[136]
- In **the Philippines**, a non-state armed group allegedly detonated an explosive device during a Catholic mass in the gymnasium of Mindanao State University, Marawi, on December 3, 2023, in Marawi city, Lanao del Sur province. Four people were killed and more than 40 people were injured, according to International Crisis Group and Scholars at Risk.[137] The gymnasium was damaged, and classes were suspended, as reported by international media outlets *BBC* and *Reuters*.[138]

Attacks on higher education students and staff included both conflict-related incidents and repression of education-related protests, as well as attacks on professors or students for their academic scholarship. Examples of conflict-related incidents during the reporting period included:

- In **Myanmar**, local media and Scholars at Risk reported that on April 14, 2022, three vehicles from the University of Computer Studies were attacked with explosive devices on the Mandalay-Mattara highway, in Mandalay city and region. The attack affected 43 students and staff, but no injuries were reported.[139]
- In **Cameroon**, a non-state armed group attacked the University of Buea, in South West region, during examinations on July 8, 2022, abducting the exam supervisor and threatening to shoot students, as reported by the UN, Scholars at Risk, and international media.[140]

Examples of attacks on higher education students and staff during repression of education-related or on-campus protests included:

- In **Iraq**, the police and security services reportedly beat and arrested professors and staff from the University of Baghdad, on April 14, 2022, who were demonstrating for their right to housing at the entrance to the university and in front of the Ministry of Science and Technology building in Al-Jadriyah, Baghdad. The police removed a female protester's hijab, as reported by Scholars at Risk and a local media outlet.[141]
- In **Türkiye**, Scholars at Risk reported that, on May 20, 2022, police arrested at least 30 students who were peacefully protesting on the Boğaziçi University campus against the closure of an on-campus LGBT club, in Istanbul city and province.[142]
- In **Kenya**, police threw teargas cannisters and shot live bullets at Maseno University students who were throwing stones and protesting the high cost of living on campus in Maseno town, Kisumu county, on March 20, 2023, as reported by Scholars at Risk. One student was reportedly shot dead, and others injured.[143]

Students shout slogans as police detain them during a protest against National Education Policy 2020 and to demand the reopening of schools and student union elections at universities, in Kolkata, India on March 10, 2023.

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Profiled countries with reports of attacks on higher education, 2022-2023

● Affected

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

● Heavily Affected

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

● Very Heavily Affected

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

GENDERED DYNAMICS OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

Although boys and girls, and men and women, were all affected by attacks on education during the reporting period, armed forces and non-state armed groups specifically targeted girls and women in certain contexts. In some countries, girls' schools were bombed to suppress their education; in others, girls were forcibly recruited and girls and women were abducted or subjected to sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university. GCPEA research has found that women and girls are differentially impacted by attacks on education.[144]

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified ten countries where girls and women were targeted in attacks on education because of their gender, **Afghanistan**, **Cameroon**, **Colombia**, **DRC**, **Niger**, **Pakistan**, **South Sudan**, **Sudan**, **Syria**, and **Yemen**. In comparison, 11 countries profiled in *Education under Attack* involved such targeted attacks. These numbers include countries where girls and women were targeted in sexual violence incidents at, or on the way to or from, school or university.

Examples of attacks on education targeted against girls, girls' schools, or women:

- In **Pakistan**, the UN reported an attack on a girls' middle school which involved the use of improvised explosive devices in 2022.[145]
- In **Afghanistan**, the UN reported that on September 30, 2022, an explosive attached to a suicide bomber detonated at the Kaaj private tutoring center in Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul, killing at least 54 people and injuring at least 114, most of whom were Hazara women and girls.[146] At the time, approximately 400 boys and girls were reportedly studying for university entrance exams at the center, and were separated by gender in accordance with Taliban instructions, as reported by international media *VOA*; the explosive reportedly detonated in the girls' section.[147]
- In **Syria**, a girl student was reportedly abducted for military conscription while on her way to school in Tal Ref'at, Aleppo city and governorate, in early January 2023.[148]

In other contexts, men and boys were targeted in attacks on education. For example, boy students were recruited at, or on the way to or from, school, in **Colombia**, **Syria**, and **Yemen** during the reporting period.

Profiled countries with reports of attacks on education that uniquely targeted girls or women, 2022-2023

Syria
Afghanistan
Pakistan
Sudan
Niger
Yemen
Colombia
Cameroon
South Sudan
Democratic Republic of Congo

● Affected Countries

CLIMATE INSECURITY AND ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

Climate change has been shown to exacerbate conflict in some contexts, further limiting students' right to education.[149] Relatedly, climate change impacts grave violations against children, most notably the recruitment and use of children and the denial of humanitarian access, as recognized by the UN.[150] GCPEA has identified several preliminary connections between climate insecurity and attacks on education. In response, an "all hazards, all threats" approach should be taken to ensure the safety and resilience of education in conflict-affected contexts, including by incorporating climate insecurity and attacks on education into early warning systems.[151]

Climate insecurity refers to changes in the climate, such as shifts in weather patterns or extreme weather events, which negatively impact human security and exacerbate conflict.[152] Due to the methodological difficulties of disentangling cause and effect, GCPEA has not identified reports of attacks on education directly caused by climate change; however, initial connections appear likely in several contexts covered in *Education under Attack 2024*.

One way climate insecurity may be linked to attacks on education is lootings of school canteens in areas of the Central Sahel affected by food insecurity. In the region, desertification, land degradation, and conflict, among other factors, have interlinked in complex ways to produce food shortages.[153] In this context of climate-change-related food insecurity, armed groups have targeted school canteens for looting. For instance:

- In late March 2022, a suspected armed group allegedly looted a school canteen in Komangou village, Gourma province, Est Region, **Burkina Faso** on two consecutive days, as reported by a local media outlet.[154]
- The UN reported that, on November 15, 2022, an armed group attacked the Youba displacement site in Yatenga province, Nord region, **Burkina Faso,** looting the canteen of a primary school.[155]
- On November 16, 2022, a suspected armed group allegedly attacked a school and looted its canteen in Fatakara village, Timbuktu region, **Mali.**[156]

In addition, climate insecurity may link to attacks on education where armed parties target schools used as temporary shelters during natural disasters. For instance, in **the Philippines,** climate change has contributed to more intense typhoons, affecting in particular the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao that has faced decades of protracted armed conflict.[157] The UN reported that an armed group in the region attacked a school being used as shelter by people displaced by emergencies while state security forces were nearby for disaster-relief efforts.[158]

GCPEA also identified several reports of climate change likely accelerating existing conflicts where education was already at risk of attack. In **Somalia,** for example, drought conditions have increased conflict-linked threats to students traveling to and from schools.[159] Climate-related resource scarcity has also been linked to increased inter-communal conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in multiple sub-Saharan African countries where GCPEA has identified attacks on schools and students, such as in **Kenya** and **Nigeria.**[160]

An "all-hazards, all-risks" approach should be taken for early warning, anticipatory action, and school preparedness in the face of attacks, climate disasters, and other threats. Taking such an approach means considering natural, technological, and health hazards, as well as conflict, violence, and everyday dangers, when developing education-related plans and policies.[161] In line with guidance from the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector's (GADRRRES) Comprehensive School Safety Framework:[162]

- States should work with education providers and relevant partners to develop comprehensive school safety and security plans that account for risks posed by climate insecurity and attacks on education in the local context.
- States and other monitoring bodies should strengthen early warning systems and anticipatory action to include indicators of climate insecurity alongside the capacity to communicate relevant risks and threats to schools. Reliable data on links between climate insecurity and attacks on education should also be collected.

Students learn at a re-opened school in Mali in 2023. Schools in Mali have been attacked and closed due to insecurity in recent years.

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Recently rehabilitated Al Zyadi School in Lahj, Yemen, in January 2022. In previous years, the school was impacted by the conflict.

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POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN PROTECTING EDUCATION FROM ATTACK

In response to the grave nature of attacks on education, many states, multilateral and civil society organizations, and donors took significant steps to safeguard schools and universities, and their students and staff, in 2022 and 2023. These efforts ranged from collecting reliable data and taking steps towards holding perpetrators of attacks accountable, to promoting conflict-sensitive education and routinely sharing good practices, among others. Non-state armed groups also took important steps to safeguard education during conflict.

Since the publication of *Education under Attack 2022*, six new states have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, bringing the total number of endorsing states to 119, as of February 2024. Countries that have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration since early 2022 are: **Australia**, **Colombia**, **Guyana**, **Mauritius**, **Republic of the Congo**, and **Tunisia**. Opened for endorsement in May 2015, the Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that allows countries to express political support for the protection of students, teachers, schools, and universities during armed conflict.

Governments that endorse the Safe Schools Declaration commit to protect education from attack and prevent military use of schools and universities by implementing several commitments. These commitments include using the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (Guidelines)* to protect educational institutions, students, and personnel; facilitating the collection of, or collecting, data on attacks; investigating allegations of violations and 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*.

Examples of states, non-state armed groups, multilateral and civil society organizations, and donors safeguarding education, fulfilling commitments in the Safe Schools Declaration, or using the *Guidelines* in 2022 and 2023 are shared below.

USING THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION AND ITS *GUIDELINES TO PROTECT SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FROM MILITARY USE DURING ARMED CONFLICT*

During the reporting period, some states, international and regional bodies, non-state armed groups, and communities took concrete steps to prevent and reduce attacks on education and the military use of schools and universities.

- In October 2022, several armed groups operating in **Burkina Faso** signed unilateral declarations committing to protect educational institutions, including by refraining from attacking schools, avoiding the military use of educational facilities, and ensuring the protection of students and educational personnel.[163]
- Also in **Burkina Faso**, an inter-ministerial decree established a steering committee to oversee the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration on August 14, 2023. The committee is composed of representatives from relevant ministries and civil society organizations, as well as students.[164]
- The government of **Cameroon** established a technical committee to oversee the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration in the north of the country in late 2021. In 2022, the committee developed an action plan for the northern region of Maroua and maintained an up-to-date map of schools closed, attacked, or affected by military use in the region.[165] In August 2023, the government developed a roadmap to implement the Declaration nationwide, supported by civil society organizations.[166]
- In **Colombia**, the government developed an action plan to implement the Safe Schools Declaration through a process of consultation and validation with civil society organizations. As part of the action plan, all government agencies in charge of protecting children and education are mandated to include the *Guidelines* in their operating procedures.[167]
- In **Mali**, a proposed law on protecting schools and universities during armed conflict has been drafted and submitted to parliament.[168]
- Also in **Mali**, several non-state armed groups that are signatories to the Algiers Peace and Reconciliation Agreement committed to comply with the principles of the Safe Schools Declaration and the *Guidelines*. This included the commitment to refrain from attacking schools and ensure continuous training of fighters on the *Guidelines*. These advances were supported by the national and local Safe Schools Declaration technical committees, as well as two international organizations.[169]
- Supported by an international organization, the community in Mopti, **Mali**, used the Safe Schools Declaration and *Guidelines* to negotiate with an armed group for the reopening of schools. The international organization translated the documents into local languages Bambara, Fulfulde, Sonrhai, and Tamasheq and conducted awareness raising activities with community members.[170] The engagement of community and religious leaders in direct or indirect dialogues with armed groups also resulted in the reopening of schools in central Mali during the reporting period.[171]
- In **Mozambique**, the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces completed training on the prevention of grave violations in 2022.[172] In addition, at least one school previously used for military purposes was vacated in 2023.[173]
- In **Niger**, the Ministry of Education developed the Safe Schools Approach in July 2023, which included several measures to implement the Safe Schools Declaration. These included attack mitigation plans developed by teachers and students at vulnerable schools and committees for monitoring the risk of arson

attacks.[174]
- At the end of 2022, **Nigeria** adopted a National Plan for Financing Safe Schools that provides funding for various policies and initiatives to protect schools, learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff from attack. As part of the plan's implementation, a National Schools Security and Emergency Response Centre was established with the mandate to ensure that schools across the country are secure, and 400 security personnel were trained across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital.[175]
- Also in **Nigeria**, three schools occupied by state forces were evacuated by the end of 2023, following joint advocacy by the education and protection sectors, including drafting a letter and conducting high-level meetings with the government.[176]
- In **Sudan**, an international organization convened a workshop in West Darfur in 2022, in which 29 different state and non-state actors, national and international organizations, and civil society groups signed a commitment to implement the Safe Schools Declaration and protect education. Two schools occupied by parties to conflict were subsequently vacated.[177]
- In **Ukraine**, a high-level military order was issued in July 2022 to restrict military use of educational facilities.[178]
- In **Yemen**, the Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah), a non-state armed group, signed an action plan in 2022 to end and prevent attacks on schools along with other grave violations against children.[179] An action plan is "a written, signed commitment between the United Nations and those parties who are listed as having committed grave violations against children in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict."[180]

COLLECTING RELIABLE, RELEVANT DATA ON ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

Several states and multilateral and civil society organizations took steps to improve monitoring and reporting of attacks on education. For one, GCPEA published the final *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* in 2023, as well as several related case studies and briefs, and worked with several governments and organizations to strengthen data collection and analysis. Examples of other positive developments include:

- The Ministry of Education of **Burkina Faso**, together with the Education Cluster, developed a mechanism for collecting data on education in emergency situations, including a monthly situation alert and a quarterly monitoring tool. Data are collected on school closures and relocations due to insecurity, school reopenings, and students and teachers affected by security crises, health crises, and natural disasters. Regular reports on school closures and reopenings are published and disseminated widely by the Education Cluster.[181]
- As part of the action plan in **Colombia**, a mapping of schools at risk and attacks on education to inform public policy was in development in 2023; it was set to include data from the government and civil society sources.[182]
- In May 2022, the **Global Education Cluster** released a guidance note on "Systematizing Approaches for Attacks on Education" to support education clusters to integrate data on attacks on education into the humanitarian program cycle.[183]

- In **Nigeria**, the education sector developed and deployed an online tool to monitor attacks on education and other security incidents in northeastern states in 2023.[184]
- In **Ukraine**, the Ministry of Education and Science established a system to monitor and report on attacks on educational facilities in early 2022.[185]

INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF APPLICABLE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LAW 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.

- In December 2022, the **Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court** issued the "Policy on the Crime of Gender Persecution" that seeks to provide guidance to staff on investigating and prosecuting this crime. The Policy expressly recognizes that acts of gender persecution may include attacks on schools and other educational facilities, and the imposition of regulations restricting access to education.[186]
- In Corinto municipality, Cauca department, **Colombia**, various government committees filed petitions to move a school away from a police station after a nearby shootout between police and an alleged armed group in July 2022. One option considered by the town council was filing a writ for protection of fundamental rights (*tutela*).[187]
- In **Nigeria**, the National Plan for Financing Safe Schools released in December 2022 included a provision for assisting survivors of attacks on education. This provision contained mental health and psychosocial support, social welfare support, and the relocation of learners to safer locations to ensure the continuity of education.[188]

IMPLEMENTING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE APPROACHES TO EDUCATION AND ENSURING THE CONTINUITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Conflict-sensitive education is essential for peacebuilding in conflict-affected contexts. The continuation of education in times of crisis and conflict is likewise crucial for community development and post-crisis recovery. In 2022 and 2023, ministries and multilateral and civil society organizations took critical steps towards ensuring the continuity of conflict-sensitive education.

- In **CAR**, the Ministry of Education disseminated the content of the Child Protection Code in November 2023, with support from civil society. Adopted in June 2020, the Code is a tool for the protection of children and has been used to promote the provision of psychosocial support and education for children released from armed forces and groups.[189]
- In **Niger**, in December 2023, the Ministry of Education presented a plan to reopen during the following year most of the 912 schools closed in Tillabéri region.[190]

- Since early 2022, multilateral organizations and the Ministry of Education and Science in **Ukraine** have continued education for many Ukrainian students in-person or virtually. Programs included rehabilitating bomb shelters in schools, providing laptops and other learning materials to displaced students and teachers, developing mental health tools for teachers, and expanding online learning systems.[191]
- In 2022, **GADRRRES** launched the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022-2030, which has a comprehensive "all-hazards, all-risks" approach with regard to resilience and safety for education. This approach included natural and climate-change induced hazards, technological hazards, biological and health hazards, conflict and violence, and everyday dangers and threats.[192]

SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, AND OTHER RELEVANT UN BODIES

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 2022 and 2023 reports to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict urged all UN Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and urged parties to conflicts to refrain from using schools for military purposes.[193] Other prominent officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, also expressed their support at high-level events, alongside mentions by states. For instance, in July 2022, 27 country delegations drew attention to the Safe Schools Declaration in their statements at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict,[194] and 33 delegations referred to the Declaration in the debate held the following year in July.[195]

During the UN Security Council open debates on the protection of civilians, sexual violence in conflict, and debates on women, peace, and security, several states also referenced the Safe Schools Declaration in their statements, highlighting it as a tool to better protect civilians and education for women and girls during armed conflict, as well as to prevent sexual violence occurring at, or on the way to or from, school or university.[196]

MEET ON A REGULAR BASIS TO REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAVE SCHOOLS DECLARATION

Meeting regularly to review implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration and share promising practices was crucial for safeguarding education during the reporting period.

- In May and June 2023, the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation** and **GCPEA** organized the second global online training on implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration. Training sessions included practical exercises, discussions, and presentations on a range of topics, including data collection, accountability, and implementing the *Guidelines* in a gender-responsive manner. Around 80 representatives from ministries of defense, education, and foreign affairs from 23 countries attended.[197]
- On March 24, 2022, **GCPEA** organized an in-person workshop in Geneva, in collaboration with the Per-

manent Missions of **Argentina**, **Nigeria**, **Norway**, and **Spain**, as well as the **Global Hub for Education in Emergencies** and **Save the Children**. The workshop followed the Networking and Exchange event, organized on October 25, 2021, parallel to the Abuja Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration, meant to build on the progress achieved through the UN Security Council Resolution 2601 (2021). In the workshop, participants developed an action plan for coordinated, collective engagement with Geneva-based bodies and mechanisms for increased attention to the Safe Schools Declaration and the agenda for protecting education from attack during conflict.

- In November 2023, the Permanent Missions of **Colombia**, **Malta**, **Nigeria**, **Norway**, and **Switzerland**, together with **GCPEA**, **Watchlist**, and **UNESCO**, co-hosted an event on UNSC Resolution 2601 (2021). Member States, UN Agencies, and civil society organizations presented their efforts to implement the resolution and the Safe Schools Declaration, including by highlighting progress made and challenges faced for effective implementation on the ground.[198]

- In December 2023, **GCPEA**, together with **Norway** and **Senegal** and with support from **Spain**, the **Regional Education in Emergency Working Group**, and **Education Cannot Wait**, held a two-day in-person workshop on implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration in the Sahel. Representatives from the ministries of education, defense, interior, foreign affairs, and justice of **Burkina Faso**, **Cameroon**, **Mali**, and **Senegal** exchanged good practices and discussed the challenges of implementing the Declaration in their contexts. They also discussed opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation with the aim of better safeguarding education during conflict.[199]

In February 2022, children in Nariño, Colombia, mark Red Hand Day, a day dedicated to ending the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

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In October 2022, a Hazara girl cries as she reaches the bench she was sitting on during an attack on an education center in Kabul, Afghanistan.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Attacks on education have increased in several countries around the world. These attacks killed and injured students and educators and damaged schools and universities. As a result, education facilities closed, enrollments dropped, and students struggled to resume their learning. In particular, attacks on education differentially impacted women and girls, as well as students and educators with disabilities, LGBT learners and teachers, and those from Indigenous or ethnic minority communities.

Some states, multilateral and civil society organizations, donors, and non-state armed groups took important steps to prevent and respond to attacks on education and military use of education facilities in 2022 and 2023. Reported attacks on education decreased in several countries, including **CAR, Libya, Mali,** and **Mozambique,** as well as in **Azerbaijan** and **Thailand.** However, significant work remains to safeguard education from attack during armed conflict.

The Safe Schools Declaration and its *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* provide concrete steps for states and non-state armed groups to take to protect education. Multilateral and civil society organizations, donors, and communities have a key role to play in supporting endorsement and implementation of the Declaration and its *Guidelines.* Relevant parties should implement these commitments in a manner that accounts for the specific needs of female students and educators, as well as learners and teachers with disabilities.

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 core recommendations are shared below.

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 non-state 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.*
- In contexts in which the armed parties have been listed by the UN Secretary-General, they should engage in dialogue with the UN toward an Action Plan with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to end and prevent attacks on education, including military use of schools, and other grave violations such as recruitment of children and sexual violence.
- States should implement the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 2601 on the protection of schools in armed conflict.
- Non-state armed groups should sign and implement Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, including as it relates to educational spaces.
- Parties to conflict should never target students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities; they should never recruit or use children or commit sexual violence. Parties to conflict should 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, including those who are LGBT or are from Indigenous or ethnic minority communities.
- Parties to conflict should avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, including near schools or universities or along routes to or from them, and develop operational policy based on a presumption against such use.
- States with influence or leverage over armed parties should press them to end and prevent attacks on education.

MONITORING AND REPORTING ON ATTACKS ON EDUCATION

- States, international humanitarian and development organizations, civil society, and other monitoring bodies should strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, while ensuring the protection of personal data and sources, to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education. This includes disaggregating data by type of attack on education, gender, age, disability, location, person or group responsible, number of days the institution was closed, and type of institution. 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 or from, schools or universities, as appropriate.
- States, international humanitarian and development organizations, civil society, and other monitoring bodies should use GCPEA's *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* to identify monitoring and reporting gaps and develop solutions.

HOLDING PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO SURVIVORS

- States and international justice institutions should promptly and impartially 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 as they pertain to attacks on education.
- 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- and disability-responsive strategies to reduce the risk of attacks, and comprehensive safety and security plans in the event of these attacks.
- In the case of distance learning or catch-up classes, education providers should ensure that learners who previously ended their studies due to attacks on schools, conflict, or displacement are included, with a specific focus on female students and students with disabilities since they may encounter additional barriers to education.
- 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.
- States should adopt an "all-hazards, all-risks" approach for early warning, anticipatory action, and school preparedness in the face of attacks on education, climate disasters, and other threats to education in line with GADRRRES' Comprehensive School Safety Framework.
- Education providers should "build back better" after attacks on education and ensure funding not only to repair but to improve schools and universities and make them safer and more inclusive to all students and educators.
- Education providers should ensure all mainstream educational programs and alternative education opportunities are accessible to and inclusive of students with different types of disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

An alphabet book and a notebook lie in a middle school in Sagaing region, Myanmar, the day after an airstrike hit the school in September 2022. The attack reportedly killed several students.

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METHODOLOGY

Education under Attack 2024 *covers attacks on schools, universities, students, and educators in 2022 and 2023. The report includes a Global Overview as well as profiles for 28 conflict-affected countries with a systematic pattern of attacks on education and military use of educational facilities. The seventh edition,* Education under Attack 2024*, follows the 2007 and 2010 editions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the 2014, 2018, 2020, 2022 reports published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). This Methodology section explains the definitions used in* Education under Attack 2024 *and the criteria for profiling a country. The sources, analyses, and limitations for the report are also laid out.*

DEFINITION OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Education under Attack 2024 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 2024* 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, subregional, and United Nations (UN) peace operations. "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 non-formal 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.[1] 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.[2] 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 nonconsensual 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.[3] 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, or other third parties, 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 airstrikes, ground attacks, 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.[4]

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 child recruitment and sexual violence.

If an attack occurs on a school or university that is being used for military purposes at the time, the incident is not counted as an attack on a school or university in this report 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 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 2024*. 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 2024 includes in-depth profiles describing and analyzing attacks on education and

military use in 2022 and 2023 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.[5] Second, the report only profiles countries that experienced a systematic pattern of attacks on education in 2021 and 2022, defined as ten attacks;[6] 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 the same as those used in past reports.

DATA SOURCES AND DATA TYPES

GCPEA collected data for *Education under Attack 2024* 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, Portuguese, 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 established UN child rights monitoring, such as a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM);[7] publicly available 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 reports from the Coalition Against the Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia (COALICO) 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 2024*, 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.[8] ACLED has its own standards for achieving data reliability.[9] Recent editions of *Education under Attack* 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, Portuguese, 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, professional role, days of schooling lost, and damage or type of harm. 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 2024* varies. Some information comes from organizations such as UN agencies or Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, 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 transpar-

ency, *Education under Attack 2024* 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 2024* 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 2022 and 2023 and brief comparisons with the previous report.

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 2022 and 2023. 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 2024* uses equivalent thresholds to the previous three reports to determine levels of severity. The reports made the determination over a two-year period beginning in 2022, rather than five years as in past editions, to reflect more regular report releases.

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 at-

tack 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 2024* 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 2024* almost certainly underrepresents school-related sexual violence and child recruitment.

When data on child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, 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.

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 2024* 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.

The Lviv National Agrarian University in Lviv, Ukraine, was damaged in an attack on January 1, 2023.

AFGHANISTAN

GCPEA identified over 140 attacks on schools, school students, and education personnel during the 2022-2023 reporting period. Also, the Taliban was responsible for a number of attacks on higher education, particularly affecting female students and staff; at least 98 higher education students and staff were arrested or detained. In addition, incidents of the military use of schools and universities increased.

CONTEXT

Conflict-related violence reduced overall in Afghanistan in 2022 after the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, although insecurity remained in some areas.[1] In 2022, the UN reported attacks on Taliban forces by members of armed groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), and around 20 other regionally-based groups.[2] According to Human Rights Watch, violence between the Taliban and the National Resistance Front (NRF) escalated briefly in 2022 in Panjshir province.[3] These attacks reportedly decreased in 2023, according to Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[4] Disputes within Taliban forces also produced occasional violence.[5] Along the country's borders, Pakistani and Iranian armed forces engaged in clashes with the Taliban, according to ACLED and international media.[6] Throughout 2022, Afghans voiced their opposition to Taliban oppression through peaceful protests, many led by women, demanding human rights, equality, and justice, according to Human Rights Watch.[7] The Taliban responded with violent repression, as well as arrests, detentions and abductions.[8]

Afghanistan faced rapid and significant economic decline in 2022 and 2023, as many foreign governments imposed sanctions and suspended development assistance, which previously represented 75 percent of government spending.[9] According to the UN, 28.3 million people, representing two thirds of the population and including 15.2 million children, required humanitarian assistance in 2023.[10] The unprecedented humanitarian crisis during the 2022-2023 reporting period was partly the result of the abrupt loss of foreign spending along with the lingering effects of war and displacement, as well as earthquakes and climate shocks, such as flooding and drought, which compounded the situation.[11] The UN reported that 125 operational schools were damaged or destroyed in the October 2023 earthquakes.[12]

The UN reported that women's and girls' freedoms and rights were restricted during the reporting period.[13] The number of working female journalists decreased, women were not allowed to access public parks nationwide, female health workers could only provide care for women, and female patients without a mahram (male chaperone) were denied treatment in some areas.[14] In December 2022, the Taliban banned female humanitarian workers, who reportedly comprised 30 percent of Afghans working for non-governmental organizations in the country, further reducing access to humanitarian assistance for women and children; however, exceptions were later made for women working in healthcare, nutrition, and primary education.[15]

The UN reported that around four million children were out of school in Afghanistan in early 2022.[16] In March 2022, in a last-minute reversal of a prior decision, the Taliban kept secondary schools closed for girls.[17] The UN reported in early 2023 that around 200,000 girls attended secondary schools across 12 provinces, and that female secondary school teachers still received salaries;[18] however, by the end of 2023, secondary schools were reported to be closed to girls in all provinces.[19] The UN also reported that community-based classes were serving approximately 686,000 children, more than half of whom were girls.[20] In higher education, Amnesty International reported in mid-2022 that gender segregation, chaperoning requirements, and dress codes, among other restrictions, created significant challenges for women to attend university.[21] In December 2022, the Taliban banned women from universities[22]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 68 attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023, compared to 76 reported attacks in 2021 and 62 in 2020.[23] Overall, the number of attacks on schools continued to decline from a 2018 peak of 192.[24] The majority of attacks involved explosive weapons. These incidents reportedly killed at least 90 students and teachers, around half of whom were female, and injured at least 195 more. The UN reported in 2023 that, as a result of ISIL-K targeted attacks against ethnic groups, in particular Hazara, including attacks on educational infrastructure, parents were afraid to allow their children to go to school.[25] The decrease in attacks may reflect reduced reporting and may also be attributed to the number of schools that were closed, in particular girls' schools, as well as lower attendance.

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least eight attacks on schools.[26] For example:

- On January 10, 2022, an explosive remnant of war detonated near a school in Lal Pur district, Nangarhar province, killing eight students and injuring four more; all the children were boys, as reported by the UN and international media.[27]
- On September 30, 2022, the UN reported that an explosive attached to a suicide bomber detonated at the Kaaj private tutoring center in Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul, killing at least 54 people and injuring at least 114, most of whom were Hazara women and girls.[28] At the time, approximately 400 boys and girls were reportedly studying for university entrance exams at the center, and were separated, in accordance with Taliban instructions, as reported by international media *VOA*; the explosive reportedly detonated in the girls' section.[29]
- The UN and international media reported that on November 30, 2022, an explosive device detonated at a religious school in Aybak town, in Samangan province, killing at least 20 students and children, and injuring another twelve.[30]

In 2023, the UN verified 60 attacks on schools.[31] Separately, in 2023, GCPEA identified two incidents of attacks schools.[32] Since some of these may overlap with the UN count, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting. For instance, on March 29, 2023, an explosive device detonated at Jeriq-doq Girls' School in Qush Tepa district, Jowzjan province, reportedly killing two female students.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified at least 15 reports of attacks on school students and teachers in the reporting period. In comparison, GCPEA identified at least 11 such attacks in 2021 and at least 16 in 2020.[33] A large number of attacks were against female students and staff at girls' schools, or against those involved in protests for girls' education.

In 2022, the UN verified 72 incidents of attacks on schools, students, and personnel; the Taliban was responsible for many of the attacks, including killings.[34] It appeared that many of these attacks were on students and staff, since the report mentions a high number of attacks against protected persons. However, GCPEA could not determine how many were attacks on students or personnel as compared with attacks on schools. Separately, GCPEA identified at least ten reported attacks on school students and teachers in 2022.[35] For example:

- On April 19, 2022, an explosive device was detonated targeting students at Abdul Raheem Shaheed High School, a boys' school serving up to 1,000 students, as boys were leaving classes, in the Shia Hazara neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, Kabul. In what appeared to be a coordinated attack, an explosive device subsequently detonated at a nearby school as rescuers were arriving at the site of the first blast, as reported by international media *Al Jazeera* and the *BBC*.[36] The UN reported that the attacks killed at least nine children and injured another fifty.[37]
- On May 14, 2022, unidentified militants reportedly killed the deputy principal of a Turkish Maarif primary school in the Aino Mena area of Kandahar city and province. No group claimed responsibility.[38]
- On September 10, 2022, local and international media reported that the Taliban allegedly arrested five school principals in Gardez city, Paktia province, for allowing girls to return to schools.[39]
- In a related incident, on September 11, 2022, the Taliban reportedly arrested 18 female protesters in Gardez city, Paktia province, who were demonstrating against school closures and the arrest of the school principals one day earlier. According to reports from local media and a local NGO shortly after the incident, the Taliban had released 16 of the girls, but one student and a teacher remained in custody.[40]

GCPEA identified at least five attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2023.[41] For example:

- On May 18, 2023, the Taliban reportedly arrested a school principal in Dawlat Shahi village, Bagram district, Parwan province, allegedly for criticizing the closure of girls' schools, according to ACLED and local media *Kabul Now* and *Hasht-E Subh*.[42]
- On May 22, 2023, the Taliban reportedly beat and detained two female teachers in Bamiyan city and province, when they attended a visit to the city by the acting minister of education, as reported by ACLED and local media *Hasht-e Subh*.[43]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 54 incidents of the military use of educational facilities during the 2022-2023 re-

porting period. This marks an increase compared to the previous reporting period, when the UN verified 26 cases of military use of educational facilities in 2021 and five cases in 2020.[44]

The UN verified 54 cases of military use by the Taliban in 2022.[45] For example, the UN reported that the Taliban occupied 24 of the 129 schools in Panjshir province from July 2022 onwards.[46] GCPEA also identified at least 35 incidents of military use in 2022; however, since GCPEA could not determine how many of these incidents overlapped with the UN's counts, they were not included in the total number of military use incidents, to avoid double counting.[47] Incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- As reported by local media *Shafaqna* on February 3, 2022, a girls' school in the village of Dehkalan in Shutul district, Panjshir province, was used as a military base.[48]
- Amnesty International reported that, on May 8, 2022, the Taliban held and interrogated detainees at Malik Mirzayee Shahid school, which they were using as a base, in Abdullah Khil village, Darah district, Panjshir province.[49]
- On October 28, 2022, local media *Hasht-e-Subh* reported that the Markaz-e Bandar Seminary in Sangtakht-Wa Bandar district, Daikundi province, was turned into a military base barracking an estimated 350 fighters.[50]

GCPEA identified at least 50 cases of the military use of schools in 2023, although it was unclear whether these began in 2022 or 2023.[51] Separately, the UN verified 32 cases of military use by the Taliban in 2023, although it was not clear when these began, or whether they overlapped with incidents identified by GCPEA.[52] As a result, these were not added to the total for the reporting period, to avoid double counting. Also in 2023, the UN reported that 22 schools that had been occupied since August 2021 were vacated.[53]

ACLED and local media *Kabul Now* reported, in January 2023, that 50 schools in Panjshir province were being used as bases.[54] For example, a secondary school was reportedly occupied in Paryan district, Panjshir province, until the end of January 2023, as reported by ACLED and local media *Kabul Now*.[55] According to local media *Hasht-e Subh*, 28 schools in Panjshir province were still being used for military purposes in March 2023.[56]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified at least 26 attacks on higher education in the current reporting period, 25 of which were attacks on higher education students and staff, and one of which was an attack on a university. The number of attacks remains consistent with the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 15 such attacks in 2021 and at least ten in 2020.[57] As the Taliban imposed increasing restrictions on female students accessing higher education in 2022, the majority of incidents included the use of force against, or detention of, female students and staff; at least 39 students were reportedly injured, and at least 98 students and staff were reportedly abducted or arrested. These attacks appeared to decline in 2023, after the Taliban banned women from higher education in December 2022.[58]

GCPEA identified at least 24 attacks on higher education in 2022.[59] For example:

- As reported by local media and Scholars at Risk, in April 2022, the Taliban arrested 11 women in connection to a meeting at Bamyan University in Bamyan city and province, where women were demanding that the Taliban lift the ban on women's education.[60]
- Local media *Voice of Afghan* and *Etilaat Roz* reported that, on May 14, 2022, female Taliban members allegedly beat three female students for wearing colorful clothes and using earphones, at Balkh University, Mazar-e-Sharif city, Balkh province.[61]
- On June 1, 2022, local media *Hasht-e Subh* reported that the Taliban allegedly stormed Khatam Al-Nabieen University in Ghazni city and province, beating four students then abducting them.[62]
- On June 17, 2022, local media reported that the Taliban arrested 30 female students at Takhar University in Taluqan city, Takhar province, for not complying with Taliban rules.[63]
- On October 4, 2022, as reported by Scholars at Risk, the Taliban arrested 40 students at Al-Biruni University in Kohistan city, Kapisa province; the students were protesting the killing of students in the suicide bombing on September 30, detailed above, which triggered a number of student protests in the region.[64]
- On October 30, 2022, at Badakhshan University in Fayzabad city, Badakhshan province, the Taliban reportedly beat at least 24 female students, rendering several of them unconscious. The students were protesting after a group of women were not allowed to enter the campus without burqas, as reported by Scholars at Risk and local and international media.[65]

GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on higher education students and staff in 2023:

- According to Scholars at Risk, on March 28, 2023, Taliban authorities reportedly arrested a professor as he was leaving Badakhshan University in Fayzabad city, Badakhshan province, allegedly in connection to his opposition to the Taliban's restrictions on the education of women and girls. He was reportedly released on April 13, 2023.[66]
- Around June 2023, Taliban authorities allegedly arrested a student from a student dormitory near Bamyan University in Bamyan city and province, as reported by local media *Etilaat e Roz*.[67]

BURKINA FASO

Attacks on education continued at a high rate in the 2022-2023 reporting period, with over 270 attacks on schools. In addition, GCPEA identified reports of the military use of schools, as well as reports of attacks against higher education students.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict-related violence intensified during the reporting period. Deadly attacks by armed groups increased, including by Al Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel).[1] In addition, soldiers and government-supported civilian army auxiliary groups (Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie, VDP) allegedly perpetrated violence against civilian populations.[2] The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported in mid-2022 that JNIM carried out at least five times as many attacks on civilians as IS Sahel, but that attacks perpetrated by the latter were more deadly, killing almost twice as many people.[3] UN data showed that attacks by armed groups involving the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) increased three-fold from 2020 to 2022.[4]

Ten of the 13 regions in Burkina Faso experienced attacks by armed groups during the reporting period;[5] the UN reported in December 2022 that Sahel and Centre-Nord were the regions most affected by conflict.[6] Approximately 46 localities were besieged by armed groups in 2023,[7] and 840,000 people lived in areas that armed groups had cut off from the rest of the country and from basic services.[8]

Burkina Faso experienced two coups d'état in 2022. In a deadly coup on January 24, 2022, the Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration (Mouvement patriotique pour la sauvegarde et la restauration, MPSR), led by Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Henri Damiba, overthrew President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who had been re-elected in 2020.[9] Damiba was deposed in a second coup, on September 30, 2022, when Captain Ibrahim Traoré became the new transitional president, and reiterated his predecessor's commitment to hold elections in 2024.[10] Traoré's military government reported an attempted coup in September 2023.[11]

In 2023, the UN reported that 5.5 million people, including 3.2 million children, in Burkina Faso were in need of humanitarian assistance, representing more than one in four people.[12] The number of internally displaced people also increased during the reporting period. As of March 2023, 2.2 million people had been internally displaced, including over 800,000 newly displaced in 2022, according to the UN.[13]

Education continued to be heavily impacted by conflict during the reporting period; in March 2023, the UN reported that half of the children in Burkina Faso were out of school.[14] The number of school closures increased significantly, from 15 percent in March 2022 to 22 percent in November 2022, with 6,253 schools reported to be closed by the end of that year, affecting more than one million children.[15] Est, Boucle du Mouhoun, and Sa-

hel regions were most affected by school closures,[16] as well as road closures and blockades, which meant that some teachers were reportedly only able to access schools by helicopter.[17] Teacher shortages were ongoing, with reports that teachers refused to return to work because of insecurity.[18]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified over 270 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks an increase as compared to the previous reporting period when GCPEA identified 78 attacks in 2021 and at least 70 attacks in 2020.[19] The majority of attacks were attributed to armed groups.[20]

GCPEA identified 99 attacks on schools in 2022 which reportedly destroyed at least 31 schools and damaged at least 53; over half of the attacks involved arson.[21] Separately, in 2022, the UN verified 120 attacks on schools and protected persons in relation to schools, the majority of which were perpetrated by armed groups.[22] However, GCPEA was unable to determine how many of these were attacks on schools rather than attacks on school students and staff, so the UN count was not included in the total number of attacks on schools for the report. Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On February 10, 2022, in Bougui village, Gourma province, Est region, unidentified armed assailants allegedly burned a classroom, accommodation, and food store at a Catholic school, and also allegedly stole cash, a vehicle, and electronics from the school, as reported by ACLED and local media *Info24*. A number of the seven staff and over 140 students reportedly fled and some were temporarily missing.[23]
- On February 19, 2022, members of an alleged armed group burned a school in Kikideni village, Gourma province, Est region, affecting the education of at least 450 students, as reported by local media.[24]
- On March 19, 2022, unidentified armed assailants allegedly looted a school and burned school furniture and education materials in Nindangou village, Gnagna province, Est region, as reported by ACLED and regional media *Afrique sur 7*.[25]
- On October 24, 2022, members of an armed group attacked a secondary school in Boudangou town, Gourma province, Est region, ordering the teachers to cease all instructional activities, according to the UN.[26] They also allegedly fired guns in the air and burned two motorcycles and stole three others, as reported by local media *AIB*. A nearby secondary school also reportedly closed as a result of the attack.[27]
- On October 28, 2022, in Bondokuy village, Mouhoun province, Boucle du Mouhoun region, unidentified armed assailants allegedly burned an education office, as reported by local media *Le Faso*.[28]
- The UN reported that, on November 10, 2022, and November 15, 2022, an armed group attacked the Youba displacement site in Yatenga province, Nord region, firstly setting a temporary school on fire, and five days later looting a primary school canteen.[29]

GCPEA received reports of 170 attacks on schools in 2023.[30] Separately, the UN reported 33 attacks on schools.[31] Since some of these may have overlapped with incidents identified by GCPEA, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting. Incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On February 4, 2023, a primary school was burned in Bani town, Seno province, Sahel region, as reported by international media *Africa News*.[32]
- On May 7, 2023, alleged members of an armed group destroyed buildings used to house teachers in Bandaoghin village, Gourma province, Est region, as reported by ACLED.[33]
- On October 16, 2023, explosive weapons reportedly struck near to a school in Djibo city, Soum province, Sahel region, as reported by ACLED and local media *Libre Info*.[34]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 14 reported attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in Burkina Faso, which killed at least 18 and injured at least five. This is a slight decrease as compared to the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*, in which GCPEA identified at least 23 such attacks in 2021, and ten in 2020.[35]

GCPEA identified at least 13 reported attacks in 2022.[36] For example:

- On February 3, 2022, in Nouna town, Kossi province, Boucle du Mouhoun region, suspected members of an armed group allegedly threatened teachers, which led to classes being suspended, as reported by local media.[37]
- On March 18, 2022, the Education Cluster and Government of Burkina Faso reported that armed men fired shots in the vicinity of a schoolyard in Markoye town, Oudalan province, Sahel region, killing one boy student.[38]
- The UN reported that, on October 24, 2022, members of an unidentified armed group threatened teachers and ordered them to stop education activities at a primary school in Potiamanga village, Gourma province, Est region.[39] Local media *AIB* reported that teachers were enrolling students ahead of the school reopening.[40]
- On December 4, 2022, in an attack that targeted teachers according to the Ministry of Education, armed men reportedly shot and killed five teachers in Bittou town, Boulgou province, Centre-Est region.[41]

GCPEA identified at least one attack on students and teachers in 2023:

- On October 6, 2023, suspected members of an armed group reportedly detained and killed 12 teenage students who were on their way to classes near Nouna town, Kossi province, Boucle du Mouhoun region.[42]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 11 cases of the military use of schools in the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, GCPEA identified two cases of military use in 2021 and at least four cases in 2020.[43] The UN reported five cases of military use in 2022, by Defence and Security Forces, JNIM, and IS Sahel.[44] In mid-February 2022, members of army auxiliary VDP group reportedly detained two men in Bougui village, Gourma province, Est region. The men's bodies were later discovered behind a primary school.[45]

GCPEA identified six reports of military use in 2023. Six schools were reportedly occupied by Defence and Security Forces and armed groups in Est, Centre Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, and Sahel regions.[46] Separately, the UN reported that five schools were used for military purposes in 2023, and that the military use of another school continued from prior years.[47] Since it is unclear whether these reports overlap, they were not added, to avoid double counting.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified at least five reported attacks on universities or higher education students and staff in the current reporting period, including protest repression and an attack involving the use of an explosive device. This represents an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified no such incidents in 2021 and one in 2020.[48] In addition to attacks on higher education, at least one university was closed for over a year during the reporting period as a result of insecurity; *University World News* reported that classes were suspended in March 2022 at Dori University Centre, Seno province, Sahel region, affecting 1,800 students.[49]

GCPEA identified at least four incidents of attacks on higher education in 2022.[50] For example:

- On January 13, 2022, in the city of Bobo-Dioulasso, Houet province, Hauts-Bassins region, police reportedly responded to a student protest at the Nazi Boni University with tear gas and live rounds; several students were reportedly injured, some severely.[51] Students reportedly blocked roads and burned tires.[52]
- On August 16, 2022, in Ouahigouya town, Yatenga province, Nord region, a car being used by Ouahigouya University staff to recover materials following an arson attack the night before hit an IED allegedly planted by members of an armed group near the University, according to local media citing the Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation. The explosion reportedly severely wounded the driver and destroyed the car.[53]
- On November 12, 2022, a reported armed clash between an armed group and the military near the University of Fada N'Gourma, Gourma province, Est region, led students to abandon classes.[54]

GCPEA identified one attack on higher education students in 2023. On April 13, 2023, police reportedly used tear gas to disperse a student protest against changes to university entry criteria, at Joseph Ki Zerbo University in Ouagadougou, Kadiogo province, Centre region; some students were reportedly injured, according to ACLED and local media *Le Faso*.[55]

CAMEROON

Attacks on education continued during the 2022-2023 reporting period, predominantly in North-West and South-West regions. GCPEA identified attacks on schools and school students, teachers, and education personnel, as well as an incident of sexual violence on the way to or from school. In addition, GCPEA identified cases of military use in Far North region.

CONTEXT

As conflict in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon continued, clashes between separatist non-state armed groups and armed forces persisted, in addition to violence and human rights abuses perpetrated against civilians by both.[1] The UN reported that non-state armed groups used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) during hostilities in these regions, killing and injuring civilians, and leading to displacement.[2] Conflict-related violence also spread to the neighbouring West region during the reporting period, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[3] In Far North region, Boko Haram and splinter group Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) continued to kill and injure civilians in 2022 and 2023, leading to an increase in internally displaced persons, as reported by Human Rights Watch.[4] Intercommunal clashes were reported in Far North, South-West and North-West regions during the reporting period.[5]

The UN reported that 4.7 million people, including at least 2.5 million children, were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2023,[6] and that conflict and flooding in Far North, North-West, and South-West regions had displaced more than one million people.[7] In addition to conflict, 37,000 people in Far North region were affected by floods, which destroyed 2,400 houses and 88 schools.[8]

At least 1.1 million children were deprived of their right to education in Cameroon in 2022.[9] The UN reported that, in North-West and South-West regions, armed separatists maintained a boycott on education, which they enforced by attacking schools, students, and education staff.[10] These groups imposed stay-at-home orders in 2022 and 2023, during which schools were required to close.[11] As of December 2023, the UN reported that 41 percent of schools were non-operational in North-West and South-West regions.[12] In Far North region, 117 schools remained non-operational in January 2023 after having been previously destroyed or closed in the context of insecurity, as reported by the UN.[13]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 54 attacks on schools in Cameroon, mostly in North-West or South-West regions. In comparison, during the previous reporting period the UN verified 18 attacks

on schools in 2021 and 20 in 2020.[14] In North-West and South-West regions, in September 2022 and 2023, there were spikes in attacks around the start of the school year,[15] when non-state armed groups imposed a two-week lockdown to delay the start of the school year.[16] GCPEA collected at least 14 reports of attacks on schools in 2022.[17] Many attacks on schools in 2022 involved arson. Examples of attacks included:

- The UN reported that, on February 8, 2022, members of a non-state armed group set fire to a government school in Buea city, Fako division, South-West region.[18]
- Human Rights Watch and the UN reported that, on February 11, 2022, during the night, armed separatists set fire to a girls' boarding school in Okoyong village, Manyu division, South-West region, burning down three dormitories and threatening students.[19]
- On August 17, 2022, a primary school in Tinta village, Manyu division, South-West region, was allegedly destroyed during armed clashes between the Cameroonian military and armed separatists, as reported by local media.[20]
- On August 22, 2022, local media reported that a secondary school was allegedly set on fire in Bamenda city, Mezam division, North-West region.[21]

In 2023, the UN reported 40 attacks on schools.[22] Separately, GCPEA identified ten reports of attacks on schools in 2023.[23] Since it was not clear whether any of these overlapped with the UN count, they were not added, to avoid double counting. For example, in February 2023, the UN reported seven attacks on education in North-West region and one in South-West region, leading several schools to close, during a lockdown imposed by non-state armed groups, which included an order to shutter schools.[24] However, it was unclear how many of these were attacks on schools rather than attacks on students and staff, so this number has not been included in the total number of attacks on schools. Examples of attacks on schools included:

- On February 7 and 8, 2023, members of non-state armed groups reportedly entered two schools in Atuakom, Mezam division, North-West region, and Nkamlikum, Meme division, South-West region, and ordered them to close, enforcing an order to shut schools between February 7 and February 11, according to the UN.[25] Several other schools subsequently closed as a result.[26]
- On February 22, 2023, alleged members of an armed group reportedly attacked a private primary school in Molyko village, Buea division, South-West region, including firing warning shots near the school, according to local media *Cameroon Concord News*.[27]
- On September 5, 2023, a primary school in Bamumka village, Ngoketunjia division, North-West region was burned; the school had recently been renovated, as reported by OCHA.[28]
- Around November 23, 2023, in Soueram, Logone-et-Chari department, Far North region, an IED was reportedly detonated near a primary school.[29]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 44 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA identified at least 26 such incidents in 2021 and at least 31 in 2020.[30] Abductions of students and teachers were the most frequently reported attacks in 2022 and 2023.

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 35 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.[31] Separately, the UN reported 37 attacks on schools and students or protected personnel in 2022.[32] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, and how many were attacks on students and staff rather than schools, this number was not included in the total number of attacks in this report, to avoid double counting. The UN also reported that at least 81 teachers or students were abducted, and five teachers or students were killed,[33] and attacks targeting students and staff appeared to spike in September of that year.[34] Incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- Human Rights Watch and OCHA reported that, on January 19, 2022, armed separatists abducted five teachers, including two female teachers, and injured two students, from the government high school in Weh village, Menchum division, North-West region.[35]
- The UN reported that, on January 26, 2022, members of a non-state armed group abducted three teachers from a government technical college in Keyon village, Boyo division, North-West region.[36]
- On February 22, 2022, ten teachers, including nine female teachers, were abducted from the Inclusive Government Bilingual Primary School, a school for children with disabilities, in Ngomham neighborhood, Bamenda city, North-West region, as reported by international media *VOA*.[37]
- The UN reported that, in August and September 2022, 15 teachers were abducted from two schools in North-West region and accused of enrolling students for the new academic year, which non-state armed groups in the area had prohibited. The teachers were released upon payment of a ransom.[38]
- On September 6, 2022, one day after the start of the academic year, a female primary school teacher was shot while she was on her way to school in Ekon village, Koupé-Manengouba division, South-West region, as reported by local media *Journal du Cameroun*.[39]
- On September 8, 2022, at least 12 students were abducted in Bamenda city, Mezam division, and in Fundong town, Boyo division, both in North-West region, as reported by International Crisis Group.[40]

GCPEA identified at least nine reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2023.[41] Separately, the UN reported 25 attacks targeting education in 2023, including attacks against schools, students, staff, and parents.[42] Again, it was not clear how many were attacks on students and staff rather than schools. As in previous years, attacks increased in the period around the return to school in September. Examples included:

- In February 2023, following an attack on a private primary school in Molyko village, Buea division, South-West region, detailed above, the head teacher was reportedly kidnapped, and the owner of the school was threatened, according to local media *Cameroon Concord News*.[43]
- The UN reported that, on June 14, 2023, members of a non-state armed group abducted 12 students in Mbveh locality, Bui division, North-West region, because of their participation in secondary school examinations; the students were subsequently released.[44]
- Ahead of the start of the new school year, on September 2, 2023, members of a separatist armed group reportedly killed two head teachers in Belo town, Boyo division, North-West region, according to International Crisis Group and local media.[45]
- On September 26, 2023, in Kembong village, Manyu division, South-West region, three teachers were

reportedly shot and injured by members of a non-state armed group allegedly enforcing a school ban, according to ACLED and local media *Actu Cameroun*.[46]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

Cameroon Armed Forces used 17 schools for military purposes in Far North region in 2022, according to the UN.[47] In comparison, GCPEA identified at least 21 and 19 incidents of military use in 2021 and 2020 respectively, in Far North, North-West, and South-West regions.[48]

GCPEA did not identify any incidents of military use in 2023.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least one report of sexual violence by a non-state armed group that occurred on the way to a school. In *Education under Attack 2022*, which covered 2020 and 2021, GCPEA also identified one reported incident of sexual violence.[49] Human Rights Watch reported that, on June 12, 2022, armed separatists threatened and subjected to degrading treatment 11 students who were on their way to Bokova secondary school, in Buea town, South-West region, forcing them to strip naked. One student was also reportedly shot in the leg.[50]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified at least four attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period, affecting at least 34 students and education personnel. In comparison, in *Education under Attack 2022*, GCPEA identified at least three reported incidents in 2021 and at least four in 2020.[51] GCPEA identified at least three attacks on higher education in 2022.[52] For example:

- Human Rights Watch and local media reported that, on April 5, 2022, armed separatists stormed Bamenda University, in Bambili town, Mezam division, North-West region, targeting students and teachers for not observing the stay-at-home order they had declared. The armed men fired shots in the air, which led to a stampede that injured at least five people.[53]
- On July 8, 2022, a non-state armed group attacked the faculty of engineering and technology at the University of Buea in Buea town, South-West region. The armed group disrupted examinations, abducted the supervisor, and ordered students to leave by threatening to shoot them, as reported by the UN, Scholars at Risk, and local media.[54]
- GCPEA identified one report of an attack on higher education in 2023. On March 16, 2023, the military reportedly raided a student residential area of the University of Buea, in Buea town, South-West region. During the raid, two students were allegedly detained and one of them died in custody, as reported by ACLED and international media *University World News*.[55]

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Attacks on schools and military use of schools continued during this reporting period, although at a reduced rate compared to 2020 and 2021. GCPEA identified at least 40 cases of military use of schools or attacks on schools perpetrated by state armed forces, other security personnel, and non-state armed groups in 2022 and 2023.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, conflict continued in Central African Republic (CAR), and the security situation remained unstable.[1] Violence between the armed forces, supported by other security personnel and Rwandan forces, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the Coalition des Patriotes pour le Changement (CPC - Coalition of Patriots for Change), a grouping of non-state armed groups led by former president Francois Bozizé, continued.[2] The 2019 peace agreement between the government and 14 armed groups fell apart in 2020;[3] however, some armed groups that signed the peace deal disbanded during the reporting period, including four in December 2022, and two in April 2023, in addition to factions of other groups.[4]

Local and regional elections, originally scheduled for 2022, were rescheduled twice in 2023 before being postponed to 2024.[5] In May 2023, President Faustin-Archange Touadéra announced a constitutional referendum to allow unlimited presidential terms and to increase term length;[6] the referendum was passed in August 2023.[7] The government threatened members of civil society and media ahead of anticipated local elections and the constitutional referendum, according to Human Rights Watch.[8] The economic situation continued to deteriorate, leading to strikes across various sectors.[9]

Violence continued during the reporting period. The UN reported that attacks by armed groups increased in late 2022, affecting civilians, humanitarian actors, and national forces.[10] In early 2023, CPC conducted three attacks against the government using explosive devices in Nana-Mambéré and Vakaga prefectures.[11] During the reporting period, the number of incidents involving explosive devices increased, with 53 incidents in 2022 and 82 incidents in 2023, resulting in 12 and 27 fatalities respectively, according to the UN.[12]

The humanitarian situation remained difficult during the reporting period,[13] including due to the presence of explosive devices, which restricted humanitarian access in many areas of the country.[14] The UN reported that 3.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance in 2023, including 1.6 million children.[15] In 2023, more than 514,000 people were internally displaced, and CAR hosted more than 48,000 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Sudan.[16]

Conflict and insecurity continued to impact education during the reporting period. The UN reported in 2022 that at least 999 schools were closed due to insecurity,[17] and that schools in Ouadda, Yalinga, and Sam-Ouan-

dja regions in Haute-Kotto prefecture had not been operational for four years.[18] Over half a million children were at risk of dropping out of school or were out of school in 2023, according to the UN.[19] The UN reported that over 220 children were recruited between January 2022 and June 2023.[20]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 24 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, when over 48 attacks were identified in 2020 and 2021.[21]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 13 attacks on schools.[22] For example, the UN reported that, on June 23, 2022, members of non-state armed groups looted a primary school in Ouanda-Djallé town, Vakaga prefecture.[23]

The UN reported five attacks that destroyed schools in 2023.[24] Separately, GCPEA identified at least 11 attacks on schools in 2023.[25] Since it is not clear whether the UN incidents overlapped with those identified by GCPEA, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting. In one incident, on April 6, 2023, an explosion in a military base near a school in Carnot city, Mambéré prefecture, led the school to close for over four weeks, according to the UN.[26]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified one incident of an attack on teachers during the reporting period, which involved protest repression. This was a similar rate as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified two such incidents, also involving protest repression.[27]

Amid ongoing teacher strikes in February and March 2023, for improved pay and conditions, police reportedly arrested and interrogated three teacher union leaders on March 9, 2023; the union leaders were reportedly released the following day.[28]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 16 cases of military use of schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks a decline as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 45 such incidents.[29]

The UN reported that armed actors, in particular the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (FACA), other security personnel, and CPC groups, occupied 14 schools during 2022.[30] Separately, GCPEA identified six incidents of military use in 2022. Since it was unclear how many of these incidents overlapped with the UN count, they were not included in the total number of military use cases, to avoid double counting. Incidents collected by GCPEA:

- On March 17, 2022, FACA and other security personnel used two schools in Sam-Ouandja, Haute-Kotto prefecture, according to the UN.[31]
- Between May 23, 2022, and May 29, 2023, FACA and other security personnel established temporary bases at a primary and secondary school in Gordil town, Vakaga prefecture, according to the UN; classes were suspended during this time, and some students and teachers fled.[32]
- In July 2022, the UN reported that UPC forces occupied two schools.[33]

The UN reported that 11 schools were used for military purposes in 2023, and also that six of those were vacated the same year.[34] Separately, GCPEA identified four cases of the military use of schools in 2023.[35] However, since it was not clear in which year some incidents began, not all have been included in the total for the reporting period, to avoid double counting. Examples included:

- In February 2023, the UN reported that armed forces used a primary school in Lady village, Ouham prefecture, disrupting students' access to education.[36]
- On March 17, 2023, armed forces began using a primary school in Ouham-Pendé prefecture, as reported by the UN; the school was still occupied in May 2023.[37]
- The UN reported that, between April and June 2023, armed forces occupied a school in Haut-Mbomou prefecture.[38]

COLOMBIA

Attacks on schools, military use of educational facilities, and child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school increased in 2022 and 2023 as Colombia experienced armed violence. Despite ceasefire and peace negotiations between the government and several armed groups, attacks on education occurred across at least one third of the departments in Colombia, with Antioquia, Cauca, Norte de Santander, and Valle del Cauca some of the most affected.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, Colombia continued to experience armed violence despite peace accords signed in 2016 between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo – FARC-EP).[1] The lead-up to presidential elections held in May 2022 coincided with an increase in political violence, according to the Electoral Observation Mission.[2] As part of its "total peace" policy, which sought the negotiated disarmament of armed groups, the government announced ceasefires with five non-state armed groups at various points during 2022 and 2023. Among them, the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN) and the government signed a ceasefire agreement in June 2023.[3] However, the ceasefires faced significant hurdles and some groups did not adhere to them.[4] For instance, a ceasefire signed between the government and the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia – AGC) in December 2022 was suspended months later by the government, according to media reports.[5]

Non-state armed groups remained active during the reporting period, including FARC dissident groups and the ELN, as well as groups, such as the AGC, that succeeded the paramilitary groups that officially demobilized in the mid-2000s. Armed violence perpetrated by non-state armed groups increased in some rural regions of Colombia, disproportionately affecting women social leaders, leaders from Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities, and former FARC-EP combatants.[6] In 2022, at least 215 human rights defenders and social leaders were killed, many by armed groups, the highest number since 2016, according to the Ombudsperson's Office.[7] Non-state armed groups restricted movement and prohibited communities from leaving their homes using threats and violence, contributing to the forced confinement of at least 102,000 people in 2022 and 88,000 people in 2023; these confinements disproportionately affected Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities.[8]

Armed conflict forced at least 63,200 people to flee in large-group displacements during 2023.[9] The UN reported that 8.3 million people, nearly one-third of them children, were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023 due to violence, disasters, and internal displacement.[10] However, over 20,000 people in 2023 faced

limitations to accessing humanitarian assistance as non-state armed groups imposed restrictions on aid organizations.[11]

Armed violence continued to impact education in 2022 and 2023. When in effect, forced confinements in the north of the country prevented at least two million students from attending classes in person during the reporting period, according to the Coalition Against the Involvement of Children and Youth in Armed Conflict in Colombia (COALICO).[12]

In November 2022, Colombia became the 116th country to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.[13]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 41 reports of attacks on schools in Colombia. These attacks occurred primarily in rural areas across about a third of the country's 32 departments. Many incidents involved improvised explosive devices (IEDs) installed at or near schools; however, confrontations in the vicinity of schools between armed groups, or an armed group and government forces, also occurred, among other types of attacks. At least one school serving Indigenous students and one serving Afro-Colombian students were impacted during the reporting period. The number of reported attacks on schools increased slightly compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified approximately 15 incidents in 2021 and around 19 in 2020.[14]

In 2022, COALICO documented 23 incidents of attacks on, or military use of, educational institutions spread across several departments, with Córdoba, Norte de Santander, and Valle del Cauca departments particularly affected.[15] However, it was unclear how many of these were attacks on schools, rather than military use. Separately, the UN verified four attacks damaging schools that year.[16] Since some of the attacks may have overlapped with incidents collected by GCPEA, the incidents from COALICO and the UN were not included in the total number of attacks on schools, to avoid double counting. During 2022, insecurity led to the closure of schools in multiple departments, including Antioquia and Nariño.[17]

GCPEA collected approximately 22 reports of attacks on schools in 2022, with Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Valle del Cauca, and Norte de Santander departments most impacted.[18] Around half of reported incidents involved IEDs emplaced near schools; others included armed confrontations in the vicinity of schools, lootings, or vandalism carried out by alleged armed groups and other forms of attack. Examples of IEDs reportedly installed near schools in 2022 included:

- In a rural area of Dagua municipality, Valle del Cauca department, an IED was reportedly planted near a school, along a path students take to class, sometime before early February 2022. The Colombian army performed a controlled detonation of the explosive device, according to local media *Semana*.[19]
- On July 27, 2022, two explosives were planted near a preschool and secondary school in the middle of the night, in Tibú, Norte de Santander, leading administrators to suspend classes, affecting around 2,000 students, as reported by *Semana*. The Colombian army performed a controlled detonation of the explosive

devices.[20]

- In mid-November 2022, three IEDs were planted a few meters from a school in a rural area of Puerto Rondón municipality, Arauca department, preventing more than 25 students and several teachers from entering the school for several days, as reported by a local media outlet. Colombian army troops performed a controlled detonation of the explosive devices.[21]

GCPEA also collected several reports of armed confrontations near schools or school infrastructure in 2022, one of which impacted Indigenous communities. For example:

- On May 9, 2022, an armed clash took place near a school in Mazamorrero area, Buenos Aires municipality, Cauca department, as reported by a local media outlet.[22]
- On July 22, 2022, an armed clash reportedly took place near a school, while students were in attendance, in Corinto municipality, Cauca department. A local media outlet reported that unidentified armed men attacked a police post in the town, which is next to the school.[23]
- On August 3, 2022, an armed clash reportedly took place near a school on the Las Delicias Indigenous community reservation in Buenos Aires municipality, Cauca department. A local news outlet reported that Indigenous guards evacuated the students from the school to keep them away from the crossfire.[24]

In 2023, COALICO documented 46 incidents of attacks on education and military use, including attacks on educational institutions, spread across several departments, with Antioquia, Cauca, and Valle del Cauca departments particularly affected.[25] Separately, the UN reported 24 attacks on schools, including threats or attacks against students or education personnel.[26] However, it was unclear how many of these were attacks on schools, rather than attacks on education personnel or incidents of military use. Since some of the attacks may have overlapped with incidents collected by GCPEA, the COALICO and UN counts were not included in the total number of attacks on schools for this report, to avoid double counting.

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 19 reports of attacks on schools.[27] Around half of reported incidents involved IEDs emplaced near schools; others included armed confrontations in the vicinity of schools, small arms fire, threats, and raids. Examples of IEDs reportedly installed near schools in 2023 included:

- Sometime before February 7, 2023, five explosive devices were reportedly installed near Cerezal School in Roberto Payán municipality, Nariño department, according to a local media outlet. The rural school offered classes to around 50 students. Colombian military forces reportedly located the explosive devices and performed a controlled detonation.[28]
- On July 29, 2023, a cylinder bomb was installed inside the Agricultural Technical Educational Institution of Suárez, María Inmaculada, in Suárez municipality, Cauca department, as reported by local media outlets.[29] Colombian authorities reportedly performed a controlled detonation, and the school was destroyed, according to international media outlet *Infobae.*[30]
- On September 20, 2023, a car bomb was detonated near a police station and the resulting blast destroyed several houses and impacted a nearby school in the Timba area of Buenos Aires municipality, Cauca department, as reported by international media outlet *France 24.*[31]

GCPEA also collected several reports of armed confrontations near schools or school infrastructure in 2023. For example:

- On February 6, 2023, an armed clash reportedly took place near a school in a rural area of El Bagre municipality, Antioquia department. As a result, parents and caregivers made the collective decision to keep children at home, meaning around 1,200 students did not attend class that day, as reported by local media *Semana* and *El Colombiano.*[32]
- On May 18, 2023, an armed clash reportedly took place near Los Nutabes Educational Center in El 15 area of Valdivia municipality, Antioquia department, while students were in class, according to a local media outlet.[33]
- On November 26, 2023, an armed clash reportedly took place near a school in Mosquera municipality, Cundinamarca department, causing damage to the school.[34]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA compiled around 61 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Killings and threats constituted the most commonly reported forms of attack and occurred across at least 20 departments, with Antioquia, Cauca, and Norte de Santander most affected. Non-state armed groups reportedly killed and threatened teachers for their involvement in teachers' unions, as occurred in the previous reporting period, as well as for their supposed support of rival armed groups.[35] Students and educators were also caught in the crossfire of armed clashes, threatened, or exposed to IEDs while on their way to or from school.[36] Reported attacks on school students and staff continued at a similar rate compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified around 24 reports in 2021 and more than 35 in 2020.[37]

In 2022, GCPEA collected approximately 27 reports of attacks on school students and education personnel, several of which targeted or otherwise impacted Indigenous teachers and students.[38] Separately, the UN verified 18 threats and attacks against students, teachers, or other protected persons in relation to schools.[39] Since some of the attacks may have overlapped with incidents collected by GCPEA, the incidents from the UN were not included in the total number of attacks on school students and staff, to avoid double counting. In addition, the Secretary of Education of Antioquia, according to local media outlet *El Colombiano*, reported that there were 400 cases of threats against teachers in the Bajo Cauca and northern areas of Antioquia department, mostly by armed groups, over an approximately 12-month period during 2022 and 2023.[40] However, it was unclear if all the threats were made by armed parties or otherwise met GCPEA criteria, so they were not included in the total number, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- In early February 2022, an alleged armed group killed an Indigenous teacher and leader from the Wounaan community in Medio San Juan municipality, Chocó department, according to a local civil society organization.[41]
- On February 23, 2022, 16 students in a school bus on their way home from class, together with the driver and a staff member, were reportedly forced to disembark and the bus was set on fire in Paz de Ariporo

municipality, Casanare department. No one was harmed. According to a local media outlet, pamphlets had recently circulated in the area announcing a forced confinement for the community.[42]

- In late March and early April 2022, several Indigenous teachers received threats via phone calls and pamphlets in El Guamo municipality and nearby parts of Tolima department, as reported in local media outlets.[43]
- In mid-August 2022, more than 75 Indigenous teachers received threats for their supposed support for an armed group in the Huellas reservation, Caloto municipality, Cauca department, as reported by a local news outlet.[44]
- On August 29, 2022, an alleged armed group abducted five students from a rural school in Argelia municipality, Cauca department. Local media outlet *El Espectador* reported that an armed group claimed responsibility for the incident and that at least one of the students was abducted for his supposed support for a local drug trafficking group.[45]
- On September 2, 2022, near the Calima river, in Bajo Calima rural zone, Buenaventura municipality, Valle del Cauca department, the AGC and ELN reportedly engaged in combat and Indigenous Wounaan students in a school boat were caught in the crossfire. COALICO reported that the shootout occurred as students arrived from nearby communities to take university entrance exams the next day.[46]

In 2023, GCPEA collected approximately 34 reports of attacks on school students and education personnel.[47] Separately, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reported 31 attacks on students and staff, including on their way to or from school, in 2023.[48] However, since it was unclear whether the incidents met GCPEA's criteria and since some incidents may have overlapped, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents GCPEA identified included:

- In the period between roughly April 15 and May 15, 2023, an alleged armed group entered schools on multiple occasions to threaten and torture at least 20 teachers during their classes in Puerto Olaya area, Cimitarra municipality, Santander department, as reported by local media outlets. Schools reportedly shut for two weeks, with some teachers being transferred to work in schools elsewhere.[49]
- On May 2, 2023, several teachers received threats via pamphlets from an alleged armed group in Bolívar and Sucre departments, as reported by the Colombian Federation of Education Workers (FECODE) and local media outlet *Semana*.[50]
- On July 20, 2023, an alleged armed group entered a school in Uribe municipality, Meta department, and, after holding students hostage, abducted two teenage female students, as reported by the Ombudsperson's Office and local media *El Universal*.[51]
- On September 12, 2023, a teacher was killed by an alleged armed group in front of students, their parents, and other school staff while he was handing back grades at a school in the Barro Blanco area of Yolombó municipality, Antioquia department, as reported by *El Tiempo* and *Infobae*.[52]
- On November 6, 2023, a group of Indigenous students, between the ages of six and eight, allegedly found an explosive device in a gravel pit while on their way home from school in Minitas Mirolindo reservation, Barrancominas municipality, Guainía department. The children played with the explosive device and brought it back to their community, where community leaders made the children set it aside, as reported by a local media outlet.[53]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified at least 40 reported incidents of military use of educational facilities, with Antioquia and Cauca departments most affected. The majority of incidents involved schools being used as fighting positions and bases. Military use of schools increased this reporting period as compared to the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*, when GCPEA collected around three reports of military use in 2020 and 2021.[54]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 12 reports of military use.[55] Separately, the UN reported that ten schools were used by FARC dissidents, Colombian armed forces, AGC, ELN, and unidentified perpetrators, and that all were vacated.[56] However, to avoid double counting, they were not included in the total, since some may overlap with those counted by GCPEA. Examples of military use cases identified by GCPEA included:

- On May 3, 2022, FARC dissidents and another unidentified armed group reportedly entered a school in Gualpi area, Nariño department. Students later found the armed groups in the school.[57]
- In late May 2022, Colombian army brigade XXVII de Selva reportedly camped fewer than 200 meters from a school in San Salvador community, Puerto Asís municipality, Putumayo department, for several days and conducted patrols in the presence of students. A local civil society organization reported that community members asked the troops to move away from the school, since students were attending classes at the time, but the brigade remained.[58]
- On July 28, 2022, an armed group allegedly used a school as protection while engaging the Colombian army in combat in El Tambo municipality, Cauca department, as reported by a local media outlet citing a police commander.[59]
- In early November 2022, a school in Piedritas village, Tuluá munucipality, Valle del Cauca department, was reportedly used as a firing position. International news outlet *El País* reported that students were still in the school at the time.[60]
- In late November 2022, Indigenous leaders protested the presence of an alleged armed group in schools and other communal and private buildings in the Chimborazo reservation, in Morales municipality, Cauca department, as reported by a local media outlet.[61]

In 2023, NRC reported 29 instances of military use and occupation of schools.[62] That same year, the UN reported 18 cases of military use, and that the schools were subsequently vacated.[63] Separately, GCPEA collected around 16 reports of military use.[64] However, to avoid double counting, the GCPEA incidents and UN count were not included in the total number of military use incidents for the report, since some may overlap with those in the NRC count. Examples of military use identified by GCPEA included:

- In early 2023, the Colombian army occupied a school for several days in Primavera community in a rural area of Buenaventura municipality, Valle del Cauca department, as reported by a local media outlet citing a regional Ombudsperson's Office.[65]
- On February 6, 2023, an alleged armed group bound a person to a chair and killed them in front of a school in a rural area of El Bagre municipality, Antioquia department, according to local media outlet *El Colombi-*

ano citing a representative of the Ombudsperson's Office. The local news outlet reported that the school principal found the body when she arrived at work in the morning.[66]

- On April 26, 2023, an armed group allegedly used La Leona school as a defensive position while engaging the Colombian army in combat in a rural area of Argelia municipality, Cauca department. Students were in the school at the time, as reported by a local media outlet.[67]
- An armed group used schools for military purposes in Atrató subregion, Chocó department, as reported by the UN in November 2023. The schools served Afro-Colombian communities, and their occupation prevented students from accessing education.[68]

GCPEA also identified reports of schools being used for indoctrination and child recruitment in 2022 and 2023, as detailed below.

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA identified at least 16 reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school during the 2022-2023 reporting period, with Antioquia and Cauca departments most affected. In comparison, two incidents of school-related child recruitment were identified in *Education under Attack 2022*, one each year in 2021 and 2020.[69]

In 2022, GCPEA identified reports of at least eight cases of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school.[70] For example:

- On March 10, 2022, at least two Indigenous students were recruited on their way to school in Caloto municipality, Cauca department, according to COALICO.[71]
- In mid-2022, several FARC dissident groups set up arms and gear displays next to schools in Cauca department and encouraged students to look at the military hardware with the intention of recruiting them, according to International Crisis Group. The international organization reported that teachers were intimidated into not raising concerns or forced to flee the area.[72]
- In early October 2022, twelve students were recruited from a secondary school in El Bagre municipality, Antioquia department, according to the Office of the Inspector General. Fear of recruitment was keeping some students from attending school in the area.[73]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least eight reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school, several of which targeted or otherwise impacted Indigenous students.[74] For instance:

- In January and early February 2023, the Office of the Inspector General received reports of indoctrination and recruitment of students by FARC dissident forces in rural schools in Yarumal municipality, Antioquia department.[75]
- On April 21, 2023, at least four Indigenous students were recruited on their way to school in Inzá municipality, Cauca department, as reported by local media outlets.[76]
- On July 13, 2023, a girl student was recruited on her way to school in the Páez de Corinto Indigenous

community reservation, Corinto municipality, Cauca department, as reported by Indigenous authorities.[77]

In addition, local news outlets reported that, in mid-January and early February 2023, alleged armed group members wearing uniforms and bearing arms entered schools to distribute school supplies and play with the students in Campamento, San Pedro de los Milagros, and Yarumal municipalities in Antioquia department.[78] *Semana* reported that an alleged armed group encouraged students in the department to draw and color the armed group's emblem.[79]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA identified one reported incident of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school during the 2022-2023 reporting period. *Education under Attack 2022*, which covered 2020 and 2021, reported two incidents of school-related sexual violence in Colombia.[80]

On June 3, 2023, members of an alleged armed group sexually abused a girl student after stopping and robbing a car of students and female teachers on their way to school in Maicao municipality, La Guajira department, as reported by a local media outlet.[81]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA collected around 18 reports of attacks on higher education in 2022 and 2023. During the reporting period, police and the Mobile Anti-Riot Squadron (ESMAD) reportedly responded with excessive force to several on- and off-campus student protests over the conditions of university infrastructure and higher education funding. In addition, local media reported that alleged non-state armed groups attacked higher education facilities and threatened university students and professors. In comparison, GCPEA identified approximately four reports of attacks on higher education in 2021 and 15 in 2020.[82]

In 2022, GCPEA identified around 17 reports of attacks on higher education.[83] Examples of repression of education-related protests in 2022 included:

- On June 9, 2022, ESMAD reportedly entered Distrital University-La Macarena in Bogotá and used teargas, water cannons, and stun grenades to disperse student protests. The students demonstrated over the lack of water and other services at the university and to commemorate the "Day of the Fallen Student."[84]
- On October 5, 2022, ESMAD reportedly used water cannons to disperse students protesting near Córdoba University over inadequate university infrastructure and demanding the resignation of the dean in Montería city, Córdoba department. Local media outlet *Semana* reported that the students committed several acts of vandalism during the protests.[85]

Examples of reported attacks on higher education facilities and threats against students and academic staff in 2022 included:

- In the early hours of February 23, 2022, two explosive devices were reportedly planted in the street in front of the main entrance to the Francisco de Paula Santander University in Cúcuta city, Norte de Santander department. The incident reportedly occurred on the first day of a newly imposed curfew as part of a forced confinement in the area.[86]
- On May 6, 2022, a University of Antioquia bus was stopped and the four university employees on board were told to disembark before the bus was set on fire in Santa Fe de Antioquia municipality, Antioquia department. Local media outlet *Semana* reported that 34 other vehicles were set on fire that day as part of a forced confinement in the area.[87]
- In April and May 2022, students received death threats for their political activities at Valle University, in Cali city, Valle del Cauca department, as reported by Scholars at Risk and a local media outlet.[88]

In 2023, GCPEA identified one report of an attack on higher education. On July 26, 2023, ESMAD reportedly used teargas and stun grenades to disperse students protesting at the governor's office in Baranquilla city, Atlántico department, for free university tuition, as reported by local media outlets. International news outlet *Infobae* reported that police beat a student inside the building.[89]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

GCPEA collected over 430 attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023, with North Kivu, Ituri, and Mai-Ndombe provinces particularly affected. In addition to attacks on schools, GCPEA collected reports of schools being used for military purposes, and armed groups recruiting students from schools or along school routes. Attacks on higher education students and staff also continued.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict between non-state armed groups and Congolese national armed forces (Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo – FARDC), as well as intercommunal violence, increased in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the 2022-2023 reporting period, especially in North Kivu province.[1] Approximately 120 armed groups were operating in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces, according to the Kivu Security Tracker.[2] Ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2023, citizens encountered violence and discrimination at voting registration sites.[3]

Attacks conducted by the Rwandan-backed March 23 Movement (M23) armed group, which resumed military operations in 2021, increased during the reporting period.[4] In March 2022, renewed fighting between armed groups and the Congolese army escalated, and in May 2022, M23 fighters conducted the largest attack in a decade against the FARDC and seized territory in North Kivu province, on the Congolese-Rwandan border.[5] M23 fighters also committed sexual violence against women and girls, according to Human Rights Watch and news reports.[6] In March 2023, M23 and the FARDC agreed to a ceasefire, which generally held, despite sporadic violent events.[7] In North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces, armed groups and government forces reportedly killed more than 2,440 civilians in 2022.[8] The UN verified that recruitment and use represented one-quarter of the almost 2,000 grave violations against children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the first six months of 2022, with a sharp increase reported in the first three months of the year.[9]

Intercommunal violence continued during the reporting period and increased in Kwamouth territory, Mai-Ndombe province, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.[10] At least 300 people were killed and more than 11,000 people were displaced in 2022 as a result of the ongoing violence.[11] During the clashes, civilian buildings, including schools, hospitals, and houses, were damaged and destroyed.[12]

More than 26 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, including over 15 million children.[13] In late 2023, the UN reported that 6.5 million people were internally displaced in DRC, including 3.8 million children, with more than 2.9 million people newly displaced in 2023.[14] Armed groups attacked aid workers, particularly in eastern provinces, impacting access to humanitarian aid during the reporting period.[15]

Conflict and insecurity continued to impact access to education during the reporting period. The UN reported in March 2023 that more than 2,100 schools closed due to insecurity in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, disrupting education for approximately 750,000 children.[16] In 2022, at least 60 schools were affected by violence in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories in North Kivu province.[17] In addition, schools were converted to shelters for internally displaced people in areas impacted by armed conflict and intercommunal violence.[18]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 430 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period, most of which damaged or destroyed the school. This was lower than during the 2020-2021 reporting period, when over 600 attacks were reported.[19] By September 2023, over 700 schools were reportedly burned or destroyed since the resurgence of M23 violence in November 2021, although GCPEA was unable to establish how many of these attacks took place during the 2022-2023 reporting period.[20] GCPEA identified an increase in attacks involving the use of explosive weapons, with at least seven such attacks in 2022 and 2023, which injured or killed at least ten students.[21]

As a result of inter-community violence in Kwamouth territory, Mai-Ndombe province, 49 schools, including 31 primary schools, were destroyed between June 2022 and April 2023, according to the UN.[22] This violence spread to nearby provinces in 2023, including Kwilu, Kwango, and Kinshasa, according to Human Rights Watch,[23] and 202 schools were closed in May 2023 because of conflict in Tshangu district, Kinshasa province, as reported by Caritas.[24]

GCPEA identified at least 180 attacks on schools in 2022, primarily in Kasai Central, North Kivu, and Ituri provinces.[25] Separately, the UN verified 70 attacks on schools in 2022.[26] According to the DRC Education Cluster, over 550 schools were reportedly attacked, destroyed, burned down, or closed in 2022 due to generalized violence caused by armed group attacks.[27] Since it was unclear how many of the UN-verified attacks overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, and since school closures due to generalized violence do not meet GCPEA's definition of an attack, these numbers were not included in the total number of attacks on schools in this report. Examples of attacks on schools identified by GCPEA included:

- On or around April 6, 2022, unidentified armed men reportedly set fire to a primary school in Malo-Tchengu, Irumu territory, Ituri province; classes for 320 children were suspended, according to ACLED and local media *Bunia Actualité*.[28]
- The UN reported that, on May 23, 2022, a rocket hit a school in Kanyagogo, Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, destroying two classrooms.[29]
- On August 17, 2022, members of an armed group vandalized a primary school and a secondary school in Bijombo village, Uvira territory, South Kivu province, during an attack on the village, according to ACLED and international media outlet *Agenzia Fides*.[30]
- On November 11, 2022, members of an armed group reportedly looted the cafeteria of Kibumba Primary School in Bukumu, Nyiragongo territory, North Kivu province, according to ACLED and local media outlet *Radio Okapi*.[31]

GCPEA identified at least 270 attacks on schools in 2023, primarily in North Kivu and Ituri provinces.[32] Save the Children reported that at least 150 schools in North Kivu province were attacked by armed groups between January and May 2023, affecting over 62,000 children.[33] Meanwhile, OCHA reported that, between January and March 2023, 97 schools were damaged or destroyed during attacks in Ituri province.[34] Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- Between February 8 and February 28, 2023, during clashes between the FARDC and M23 in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, at least two schools were looted, according to the UN.[35]
- In April 2023, suspected members of an armed group attacked and vandalized three schools in Djugu and Mahagi territories, Ituri province, as reported by the UN. In the context of increased violence in the two territories, 21 other schools suspended classes, impacting around 1,200 students.[36]
- On May 9, 2023, a grenade reportedly discarded by an unidentified armed group exploded and injured three students in a primary school in Aru town and district, Ituri province.[37]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified four attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Such incidents appeared to have decreased compared to the previous reporting period: GCPEA identified at least 11 incidents in 2021 and at least 13 in 2020, including a number of incidents involving the use of excessive force against student or teacher protestors.[38] The UN and the BBC reported that teachers closed at least 130 schools for two weeks in October and November, 2023, in Béni and Oïcha, North Kivu province, after three teachers and at least 12 students were killed in an attack, although GCPEA was unable to confirm whether the attack targeted students and teachers.[39]

GCPEA identified one attack in 2022: on November 5, 2022, an armed group allegedly abducted two teachers from a school in Kisimba, Walikale territory, North Kivu province, and shot one who attempted to escape, according to the UN.[40] This attack occurred in relation to an incident of child recruitment, detailed below.

GCPEA identified three attacks in 2023.[41] For example: on March 17, 2023, a headteacher was burned alive in Fakamba, Wamba Futundu district, Mai-Ndombe province, as reported by the UN.[42]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 41 cases of the military use of schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, GCPEA identified at least 25 such incidents in the previous reporting period.[43]

The UN reported that armed actors occupied 13 schools during 2022.[44] Separately, the DRC Protection Cluster reported that, in September 2022, the Uganda People's Defence Force stored ammunition at Lwanoli Primary School in Beni territory, North Kivu province, while the school was operational, putting students and

teachers in danger.[45]

The UN reported that 41 schools were used for military purposes in 2023.[46] Separately, the DRC Protection Cluster reported 25 cases of military use in 2023, all in North Kivu,[47] although GCPEA was not able to determine whether these overlapped with the UN count, or whether they began in 2023 or earlier. Examples included:

- On May 15, 2023, members of an armed group occupied two schools in Muhangi, Lubero territory, North Kivu province, and used classroom tables and benches for firewood, as reported by the DRC Education Cluster.[48]
- The DRC Education Cluster reported that, on June 19, 2023, members of an armed group occupied a primary and a secondary school in Busenene, Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, destroying the schools.[49]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

Reports of sexual violence by warring parties at, or on the way to or from, school or university, continued to decrease in the 2022-2023 reporting period from a peak in the mid-2010s, although it is not clear whether this reflects a reduction in incidents, or in reporting. The UN verified 200 incidents of sexual violence against children in DRC in 2022,[50] although GCPEA could not determine whether any of these incidents took place at school or along school routes. In the previous reporting period, GCPEA identified one such incident in 2020.[51] In May 2023, students interviewed by the DRC Education Cluster in Kitshanga, Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, reported that three girls had been raped on the way to school, although details about the perpetrator were not specified.[52]

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA identified at least two incidents of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school, affecting at least 17 children, during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, during the previous reporting period at least 40 children were affected by school-related child recruitment.[53]

The UN verified 1,545 children as having been recruited in DRC in 2022, although GCPEA was unable to determine whether any of these incidents took place at, or on the way to or from, school.[54] The UN reported that, on November 5, 2022, an armed group recruited 15 students from a school in Kisimba, Walikale territory, North Kivu province.[55]

In May 2023, students interviewed by the DRC Education Cluster in Kitshanga town, Rutshuru territory, North Kivu province, reported that recruitment into armed groups was a danger at school and that a number of boys there had joined armed groups.[56]

At the start of the school year in September 2023, over 15,000 students did not return to school in Masisi, North Kivu province; local media reported that parents kept children at home because of fear that they would be recruited.[57]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified 11 incidents of attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This is a similar rate as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA identified nine such incidents in 2021, and three in 2020.[58] Similar to previous years, incidents involved the use of excessive force against protesting students.

GCPEA identified nine incidents in 2022.[59] Examples included:

- On July 25, 2022, police allegedly fired guns to disperse a crowd of students protesting against university management and increased insecurity in Kalemie city, Tanganyika province; one student died, at least five suffered injuries, and two were arrested, as reported by ACLED and local media *Radio Okapi*.[60]
- On December 1, 2022, police reportedly shot at students from the University of Kisangani in Kisangani city, Tshopo province, who were protesting the university calendar, injuring at least six students, according to local media *Radio Okapi* and Scholars at Risk.[61]

GCPEA identified two attacks on higher education in 2023.[62] For example:

- On August 12, 2023, police allegedly used teargas to disperse students who were protesting in front of the University of Bunia in Bunia city, Ituri province, as reported by ACLED and local media *Radio Okapi*.[63]

EGYPT

GCPEA identified at least 13 reports of the military use of schools within the context of the armed conflict in North Sinai governorate during the reporting period, as well as one attack on teachers and one attack on higher education students.

CONTEXT

Conflict in North Sinai governorate continued in the 2022-2023 reporting period between the non-state armed group Wilayat Sina', an Islamic State affiliate, and the Egyptian military, supported by allied militia groups.[1] President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi declared in 2022 that military operations against Wilayat Sina', which began in 2013, had been successful and were almost concluded.[2] However, Human Rights Watch reported that militias affiliated with the military were still operational in North Sinai in the second half of 2022.[3]

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who has been in power since 2014, secured a third term following elections in December 2023.[4] A national dialogue between the government and opposition members began in May 2023, although the government was criticized for continuing to arbitrarily detain critics, according to International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch.[5]

Egypt hosted an increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees during the reporting period. According to the UN, around 350,000 people had sought refuge as of September 2023, in particular from Syria and Sudan.[6] The conflict in North Sinai governorate impacted children's access to education; 96 schools in the governorate were not functioning, meaning increased rates of illiteracy, as reported by *The Guardian* in March 2023.[7] In addition, children as young as 16 were reportedly used as child soldiers in military operations carried out by army-aligned militia groups in North Sinai, according to Human Rights Watch.[8] In 2022, 2.1 million children were out of school in Egypt.[9] According to Amnesty International, the government extended emergency measures, including granting the defense minister exceptional powers to close schools, during the reporting period.[10]

Although Egypt has been profiled in previous reports, it was not profiled in *Education Under Attack 2022* so no comparison can be made with the previous reporting period.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified one attack on school teachers. On October 15, 2023, around a dozen teachers were allegedly detained during a protest against the disqualification of teachers from public school positions, in front of the Ministry of Education in Cairo, as reported by Human Rights Watch and local media.[11]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 13 reports of military use during the 2022-2023 reporting period. According to a human rights organization, at least 37 schools had been used as military bases since 2013,[12] although GCPEA was unable to determine how many of these were ongoing during the 2022-2023 reporting period.

GCPEA identified at least nine reports of military use in 2022, affecting both schools and higher education infrastructure.[13] Schools were often used as bases and as fighting positions. Examples included:

- Al Husseinat Joint Elementary School in North Sinai governorate was reportedly occupied and being used as a base in August 2022, according to a human rights monitor; part of the school was allegedly damaged.[14]
- On November 18 and 19, 2022, a higher education building was reportedly occupied by an armed group in the eastern part of Al-Qantara city, Ismailia governorate. Their presence led to airstrikes from the armed forces, and armed clashes, as reported by International Crisis Group, a violence monitor, and local media outlet.[15]
- Al Okour Joint Preparatory School in North Sinai governorate was allegedly used as a military base from at least May 2017 through 2022, according to a human rights organization. New structures were reportedly added to the school while others nearby, as well as vegetation, were reportedly destroyed, indicating that the school was used for reconnaissance or as a fighting position.[16]
- GCPEA received a report that military and police forces allegedly occupied a primary school for boys in North Sinai governorate between 2016 and December 2022, when the school was vacated; the school was reportedly used as a military base and fortifications were added to the structure for that purpose.[17]

GCPEA identified at least four reports of the military use of schools in 2023.[18] For example, Ahmed Abu Salma Joint School for Elementary Education in North Sinai governorate was reportedly used from at least 2015, when the school was allegedly closed and converted to a military camp, until January 2023; during the same period, the school was reportedly used as a position for snipers.[19]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified one attack on higher education during the reporting period. On October 3, 2022, police reportedly assaulted some protesting students and arrested at least eight others outside the South Sudanese embassy in Cairo. The students, who were from South Sudan, were protesting living conditions at various Egyptian universities and calling for the payment of their scholarships. Some of the arrested students were deported some weeks later without due process, as reported by local and international media.[20]

GCPEA did not identify any reports of attacks on higher education in 2023.

ETHIOPIA

Attacks on schools and universities, and their military use, continued in 2022 and 2023. GCPEA identified more than 90 reports of attacks on schools, particularly in northern Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and Benishangul-Gumuz states or regions. The Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front signed a "cessation of hostilities" agreement in November 2022, although conflict resumed in Amhara in August 2023.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, armed conflict continued in Ethiopia's northern Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions between Ethiopian government forces, as well as government-aligned forces such as the Eritrean army, and forces affiliated with Tigray's regional government led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).[1] Violence also persisted in the south-central Oromia region.[2] Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reported that all actors in the conflict in the northern regions committed human rights violations and war crimes, such as extrajudicial executions and sexual violence.[3] After preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid to Tigray region in early 2022,[4] the government announced a truce that temporarily alleviated fighting and permitted humanitarian access to the region in March of that year.[5] In August 2022, fighting escalated and the delivery of humanitarian aid was once again inhibited, according to International Crisis Group.[6] Airstrikes in Mekelle and Adi Daero, the capital of Tigray region and a town there, killed civilians including children in August and September 2022, as reported by Amnesty International.[7] The Ethiopian army regained control of three towns from the TPLF in October 2022;[8] the following month, the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan forces reached a "cessation of hostilities" agreement after two years of conflict.[9] The ceasefire generally held until August 2023, when conflict resumed in the Amhara region.[10]

In Oromia region, the government relaunched its counterinsurgency campaign against the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in May 2023 after peace talks ended without an agreement the previous month.[11] In June 2022, armed men killed approximately 400 ethnic Amhara people in Oromia region, while government security forces took several hours to respond, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.[12] Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced due to hostilities in the region.[13]

In 2023, approximately 20 million people, including 10.8 million children, required humanitarian aid across Ethiopia.[14] However, internet outages and limited fuel, in addition to fighting, impacted access to assistance.[15] As of October 2023, 4.39 million people were internally displaced due to conflict and natural disasters.[16] Internally displaced people and Eritrean refugee women and children in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara were particularly vulnerable to human trafficking, according to the UN.[17]

Violence and natural disasters continued to impact education during the reporting period. Approximately 7.6

million children were out-of-school at the end of 2023 due to conflict, draught, and the humanitarian situation.[18] In Gambela and Amhara regions, floods damaged 125 schools and over 455 schools, respectively, impacting 270,000 children, according to the UN.[19] The UN also reported that, in conflict-affected regions, approximately 3,860 schools were closed in 2022, leaving over 2.8 million children without access to education.[20] The truce signed in November 2022 between the government of Ethiopia and the TPLF included a provision concerning education in conflict-affected communities, namely, "Students must go to school..."[21]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 90 reports of attacks on schools. In comparison, GCPEA collected at least 24 incidents of attacks on schools in 2021 and at least eight such attacks in 2020.[22] During both reporting periods, NGOs, the media, and the UN reported on the widespread damage or destruction of schools during conflict in Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Benishangul-Gumuz states or regions; however, much of the reporting did not specify the year in which damages occurred or if it 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. These reports were not included in the total number of attacks on schools for either reporting period, meaning they may be significant undercounts. Likewise international media outlet *Reuters* and Human Rights Watch reported that internet shutdowns limited reporting of human rights abuses in Tigray region.[23]

In 2022, the UN identified 77 attacks on schools in Tigray, Amhara, Afar, and Benishangul-Gumuz states or regions.[24] Separately, GCPEA collected around 14 reports of attacks on schools that year, several of which may have overlapped with the UN count.[25] In addition, the Education Cluster determined that, as of December 2022, Ethiopia had more than 9,000 damaged or destroyed schools, mostly due to conflict, many in Tigray and Amhara regions.[26] Examples of incidents GCPEA collected included:

- Human Rights Watch reported that, on January 7, 2022, an Ethiopian government drone dropped three explosives on a school in Dedebit town, Tigray region, killing at least 57 civilians and wounding 42 others.[27] International media outlet *The Washington Post* reported that those killed were mostly women, children, and older persons, using the school as a shelter.[28] One school building and several temporary shelters were reportedly damaged.[29]
- A school sheltering displaced persons was shelled in late May 2022 in Sheraro town, Tigray region, as reported by international media outlet *Al Jazeera* and ACLED.[30]
- On June 10, 2022, a heavy artillery shell left on the premises of Silk Amba School reportedly exploded in Dessie town, Amhara region. The Ethiopia Peace Observatory reported that the explosion injured three students.[31]
- On August 26, 2022, an airstrike hit a kindergarten in Mekelle city, Tigray region, killing several children and injuring others, according to the UN.[32] *The New York Times*, *Vatican News*, and other international media outlets reported that the attack appeared to strike a playground next to the kindergarten, where children were playing.[33]
- On October 4, 2022, an airstrike hit a school in Adi Daero town, Tigray region, killing more than 50 inter-

nally displaced persons seeking shelter there, as reported by international media outlet *Reuters*.[34]

- On October 24, 2022, a drone strike reportedly hit a school, killing students, in Chobi district, West Shewa zone, Oromia region, according to local media *Addis Standard* and other outlets.[35]

In 2023, the UN reported that schools in Gambela and Itang woredas, or districts, in Afar region closed due to fighting in May, keeping more than 600 students from classes for over two weeks.[36] Across the Amhara region, damage and looting closed 157 schools in the first six months of 2023, preventing over 671,000 students, nearly half of them girls, from attending school.[37] In Oromia region, the presence of armed groups led 625 schools to close in the first half of the year, impacting 225,000 students, according to the UN.[38] In addition, the Education Cluster reported in September 2023 that 8,552 schools were damaged in Amhara, Oromia, and other regions.[39] Since it was unclear whether the school closures or damages met GCPEA's definition of attacks on schools, these numbers were not included in the count of attacks on schools in the report.

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least eight attacks on schools.[40] Separately, the UN reported 12 attacks on schools, students, and staff in Oromia, Tigray, and Amhara regions.[41] However, it was unclear how many of these attacks were against schools, so they were not included in the total count for this attack type. Examples of reports of attacks on schools collected by GCPEA included:

- In late January 2023, at least two public schools were reportedly looted and burned down in Shew Robit town, North Shewa zone, Amhara region, according to ACLED and a local media outlet.[42]
- In early February 2023, humanitarian demining units cleared or cordoned off explosive remnants of war or unexploded ordnance in Kola Temben and Wejerat schools in Kola Temben and Hintalo Wajirat districts, Tigray region, according to the Protection Cluster.[43]
- The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reported that, on August 6 and 7, 2023, the Ethiopian National Defense Force and Fano armed group clashed in Debre Birhan city, Amhara region. During combat, artillery shells and crossfire killed civilians and hit civilian buildings, including a school.[44]
- On November 28, 2023, bombs exploded near at least two schools in Bahir Dar city, Amhara region, as reported by international media outlet *Deutsche Welle*. Although no injuries were reported, parents and caregivers kept students home the following day out of fear, and nearby schools canceled exams.[45]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA collected at least ten reported incidents of attacks on school students and educators in 2022 and 2023. In October 2023, the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia reported that parents in Afar region had at times been afraid to send their children to school due to the presence of explosive remnants of war along school routes since the conflict began in November 2020.[46]

In 2022, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel.[47] For instance:

- On March 23, 2022, five students were allegedly shot and killed at school in Maksa Leku kebele, Cobi

woreda, Oromia region.[48]

- On October 19, 2022, a drone strike reportedly killed 14 people, three of whom were students on their way to school, in Meta Walkite district, West Shewa zone, Oromia region, according to local and international news outlets and ACLED.[49]

In 2023, GCPEA collected at least seven reported incidents of attacks on students and educators.[50] For instance:

- In early January 2023, in Lalo district, West Wellega zone, Oromia region, police reportedly detained 24 teachers from six schools who questioned a government policy that takes one month's wages from their salary. According to local media outlet *Addis Standard*, the teachers were detained for over a week. [51]
- On July 29, 2023, unidentified gunmen killed the head of the Guba Lafto Woreda Education Office in North Wollo zone, Amhara region, as reported by a local news outlet and ACLED.[52]
- In December 2023, teachers were detained in Hadiya zone, Central Ethiopia regional state, after protesting over the non-payment of wages, as reported by EHRC, media outlet *Addis Standard*, and ACLED.[53]
- In mid-December 2023, at least three teachers were reportedly abducted from a secondary school in Dembecha town, Amhara Region. One teacher was allegedly shot and killed, while the others were later released.[54]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least sixteen reports of military use of schools and universities in 2022 and 2023. *Education under Attack 2022* included approximately 60 reported incidents of military use in 2021 and around ten such incidents in 2020.[55] The number of military use incidents in 2022 and 2023 may be an undercount; during the reporting period, the UN received unverified reports of 381 military use of school incidents.[56]

In 2022, GCPEA collected at least six reports of military use.[57] The UN reported that armed forces were using schools in North Wello, North Gonder, and Wag Hemra zones, Amhara region, in April and June 2022.[58] Separately, the UN reported the military use of two schools and one hospital in Tigray and Oromia regions in 2022.[59] GCPEA also identified a report of an alleged armed actor using a school to hide and as a firing position in Gambela town, Agnewak zone, Gambela region.[60]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least ten reports of military use.[61] In May and June of that year, the UN reported that internally displaced persons sought shelter in, and military forces or armed groups occupied, around 100 schools in Tigray and Amhara regions.[62] However, it was unclear how many of these incidents were occupation rather than IDPs seeking shelter, so the number is not included in the total count for military use. Examples of reports GCPEA collected included:

- Media outlets and Amnesty International reported that the police used schools to detain people in Addis Ababa after conflict in the Amhara region resumed in August 2023.[63]
- EHRC reported the military use of Dejazmach Tesema Irgete Primary and Secondary School, Jehuha Pri-

mary School, and Bechna Belai Zeleq Preparatory School in Amhara region in late October 2023.[64]

- In early November 2023, Fano militias reportedly partially occupied a primary school in Wadera district, Amhara region. On November 6, a government drone allegedly hit the school, killing three teachers and four other civilians, according to the UN and a news report.[65]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified six reports of attacks on higher education. In *Education under Attack 2022*, GCPEA identified around eight reports of higher education attacks in 2021 and six such attacks in 2020.[66] As in previous years, the incidents during this reporting period included both education-related protest repression and conflict-related violence.

In 2022, GCPEA collected five reports of attacks on higher education.[67] For example:

- The UN reported that, on January 11, 2022, the Ethiopian air force allegedly carried out an airstrike on the Technical Vocational Education and Training institute, killing three men and injuring 21 people, many of them women, in Mekelle city, Tigray region.[68] The status of those killed and injured as students or academics was unclear.
- On June 25, 2022, police reportedly beat and forcibly dispersed students marching from Addis Ababa University to an off-campus site. According to Scholars and Risk and international and local news outlets, the police also forcibly prevented some students from leaving campus to join the other protesters. The students were reportedly protesting over ethnic violence against Amhara communities.[69]
- On September 13, 2022, a drone strike hit the business campus of Mekelle University in Mekelle city, Tigray region, as reported by international media outlet *Al Jazeera* and ACLED.[70]

In 2023, GCPEA identified one attack on higher education. In early August, armed clashes took place near Gondar University in Gondar city, Amhara region, as reported by a civil society organization and the international media outlet *Deutsche Welle*. The clashes reportedly killed dozens of civilians, including a professor who was administering an exam for secondary students at the university. Students were also reportedly injured, and more than 16,000 students were unable to take the 12th-grade national exam.[71]

INDIA

Attacks on schools continued in several eastern states during the 2022-2023 reporting period. GCPEA also identified at least 55 incidents of attacks on school students and teachers, primarily involving the use of excessive force during education-related protests. Attacks on higher education students and personnel increased slightly in 2022 and 2023 as compared to the previous reporting period.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, low-grade violence continued in Jammu and Kashmir and the areas affected by the Naxalite insurgency.[1] The National Democratic Alliance-led government remained in power at the central level.[2]

In 2022, militants carried out targeted attacks on civilians and government workers in Kashmir, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG).[3] The attacks forced hundreds to flee the region in May and June 2022.[4] Amnesty International reported that authorities demolished residential homes in February 2023 in Jammu and Kashmir.[5] Separately, conflict continued between the Naxalite insurgents and government forces, harming civilians in the central and eastern states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, among others, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and news reports.[6]

In May 2023, communal conflict broke out in Manipur state, according to the UN and ICG.[7] The violence killed at least 200 people and displaced approximately 60,000 by December of that year.[8] Human Rights Watch reported that more than 1,700 houses were destroyed, in addition to churches.[9] In response to the violence, the government restricted internet access in the state, limiting access to essential services including health care, according to *The New Humanitarian* and Human Rights Watch.[10]

Government employee, farmer, and student protests occurred at several points during the reporting period.[11] In 2023, student protests occurred in Manipur amid continued violence.[12] The government increased restrictions on the right to protest in Jammu and Kashmir during the reporting period.[13]

Natural disasters affected children and access to education. Flooding and landslides occurred in several states during the reporting period, including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam.[14] In June 2022, floods impacted more than four million people including a million children in Assam state; the storms damaged school infrastructure, leading to more than 800,000 out of school children, according to Save the Children.[15] In August 2023, flooding and landslides destroyed infrastructure in Himachal Pradesh, leading to school closures in the state.[16]

In February 2022, schools and some universities reopened in-person classes after months of reoccurring Covid-19 closures.[17] The closures disproportionately impacted girls as they faced higher risk of child marriage, according to Human Rights Watch and Save the Children.[18]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified ten reported attacks on schools. The number of attacks remained similar to previous years, when GCPEA collected at least six and two attacks on schools in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[19] In 2022 and 2023, attacks on schools primarily involved the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In 2022, GCPEA collected six reports of attacks on schools from local media reports.[20] For example:

- On January 26, 2022, an explosive device was reportedly emplaced in the Upgraded Middle School in Kharki town, Bihar state, according to local media outlet *The Telegraph*. Police reportedly diffused the device.[21]
- On June 5, 2022, an IED was reportedly detonated near the gate of the Little Flower School in Sangaiprou, Imphal city, Manipur state.[22]
- On July 16, 2022, an IED was reportedly detonated near a school in Murgiyachak village, Bihar state, injuring at least six students, according to *Times of India*.[23]

In 2023, GCPEA identified four reported attacks on schools in.[24] For example:

- On March 21, 2023, students reportedly found bomb making equipment at Kharija Falimari AP Primary School in Okrabari village, West Bengal state.[25]
- On September 1, 2023, three explosive devices detonated near Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya School, a government-run girls' residential secondary school, in Thamnapokpi village, Manipur state.[26]
- On December 31, 2023, an IED was reportedly found and subsequently diffused at the Princeton International school in Imphal city, Manipur state.[27]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least 55 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. The number of attacks remained similar compared to last reporting period; GCPEA identified more than 50 reported incidents of attacks in 2021 and at least four reports of attacks on students, teachers, and personnel from media reports in 2020.[28] Incidents in 2022 and 2023 involved the reported arrest or detention of over 2,700 students, teachers, and other education personnel.

In 2022, GCPEA identified 45 reports of attacks on students, teachers, and personnel.[29] For example:

- On February 24, 2022, students protested irregularities in the appointment of secondary teachers, outside the education department in Patna city, Bihar state, according to *Times of India*. The police reportedly used lathi (martial-arts sticks) charge to disperse the protesters.[30]
- On May 31, 2022, a teacher was reportedly shot and killed by militants outside a school in Kulgam district, Jammu and Kashmir union territory.[31]
- On July 13, 2022, police reportedly used excessive force against unemployed teachers' union protesters and allegedly pulled an unemployed female teacher by the hair, in Sangrur city, Punjab state. The teachers' union members were protesting over the lack of teaching positions in the state, according to a local media outlet.[32]
- On September 4, 2022, teachers reportedly protested across the 13 districts in Telangana state, demanding their spouses be transferred to the same district as outlined by governmental regulation. Local media reported that police arrested hundreds of teachers.[33]
- On September 26, 2022, a large group of unemployed teachers demanded to be reinstated in Agartala city, Tripura state. Police reportedly fired teargas and water cannons to disperse the protesters, injuring more than 30 teachers.[34]

In 2023, GCPEA collected ten incidents of attacks on students, teachers, and education personnel.[35] For example:

- On January 4, 2023, police reportedly used a lathi charge to disperse a group of teachers protesting in Jammu city, Jammu and Kashmir union territory, injuring several teachers. The protest was to demand the reinstatement of teaching posts.[36]
- On March 18, 2023, students protesting the leak of exam answers were reportedly detained in Dhalpur village, Assam state. As reported by a local media outlet, a police officer allegedly tortured the students while they were in custody.[37]
- On July 1, 2023, police reportedly used a lathi charge to disperse a group of teachers demanding the regularization of their jobs in Sangrur city, Punjab state.[38]
- On October 5, 2023, police reportedly arrested more than 1,000 teachers protesting to demand increased salaries in Chennai city, Tamil Nadu state.[39]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified at least 80 reported attacks on higher education. The police reportedly used excessive force against higher education students and personnel during this reporting period, including detaining or arresting more than 1,200 students and academics. Attacks on higher education involved repression of on-campus or education-related protests in 2022 and 2023, rather than attacks on higher education facilities, continuing a trend from *Education under Attack 2022*. Attacks on higher education increased slightly compared to last reporting period, when GCPEA collected approximately 65 incidents in 2020 and 2021.[40]
In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 55 reported incidents of attacks on higher education.[41] For example:

- On January 31, 2022, students reportedly protested at Bangalore University in Bangalore city, Karnataka

state, against a delay in the release of their grades, including two groups of students arguing with one another, according to Scholars at Risk. Local media sources reported that the police injured some students when they used lathi charge to disperse the protests.[42]

- On April 4, 2022, police reportedly detained several protesting students that demanded their final exams be conducted online due to the increase in Covid-19 infections at Delhi University, in New Delhi city, Delhi state, according to local media sources.[43]
- On June 9, 2022, members of several student organizations, including the Student Federation of India, Punjab Students Union, and Students for Society, reportedly protested against the proposed plan to centralize Panjab University, in Chandigarh city. When students attempted to cross police barricades, police used lathi charges, injuring around nine students, according to Scholars at Risk and local media sources.[44]
- On November 4, 2022, police reportedly used water cannon against and detained at least 200 students from the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Rohtak city, Haryana state. The students were protesting against increased course fees, according to Scholars at Risk.[45]
- On December 12, 2022, police reportedly detained at least 100 students during a protest outside the Ministry of Education in Agartala city, Tripura state, according to local media sources and Scholars at Risk.[46] Two student groups were protesting the termination of a fellowship originally established to support students from minority communities.[47]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 25 reported attacks on higher education from media reports, most of which consisted of protest repression.[48] For instance:

- On February 15, 2023, students from Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak city, Haryana state, protested against the Haryana Chief Minister's campus visit. Police detained several students, according to Scholars at Risk.[49]
- Students from Dhanamanjuri University, in Imphal city, Manipur state, protested against faculty classifications at the university on March 6, 2023. According to local media, the police used lathi charge against the students when they attempted to enter the administrative block, injuring several students.[50]
- On March 31, 2023, police detained several students during a protest at the University of Delhi and the Indraprastha College for Women in New Delhi, according to Scholars at Risk. The students reportedly demanded the resignation of the principal of the women's college.[51]
- Police detained around 30 students during a protest at the Delhi University's Arts Faculty in New Delhi on May 3, 2023, according to local media.[52]
- On June 28, 2023, police reportedly detained 12 students protesting at Rajasthan University, in Jaipur city, Rajasthan state. Among other grievances, the students demanded reduced housing costs and university fees, according to Scholars at Risk.[53]
- On August 11, 2023, students protested outside the Rajasthan University gate against the administration for having not yet declared the schedule for the students' union election, in Jaipur city, Rajasthan state. According to local media outlet *Times of India*, students were reportedly injured when police used lathi charges.[54]
- On September 5, 2023, police reportedly tortured several students after they had been detained during a protest at Kakatiya University over irregularities in PhD admissions in Hanamkonda city, Telangana state.[55]

IRAQ

Attacks on education continued in several regions of Iraq in 2022 and 2023, with a decline in the final months of the reporting period. As in previous years, explosives were used in attacks on schools, and police continued to use excessive force during education-related protests. The military use of schools increased compared to the previous reporting period.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, Iraq continued to experience political unrest and violence.[1] Following the parliamentary elections in October 2021, politicians were unable to form a government or implement reforms for a year, and protesters occupied the parliament building in Baghdad in July 2022, according to media reports.[2] In August 2022, Muqtada Al-Sadr, a religious and political leader, withdrew from politics, leading to violent clashes between protesters and security forces in Baghdad, which resulted in at least 30 people killed and hundreds more injured, according to Human Rights Watch and media reports.[3] Iraqi parliamentarians elected Abdul Latif Rashid to the presidency in October 2022, who appointed Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as prime minister, ending the year-long political deadlock.[4] In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Kurdish authorities arrested government critics, journalists, and activists ahead of planned protests in August 2022, as reported by Human Rights Watch.[5]

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued to carry out attacks against civilians and Iraqi security forces during the reporting period, particularly in the north and central regions of the country, although at a reduced rate compared to previous years.[6] ISIL killed a dozen civilian farmers in Kirkuk and Diyala governorates in May 2022.[7] In December 2022, ISIL claimed responsibility for attacks near Kirkuk and Albu Bali cities that killed 17 people, including nine policemen, according to the UN.[8] Iraqi military forces carried out operations against ISIL fighters in 2022 and 2023.[9]

The Turkish military continued to conduct cross-border attacks against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK), a non-state armed group active in the northern Iraqi governorates of Erbil, Dahuk, Nineveh, and Sulaymaniyah.[10] The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported an increase in the number of attacks by Turkish armed forces in Iraq in 2022, compared to 2021.[11] Attacks included Turkish airstrikes against the PKK in northern Iraq during the reporting period.[12] In February 2023, the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire with Turkish forces following the large-scale earthquake in Türkiye and Syria.[13] The ceasefire ended in June of that year when a key member of the group was killed in Sulaymaniyah.[14]

As of late 2023, the UN reported that 1.1 million Iraqis were internally displaced.[15] In January 2023, 2.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, including 1.1 million children.[16]

Approximately 680,000 internally displaced and returnee children faced barriers to accessing learning in September 2022, which included lack of civil documents and educational costs.[17] One-third of schools in Mosul were damaged from prior fighting, as of July 2022, resulting in half of the city's students attending class in damaged facilities.[18] At the higher education level, the University of Mosul rebuilt and reopened the central library in February 2022, eight years after an ISIL attack damaged it.[19]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least six reported attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023. This is a decrease as compared to *Education under Attack 2022*, which included six and five reported attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[20] During both reporting periods, many of the incidents involved explosive devices installed in or near schools.

In 2022, the UN verified two attacks on schools by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and an unidentified perpetrator.[21] Since it was unclear how many attacks from the UN overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools for this report, to avoid double counting. GCPEA identified at least four reports of attacks on schools in 2022:

- Unidentified assailants launched rockets that damaged a school in the Green Zone in Karkh district, Baghdad, on January 13, 2022, as reported by local media outlet *Shafaq News*.[22] A woman and child were injured in the attack, although their status as student or teacher was unclear.
- An explosive device detonated near the Al Noor Private School in Amarah city, Maysan governorate, on February 11, 2022, according to local media outlet *Shafaq News*.[23]
- A school in a refugee camp in Koya, Kurdistan region, was attacked on September 29, 2022, as reported by the UN.[24] Two children were injured and a pregnant woman was killed, although their status as students or a teacher was unclear.
- Iraqi police reportedly defused a grenade found at the gate of a school in Daquq district, Kirkuk governorate, on December 22, 2022. Classes were suspended for five days, affecting 198 students enrolled in the school, as reported by the *National Iraqi News Agency*.[25]

In 2023, the UN reported one attack on a school.[26] Separately, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on schools:

- On April 24, 2023, an explosive device detonated outside a school under construction in the Shatrah district, Dhi Qar governorate, causing the school's outer fence to collapse, as reported by local media outlet *Shafaq News*.[27]
- On May 15, 2023, unidentified assailants reportedly opened fire at a private school in an unspecified location in Maysan governorate. This was the second time the school had been attacked, as reported by local media outlet *Al Mirbad.*[28]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected three reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately four and ten reports of such attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[29] GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on education personnel in 2022:

- Police arrested two contract teachers who were demonstrating for employment opportunities in Erbil city, Kurdistan region, on September 6, 2022, as reported by a local media outlet and ACLED.[30]
- Police arrested several recent secondary school graduates who were demonstrating against their university placements in Soran city, Erbil governorate, Kurdistan region, on October 27, 2022, as reported by a local media outlet.[31]
- On November 20, 2022, police reportedly used tear gas near a primary school in Sulaymaniyah city and governorate with the aim of dispersing nearby University of Sulaymaniyah students demonstrating over student fees, as detailed below. The use of tear gas caused about 100 primary-school students to fall unconscious, according to a local media source.[32]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on students or education personnel in 2023.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 45 incidents of military use. This is an increase compared to past years; *Education under Attack 2022*, which covered 2020 and 2021, included approximately 33 incidents.[33]

In 2022, the UN verified 42 cases of military use perpetrated by the Iraqi Federal Police and security forces, as well as the Peshmerga, the Popular Mobilization Forces, and the People's Defense Forces of the Kurdistan Workers' Party.[34] Separately, GCPEA identified two reports of military use:

- International Crisis Group and local media outlet *Shafaq News* reported that, on May 2, 2022, two Sinjar Resistance Unit snipers positioned themselves in a school in Sinjar district, Nineveh governorate. In response, the Iraqi armed forces shelled the school, killing the two snipers.[35]
- On March 19, 2022, Iraqi Civil Defense forces reportedly found a mass grave containing the bodies of around ten civilians near Bahaa Din School in Mosul city, Nineveh governorate. An alleged armed group had used the school in the past, as reported by a local media outlet.[36]

In 2023, the UN reported that the military use of 22 previously occupied schools continued, while some 15 schools were vacated.[37] Separately, GCPEA identified at least three reports of military use in 2023. As of June 6, 2023, according to the head of the Sinjar Education Department, armed groups had occupied three schools in Sinjar district, Nineveh governorate, as reported by Human Rights Watch.[38] In October 2023, international and local media reported that an alleged armed group occupied a school in Sinjar city, Nineveh governorate, denying over 1,000 students access to education.[39] Since it was unclear whether this incident overlapped with

one of the other three schools in the same governorate, it was not included in the total number of incidents, to avoid double counting.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA collected approximately 13 reports of attacks on higher education. This trend is similar to previous years; GCPEA gathered two and eight reports of attacks on higher education in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[40]

In 2022, GCPEA collected approximately nine reports of attacks on higher education students and staff.[41] The attacks were concentrated in Sulaymaniyah city. For instance:

- On April 14, 2022, the police and security services reportedly beat and arrested professors and staff members from the University of Baghdad who were demonstrating for their right to housing at the entrance to the university and in front of the Ministry of Science and Technology building in Al-Jadriyah district, Baghdad. The police removed a female protester's hijab, as reported by Scholars at Risk and a local media outlet.[42]
- On October 17, 2022, police reportedly arrested at least 15 students at the University of Sulaymaniyah in Sulaymaniyah city and governorate. The students protested over dorm conditions and stipend delays, as reported by a local media outlet.[43]
- On October 27, 2022, unidentified assailants on a motorcycle allegedly shot at the home and car of a University of Maysan professor in Amarah city, Maysan governorate. No casualties were reported by a local media outlet.[44]
- For several days in mid and late November 2022, police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at students demonstrating over increasing student fees and unpaid student allowances at the University of Sulaymaniyah and in Sulaymaniyah city and governorate, according to Scholars at Risk and local media sources.[45]

In 2023, GCPEA collected four reports of attacks on higher education students and academics:

- On January 22, 2023, an explosive device reportedly detonated at the home of a University of Maysan professor in Amarah city, Maysan governorate, damaging the house and a car. Scholars at Risk reported no casualties.[46]
- In March 2023, a Russian-Israeli doctoral student enrolled in Princeton University in the United States was abducted while carrying out academic research in Baghdad. Israeli officials announced that an armed group abducted her, according to Scholars at Risk and media outlet *Al-Monitor.*[47]
- In mid-May 2023, security forces allegedly arrested two lecturers who had organized recent protests demanding job opportunities. One was arrested in Diwaniyah city, AlQādisiyah governorate, and the other was arrested in Najaf city, Najaf governorate, according to a local media outlet.[48]
- In mid-May 2023, security forces also beat lecturers in Najaf city, Najaf governorate, as reported by a local media outlet.[49]

KENYA

Schools in the northeast of the country faced attacks by suspected non-state armed group fighters. In addition, attacks on school students and teachers persisted at a similar rate in 2022 and 2023 as compared to the previous two years. Police continued to use excessive force during higher education protests.

CONTEXT

Fighting between government military forces and the non-state armed group al-Shabaab continued in northeastern Kenya and escalated in 2023.[1] Based in Somalia, al-Shabaab conducted attacks across the border in Kenya.[2] In 2023, Kenya and Somalia planned to reopen border crossings after more than a decade of closure; however, Kenya suspended the plans amid increased attacks, according to *Al Jazeera* and *VOA*.[3] In August 2022, Kenya held elections and William Ruto was elected president.[4]

Al-Shabaab conducted targeted attacks against security forces and civilians in Mandera, Lamu, and Garissa counties during the reporting period, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[5] Many of these attacks involved the use of explosive weapons.[6] For instance, International Crisis Group (ICG) and ACLED reported that al-Shabaab carried out attacks on civilian infrastructure using explosive weapons in Mandera county in October 2022.[7] Counterinsurgency initiatives in Somalia allegedly pushed al-Shabaab militants across the border in 2023, leading to an uptick in armed violence in Kenya.[8]
Police used excessive force against protesters during anti-government demonstrations in 2023.[9] In July 2023, protests took place over increasing taxes; police responded with disproportionate force, including teargas, killing more than 20 people and arresting approximately 300, according to ICG and ACLED.[10]
In 2023, Kenya hosted more than 623,000 refugees and asylum seekers primarily from Somalia and South Sudan, according to the UN.[11] More than 2.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance that year, including over 1.3 million children.[12] Climate shocks exacerbated the humanitarian situation; approximately 187,000 children were displaced in 2022 due to climate disasters.[13] In 2023, floods displaced approximately 36,000 people and killed more than 45, according to Save the Children.[14] In the northwest, ongoing drought increased intercommunal tensions between pastoralists and landowners.[15]

Climate shocks and other factors limited education access during the reporting period. In 2023, more than 3.5 million school-aged children were out of school due to drought.[16] Rates of child marriage increased during the drought, affecting girl students, according to the UN.[17] A dearth of teachers, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of meals provided by schools also drove high dropout rates during the reporting period.[18] In addition, insecurity created by banditry and cattle rustling in the North Rift region prevented students from accessing learning.[19]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified four reported attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This represents an increase compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA collected zero reported attacks in 2021 and 2020.[20]

In 2022, GCPEA identified two attacks on schools, both of which occurred in Mandera county in the northeast of the country:

- On October 12, 2022, alleged non-state armed group fighters staged an attempted attack on Libehiya Primary School in Libehiya, Mandera county, in the middle of the night, as reported by local media outlet *Nation*.[21]
- On October 25, 2022, alleged non-state armed group fighters reportedly threw explosives into Fino Primary School in Lafey, Mandera county. At the time, students and teachers had formed an audience for an event with a local politician. One student was injured, as reported by local media outlet *Nation*.[22]

In 2023, GCPEA identified two attacks on schools, both of which occurred in Lamu county, near the border with Somalia:

- On July 11, 2023, suspected non-state armed group fighters attacked Juhudi Primary School in Juhudi village, Lamu county, when it was being used as a shelter for displaced people, as reported by local media outlet *Nation*.[23]
- Also at Juhudi Primary School, suspected non-state armed group fighters attempted an attack on August 24, 2023, while the school was being used as a shelter for displaced people, as reported by local media outlet *Star*.[24]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected six reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected three and two reported attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[25]

In 2022, GCPEA identified one report of an attack on school students:

- On May 12, 2022, police fired teargas at and arrested students demonstrating in Garissa town and county for the removal of the principal of County High School, as reported by local media outlet *Star*. The students reportedly threw stones.[26]

In 2023, GCPEA identified five reports of attacks on school students and personnel.[27] For instance:

- On July 12, 2023, police reportedly threw teargas into Kihumbulni Primary School in Kangemi, Nairobi city and county, while responding to a nearby protest. 50 students present in classrooms were taken to hospi-

tals due to breathing difficulties, as reported by local media outlet *Star*.[28]
- On September 20, 2023, suspected non-state armed group fighters killed a security guard at Majembeni Primary School in Widhu, Lamu county, as reported by a local media outlet.[29]
- On October 16, 2023, police fired teargas at teachers who were protesting against their dismissal by the Teachers Service Commission in Upper Hill, Nairobi city and county, as reported by a local media outlet. Ten teachers were reportedly arrested.[30]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected eight reports of attacks on higher education. This trend of sporadic attacks is similar to previous years; GCPEA collected approximately five reported attacks each year in 2021 and 2020.[31]

In 2022, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on higher education, both of which affected students:

- On March 26, 2022, police threw teargas at Maseno University students who were protesting campus insecurity by blocking a road in Maseno town, Kisumu county, as reported by a local media outlet.[32]
- On December 5, 2022, police shot and killed a student during a protest over insecurity at Machakos University in Machakos town and county, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[33]

In 2023, GCPEA identified six reports of attacks on higher education, all of which involved students.[34] For instance:

- On March 20, 2023, police threw teargas and shot live bullets at Maseno University students who were throwing stones and protesting the high cost of living on campus in Maseno town, Kisumu county, as reported by Scholars at Risk. One student was reportedly shot dead, and others injured.[35]
- On April 4, 2023, police reportedly threw teargas at University of Kabianga students protesting student loan delays and university fees in Kabianga, Kericho county. The students clashed with police, blockaded a road, and lit bonfires in protest, as reported by a local media outlet.[36]
- On May 24, 2023, police threw teargas at Kisumu National Polytechnic College students who protested high university fees and canteen prices in Kisumu city and county, as reported by Scholars at Risk and a local media outlet. The students reportedly threw stones and blockaded roads outside the campus.[37]
- On November 2, 2023, police reportedly threw teargas at Machakos University students who were protesting student loan delays in Machakos town and county.[38]

KYRGYZSTAN

During a brief escalation of hostilities between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in September 2022, more than 20 schools and kindergartens were damaged or destroyed by fighting. At least one school was used for military purposes.

CONTEXT

In 2022, hostilities between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan escalated along the disputed border in the area covering the south-western Kyrgyz region of Batken and the region of Sughd in northern Tajikistan, which includes the Tajik enclave of Vorukh.[1] Border guards reportedly fired at each other, and clashes occurred in January, April, June, and September 2022, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[2] These incidents were among at least 20 border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan since 2017, which involved both government forces and civilians.[3] Violence peaked in September 2022, when hostilities lasted for four days and resulted in 62 deaths, as reported by Human Rights Watch.[4] Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan reached a ceasefire on September 16, 2022, which generally held for the remainder of the reporting period, despite reports of sporadic shelling from both sides.[5]

In south-western Kyrgyzstan, the UN reported that over 140,000 people were displaced by the hostilities in Batken region, including some to neighboring Osh region.[6] Although many returned in the months that followed, some homes had been destroyed and over 3,900 people remained displaced as of December 2022.[7] The International Organization for Migration reported the lowest temperatures in fifteen years across the region during the 2022-2023 winter, leaving those displaced in the Batken and Osh regions in need of humanitarian aid.[8]

In September 2022, 53 schools in Batken town were converted into shelters to accommodate families, as reported by Human Rights Watch, and 26 schools and 30 kindergartens closed, some as a result of damage caused by hostilities.[9] According to the UN, learning was disrupted for over 130,000 students as 161 schools in Batken and Osh regions were temporarily closed, and children suffered psychosocial trauma.[10] As of October 2022, nearly all education facilities had reopened.[11]

Kyrgyzstan was not profiled in *Education under Attack 2022* so no comparison can be made with the previous reporting period.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 23 attacks on schools in Kyrgyzstan, primarily from UN reports.[12] According to the UN, the government of Kyrgyzstan reported that 12 schools and 11 kindergartens were damaged in the Batken region during conflict in September 2022.[13] As reported by Human Rights Watch, some schools and kindergartens were damaged by shrapnel.[14] GCPEA was unable to identify details about individual incidents.

In Tajikistan, during the conflict, Human Rights Watch reported that School No. 64 in Somoniyon town, Sughd region, was burned down on September 16, 2022, affecting 450 children.[15] Also in Tajikistan, in Khojai A'lo village, Sughd region, a teacher was reportedly killed as he was attempting to protect his students during fighting.[16] However, GCPEA could not determine whether these incidents constituted attacks on education as per GCPEA definitions. Therefore, Tajikistan did not have a sufficient number of attacks on education for a profile in this reporting period, as per the report's methodology.

GCPEA did not identify any reports of attacks on schools in 2023.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified one report of the military occupation of a school in Kyrgyzstan during the reporting period. As reported by Human Rights Watch and local media, on September 16, 2022, Tajik armed forces used a school as a military base in Ak-Sai in Batken district and region, for two days.[17]

GCPEA did not identify any reports of the military use of schools or universities in 2023.

LIBYA

Attacks on education continued in Libya in 2022 and 2023, particularly in and around Tripoli. Attacks on schools declined slightly compared to the previous reporting period, while the military use of schools and attacks on higher education continued sporadically.

CONTEXT

Intermittent violence persisted in 2022 and 2023 between armed groups aligned with the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), established by consensus through a UN-led process, and the eastern-based Government of National Stability (GNS), established by the House of Representatives and aligned with the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) armed group.[1] Despite the decline in hostilities after the UN-brokered ceasefire in October 2020, low-level violence between armed groups endured.[2] Parliamentary and presidential elections, originally set for December 2021, were indefinitely postponed amid disagreements between rival administrations over constitutional amendments and election laws, according to the UN and media reports.[3] In May and August 2022, GNS-allied armed groups clashed with armed groups aligned with the GNU near Tripoli but were unable to gain control of the capital.[4]

Violence continued throughout the reporting period.[5] In August 2022, fighting between armed groups in Tripoli killed at least 32 people, including four civilians, wounded 159 people, including civilians, and damaged critical infrastructure, according to Human Rights Watch.[6] One year later, in August 2023, renewed fighting broke out in Tripoli between armed groups based in the west of the country, resulting in 55 deaths and more than 146 civilians injured.[7] The UN reported an increase in landmine and unexploded ordnance incidents since the 2020 ceasefire;[8] such incidents killed at least 39 people in 2022, according to Amnesty International.[9]

Amid the overall decline in hostilities, there was an increase in the number of displaced people returning to their regions of origin, according to the UN.[10] However, more than 125,800 Libyans remained internally displaced as of September 2023.[11] Libya hosted more than 54,256 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Sudan, as of November 2023.[12] Armed groups and state officials committed human rights abuses against refugees and migrants, including arbitrary detentions and sexual violence, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.[13]

In September 2023, floods in eastern Libya killed over 4,300 people and left over 8,000 missing;[14] they also damaged infrastructure, particularly in northeastern Derna city, including approximately 280 schools, as reported by the UN.[15] As a result, over 43,000 people were displaced and schools were used as shelters by internally displaced persons in Derna city, although they were vacated at the beginning of the academic year. In nearby Benghazi municipality, three schools used as shelters after the flooding had not been vacated as of November 2023.[16]

More than 111,380 children required support accessing education in January 2023, according to the UN.[17] School closures and damaged infrastructure were among the main barriers for children to access learning.[18] Following militia clashes in August 2022, the University of Tripoli suspended classes and exams; the university closed again for five days after the renewed fighting in August 2023, according to news reports.[19]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA collected at least nine reported attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023, which destroyed at least three schools. In comparison, GCPEA collected at least one reported attack in 2021 and 22 attacks in 2020, many of which occurred before the UN-brokered ceasefire in October of that year.[20] Shelling, the use of other explosive weapons, and crossfire affected schools during both reporting periods.

Between mid-2012 and mid-2022, more than 250 schools were damaged due to fighting and other causes, according to the European Commission.[21] In August and September 2022, LAAF-affiliated fighters limited the movement of civilians in Qasr Abu Hadi village, near Sirte city, forcing schools to temporarily close, according to the UN.[22]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least eight reports of attacks on schools.[23] Separately, the UN verified four attacks on schools that year.[24] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools in this report, to avoid double counting. Attacks on schools were concentrated in and around Tripoli. For instance:

- A shooting occurred near the rear entrance of the Shohada Bohdema School in Benghazi city and district, on February 1, 2022, due to a dispute between two unidentified armed groups. Classes were suspended for five days, affecting 670 students enrolled in the school, according to the Libya Education Cluster.[25]
- Security forces cleared an anti-tank landmine and explosive compounds found in a schoolyard in the Hadaba Agricultural Project, in Tripoli, on February 23, 2022, as reported by local media *Alwasat News*.[26]
- Security forces cleared an anti-personnel landmine inside Al-Hussein School in the Hadaba Agricultural Project, Tripoli, on March 3, 2022, as reported by local media *Alwasat News*.[27]
- A war remnant reportedly exploded at Noor Al-Yaqin School near Sirte city and district, on March 21, 2022. The explosion of the shell injured one student, as reported by local media.[28]
- In late August 2022, armed clashes in Tripoli reportedly damaged three secondary schools, according to local media.[29]
- On December 13, 2022, an explosive projectile landed on the roof of a school in Benghazi city and district. It did not detonate, and no casualties were recorded, according to the UN.[30]

In 2023, GCPEA identified one report of an attack on a school. Between January 3 and 7, 2023, nearby armed clashes involving artillery led to the suspension of school classes in the Ujaylat area of western Sabratah city, on the border of Nuqat Al-Khams and Zawiya districts, according to the UN.[31]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least one incident of the military use of a school. This is similar to previous years, during which GCPEA identified no incidents in 2021 and two reports of military use in 2020.[32]

On October 2, 2022, a mass grave containing 42 bodies was reportedly discovered at a school in Sirte city and district, as reported by international media outlet *AP News*.[33] As of February 2024, there was no confirmed information on their identities, date of burial, or cause of death.

GCPEA did not identify any incidents of military use in 2023.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified eight attacks on higher education. Attacks also occurred sporadically in the previous reporting period; GCPEA gathered one and seven reports of attacks on higher education in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[34]

GCPEA did not collect any incidents of attacks on higher education in 2022.

In 2023, GCPEA collected eight reports of attacks on higher education:

- Around August 15, 2023, nearby armed clashes caused two universities in Tripoli, the University of Tripoli and the Africa University for Humanities & Applied Sciences, to close for several days. Deadly fighting reportedly occurred within the campus of the University of Tripoli, and at the university gate, which was also damaged by shelling, according to *University World News.* A dean interviewed by the news outlet reported that students' mental health and academic performance were negatively impacted by the clashes.[35]
- On November 16, 2023, the Internal Security Agency detained a professor who chaired a union representing university teaching staff amid a labor dispute at the University of Tripoli in Tripoli, according to Scholars at Risk.[36] Three other academics were reportedly abducted in connection with the dispute around the same time, according to local media outlet *Alwasat News*.[37]
- On November 28, 2023, an academic who participated in a labor dispute relating to university teaching staff was arrested at the University of Tripoli in Tripoli, as reported by local media.[38]
- On December 25, 2023, an academic was arrested on the University of Tripoli campus in Tripoli, as reported by local and international media outlets.[39]

MALI

GCPEA identified over 90 reported attacks on schools in Mali in 2022 and 2023. Attacks on schools decreased while actual or threatened attacks against school personnel and students, as well as the military use of schools, remained sporadic.

CONTEXT

Armed violence continued in Mali during the 2022-2023 reporting period, and the security situation deteriorated, with the north particularly impacted.[1] Fighting between armed groups and government security forces supported by other security personnel increased, leading to an uptick in civilian fatalities during the reporting period.[2] Between July and December 2023, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) withdrew from the country at the request of the transitional government, which assumed leadership over civilian security.[3] After the departure of MINUSMA, the Malian army reported the recapture of Kidal in the north.[4]

Malian armed forces conducted military operations against non-state armed groups during the reporting period, primarily in the center and north of the country.[5] In March 2022, government forces and other security personnel reportedly killed at least 200 people in Moura town, Mopti region, for their alleged membership in armed groups.[6] Sexual violence against women and girls was also reported by Amnesty International and the UN.[7] In addition, Human Rights Watch reported that explosive weapons killed more than 70 people in 2022.[8] Grave violations against children increased in 2022, according to the UN,[9] and more than 450 children were recruited by armed groups and state forces.[10]

Violence against civilians increased in 2023.[11] Armed groups including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Islamic State Sahel Province (IS Sahel), Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), and affiliated groups, conducted attacks against civilians and clashed with each other.[12] During the reporting period, clashes between armed groups in Ménaka and Gao regions in the north resulted in civilian fatalities and the displacement of thousands of civilians, as reported by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.[13]

The humanitarian situation in Mali deteriorated during the reporting period.[14] The UN reported that 8.8 million people needed humanitarian aid in 2023, including 4.7 million children.[15] Approximately 375,500 civilians were internally displaced in 2023, over half of whom were children.[16]

Insecurity continued to impact access to education during the reporting period.[17] In October 2023, the UN reported that more than 1,600 schools were closed due to insecurity, impacting approximately 480,000 children;[18] this was a slight decrease from June 2022, when 1,766 schools were closed due to insecurity.[19] In addition, poverty, child marriage, and child labor were barriers to education.[20] Over two million children were

out of school in 2023, with girls disproportionately impacted.[21]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified around 90 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, during the previous reporting period, GCPEA identified over 110 and 36 attacks on schools in 2021 and 2020, respectively, in addition to 489 threats against schools.[22]

In 2022, GCPEA identified around 80 reports of attacks on schools.[23] Separately, the UN reported 83 attacks on schools and students and staff.[24] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, or how many of them were attacks on schools rather than protected persons, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools in this report, to avoid double counting. Many of the incidents identified by GCPEA in news, UN, and Education Cluster reports involved arson and threats from non-state armed groups, usually ordering schools to close. For example:

- On April 20, 2022, a warning shot was heard in the vicinity of a school in Sangha commune, Bandiagara district, Mopti region, during an armed clash between two armed groups, according to the Education Cluster; no injuries were reported.[25]
- On May 5, 2022, an unidentified armed group reportedly attacked Ommon school in Bondo commune, Koro district, Mopti region, and burned the director's office as well as school materials, as reported by the Education Cluster, local media, and ACLED.[26]
- On May 17, 2022, a primary school was reportedly looted and vandalized in Anderamboukane town, Menaka region, according to ACLED.[27]
- On June 10, 2022, presumed members of an armed group reportedly forced two schools to close and burned education material in Thierola and M'Piabougou villages, Banamba district, Koulikoro region, as reported by ACLED and local media *Mali Actu*.[28]
- On November 28, 2022, schools were forcibly closed in Intechaq, Telabit, and Aoukenek villages, Tessalit district, Kidal region, as reported by ACLED.[29]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 13 attacks on schools.[30] The UN reported 11 attacks on schools in 2023, but since it was unclear whether any of these overlapped with incidents identified by GCPEA, the number was not included in the total, to avoid double counting.[31] Many attacks involved the use of explosive weapons and impacted hundreds of students. For example:

- On January 30, 2023, an unpinned grenade that had been left close to a school was discovered in Bara village, Ansongo district, Gao region, as reported by ACLED and local media *Studio Tamani*.[32] The military conducted a controlled detonation.
- On April 22, 2023, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near a primary school in Saréma, Mopti region, according to the UN; the school was damaged and classes stopped , affecting 217 students.[33]

- On September 13, 2023, a grenade was discovered near a primary school in Ansongo town, Gao region, as reported by ACLED and local media *Studio Tamani*; the grenade was safely defused.[34]
- On November 7, 2023, during airstrikes in Kidal region, a school was allegedly hit, as reported by international media *VOA;* six children were reportedly killed, although GCPEA was unable to confirm whether they were students.[35]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified at least 11 attacks on school students and teachers in the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, during the previous reporting period, GCPEA identified nine such attacks in 2021 and eight in 2020.[36]

GCPEA identified seven attacks on education personnel in 2022.[37] For example:

- In January 2022, armed men entered a school while classes were in session in Timbuktu region; they reportedly made threats, forced the students to leave, set fire to school equipment, and threatened to return if the school did not remain closed, according to the UN.[38]
- On April 27, 2022, presumed members of an armed group attacked an education center in Klela village, Sikasso region, and held members of staff hostage for around 45 minutes, threatening them with violence and death, and stealing their property, as reported by the Education Cluster and local media *Mali Actu*.[39] The attack reportedly led six schools to relocate students[40]
- On October 3, 2022, armed men threatened to kill the director of Zérélani II primary school in Kléla village, Sikasso region, as reported by local media *Mali Actu*.[41]
- On November 9, 2022, presumed members of an armed group attacked Gairama and Bingata villages, Dire commune, Timbuktu region, forcing students to leave two schools, and physically assaulting teachers, as reported by OCHA. The armed men reportedly also set alight school documents.[42]

GCPEA identified four attacks on school students and staff in 2023.[43] For example:

- On January 23, 2023, members of an armed group abducted three community leaders in Souba, Sagni and Kamiti villages, Segou region, including an education officer, and accused them of campaigning for schools to reopen, among other allegations, as reported by the UN and ACLED.[44]
- In late October and early November 2023, members of an armed group interrupted lessons in several schools in Timbuktu and Sikasso regions, threatening teachers and students and ordering them to stop lessons, as reported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.[45]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified three cases of military use of schools during the reporting period. In 2022, the UN reported

one instance of military use by Malian armed forces and two by Macina Liberation Front.[46] In comparison, during the previous reporting period GCPEA identified four cases of military use in 2020.[47]

GCPEA did not identify any incidents of military use in 2023.

MOZAMBIQUE

Attacks on education continued in Mozambique in 2022 and 2023, although fewer attacks were identified than during the previous reporting period. Attacks on schools continued, and GCPEA identified incidents of their use for military purposes.

CONTEXT

Although the security situation in northern Mozambique improved during the reporting period, armed conflict continued in Cabo Delgado province between armed groups, state forces, and local militias,[1] and fighting spread to Nampula province.[2] In 2023, Mozambique legalized local militias to fight armed groups in Cabo Delgado province, according to Human Rights Watch and news reports.[3]

A non-state armed group reportedly affiliated with Islamic State (IS) and known locally as "Al-Shabab" or Al-Sunna wa Jama'a (ASWJ), continued to conduct attacks in Cabo Delgado province during the reporting period.[4] In December 2023, after a months-long decline in violence, attacks increased, and 19 soldiers were killed in attacks by the group.[5] Violence carried out by armed groups displaced approximately 946,000 people in northern Mozambique in 2022.[6] As the security situation improved in 2023, over 570,000 people displaced by the conflict since 2017 had returned home.[7] However, more than 109,000 people were newly displaced in 2023 due to ongoing violence.[8]

The humanitarian situation deteriorated in Mozambique during the reporting period as a result of violence, insecurity, and climate shocks.[9] At the end of 2023, the UN reported that 2.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance in the country's northern provinces, including 1.3 million children.[10] Between January and March 2023, a tropical cyclone and floods impacted eight provinces in Mozambique, displacing over 184,000 people and damaging more than 132,000 houses and over 1,000 schools, according to the UN.[11]

In 2023, an estimated three million children remained outside the education system.[12] In June 2022, renewed violence forced around 30,000 children to flee Cabo Delgado province, and 11 schools closed, impacting more than 5,740 students, according to Save the Children.[13] According to the UN, armed groups recruited and used 132 children in 2022.[14]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least six attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period, most of which damaged or destroyed the school. This marks a decrease in attacks compared to previous years; the UN reported that over 220 schools were attacked between 2017 and 2021.[15] Across reporting periods, non-state armed

groups carried out the majority of attacks, which included arson, gunfire, and the use of explosive weapons. GCPEA identified six attacks on schools in 2022.[16] Separately, the UN verified two attacks on schools by non-state armed groups.[17] Since it was not clear whether any of these overlapped with the incidents GCPEA collected, the UN number was not included in the count of attacks on schools in the report, to avoid double counting. Examples of attacks collected by GCPEA included:

- On January 27, 2022, in Nangororo village, Meluco district, Cabo Delgado province, an airstrike allegedly destroyed classrooms at a school, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Zitamar*.[18]
- On September 6, 2022, members of a non-state armed group allegedly set fire to a primary school and a secondary school in Chipene village, Memba district, Nampula province, disrupting education for at least 78 students, as reported by Human Rights Watch, ACLED, and media outlets.[19] IS-linked group "Al-Shabab" claimed responsibility for the attack.[20]
- On October 29, 2022, members of a non-state armed group reportedly burned a school in Murrameia village, Namuno district, Cabo Delgado province, as reported by ACLED and international media outlet *Deutsche Welle*.[21]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on schools in 2023.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 12 cases of the military use of schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period, an increase as compared to the previous reporting period when GCPEA did not identify any such incidents.[22] In 2022, the UN verified the use of 12 schools; most of the incidents were perpetrated by the Mozambican military, although one school was used by the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique.[23] Four schools were used for over a year by these forces.[24]

In 2023, GCPEA received reports of the continued military use of previously occupied schools.[25] At least one school was vacated that year.[26]

MYANMAR

As armed conflicts continued in Myanmar following the February 2021 military takeover, attacks on schools and universities and the military use of educational facilities continued at a high rate during the 2022-2023 reporting period. GCPEA identified over 245 reports of attacks on schools and at least 190 reports of military use.

CONTEXT

Violence and insecurity increased in Myanmar during the reporting period, as both armed and peaceful resistance against the military junta that seized power in February 2021 continued, along with military violence against the resistance.[1] The fragile ceasefire between the Arakan Army and the military broke down in July 2022, resulting in months of heavy fighting in Rakhine state and Chin state, until an informal ceasefire was reached in November 2022.[2] Fighting between armed resistance groups, including the Arakan Army, as well as other ethnic armed organizations and people's defense forces, and the military, intensified in late 2023, particularly in northern Shan, Rakhine, Kayah and Chin states, and Sagaing region, according to International Crisis Group and the UN.[3]

Media outlets and The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported that the military continued to carry out high levels of violence, sometimes fatal, against civilians.[4] A number of pro-junta militias also reportedly perpetrated grave human rights violations, as reported by Amnesty International.[5] As the conflict between the military and armed resistance groups continued, the UN reported that the military was increasingly using fighter jets and helicopter gunships.[6] The UN also reported that grave violations against children increased in 2022 compared to the previous year, including increases in the number of abductions and children killed and maimed.[7] At least 150 civilians were killed, including 35 children, in an attack on Pa Zi Gyi village, Sagaing region, on April 11, 2023.[8]

The humanitarian situation deteriorated significantly during the reporting period. The UN reported that 18.6 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance at the end of 2023, including 5.8 million children.[9] Fighting, which especially affected the northwest and southeast of the country, led the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to increase by over one million during the reporting period, reaching 2.6 million people in December 2023.[10]

Following Cyclone Mocha in May 2023, UN estimates indicated that over 1,200 schools had been damaged in Rakhine state and the northwest.[11] According to the UN, children with disabilities were heavily impacted by the conflict, in particular their access to education, as school buildings with accessibility features were destroyed.[12]

Some schools run by de facto authorities reopened in June 2022 at the beginning of the school year, while many remained closed in Kachin, Kayah, and Chin states, and approximately 50 percent of schools in Sagaing region, where conflict was particularly intense, were still closed at the end of September 2022.[13] According to the UN, while reported enrolment in schools run by the de facto authorities increased in 2022, this did not always indicate attendance, and demand for alternative and non-formal education systems increased.[14] This dual education system continued to put teachers and students in both systems at risk of attack, as attendance could be construed as either support for the military junta, or for the resistance.[15] Nationwide, at least 30 percent of school-age children were not formally enrolled in any learning at the end of 2023.[16]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 245 attacks on schools nationwide. In comparison, GCPEA identified 200 attacks on schools in 2020 and 2021, most of which occurred after the military takeover in 2021.[17] The majority of the attacks during the current reporting period involved the use of explosive weapons, although some attacks also involved arson and small arms fire.

GCPEA identified over 130 attacks in 2022.[18] The UN verified 78 attacks on schools in 2022, attributed mostly to the military.[19] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with reports that GCPEA collected, the UN number was not added to the total number of attacks on schools in this report, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On January 6, 2022, an explosive device detonated in front of a high school in Kin Mun Chaung village, Kyaikto township, Mon state, as reported by local media *BNI Online*; reports indicated that three people were injured, but did not specify their status as students or personnel.[20]
- In late March 2022, an airstrike struck a school in Hpapun township, Kayin state, as reported by Amnesty International, ACLED, and local media *Mizzima*.[21]
- On May 31, 2022, an explosive device detonated at an education office in Naung Cho, Kyaukme district, Shan state, as reported by international media; a female headteacher was reportedly killed and at least six other staff were reportedly injured.[22]
- On June 15, 2022, explosive devices detonated at a high school and another school in Mogok city, Mandalay region, as reported by local media *Democratic Voice of Burma*.[23]
- On September 16, 2022, at least 11 children were killed when military forces attacked a school within a monastery compound in Let Yet Kone village, Tabayin township, Sagaing region, where at least 200 children were in classes, as reported by the UN and the *BBC*.[24]
- The UN reported that an airstrike destroyed a primary school in Lu Thaw township, Kayin state, on November 8, 2022.[25]
- On November 23, 2022, a number of buildings, including a school, were burned in the village of Mon Hla, Khin-U township, Sagaing region, as reported by local and international media.[26]

The UN verified 117 attacks on schools in 2023.[27] Separately, GCPEA collected at least 43 reports of attacks on schools that year.[28] Since some of these may have overlapped with the attacks verified by the UN, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools, to avoid double counting. For example:

- On January 30, 2023, local media *Democratic Voice of Burma* reported that a school was set on fire in Hta Pauk Kone village, Pakokku district, Magway region.[29]
- On February 15, 2023, an airstrike destroyed a primary school in Pedae Kae village, Dooplaya district, Karen state, as reported by local media *BNI Online*.[30]
- Between February 16 and 17, 2023, a high school was set on fire in Ka De village, Palaw township, Tanintharyi region, as reported by local research group Southern Monitor.[31]
- The UN reported that, on June 27, 2023, gunfire hit a primary school in Nyaung Kone village, Pale township, Sagaing region, when a military jet dropped bombs and deployed gunfire.[32]
- As reported by international media *Radio Free Asia,* on September 7, 2023, an airstrike hit a school dormitory in Hpapun township, Kayin state, killing a teacher and three students.[33]
- On September 10, 2023, in Ka Paing village, Yinmarbin township, Sagaing region, a school operated by Civil Disobedience Movement teachers was reportedly shot at, which caused damage to the school, according to *Radio Free Asia*; no students or staff were reported injured or killed.[34]
- On October 10, 2023, an airstrike destroyed a preschool at Mung Lai Hkyet displaced persons camp near Laiza town, Kachin state, as reported by Amnesty International and *the Associated Press*.[35]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified 40 reported attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in Myanmar. This represents an increase as compared to the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*, in which GCPEA identified ten such attacks in 2021 and two in 2020.[36] As education in Myanmar became increasingly politicized during the current reporting period, the UN reported that the military arrested teachers and students for teaching at, or attending, schools connected to opposition groups.[37] The UN also reported that, as some children needed to pass checkpoints to access schools, attendance decreased amid fears of violence, harassment, and forced recruitment.[38] GCPEA also identified reports of teachers being targeted at home, based on whether they work in the school system under the military junta, or alternative opposition-supported schools.

In 2022, GCPEA identified 34 reported attacks on school students and staff.[39] Examples of attacks included:

- On July 3, 2022, in Tigyaing township, Sagaing region, local media reported that two female teachers were arrested.[40]
- On August 2, 2022, two 12-year-old students were killed, and two older students were injured by gunfire when they were traveling by boat on the way back from middle school in Paletwa township, Chin state, amid a firefight between the Arakan Army and the military, as reported by local media *Network Media Group*.[41]
- On October 19, 2022, Buanlung village, Hakha district, Chin state, was attacked with explosives, killing two primary school students who were on the way home from school, and injuring one other child, according to reports from local media.[42]

GCPEA identified six attacks on teachers in 2023.[43] For example:

- The UN reported that, on January 12, 2023, members of anti-military armed groups shot and killed a principal in Nat Mauk township, Magway region.[44]
- On December 13, 2023, the principal of a school in Tongzam, Chin state, received a threatening letter, including a bullet, instructing him to cease classes and close the school, as reported by local media.[45]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA collected at least 190 reports of the military occupation of schools or universities during the reporting period; in most cases, schools and universities were used as military bases, although they were also used as fighting positions and interrogation centers. In comparison, during the previous reporting period the UN reported 176 cases of military use in 2021 and verified 30 cases in 2020.[46] The UN reported that soldiers occupied schools while children were present, potentially endangering their lives, amid concerns that children could be used as human shields.[47]

The UN verified the military use of 115 schools in Myanmar in 2022, mostly by the armed forces or allied militias.[48] GCPEA identified at least 46 reports of the military use of educational facilities in 2022, as well as 34 incidents of schools or universities that were attacked while being used for military purposes.[49] Since it was unclear how many of these incidents overlapped with the UN count, they were not added to the number of military use incidents verified by the UN, to avoid double counting. Examples of military use included:

- Local media reported on January 6, 2022, that Kalay Technological University was occupied and used as a position from which to fire artillery shells in Sagaing region; the university was then reportedly attacked by rival forces on March 16, 2022, and on September 19, 2022.[50] It remains unclear whether the university was occupied throughout this time, or sporadically.
- On January 11, 2022, around 300 people were abducted in Letyetma village, Magway region, and held at a school, as reported by local media *Democratic Voice of Burma*.[51]
- On January 30, 2022, a drone attack was carried out on a military checkpoint stationed at Shwebo University, Shwebo township, Sagaing region, reportedly killing and injuring soldiers, according to local media *Democratic Voice of Burma*.[52]
- On April 4, 2022, a school was allegedly used as a base in Tanja village, Putao city, Kachin state, for at least three days, as reported by the *BBC*.[53]

In 2023, the UN verified the military use of 82 schools.[54] Also in 2023, the UN reported that 27 schools were vacated.[55] Separately, GCPEA collected at least 16 reports of the military use of educational facilities.[56] Six of these were attacked while being used for military purposes. Since some of these may overlap with the UN count, they were not included in the total number of military use incidents, to avoid double counting. Examples included:

- On February 17, 2023, in Ayadaw town, Monywa district, Sagaing region, around 50 residents were re-

portedly arrested in Lel Di ward and detained at a school, as reported by local media *Democratic Voice of Burma*.[57]
- On February 20, 2023, an armed clash took place between a number of armed groups and the military, outside a high school in Tha Kyin village, Myingyan district, Mandalay region, where the military was allegedly stationed, as reported by local media *Democratic Voice of Burma*.[58]
- The UN reported, as of December 4, 2023, that the military had occupied schools in Maungdaw township, Rakhine state; as a result, the schools closed, impacting 75 students.[59]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA collected three reports of attacks on higher education infrastructure, students, and personnel during this reporting period. In comparison, during the 2020-2021 reporting period over 20 such attacks were reported.[60] Authorities planned to reopen universities in May 2022, although many students continued to boycott education under the military junta.[61] Overwhelming demand for alternative higher education was reported in 2022.[62]

In 2022, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on higher education.[63] For example:

- On April 14, 2022, local media and Scholars at Risk reported that three vehicles from the University of Computer Studies were attacked with explosive devices on the Mandalay-Mattara highway, in Mandalay city and region. The attack affected 43 students and staff, although none were reported injured or killed.[64]
- On November 3, 2022, the Myanmar military fired heavy artillery rounds at Kachin Theological College in Kutkai, Shan state, injuring four students and causing damage to buildings, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[65]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on higher education in 2023.

NIGER

Attacks on education continued in Niger in 2022 and 2023, particularly in Tillabéri region, although fewer attacks were identified than during the previous reporting period. Some attacks on schools and on students, teachers, and education personnel involved the use of explosive weapons. The military use of schools continued, and GCPEA identified attacks on higher education, as well as one incident of sexual violence.

CONTEXT

During the reporting period, conflict continued between armed groups and Nigerien armed forces in Diffa region in the southeast, and in Tahoua and Tillabéri regions in the west.[1] In July 2023, military officials led a coup against President Mohamed Bazoum, subsequently forming the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland and assuming control of the government.[2]

Non-state armed groups continued to conduct attacks, including against civilians and to displace them, particularly in Tillabéri region, in 2022 and 2023.[3] The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin operated in the west of the country,[4] and Boko Haram and affiliated or splinter groups operated primarily in the southeast.[5] ISGS activity decreased in early 2022.[6] The UN verified 127 grave violations against children in Diffa region in 2022, including recruitment and killing of children.[7]

Nigerien security forces increased counterinsurgency operations in 2023, and attacks on civilians decreased, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[8] In August 2023, armed groups allegedly attacked Nigerien armed forces in Tillabéri region, resulting in 17 soldier fatalities and 24 injured, according to International Crisis Group and news reports.[9] That same month, intercommunal violence broke out in Tillabéri region, resulting in approximately 40 civilian fatalities.[10]

Niger's humanitarian situation deteriorated during the reporting period. The UN reported that 4.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 2.4 million children.[11] Climate disasters such as droughts and floods further compounded the humanitarian situation.[12] In October 2023, the UN reported that floods impacted around 161,000 people, primarily in Maradi, Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Zinder regions.[13]

Insecurity continued to impact education during the 2022-2023 reporting period.[14] In 2023, more than 900 schools were closed due to insecurity in Niger, with more than 850 in Tillabéri region alone, impacting more than 73,000 children, including over 35,000 girls, throughout the country.[15] Additional barriers to education included child marriage, which disproportionately affected girls, as well as inadequate funding for payment of teachers or purchasing equipment and the closure of learning space due to access challenges.[16]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 13 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period, most of which damaged or destroyed the school. Attacks involved the use of explosive weapons, arson, looting, and the destruction of learning materials. This marks a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA recorded at least 11 attacks in 2021 and 29 attacks in 2020.[17]

GCPEA identified three attacks on schools in 2022:

- On February 2, 2022, an unexploded ordnance that was found in a school was deactivated in Ouallam town and commune in Tillabéri region, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Mourya*.[18]
- On April 6, 2022, an arson attack was carried out on a school in Banteri village, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region.[19]
- On September 5, 2022, in Mossi Paga village, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region, suspected members of an armed group allegedly looted a school and burned school materials.[20]
-

GCPEA identified at least ten attacks on schools in 2023.[21] For example, The UN reported that four schools were burned by non-state armed groups in Diffa region in July 2023, impacting the education of 500 children.[22] The Protection Cluster recorded 15 attacks on schools, students, and staff between January and July 2023, particularly affecting Tillabéri and Diffa regions; members of armed groups reportedly burned schools and teaching materials, ordered the closure of schools, and threatened teaching staff. [23] Since GCPEA was unable to determine how many of these were attacks on schools rather than attacks on school students and staff, the Cluster count was not included in the total number of attacks on schools for the report, to avoid double counting. Incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- On March 8, 2023, in Famale village, Dessa commune, Tillabéri region, an arson attack was carried out on a secondary school.[24]
- On April 25, 2023, an explosive device was reportedly detonated in Bandio village, Gotheye commune, Tillabéri region, destroying a school.[25]
- On November 29, 2023, an improvised explosive device detonated at the Secondary Education Complex in Chetirmari village and commune, Diffa region, damaging classrooms.[26]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified six attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. Such incidents appeared to have decreased as compared to the previous reporting period. GCPEA identified at least seven incidents in 2021 and at least ten in 2020.[27]

GCPEA identified four attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2022.[28] For example:

- On April 7, 2022, suspected members of an armed group allegedly abducted a primary school teacher in Banteri village, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region, as reported by ACLED and local media *Air Info*.[29] This attack was the day after members of an armed group allegedly burned a school in the village, as detailed above.
- On June 23, 2022, an IED reportedly detonated near a road in Niakatire village, Torodi commune, Tillabéri region, when an education official traveling in a military convoy passed through the village. No injuries were reported.[30]
- On June 24, 2022, in Tahoua commune, Tahoua region, suspected members of an armed group allegedly fired shots at the vehicle of an education official traveling between Keita and Tahoua towns, damaging the vehicle, according to ACLED and local media *Actu Niger*.[31]
- GCPEA identified two incidents of attacks on school students and staff in 2023:
- On April 26, 2023, at Dan Kassawa Technical High School in Maradi town and region, police used teargas to disperse a student protest, and stormed the school, as reported by ACLED and local media *Actu Niger*.[32]
- Around October 30, 2023, members of an armed group kidnapped two teachers from Bankata school in Makalondi, Torodi region.[33]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified two cases of the military use of schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period, a similar rate to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least one such incident.[34]

GCPEA identified one incident in 2022. As reported by Médécins Sans Frontières, and media outlets, in February 2022, alleged members of an armed group used a school in Nachambé hamlet, Maradi region; shelling by Nigerian armed forces subsequently struck in the vicinity of the hamlet. Four children were killed in the airstrike, although it was not possible to establish whether or not they were at, or on the way to or from, school.[35]

GCPEA identified one incident of the military use of a school in 2023. On March 4, 2023, alleged members of a non-state armed group reportedly used a school in N'guiram village, Diffa region.[36]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

GCPEA received one report of an incident of sexual violence during the 2022-2023 reporting period. No such incidents were identified in the previous reporting period.[37] On October 27, 2023, in connection with the incident detailed above, members of an armed group perpetrated sexual violence against two female teachers at Bankata school in Makalondi commune, Torodi region.[38]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified two incidents of attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In the prior reporting period, GCPEA did not identify any such incidents.[39] Incidents involved the use of excessive force against protesting students.

GCPEA identified two incidents of attacks on higher education students in 2022:

- On October 17, 2022, in Zinder city and region, police reportedly used teargas to disperse a crowd of students from the André Salifou University of Zinder protesting unpaid scholarships and poor infrastructure. Several students allegedly suffered injuries, and at least three required medical treatment, as reported by ACLED and local media *Actu Niger*.[40]
- On October 22, 2022, in Maradi town and region, students from the Dan Dicko Dankoulodo University of Maradi were protesting the relocation of the pharmacy faculty to Niamey when police intervened using force and teargas, injuring a number of students, as well as arresting some students, according to ACLED and *Actu Niger*.[41]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on higher education in 2023.

NIGERIA

In 2022 and 2023, attacks on schools in Nigeria persisted in the context of armed conflict in northeastern states due to the presence of non-state armed groups, as well as armed violence in northwestern and northcentral states due to pastoralist-farmer tensions. Military use of schools, particularly by non-state armed groups, increased as compared to the previous reporting period, while attacks on school students and teachers decreased slightly.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict continued between Nigerian government forces and Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups, including the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), during the reporting period, primarily in the northeast, although ISWAP expanded operations southward.[1] For example, the non-state armed group claimed responsibility for an attack on a prison in July 2022 in the Federal Capital Territory, not far from the capital, Abuja.[2] Boko Haram, ISWAP, and other splinter groups also combatted one another, increasing violence.[3] Boko Haram has explicitly targeted what they perceive to be Western education for over a decade.[4] In Nigeria's northwestern and northcentral regions, violence between mostly Fulani pastoralists and mostly Hausa farmer communities persisted in 2022 and 2023, due in part to population growth and scarcity of land for farming and grazing, which is linked to climate change.[5] In addition, criminal groups commonly referred to as bandits, which emerged following years of violence between pastoralists and farmers and have been categorized as "terrorists" by the government, carried out kidnappings, killings, and other violence in the northwest.[6] Nigerian security forces responded with airstrikes, including one in Kaduna state in December 2023 which killed 85 people, according to Human Rights Watch.[7]

Sporadic violence coincided with national elections held in February 2023, as armed men targeted polling stations and voters, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) project and media reports.[8] In the southeast, groups claiming to belong to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) separatist group continued enforcing a stay-at-home order on Mondays, which required residents to remain home and businesses to close, as a form of protest over the imprisonment of their leader.[9] Gunmen enforced the order by killing residents, although IPOB has condemned those actions, according to Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group.[10]

In 2022, violence forcibly displaced 1.2 million people,[11] while 3.2 million people, including 1.9 million children, were affected by flooding that displaced half of them, according to the UN.[12] Schools were temporarily flooded in the northeast in 2023, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) used other schools for shelter in both the northeast and the northwest.[13] Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and International Crisis Group reported that, in the northeast, the government closed IDP camps without adequate resettlement assistance, putting IDPs' safety at risk and cutting off aid to thousands of children and families in need.[14]

Over 20 million children in Nigeria were out of school as of mid-2022, according to the UN.[15] In the northeast, conflict and displacement negatively impacted access to learning, with almost two million school-aged children unable to access schools in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states.[16] In the northwest, bandits threatened and abducted students in 2022, often for ransom, leading to the closure of over 400 schools.[17] Stay-at-home orders in several southeastern states, also prevented schools from opening in mid-2022, according to media reports.[18]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected at least 19 reported incidents of attacks on schools, primarily involving raids, the use of arson, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This is an increase compared to *Education under Attack 2022*, in which GCPEA reported six attacks on schools in 2021 and at least five in 2020.[19] As in the prior reporting period, GCPEA identified reports of attacks on schools related to both armed conflict and inter-communal tensions. In addition, 113 schools were closed as a result of insecurity in northeastern Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states, between January and September 2023, according to the UN, a decrease from the number in 2022.[20]

In 2022, the UN verified five attacks on schools and protected persons by Islamic State West Africa Province.[21] However, it was unclear how many of these were attacks on schools, rather than attacks on education personnel, so they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools for this report, to avoid double counting.

GCPEA identified 15 reported attacks on schools in 2022.[22] The UN reported attacks on five schools on the same day in Kebbi state, attacks on three schools in Yobe state, and one attack on a school in Ngala town, Borno state, during the first half of the year;[23] these incidents were included in the total number of attacks on schools. Examples of attacks in 2022 included:

- On April 20, 2022, an alleged armed group set fire to the staff quarters of the Government Science and Technical College in Geidam town, Yobe state, according to local media outlets. *Premium Times* reported that state police confirmed the attack.[24]
- On April 24, 2022, government-run primary and secondary schools were reportedly set on fire in Bam-Buratai, Biu local government area, Borno state.[25]
- On May 17, 2022, an unidentified individual reportedly detonated a person-borne IED, also known as a suicide bomb, near a primary school in Sabon Gari area, Kano state, killing nine civilians and injuring others, although their status as educators or students remained unclear, as reported by the NGO Action on Armed Violence, and local media outlets.[26] According to *Sahara Reporters*, security forces arrested two armed group members several days after the attack.[27]

In 2023, the UN reported one attack on a school.[28] Separately, GCPEA identified four attacks on schools that year:

- On January 20, 2023, a primary school was raided in Alwaza, Doma local government area, Nasarawa state, with the aim of abducting students (detailed below), as reported by a local media outlet.[29]
- On April 7, 2023, unidentified assailants raided a primary school in Mgban, Guma local government area, Benue state, killing and injuring some of the displaced people sheltering inside, as reported by Insecurity Insight and a local media outlet.[30]
- In June 2023, a primary school was attacked in Gujba local government area, Yobe state, resulting in a damaged classroom and the suspension of classes, according to the UN.[31]
- On November 30, 2023, police allegedly raided Mayigi Community High School, in Ilashe town, Ogun state, resulting in destroyed school property. They also threatened students and teachers with guns, as reported by a local media outlet.[32]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 15 reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. At least 52 students or educators were injured, abducted, or killed in these attacks. This marks a decrease as compared to *Education under Attack 2022*, which included around 21 reported attacks on students and education personnel in 2020 and 2021, including the abduction of at least 1,436 children from schools in 2021.[33]

In 2022, GCPEA identified seven attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel.[34] For example:

- In April 2022, the head teacher of Shuwari primary school was abducted in Buni-Yadi town, Yobe state, according to Save the Children.[35]
- On June 10, 2022, in the evening, one student was killed and two others injured in Kuru community, Jos South local government area, Plateau state, while running an errand near the school, as reported by local media.[36]
- On December 13, 2022, unidentified gunmen reportedly abducted a female teacher from a primary school in Dutsinma local government area, Katsina state, while she was instructing classes. According to a local media report, another teacher was seriously injured in the attack but escaped abduction.[37]

In 2023, GCPEA identified eight attacks on school students, teachers, and personnel.[38] For example:

- On January 20, 2023, six students were abducted from a primary school in Alwaza, Doma local government area, Nasarawa state, as reported by local media outlet *The Guardian*.[39]
- On April 3, 2023, eight female students were abducted in Kachia district, Kaduna state, while they were on their way to school, as reported by international media outlet *Voice of America*.[40]
- On July 5, 2023, a suspected armed group beat students and teachers at a primary school in Enugu West district, Enugu state, as reported by a local media outlet.[41]
- On August 14, 2023, a suspected armed group killed two teachers and wounded the vice principal at BECO Comprehensive Secondary School in Riyom local government area, Plateau state, as reported by a local media outlet.[42]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 159 reported incidents of military use during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022* included seven and one reports of military use of educational facilities in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[43]

The UN reported that military forces occupied eight schools in Borno state in late August 2022.[44] In mid-November, the UN separately reported that military forces partially occupied a government-run primary school in Bulabulin Bolibe area, Borno state.[45]

In 2023, the UN reported that security forces occupied 23 schools in Borno and Adamawa states, three of which were vacated that year.[46] Separately, the UN reported that, between January and September 2023, approximately 134 schools were used by non-state armed actors for non-educational purposes in Zamfara state.[47] In Borno state, two schools were also occupied by non-state armed actors from January to September 2023, according to the UN.[48] Since it was unclear whether the eight schools occupied by military forces in Borno state in 2022 were the same as those occupied in 2023, these incidents were not included in the total number of educational facilities used for military purposes, to avoid double counting.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified 18 reported attacks on higher education in which over 20 students and academics were reportedly injured, abducted, killed, or threatened, and around ten were detained or arrested. Most of the reported attacks were on higher education students and personnel, rather than on infrastructure. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately 15 and six attacks on higher education in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[49]

In 2022, GCPEA collected approximately nine reports of attacks on higher education facilities, students, and academics, including both conflict-related incidents and several incidents of education-related protest repression.[50] For example:

- On May 17, 2022, members of the Nigerian army reportedly fired live ammunition in the air to disperse protesting university students who had barricaded a highway in Akure city, Ondo state, according to Scholars at Risk. The students demonstrated to demand that the government reach an agreement with a union for academic staff striking at several universities, so that classes could resume.[51]
- On July 19, 2022, police reportedly dispersed protesting Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Bauchi students, arresting several students, and injuring several others and a lecturer, in Bauchi city, Bauchi state. Media outlets reported that students set tires on fire and threw stones at police while demonstrating for the restart of classes which had been paused due to academic and non-academic union strikes.[52]
- On October 19, 2022, a lecturer was abducted on his way home from Isa Mustapha Agwai Polytechnic in Lafia town, Nasarawa state, as reported by local media.[53]
- Also on October 19, 2022, the provost of the Federal College of Education was reportedly abducted and

several of his colleagues were injured while traveling in a convoy in Onicha local government area, Ebonyi state.[54]

In 2023, GCPEA identified nine attacks on higher education facilities, students, and academics, including both conflict-related incidents and incidents of education-related protest repression.[55] For example:

- On September 7, 2023, police reportedly fired teargas to disperse protesting University of Lagos students and arrested two students in Yaba district, Lagos city and state. A local media outlet reported that students demonstrated against fee increases.[56]
- On September 23, 2023, a suspected armed group abducted at least 30 students, including at least 24 female students, enrolled at Federal University of Gusau in Bungudu district, Zamfara state, according to the European Commission.[57] Fourteen of the abducted students were later rescued, according to university authorities as reported by *the Associated Press*.[58]
- On October 4, 2023, five female Federal University students were abducted in Dutsin-Ma town, Katsina state, as reported by *Reuters*.[59]
- In mid-October 2023, a suspected armed group killed an official of Ebonyi State University while he was traveling in Imo town and state, as reported by International Crisis Group.[60]
- On December 4, 2023, a suspected armed group allegedly planted an explosive device outside the gate of University of Maiduguri in Maiduguri city, Borno state. Following the discovery, police performed a controlled detonation of the explosive device, as reported by a local media outlet.[61]

PAKISTAN

Attacks on schools and school students and staff continued in 2022 and 2023, some of which targeted girls' education. In addition, over 540 teachers were detained in attacks on school students and personnel. Attacks on higher education, in particular arrests and abductions, affected over 140 students and staff. As in previous reporting periods, attacks on education included the use of explosive weapons.

CONTEXT

The security situation deteriorated and political instability increased in Pakistan during the 2022-2023 reporting period.[1] Attacks by armed groups targeting security forces increased, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, according to International Crisis Group.[2] Following a failed 2021 ceasefire, the government and non-state armed group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) agreed to an indefinite ceasefire in June 2022.[3] However, in November of that year, the TTP resumed attacks.[4] In January 2023, a faction of the TTP claimed responsibility for the bombing of a religious building in a police compound in Peshawar city, which resulted in over 80 fatalities and more than 200 injuries, making it the deadliest attack in almost a decade.[5] The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported an increase in political violence events involving TTP in 2023.[6]

In April 2022, Prime Minister Imran Khan of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party was removed from parliament; Shehbaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PLM-N) party was subsequently elected by parliament as prime minister.[7] Following the decision, protests led by the PTI party broke out throughout the country in May 2022.[8] In May 2023, police arrested Imran Khan, prompting renewed violent protests across the country;[9] in response, police used teargas against protesters, and detained over 4,000 people.[10] Journalistic expression and civil society activities were restricted during the reporting period, according to Human Rights Watch.[11]

The humanitarian situation worsened in Pakistan during the reporting period.[12] In 2023, 20.6 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 9.6 million children.[13] The situation was compounded by climate disasters, including heat waves and floods.[14] In August 2022, floods displaced over 30 million people and killed at least 1,200, including approximately 400 children, according to the UN.[15] In 2023, an estimated 3.7 million Afghans lived in Pakistan including approximately 600,000 who arrived after August 2021.[16]

The Pakistani government reported that approximately 26 million children were out of school in 2022, the majority of whom were girls.[17] Girls faced additional barriers to education, including child marriage, child labor, and discrimination.[18] In 2022, the UN reported that floods damaged more than 30,000 schools, impacting at least 3.5 million children.[19] In addition, the Education Cluster reported that over 7,000 schools were used to

host internally displaced people following the flooding.[20] Amid political unrest in May 2023, some schools and universities temporarily closed.[21]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least eight attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This was similar to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified six attacks in 2021 and one attack in 2020.[22] Most attacks during this reporting period involved the use of explosive weapons, and over half targeted girls' schools. In 2022, the UN reported an attack on a middle school for girls which involved the use of explosive weapons.[23] In addition, GCPEA identified two attacks in 2022:

- On September 12, 2022, unidentified armed men allegedly threw a grenade at a religious school in Dera Ismail Khan city and district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, injuring a teacher and two students, as reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn*.[24]
- On December 1, 2022, members of an armed group shot at a girls' school in Azam Warsak village, South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, injuring a security guard, as reported by ACLED and local media *Tribune*; Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack.[25]

GCPEA identified five attacks on schools in 2023.[26] For example:

- On April 11, 2023, an explosive device concealed in a pen allegedly detonated and injured a student at a religious school in Pishin district, Balochistan province, as reported by ACLED and local media *24News*.[27]
- On May 21, 2023, explosives reportedly detonated and caused significant damage to two girls' schools in Mir Ali town, North Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, disrupting education for around 500 students, according to ACLED and local media outlets *The Defense Post* and *Daily Sun*.[28]
- On December 5, 2023, an explosive device reportedly detonated near a school in Peshawar city, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province; the explosion killed four Afghan children although GCPEA was unable to establish whether they were students.[29]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified 20 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the 2022-2023 reporting period, during which over 540 teachers were arrested, and over 70, mostly teachers, were injured or killed. This marks an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least nine incidents in 2021 and at two in 2020, and over 250 students and teachers were arrested.[30]

GCPEA identified ten attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2022.[31] For example:

- On June 1, 2022, teachers protested employment conditions in Saddar neigborhood, Karachi city, Sindh

province. Police reportedly baton-charged the protesters and arrested over 250, according to ACLED and local media *Ary News* and *Pakistan Today*.[32] Similar protests in the same location also took place on July 4 and July 18, 2022, when police reportedly detained 40 and 35 teachers, respectively, and baton-charged protesters, according to ACLED and local media *Dawn*.[33]

- On August 4, 2022, over 100 teachers and other personnel peacefully protested outside the District Education Department office in Rawalpindi city and district, Punjab province, when police reportedly baton-charged protesters, injuring ten, and detained at least 15, according to ACLED and local media *Dawn*.[34]
- As reported by ACLED and international media *The Independent,* on October 10, 2022, a gunman reportedly killed a driver and injured a child when he attacked a school van in Mingora, Swat district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.[35] The attack took place on the ten-year anniversary of the shooting of Malala Yousafzai, also in Swat district, and a day ahead of her arrival in Pakistan to visit flood victims. Following the attack, private schools in Swat district closed for two days.[36]
- On October 18, 2022, police reportedly baton-charged protesting male and female teachers who demanded teaching positions in Saddar neighborhood, Karachi city, Sindh province, injuring three, and detained at least 20, according to ACLED and local media *Dawn* and *Ary News*.[37]

GCPEA identified ten attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel in 2023.[38] For example:

- On January 3, 2023, in Nasirabad town, Qambar Shahdadkot district, Sindh province, police allegedly baton-charged secondary school students who were peacefully protesting against an examination fee, as reported by ACLED and local media *The Nation*.[39]
- As reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn* and *The Express Tribune,* on May 16, 2023, in Sangota village, Swat district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a female student was reportedly killed by gunfire as she was leaving school, and seven others were injured, including female students and a female teacher.[40]
- On July 12, 2023, in Karachi city, Sindh province, police allegedly used batons and water cannons to disperse a teacher demonstration, as well as allegedly detaining 19 teachers; over 200 primary school teachers protested work conditions, including contracts and payment of allowances, as reported by ALCED and local media *Dawn*.[41]
- On July 13, 2023, in Peshawar city, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, secondary school teachers held a protest to demand better work conditions; police allegedly used batons and teargas to disperse the protest, according to ACLED and local media *The News International*.[42]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified one report of the military use of a school during the 2022-2023 reporting period. GCPEA did not identify any such reports in the 2020-2021 period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*.

On December 13, 2023, in Daraban town, Dera Ismail Khan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a school that was reportedly being used as a military base was targeted in an attack involving vehicle-borne explosives, causing the building to collapse; non-state armed group Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan, a group affiliated with the TTP, claimed responsibility for the attack, as reported by international media *The Washington Post,* the UN, and local media *Dawn*.[43]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified 20 attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period, a similar rate as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA identified 13 such incidents in 2021, and five in 2020.[44] Over 130 students were reportedly arrested or abducted in attacks on higher education, and the use of excessive force against protesting students continued. Most incidents were recorded in Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh provinces. Local media reported that over 48 ethnically Baloch students were forcibly disappeared between January and May 2022.[45]

GCPEA identified 13 attacks on higher education in 2022.[46] For example:

- On March 7, 2022, employees at the University of Punjab in Lahore city, Punjab province, held a peaceful demonstration to demand payment of a government allowance; police allegedly used teargas and batons to disperse the protest, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[47]
- As reported by Scholars at Risk and international media, on April 26, 2022, a woman reportedly detonated a person-borne improvised explosive device outside the Confucious Institute at the University of Karachi in Karachi city, Sindh province, killing three Chinese teachers and injuring another. The Baloch Liberation Army separatist group claimed responsibility for the attack. Instruction at the university was suspended, and 12 other Chinese teachers left the university.[48]
- On May 11, 2022, in Karachi city, Sindh province, at least two Baloch students from the University of Karachi were allegedly detained and forcibly disappeared by security forces, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[49]
- On October 1, 2022, at Balochistan University in Quetta city, Balochistan province, police allegedly baton-charged protesting students, injuring at least eight, and arrested at least three, as reported by ACLED and local media *Quetta Voice*; the students protested entry tests at the university.[50]
- On November 19, 2022, at Government Islamia Science College in Karachi city, Sindh province, police reportedly used teargas and batons when clashing with students, according to Scholars at Risk, ACLED, and local media *Dawn*. Police were reportedly at the college with education officials, who were communicating court orders to vacate the premises.[51]

GCPEA identified seven attacks on higher education in 2023.[52] For example:

- On May 15, 2023, police allegedly used batons to disperse protesting students outside a private university in Lahore city, Punjab province, as reported by ALCED and local media *Dawn*; students demonstrated against advance payment for examinations.[53]
- On October 27, 2023, at University of Punjab in Lahore city, Punjab province, police allegedly beat and arrested a Baloch student as he was leaving the campus, as reported by local media *Dawn.*[54]

PALESTINE

Attacks against education increased sharply during the 2022-2023 reporting period. Attacks peaked amid hostilities between Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip in late 2023, when over 350 schools were damaged. Many attacks on schools involved the use of explosive weapons. The military use of schools, as well as attacks on higher education, also continued.

CONTEXT

Hostilities in Palestine intensified during the 2022-2023 reporting period.[1] In August 2022, Israel carried out airstrikes and used explosive weapons in the Gaza Strip, and Palestinian armed groups launched rockets into Israeli communities;[2] the fighting killed approximately 22 civilians including 17 children, and injured hundreds in the Gaza Strip, according to the UN.[3] In May 2023, Israeli forces conducted a five-day offensive in the Gaza Strip that resulted in at least 12 civilian fatalities, including six children, and injured 190, including 64 children, according to OCHA.[4]

On October 7, 2023, Hamas-led fighters carried out a deadly assault in southern Israel, attacking towns and kibbutzim, taking scores of hostages, and killing hundreds of civilians, as reported by Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group.[5] Palestinian armed groups also launched thousands of rockets at Israeli communities, causing deaths, injuries, and damage to buildings.[6] Attacks on education in Israel were reported at that time, including the military use of educational facilities.[7] Subsequently, Israel launched thousands of airstrikes and artillery attacks, and conducted an intensive, months-long ground operation in the Gaza Strip.[8] The UN estimated that nearly two million people were displaced in the Gaza Strip.[9] In late December, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, at least 20,057 people had been killed.[10]

In the occupied West Bank, violence increased during the reporting period.[11] In 2022, 34 children in the West Bank were killed, the highest number in 15 years, according to Save the Children and Human Rights Watch.[12] This number increased to 124 in 2023, according to the UN.[13] The UN reported that around 2,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced by Israeli settler attacks in 2022 and 2023, and 2,380 more were left homeless by demolitions.[14] In July 2023, Israel led a military operation in the West Bank using airstrikes and drones, which killed 16 Palestinians, and injured more than 100.[15]

During hostilities that began in October 2023, Israel cut basic services such as electricity and water to Gaza, and blocked the entry of most food and aid supplies, a continuation of a 16-year Israeli policy of closure of the Gaza Strip that restricted the entry and exit of people and goods, compounding the humanitarian situation.[16] The UN reported that grave violations against children in Palestine increased during the reporting period;[17] violence included the use of live ammunition.[18]

Violence impacted education during the reporting period.[19] In the West Bank, the Israeli Ministry of Education temporarily suspended six East Jerusalem schools' licenses due to use of Palestinian curriculum, in July 2022.[20] During the hostilities beginning October 2023, all schools in the Gaza Strip were closed, according to the UN,[21] and the Ministry of Education stated that the school year was suspended.[22] Other barriers to education included delays at checkpoints, inadequate infrastructure, restrictions on movement, and teacher strikes.[23] At the end of 2023, the UN reported that around 90 percent of school buildings in the Gaza Strip were being used as shelters or had been damaged during fighting, including some that sustained damage while being used as shelters.[24]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 642 attacks against, and interferences to, education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This was an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified over 429 attacks.[25]

In 2022, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) Education Cluster reported 167 attacks on schools, affecting over 24,000 students, many of which involved the use of teargas or weapons firing, at or near schools, an increase compared to previous years.[26] In the first half of 2022 alone, these attacks affected 6,880 students (2,108 girls) and 279 teachers (38 female), including killing two students and leaving 478 students and 42 teachers in need of medical treatment.[27] The UN also verified 74 cases of Israeli forces firing weapons at or near schools.[28]

In addition, GCPEA identified 32 attacks on schools in 2022, which reportedly injured 58 students and staff.[29] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with Education Cluster reports, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On March 1, 2022, teargas was reportedly fired at three schools, including a secondary school, in Hebron city and governorate, West Bank, according to ACLED and local media *WAFA News Agency*; dozens of students and teachers were reportedly affected, and some were treated by paramedics for teargas inhalation.[30]
- On May 18, 2022, live ammunition was reportedly fired in the direction of a girls' secondary school in Duma village, Nablus governorate, West Bank, while classes were in session, leading students to panic, according to ACLED and local media *WAFA News Agency*.[31]
- The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) reported that, on October 13, 2022, Israeli forces fired teargas near al-Qisariyia Mixed School, Juhor al-Deek village, Gaza, causing breathing problems for a number of students; the school was subsequently evacuated.[32]
- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reported that, on December 5, 2022, in Bethlehem governorate, West Bank, Israeli Security Forces forcibly entered a girls' school and tried to enter a nearby boys' school. The Israeli Forces fired live ammunition outside the girls' school during clashes with Palestinians, who threw stones; the girls' school sustained damage and

schools in the area were closed that day.[33]

According to the reports identified by the oPt Education Cluster, 56 schools in the West Bank were under threat of being demolished by Israeli authorities in June 2022.[34] Examples of incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- PCHR reported that, on August 3, 2022, Israeli forces issued a demolition order for a classroom of Khelet al-Dabi' school, Hebron governorate, West Bank.[35]
- The Norwegian Refugee Council reported that, on November 23, 2022, Israeli forces bulldozed a primary school in Isfey AI-Fouqa village, Hebron governorate, West Bank, while instruction was taking place; soldiers allegedly used sound bombs to force students to vacate the building.[36]

Some attacks on schools in 2022 also involved settler violence. The oPt Education Cluster reported three incidents of settler violence, including damage to school windows and solar panels.[37] Examples identified by GCPEA included:

- As reported by PCHR, on March 13, 2022, an alleged Israeli settler fired live ammunition at al-Khansaa' Elementary School, Bethlehem governorate, West Bank, causing fear among students.[38]
- On May 30, 2022, in Urif village, Nablus governorate, West Bank, alleged Israeli settlers reportedly attacked a secondary school with stones, damaging solar panels, while alleged Israeli soldiers reportedly fired teargas at the school. Students and staff suffered breathing problems, and the school was subsequently evacuated, according to ACLED and local media *WAFA News Agency*.[39]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 475 attacks on schools. In the first half of 2023, the oPt Education Cluster reported an increase in attacks on schools as compared to previous years, including airstrikes that affected 42 schools and 21 kindergartens in Gaza.[40] Also between January and June 2023, the Education Cluster reported 63 incidents involving Israeli security forces firing teargas, rubber bullets, or live ammunition, at or near education facilities; these attacks affected 10,300 students, 4,684 of them girls, including killing one student and leaving 32 students and five teachers in need of medical treatment.[41] Between the hostilities in October and December 2023, the UN reported that at least 352 schools were damaged in Gaza, representing more than half of all schools.[42] Among schools that were damaged, eight were destroyed, 96 sustained major damage, and 110 sustained moderate damage.[43]

In the West Bank, according to the reports identified by the oPt Education Cluster, Israeli authorities demolished or confiscated property at two schools and issued stop-work orders for three schools. In addition, 60 schools in the West Bank were under threat of being demolished in June 2023, affecting education for approximately 6,800 students.[44]

GCPEA identified at least 75 individual incidents of attacks on schools from media and UN reports in 2023.[45] For instance:

- UNRWA and OCHA reported that four schools in the Jenin Refugee Camp, West Bank, were damaged when Israeli forces carried out drone strikes and at least 1,000 soldiers were engaged in operations in the camp on July 3 and 4, 2023.[46]
- On August 17, 2023, Ein Samiya elementary school was demolished in the West Bank, as reported by OCHA.[47]
- On August 31, 2023, in Jerusalem Old City, East Jerusalem, textbooks were allegedly seized while being transported by car to a Palestinian private school, as reported by international media *Middle East Monitor*.[48]
- On October 10, 2023, Al Fakhoora House, an educational facility, was destroyed during a bombing in Al Rimal, in the Gaza Strip, according to Education Above All Foundation and international media *Doha News*.[49]
- On October 17, 2023, in al-Maghazi refugee camp, in the Gaza Strip, during Israeli airstrikes in the area, an UNRWA school was hit, causing extensive structural damage.[50]
- On November 21, 2023, Israeli settlers allegedly set fire to Zanuta Elementary School south of Hebron, West Bank, damaging several classrooms, as reported by local media *Al Quds* and the Ministry of Education.[51]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified at least 385 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 85 incidents in 2020 and 2021.[52]

In 2022, the Education Cluster recorded over 150 attacks against school students or staff, including 19 incidents in which students were detained at school, or on the way to or from school; 55 cases of delays at checkpoints, affecting more than 900 students; 65 cases of the denial of the right to education; and 15 cases of intimidation while commuting to school, which affected at least 200 girls, and 17 female teachers.[53] The UN verified 44 incidents of interferences with education, including intimidation and delays at checkpoints.[54] Separately, GCPEA identified 27 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in the West Bank in 2022.[55] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with Education Cluster reports, they were not included in the total number of attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents of arrest or detention included:

- In mid-January 2022, PCHR reported that Israeli forces detained two students, as well as assaulting teachers, after raiding their school in Ramallah city, Ramallah and al-Bireh governorate, West Bank.[56]
- On November 17, 2022, Israeli forces allegedly detained a male student at a school in Zubeidat village, Jericho governorate, West Bank, after forcibly entering the school, as reported by local media *WAFA News Agency*.[57]
- On December 1, 2022, Israeli forces allegedly stormed a school in Tuqu town, Bethlehem governorate, West Bank, and briefly detained the school director and teachers, according to local media *WAFA News Agency*.[58]

Other incidents of attacks on students, teachers, or other personnel outside, or on the way to or from, school in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem included:[59]

- On May 11, 2022, a 16-year-old student was reportedly shot and killed by Israeli forces as he was leaving school in Al Bireh, Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate, West Bank, during confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli forces, according to OCHA.[60]
- On September 18, 2022, Israeli forces allegedly fired teargas at Anata Girls' Secondary School in East Jerusalem, Quds governorate, West Bank, as reported by ACLED and local media *Jerusalem 24*.[61]
- On October 4, 2022, a group of alleged Israeli settlers forcibly entered the secondary school in Huwwara village, Nablus governorate, West Bank, and beat students and teachers. The settlers also reportedly threatened teachers and students with live ammunition, according to ACLED and international media *Al Jazeera*.[62]

In the first six months of 2023, the Education Cluster recorded a sharp increase in the number of attacks on students and staff with over 225 attacks, including 186 cases of delays at checkpoints, affecting more than 7,600 students and 463 teachers, including 3,588 girls and 263 female staff; 15 incidents in which students were detained at school, or on the way to or from school; and 16 cases of intimidation while commuting to school.[63] Separately, GCPEA identified at least nine incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in 2023.[64] For example:

- On August 31, 2023, in connection to the incident detailed above in the Old City of East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities allegedly detained a driver and school employee who were transporting textbooks to a Palestinian private school, as reported by international media *Middle East Monitor*.[65]
- On September 3, 2023, Israeli police reportedly confiscated Palestinian textbooks from students outside Al-Aqsa Secondary School in the Old City of East Jerusalem, as classes were set to resume after the summer break, according to international media *Middle East Monitor*.[66]
- On October 4, 2023, Israeli forces allegedly detained the director of Shaab al-Batm Mixed Basic School, as well as at least two teachers, for over an hour, at a military checkpoint, in al-Tuwanah village, Hebron governorate, West Bank, disrupting education for over 50 students, as reported by local media *Al Quds*.[67]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified several cases of military use in the 2022-2023 reporting period, as in previous years.[68]

In 2022, the UN verified the existence of a tunnel underneath a school in Gaza, for potential use by Palestinian armed groups.[69] Also in 2022, the Education Cluster reported eight incidents of military presence in or around schools,[70] although it is not clear how many of these met GCPEA's criteria for military use.

GCPEA identified at least ten reports of military use in 2023.[71] Separately, between January and June 2023, the Education Cluster reported 27 incidents of military presence in or around schools;[72] as above, GCPEA was not able to establish whether these incidents met GCPEA criteria for military use. GCPEA also identified anec-

dotal reports of additional military use of educational facilities after October 7, 2023, although these were not included in the count due to the lack of sufficient details.[73] Incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- As reported on October 11, 2023, according to Scholars at Risk and *University World News*, a press release from Israeli forces detailed an airstrike on the Islamic University of Gaza, which destroyed several buildings; the press release claimed that the university was being used by Hamas as a military training center.[74]
- On December 9, 2023, Hamas-led fighters allegedly shot at Israeli soldiers from a school in Beit Hanoun, in the Gaza Strip, as reported by ACLED and *The New York Times;* the school was subsequently targeted in an attack by the Israeli military.[75]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified 28 attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. These attacks occurred at a slightly higher rate as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA identified around 15 such incidents in 2021, and five in 2020.[76] Attacks were identified predominantly in the West Bank, but also sporadically in the Gaza Strip.

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 16 incidents of attacks on university students.[77] These cases involved the arrest or detention of Palestinian students as well as protest repression by Israeli forces, including the use of teargas and live ammunition.[78] Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On April 16, 2022, Israeli forces reportedly used teargas and clashed with students at Al Quds University in East Jerusalem, in the West Bank, during a student demonstration, according to ACLED and Scholars at Risk.[79]
- On June 29, 2022, Palestinian Authority security forces allegedly detained a student at Hebron University in Hebron city and governorate, West Bank, while he was leaving the university, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[80]

In addition, GCPEA identified at least six reported attacks on higher education facilities in 2022.[81] For example:

- On April 12, 2022, Israeli forces reportedly raided the Palestine Technical University, Kadoorie in Tulkarem city, West Bank, and clashed with students, allegedly firing teargas and rubber bullets, which injured 18 students, according to ACLED, Scholars at Risk, and local media *WAFA News Agency*.[82]
- On August 5, 2022, airstrikes in Gaza reportedly damaged a building of Al-Quds Open University in the Gaza Strip, killing five students and injuring several more, as reported by Scholars at Risk; following the attack, eight universities in the Gaza Strip closed temporarily.[83]

In 2023, GCPEA collected at least six reports of attacks on higher education students and facilities.[84] For example:

- On September 24, 2023, dozens of military vehicles, and Israeli forces, forcibly entered Birzeit University in Ramallah governorate, West Bank, reportedly assaulting the university guards, raiding the Student Council office, and causing extensive damage; the Israeli forces also arrested eight students, as reported by Scholars at Risk, a statement from Birzeit University, and local media *IMEMC News*.[85]
- As reported on November 6, 2023, Israeli airstrikes reportedly struck south of Gaza City, in the Gaza Strip, destroying Al-Azhar University buildings and causing serious damage, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[86]
- On November 8, 2023, Israeli forces allegedly forcibly entered Birzeit University, Ramallah city, West Bank, with six military vehicles, raided the Student Council office, and damaged property, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[87]

THE PHILIPPINES

In 2022 and 2023, attacks on education in the Philippines were primarily concentrated on the islands of Mindanao and Masbate. As in previous years, attacks on students and educators occurred sporadically. Reports of attacks on schools increased.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict continued in the Philippines during the reporting period particularly in Mindanao and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), in the south, and in the Western Visayas region in the center of the country, according to International Crisis Group and the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[1] The Philippines held presidential and local elections in May 2022;[2] Ferdinand Marcos Jr. was elected to the presidency, succeeding President Rodrigo Duterte.[3] The new administration continued the deadly antidrug raids, and killings related to those operations continued into 2023.[4] During the reporting period, the government and armed forces labelled activists, journalists, and Indigenous leaders as "communist," which led to attacks and harassment, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.[5]

Intermittent armed clashes between the Philippine armed forces and non-state armed groups continued during the reporting period.[6] Conflict between government forces and the New People's Army (NPA) in the Western Visayas region and Mindanao displaced hundreds of civilians in 2022 and 2023.[7] In December 2023, fighting occurred in Mindanao between the Dawlah Islamiyah armed group and the military, according to the International Crisis Group,[8] and Dawlah Islamiyah and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) armed group clashed in Maguindanao del Sur and Cotabato provinces during the reporting period.[9] Members of Lumad and other Indigenous communities were allegedly abducted and killed by government forces, according to media reports;[10] they were also at risk of recruitment by armed groups.[11] In 2022, grave violations against children decreased in the Philippines;[12] the UN verified 34 grave violations that year.[13]

Climate-related disasters affected the Philippines during the reporting period.[14] In October 2022, a tropical storm led to floods and landslides that killed more than 150 people and displaced approximately one million.[15] According to the UN, 9.7 million children were displaced due to climate-related disasters in the Philippines in recent years.[16]

Limitations in education infrastructure, climate-related disasters, and violence impacted access to education for students in the Philippines. By November 2022, all public schools reopened for in-person classes after the government ended most of the remaining Covid-19 regulations in August that year, according to media reports.[17] However, while students learned online in 2022, they faced challenges including lack of internet and computers.[18] The number of schools requiring repair also remained a barrier to learning and was further exacerbated by the use of schools as shelters during climate-related disasters.[19] During multiple periods in 2023,

schools temporarily halted in-person classes in Negros Occidental, Masbate, and Iloilo provinces due to clashes between the military and the NPA.[20]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 23 reported attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023. This represents an increase compared to previous years, when GCPEA collected five and three reported attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[21] Several of these attacks were related to schools being used as polling stations during elections.

In 2022, the UN verified three attacks on schools and education personnel. Two of these attacks were committed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and one by the Philippines National Police.[22] Since it was unclear how many attacks overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, or how many were attacks on schools rather than on education personnel, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools for this report, to avoid double counting. Separately, GCPEA identified five attacks on schools, several of which were concentrated in BARMM and took place while schools served as polling stations for the May elections:

- On May 9, 2022, a cell phone-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) reportedly detonated near the Kabacan Pilot Elementary School, which served as a polling station in Poblacion barangay, Cotabato province. No casualties were recorded, according to the *Philippine Information Agency* and the national media outlet *Rappler.*[23]
- On May 9, 2022, unidentified assailants allegedly shot at voters at the Jose Abad Santos Elementary School, while the school served as a polling station in Jose Abad Santos barangay, Malabang municipality, Lanao del Sur province. One fatality was reported by national media outlet *Rappler*; it was unclear whether the school was damaged.[24]
- On May 9, 2022, unidentified assailants reportedly fired a grenade at Datu Piang Elementary School, while it served as a polling station in Buayan barangay, Datu Piang municipality, Maguindanao province. The grenade landed inside the school and its explosion injured six voters, as reported by the *Philippine News Agency.*[25]
- On May 9, 2022, unidentified assailants allegedly shot at members of the Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team, a community-led force supported by the police, while they were on duty behind Pilot Elementary School, which was being used as a polling station in Buluan town, Maguindanao province. Four casualties were reported by the national media outlet *Inquirer*; it was unclear if the school was damaged.[26]
- Security forces found explosive devices and bomb-making materials at a school in Parangbasak barangay in Lamitan city, Basilan province on September 8, 2022, according to a military official as reported by the *Philippine News Agency*. The military reportedly conducted a controlled disposal of the explosive materials.[27]

In 2023, GCPEA identified 18 reports of attacks on schools, several of which took place while schools served as polling stations for elections in October.[28] The UN reported that the proximity of armed conflict incidents to schools resulted in class suspensions in the provinces of Masbate, Quezon, Rizal, and Iloilo in 2023; these incidents were included in the total number of attacks on schools.[29] Separately, the UN reported two attacks on

schools and two threats of attacks against schools in 2023;[30] since it was unclear whether these attacks overlapped with the other incidents, they were not included in the total number of attacks on schools, to avoid double counting. For example:

- On March 9, 2023, an explosive device reportedly detonated near Gawaan Elementary School in Gawaan town, Kalinga municipality, Cordillera Administrative region, while afternoon classes were in session. A village chief interviewed by a local news outlet reported that, because of the explosion, the school was closed for three days and students' mental health was negatively impacted.[31]
- Clashes between military forces and a non-state armed group occurred near at least five schools in Cawayan, Placer, and Dimasalang municipalities, Masbate province, on March 20 and 22, 2023, according to International Crisis Group and local media outlets. The clashes took place near Villahermosa National High School, Tomas V. Rivera Memorial High School, Locso-an Elementary School, Arriesgado-Sevellino National High School, and another educational facility. In one case, the classes at Villahermosa National High School were in session during the clash and bullets hit the school.[32] In-person classes were suspended in many schools in the province, with students moving to distance learning lessons, affecting 112 schools with 31,764 students.[33]
- On April 25, 2023, clashes between alleged armed groups reportedly occurred near at least two schools, including Saint Francis School in Dapiawan barangay, Datu Saudi-Ampatuan municipality, Maguindanao province. Bullets and shelling significantly damaged the schools' roofs and walls, according to a regional media outlet.[34]
- On October 28, 2023, alleged armed group members shot at election officials and a soldier while they were on duty near Dinawacan Elementary School, which was in use as a polling station, in Dinawacan village, Calbayog city, Samar province, as reported by the *Philippine News Agency.*[35]
- Unidentified assailants reportedly fired grenade projectiles at Simuay Junction Elementary School, while it served as a polling station on October 30, 2023, in Simuay barangay, Sultan Kudarat municipality, Maguindanao del Norte province. Shrapnel from the blast injured three community members and a soldier who was overseeing voting activities, as reported by local media outlet *Philippine Star.*[36]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected at least six reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected at least one and four reported attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[37]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least one report of an attack on education personnel. On February 24, 2022, at least two teachers from the Indigenous Lumad group were accused of being NPA militants and were allegedly killed in a military operation in Andap barangay, New Bataan municipality, Davao de Oro province, as reported by the national media outlet *Inquirer.*[38] In 2023, GCPEA identified five reports of attacks on school students and education personnel:

- An activist who worked as a coordinator for the Alliance of Concerned Teachers was abducted along with

their spouse for six days in Cebu City, Cebu province, on January 10, 2023. The couple, who were returning from holiday travel, recounted facing emotional and psychological torture, as reported by Amnesty International and the national media outlet *Inquirer.*[39]
- A former Lumad teacher was allegedly accused of being an NPA militant and shot and killed in a military operation in Lemulan village in Kalamansig municipality, Sultan Kudarat province, on July 27, 2023, as reported by national media outlet *Rappler.*[40] Save Our Schools Network reported that the former teacher was targeted for his role as an educator.[41]
- On November 29, 2023, unidentified assailants reportedly shot and killed a student at Datu Dalandag National High School in Ginatilan village, Pikit town, Cotabato province. Classes at the school were suspended as a result, as reported by national media outlet *Rappler.* The student was also a member of the Civilian Auxiliary Forces Geographical Unit under the Army.[42]
- In 2023, the UN verified that the safety of students in two schools was under threat after allegations that they were linked to the NPA by the government while conducting anti-insurgency lectures.[43]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least one incident involving the military use of a school. In comparison, no such incidents were identified in the previous reporting period.[44] In the period spanning 2017 through 2019, however, GCPEA collected at least 30 reports of military use of schools,[45] showing a significant decline over time.

On April 25, 2023, an alleged armed group reportedly used Padre Pio Day Care Center as a fighting position during clashes with a rival armed group in Dapiawan barangay, Datu Saudi-Ampatuan municipality, Maguindanao province. Students were not present at the time of the military use, according to the school's principal who was interviewed by an international media outlet.[46]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, attacks on higher education occurred sporadically. This trend is similar to previous years; GCPEA gathered two reports of attacks on higher education during the 2020-2021 reporting period.[47]

In 2022, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on higher education. On November 5, 2022, security forces found and defused two IEDs near the Mindanao State University campus in Datu Odin Sinsuat town, Maguindanao del Norte province, as reported by national media outlet *The Philippine Star.*[48]

The following year, on December 3, Dawlah Islamiyah militants reportedly detonated an explosive device during a Catholic mass in the gymnasium of Mindanao State University, Marawi, in Marawi city, Lanao del Sur province. Four people were killed and more than 40 people were injured, according to International Crisis Group and Scholars at Risk.[49] The floor of the gymnasium was reportedly damaged, and classes were suspended.[50]

SOMALIA

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 80 attacks on schools and against school students and personnel, as well as the military use of schools. At least 121 civilians were killed in one attack alone targeting education in 2022.

CONTEXT

Conflict between the non-state armed group Al-Shabaab, on the one hand, and Somali and international forces, on the other, continued during the reporting period.[1] Amnesty International reported that all actors in the conflict committed human rights abuses.[2] Somalia's presidential and parliamentary elections, originally set for 2020 and rescheduled for 2021, were delayed until May 2022 due to ongoing instability.[3] Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected as president; he previously held the position from 2012 to 2017.[4] The security context remained volatile following the presidential elections amid an increase in military offensives against Al-Shabaab, and retaliation attacks.[5]

Al-Shabaab conducted attacks against armed forces, government representatives, and civilians in 2022 and 2023, particularly in Banadir, Lower Shabelle, and Lower Juba regions.[6] In May 2023, Al-Shabaab attacked an African Union base in Lower Shabelle region, killing more than 50 Ugandan soldiers.[7] The UN also reported that the number of civilian casualties increased sharply in 2022, with over 600 killed and over 900 injured; Al-Shabaab was responsible for the majority.[8] From August 2022, the government carried out a military offensive and regained territory from Al-Shabaab, and both sought the support of clan militias.[9]

Conflict was compounded by other acute crises, including seasonal floods, drought, and cholera, during the 2022-2023 reporting period.[10] In addition, Al-Shabaab conducted indirect attacks on civilians by damaging and poisoning wells, further exacerbating the impact of the drought, according to the UN.[11] In 2023, 8.2 million people in Somalia needed humanitarian assistance, of which 5.1 million were children.[12] As a result of floods, drought, and conflict, the number of internally displaced people increased, with approximately 3.8 million people internally displaced at the end of 2023, including 2.9 million people who were newly displaced that year.[13]

Children were particularly affected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis.[14] All Somali parties to the conflict recruited child soldiers, including for combat and support roles, and Somali forces detained children allegedly affiliated with armed groups, according to Human Rights Watch and the UN.[15] In 2022, the UN verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence.[16]

Approximately 4.8 million children were out of school in 2022 and 2023 in Somalia, due to violence, floods, drought, and other causes.[17] The UN reported in December 2023 that floods had impacted education for around 905,000 children, with at least 224 schools damaged.[18] School closures, along with violence, early marriage, and financial barriers, inhibited access to education, disproportionately affecting girls, according to the UN.[19]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified around 40 reports of attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks a decrease in comparison to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA collected at least 30 incidents of attacks on schools in 2021 and at least 53 such attacks in 2020.[20] Some of these attacks were carried out by Al-Shabaab, which targeted education facilities during the reporting period because it is opposed to the government curriculum, according to international media outlet *VOA*.[21]

In 2022, the UN verified at least 14 attacks on schools.[22] Separately, GCPEA identified an attack on the Ministry of Education, which was one of the deadliest attacks carried out by Al-Shabaab since 2017:

- On October 29, 2022, Al-Shabaab detonated two car bombs outside the Ministry of Education, in Mogadishu, as reported by human rights organizations and the UN. The attack occurred while secondary students and their families collected diplomas; it killed at least 121 civilians and wounded over 300 more.[23] The prime minister reportedly ordered schools and universities to temporarily close after the attack.[24]

In 2023, GCPEA identified around 26 attacks on schools, many of which included the use of explosive weapons.[25] For example:

- On January 24, 2023, two mortars reportedly struck inside a primary school in Hamarweyne district, Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, as reported by ACLED and local and international media.[26]
- On February 27, 2023, three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were reportedly planted near the main gate of Mujama School in Beledweyne city, Hiiraan region; two exploded while the other was being defused by police, injuring two teachers. Teaching examinations were due to take place at the school.[27]
- On March 2, 2023, mortar rounds struck and damaged the roof of a madrassa in Karan district, Banadir region. No children were at the school at the time of the attack.[28]
- On April 9, 2023, in a neighborhood in Mogadishu where 15 May School is located, one of several mortar shells hit a building near a school, as reported by ACLED and local media. [29]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 42 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.[30] This marks an increase as compared to the previous reporting period, when such attacks were identified sporadically.[31]

In 2022, the UN verified at least 25 attacks on students or personnel, primarily involving killing, injury, or ab-

duction[32] Separately, GCPEA collected four incidents,[33] some of which may have been included in the UN count. Examples of incidents GCPEA collected included:

- On June 27, 2022, alleged parties to the conflict reportedly shot at students at the Hoyga Xamar school, amid a land dispute, as reported by ACLED.[34]
- On November 3, 2022, in Dayniile district, Mogadishu, a roadside IED detonated, killing two students who were in a vehicle returning home from school, as reported by the *Associated Press*.[35]

The UN verified 17 attacks between January and September 2023, although at least one involved child recruitment which GCPEA classified in a category below.[36] Separately, GCPEA identified two incidents, although the first may overlap with the UN count:

- On March 15, Al-Shabaab militants abducted a teacher from a madrassa in Burhakaba district, Bay region. The group had earlier summoned the teacher for unknown reasons and when he declined, they abducted him.[37]
- On October 14, 2023, in Garowe town, Nugaal region, secondary school students demonstrating against student association elections clashed with the police who fired live bullets, injuring at least three people, including students and a principal.[38]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA collected at least eight cases of military use in the 2022-2023 reporting period, a slight increase as compared to past years. *Education under Attack 2022* included three incidents of military use in 2021 and one reported incident in 2020.[39]

The UN verified one case of military use by Al-Shabaab in 2022.[40]

In 2023, seven schools were used by SSC Khatumo forces in Sool region; the schools were subsequently attacked.[41] On March 7, in Laascaanood, Sool region, a secondary school was partially damaged by mortars attributed to Somaliland forces. At the time of the incident, the school was being used for military purposes by the SSC Khatumo militia, and no children were present.[42]

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA received one report of child recruitment at a school in 2023; no such incidents were identified in the previous reporting period.[43] On February 13, Al-Shabaab militants abducted seven boys aged between 14 and 17 from a madrassa in Baidoa district, Bay region, and transferred them to a nearby training center.[44]

SOUTH SUDAN

Fighting continued in South Sudan during the reporting period, despite the signing of peace accords in 2018. Attacks on, and military use of, schools increased in 2022 and 2023 compared to previous years. GCPEA also identified a report of sexual violence along a school route and two reports of attacks on higher education.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, conflict and intercommunal violence continued in South Sudan, particularly in Warrap, Upper Nile, Unity, and Central Equatoria states.[1] In August 2022, the South Sudanese government and main armed opposition group, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), alongside three other political groups, extended the timeline of the transitional government established in 2020 by two years. Formed under the 2018 peace accords, the transitional government had been set to conclude in February 2023.[2] In early 2022, President Salva Kiir signed peace accords with a splinter group of SPLM/A-IO, Kitgwang, unifying Kitgwang fighters into the national army, according to International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch.[3] In March 2022, SPLM/A-IO halted engagement in parts of the 2018 peace deal due to alleged government-led attacks, leading violence to increase before both parties recommitted to the deal the following month.[4] Peace talks between the government and non-signatory armed groups to the 2018 peace accords halted in 2022 when the government withdrew; discussions resumed in 2023, but progress remained stalled by the end of that year, as reported by a local media outlet.[5]

Armed groups continued to attack civilians and commit human rights abuses during the reporting period.[6] The number of civilians impacted by violence increased in 2022, with more than 3,460 victims and survivors, despite a decrease in violent incidents committed by parties to the conflict that year, according to the UN.[7] In August 2022, conflict broke out between SPLM/A-IO splinter groups, Kitgwang and Agwelek, in Upper Nile state, displacing thousands of civilians.[8] Fighting also continued between the government and the National Salvation Front (NAS), a non-signatory to the peace agreement, in Equatoria region, and both parties committed human rights abuses including sexual violence, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.[9] Intercommunal violence also persisted during the reporting period.[10] The UN reported that more than 60 percent of civilian casualties in the first six months of 2022 were a result of such violence.[11]

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan continued to deteriorate during the reporting period.[12] In 2023, the UN reported that nine million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, with children comprising more than half.[13] Armed groups attacked aid operations, inhibiting access to humanitarian relief for civilians across the country.[14] Approximately 2.2 million civilians were internally displaced in 2023;[15] in addition, South Sudan received an influx of more than 450,000 civilians from the 2023 conflict in Sudan, including many returning South Sudanese refugees, according to the UN.[16]

Conflict continued to impact children's access to education during the reporting period, disproportionately affecting girls.[17] School fees and lack of trained teachers were additional barriers to education.[18] Approximately 2.8 million children and adolescents were out of school in 2023; girls faced additional risks while out of classes, including early marriage, according to the UN.[19] In February 2023, President Salva Kiir announced the expansion of free education to include secondary in addition to primary school.[20]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 51 attacks on schools. This represents a significant increase compared to previous years, when GCPEA collected eight and three such attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[21]

In 2022, the UN reported 51 attacks on schools in South Sudan.[22] Separately, GCPEA identified five reported attacks on schools from news and UN reports, some of which may overlap with the UN-reported incidents. Examples of attacks included:

- In 2022, Gumuruk Boys and Gumuruk Girls primary schools in Gumuruk county, Greater Pibor Administrative Area, were burned down. As a result, access to education for over 500 students was affected.[23]
- In June 2022, South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) soldiers looted a primary school in Yei county, Central Equatoria state, destroying the school fence and stealing a power generator and parts of the roof, according to the UN.[24]
- Amid fighting between rival armed groups, two schools were reportedly burned down in New Fangak town, Jonglei state, on August 20, 2022, according to the UN and a local media outlet.[25]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on schools in 2023.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected approximately eight reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected no reports of attacks on students and education personnel in 2021 and 2020.[26]

GCPEA identified five reports of attacks on education personnel in 2022:

- Security forces beat teachers who were demonstrating over withheld salaries in Bor town, Jonglei state, on February 9, 2022, as reported by local media.[27]
- Around February 9, 2022, security forces arrested a teachers' union chairperson in Bor town, Jonglei state, as reported by a local media outlet.[28]
- On June 20 and June 22, 2022, security forces arrested 12 and 21 teachers, respectively, who were demonstrating over withheld salaries in Rumbek town, Lakes state, as reported by local media outlets.[29]

- On August 12, 2022, police arrested a teachers' union chairperson, who was also arrested on February 9, as detailed above, in front of the education ministry in Bor town, Jonglei state, where he was leading a peaceful protest over withheld salaries, as reported by local media outlets.[30]

GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on students and education personnel in 2023:

- Six students, two girls and four boys, were abducted and killed while in transit to take primary school mock examinations in Kuinam village, Unity state, on February 3, 2023, as reported by a local media outlet.[31]
- In June 2023, over 15 teachers were detained by police in Lakes state after they protested an exercise to screen teacher quality by the Ministry of Education.[32]
- The Education Director of Nagero county was fatally shot at his house in Nagero town, Western Equatoria state, on September 9, 2023, as reported by a local media outlet.[33]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified over 30 instances of the military use of schools. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022*, which covers 2021 and 2020, included at least ten reports of military use.[34]

The UN verified the use of 24 schools by SSPDF and other parties to the armed conflict in 2022.[35] Separately, GCPEA identified four reported incidents of military use from news and UN reports, some of which may overlap with the UN-verified incidents. Examples of incidents included:

- The UN reported that the SSPDF occupied three schools in the Agok area of Abyei region in 2022 up to at least October of that year.[36]
- In 2022, Manyabol primary school in Greater Pibor Administrative Area was used as a camping shelter for armed group fighters, resulting in damaged school property and restricted access to education for students.[37]

In 2023, the UN reported the military use of seven schools, and that six previously occupied schools were vacated.[38]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

GCPEA identified one report of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school during the 2022-2023 reporting period. During the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*, GCPEA did not receive any such reports.[39]

In Yambio county, a SPLM/A-IO soldier attempted to rape a young girl while she was on her way to school, as reported by her mother, according to the UN.[40]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, attacks on higher education occurred sporadically. This trend is similar to previous years; GCPEA gathered two reports of attacks on higher education during the 2020-2021 reporting period.[41]

In 2022, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on higher education. On March 1, 2022, police arrested three students who were demonstrating against university exam policies at Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology in Bor town, Jonglei state, as reported by a local media outlet.[42]

In 2023, GCPEA collected one report of an attack on higher education. On August 16, 2023, after two days of student protests over tuition increases, police reportedly raided a hostel for female students at the University of Bahr el Ghazal in Wau city, Western Bahr el Ghazal state, and detained some students. According to students interviewed by a local media outlet, police stood, armed with guns, at the campus gate.[43]

SUDAN

Attacks on schools and universities, as well as their use for military purposes, increased during the reporting period, in particular after conflict erupted in April 2023. In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified reports of at least 62 attacks on schools and at least 28 attacks on higher education, as well as an incident of sexual violence at a university.

CONTEXT

During the reporting period, Sudan continued to experience political unrest in 2022, followed by armed conflict in 2023.[1] In 2022, protests demanding a civilian democratic transition continued, following the October 2021 military coup.[2] Police used tear gas and live ammunition against protesters on numerous occasions in 2022, killing and injuring civilians in Khartoum, according to Human Rights Watch and news reports.[3] In April 2023, fighting broke out in Khartoum between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.[4] Fighting spread to other parts of the country, including the Darfur region.[5] Parties to the conflict agreed to various ceasefires throughout 2023, but fighting broke out following each of the agreements.[6]

Both parties used explosive weapons in the conflict, which killed civilians and damaged infrastructure, including hospitals and homes, according to Human Rights Watch and the Explosive Weapons Monitor.[7] The violence forced hundreds of thousands, including children, to flee, as well as trapping others in areas of fighting.[8] Students were trapped at the University of Khartoum for more than three days at the outset of fighting;[9] several months later, at least one million people continued to be trapped in Khartoum and neighboring cities.[10] In December 2023, ACLED reported at least 12,000 people had been killed in the conflict since April of that year.[11]

Violence also continued in the Darfur region in 2022, further escalating in 2023 after the outbreak of hostilities in the capital, with West Darfur the epicenter of multiple large-scale attacks against civilians.[12] In June 2022, armed clashes in the town of Kulbus and nearby areas in West Darfur state killed at least 125 people, including five children, according to Human Rights Watch and the UN.[13] During the first half of 2022, violence displaced more than 75,000 civilians in North, South, and West Darfur and South Kordofan states in addition to 11,000 refugees who fled to Chad.[14] In June 2023, RSF forces abducted and killed the Governor of West Darfur state, according to Amnesty International and news reports.[15]

The UN reported that 24.8 million civilians, nearly half of them children, needed humanitarian assistance at the end of 2023.[16] Sudan had approximately 7.1 million internally displaced people, with over 5.8 million people newly displaced from April 2023, according to the UN.[17]

Natural disasters and violence continued to impact education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. More than 400 schools were closed in 2022 due to floods, impacting at least 138,000 students.[18] Following the outbreak of hostilities in 2023, the number of children out of school more than doubled from approximately 6.9 million in 2022 to approximately 19 million at the end of 2023, according to the UN.[19] In April 2023, all schools in Sudan closed as a result of the escalating violence;[20] internally displaced people including children subsequently used schools as shelters, according to the UN and media reports.[21] In 12 states that were less affected by the conflict, schools reopened in May 2023.[22] Universities in Khartoum closed in April 2023, after which many students fled the country.[23]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 62 reported attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022*, which covered 2020 and 2021, included at least ten reports of attacks on schools.[24]

In 2022, the UN verified 22 attacks on schools, the majority of which were carried out by unidentified perpetrators.[25]

In 2023, GCPEA identified 40 reports of attacks on schools, almost all of which occurred after the armed conflict broke out on April 15.[26] Separately, the UN reported that 52 schools were damaged, looted, or occupied in Darfur between mid-April and October 2023.[27] However, it remained unclear how many of the schools were damaged by parties to the conflict rather than by other causes, and how many were attacks rather than occupied, so the number is not included in the count of attacks on schools here. Examples of incidents GCPEA collected included:

- On April 15, 2023, armed clashes occurred near the Comboni School near the presidential palace in Khartoum, trapping 300 students inside, as well as teachers, as reported by Insecurity Insight and the media outlet *Middle East Eye*.[28]
- In late April 2023, the Ministry of Education offices in Nyala city, South Darfur, were vandalized and looted, according to the Acting Minister of Education and Instruction, as reported by *Sudan News Agency* and other media outlets. Exams and exam equipment were burned, and the ministry's bookstore and vehicles looted.[29]
- Around May 15, 2023, stray bullets and shrapnel from nearby armed clashes hit a boys' school in El Geneina, West Darfur, killing or injuring some of the displaced people sheltering inside, according to Amnesty International.[30]
- On August 7, 2023, a student dormitory in El Obeid city, North Kordofan, was raided and students were beaten and robbed at gunpoint, as reported by Insecurity Insight and a local media outlet.[31]
- Armed clashes occurred near the El Fasher secondary school in El Fasher city, North Darfur, on September 9, 2023, as reported by a local media outlet.[32]
- On November 1, 2023, shelling hit a boys' secondary school in Ardamata, a suburb of El Geneina city in West Darfur, killing or injuring some of the displaced people sheltering inside classrooms, according to Human Rights Watch.[33]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA collected four reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately six reported attacks during the 2020-2021 reporting period.[34]

In 2022, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on education personnel:

- On March 14, 2022, police used teargas before entering Nyala Secondary School in Nyala city, South Darfur, then allegedly beat and arrested the school's director, deputy director, and several teachers, as reported by a local media outlet.[35]
- On March 14, 2022, security forces used teargas on students and striking teachers at Zat Alnitagain girls' primary school in Atbara city, River Nile state, as reported by a regional media outlet. The teachers were reportedly on strike for increased wages.[36]
- On November 2, 2022, police used teargas to disperse students who were protesting tuition increases in El Fasher city, North Darfur, as reported by local news outlet *Darfur 24*.[37]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least one report of an attack on school students and personnel. On September 22, 2023, state intelligence service officers arrested the spokesman of the Sudanese Teachers' Committee in Port Sudan city, Red Sea state, in addition to two other committee members, as reported by local media outlet *Sudan Tribune*.[38]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 28 incidents involving the military use of schools. In comparison, GCPEA collected approximately three and eight reported incidents involving military use in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[39]

In 2022, the UN verified 11 instances of the military use of schools by the RSF, Justice and Equality Movement, Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, and unknown perpetrators.[40] Separately, GCPEA collected one report from the UN, in which security forces occupied a school in Kafani village, West Darfur, in June 2022.[41] Since it was unclear whether this individual attack overlapped with the UN count, it was not included in the total number of instances of military use for this report, to avoid double counting.

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 17 incidents involving the military use of schools and universities.[42] For instance:

- The Protection Cluster reported that, in the period between April 15 and June 20, 2023, armed parties occupied four schools in North Darfur.[43]
- Around May 18, 2023, RSF fighters used Khalid Bin Walid High School to hide in Nyala city, South Darfur, according to Amnesty International. The school was subsequently attacked by SAF combatants.[44]

- An alleged armed group used the Omdurman Islamic University as a base in Omdurman city, Khartoum state, on July 3, 2023. A rival armed force subsequently attacked the armed group, resulting in clashes at the university, as reported by a local media outlet.[45]
- An alleged armed group used the University of Medical Sciences and Technology in Khartoum as a barracks in mid-2023, as reported by *University World News*.[46]
- On September 26, 2023, a school was used as a firing position for shelling opponents during armed clashes between the RSF and the SAF near Hasahisa camp, Central Darfur, as reported by the UN.[47]
- On November 6, 2023, the UN reported the ongoing military use of schools in Abyei.[48]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

GCPEA identified one report of sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school or university during the 2022-2023 reporting period. During the period covered by *Education under Attack 2022*, GCPEA did not receive any such reports.[49]

On May 14, 2023, alleged armed group fighters raided a dormitory for teaching staff at the Ahfad University for Women, took two women to another building, and raped them, according to a legal activist group as reported by *University World News*.[50]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified at least 28 reported attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In comparison, *Education under Attack 2022,* which covered 2020 and 2021, included three reports of attacks on higher education.[51]

In 2022, GCPEA identified four reported attacks on higher education, all of which involved students or personnel.[52] For instance:

- On March 14, 2022, the leader of the Omdurman locality branch of the Sudanese Teachers Committee was arrested and detained at his house in Omdurman city, Khartoum state, as reported by a local media outlet.[53]
- On July 28, 2022, security forces hit medical students with batons at Elsheikh Abdallah Elbadri University in Berber town, River Nile state, when they tried to enter the campus to start a sit-in protest over academic complaints, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[54]
- On August 22, 2022, police assaulted and threw teargas at university students who staged a protest in Al Gedaref city, Gedaref state, over poor living conditions at their dormitory, as reported by a local media outlet.[55]

In 2023, GCPEA identified 24 reported attacks on higher education, of which the majority involved attacks on infrastructure rather than students or staff.[56] Separately, ACAPS and *University World News* reported that 105 higher education facilities had been damaged or vandalized since the outbreak of fighting in April that year, including private and public universities and the National Fund for Student Welfare.[57] However, this number was not included in the total number of attacks on higher education since it was unclear how many of the incidents met GCPEA's definition of an attack on education. Examples of attacks collected by GCPEA included:

- On April 17, 2023, an airstrike hit the Jabra Scientific College for Islamic Studies campus in Khartoum, according to Human Rights Watch.[58]
- On April 17, 2023, a student was shot near the University of Khartoum in Khartoum, as reported by *University World News*.[59]
- In May 2023, unidentified assailants burned the offices of the presidency of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Khartoum, as reported by *University World News*.[60]
- On May 28, 2023, the UN reported that the University of Zalingei in Zalingei city, Central Darfur, was looted.[61]
- On June 4, 2023, an airstrike hit the International University of Africa in Khartoum, as reported by Scholars at Risk and international media outlets *BBC* and *Voice of America*.[62]
- On June 6, 2023, several shells hit the El Geneina University female dormitory compound and its vicinity in El Geneina, West Darfur, according to Amnesty International. Shrapnel from the shelling left one woman blind in one eye and injured another woman in the abdomen.[63]
- On September 13, 2023, an airstrike hit the area around Nyala University in Nyala city, South Darfur, as reported by the local media outlet *Sudan Tribune*.[64]

SYRIA

GCPEA identified over 100 attacks on schools, students and teachers, as well as the military use of dozens of schools, mostly in northwest Syria. GCPEA also collected reports of the recruitment of students at, or on the way to or from, school.

CONTEXT

Armed conflict continued in Syria during the 2022-2023 reporting period. The Syrian government controlled much of central, western, and southern Syria, including major cities, and some areas of the north. The US-backed Kurdish-led armed group Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) controlled much of northeastern Syria, while Türkiye occupied territories of northern Syria alongside its border, and Turkish-aligned groups controlled most of Idlib governorate in the northwest.[1] Fighting between Syrian government forces and opposition armed groups continued in northern Syria, killing and injuring civilians, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.[2] According to the UN, in November 2022, shelling, airstrikes, and armed clashes near Idlib city killed at least four children, and injured approximately 75 people.[3] Parties to the conflict committed human rights abuses during the reporting period, such as detaining and forcibly disappearing people, including children.[4]

In the northeast, the SDF continued to fight against the Islamic State (IS) armed group.[5] In January 2022, IS attacked an SDF-controlled prison in northeastern Syria that held suspected IS members.[6] The SDF regained control of the prison after a ten-day battle that reportedly killed 500 people, including children, according to Human Rights Watch.[7] IS also conducted regular attacks in Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, and Raqqa governorates during the reporting period.[8] In 2022 and 2023, the Turkish military conducted airstrikes in northeastern Syria that destroyed infrastructure, disrupted electricity and water supply, and displaced families in the region.[9] The UN reported that violence in Syria continued to disproportionately affect women and girls.[10]

In December 2022, 15.3 million people in Syria were in need of humanitarian assistance, of which seven million were children.[11] The Syrian government continued to limit international aid delivery throughout the country, during the reporting period.[12] However, following earthquakes in northern Syria in February 2023, when around 6,000 people died and 12,000 were injured,[13] the government temporarily allowed aid delivery to the northwest from Türkiye by opening two additional border crossings.[14] In addition, in August 2023, the government authorized the UN to continue using the Bab al Hawa crossing from Türkiye through the end of 2023, after the UN Security Council was unable to renew a cross border mechanism for aid delivery.[15] In 2022, 6.9 million people were internally displaced in Syria;[16] the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported that most people who were displaced from camps in the northwest by the earthquakes had already been displaced by conflict.[17]

Conflict, natural disasters, and the ongoing economic crisis continued to impact education throughout the reporting period. At the end of 2022, the UN reported that 2.4 million children were out of school in Syria and 1.6 million school students were at risk of dropping out.[18] In 2023, the earthquakes damaged approximately 2,220 schools, according to the Ministry of Education, further impacting education.[19]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified at least 95 attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. Attacks appeared to decrease in 2022 before rising again in 2023. In comparison, GCPEA collected at least 28 incidents of attacks on schools in 2021 and at least 60 such attacks in 2020.[20] The majority of attacks identified by GCPEA during the reporting period involved the use of explosive weapons.

In 2022, GCPEA collected around 12 reports of attacks on schools from media, UN, and non-governmental organization reports.[21] Separately, the UN verified 13 attacks on schools and protected persons in relation to schools, attributed to government and pro-government forces, as well as Turkish armed forces, non-state armed groups, and unidentified perpetrators,[22] although GCPEA was unable to determine whether any of these overlapped with GCPEA's count. Incidents GCPEA collected included:

- The UN reported that on February 3, 2022, artillery shelling damaged a school in Afrin city, Aleppo governorate.[23]
- On April 4, 2022, artillery shelling hit and damaged a primary school in Ma'arat al-Naasan village, Idlib governorate, as reported by the UN, ACLED, and media reports.[24]
- On August 18, 2022, a drone reportedly struck a girls' school in Al Hasakah governorate, injuring several people and killing four female students, as reported by International Crisis Group and international media.[25]
- On August 19, 2022, a rocket attack on Al Bab city, Aleppo governorate, damaged a school, as reported by the UN; seven children were killed and ten were injured, although GCPEA could not establish whether or not they were at, or near to, the school.[26]
- On November 4, 2022, artillery shells reportedly damaged a primary school in Ma'ar Ballit village, Idlib governorate, as reported by a human rights monitor.[27]

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 83 attacks on schools, primarily in the northwest.[28] Separately, the UN reported 19 attacks on schools; however, since some of these could overlap with the incidents identified by GCPEA, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting.[29] Schools were damaged during airstrikes, shelling, and armed clashes in northwestern Syria in September 2023, according to the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.[30] During increased hostilities in October, 27 schools in northern Syria were damaged or destroyed, according to OCHA,[31] and schools were closed.[32] Other attacks GCPEA identified included:

- On January 8, 2023, an unidentified armed group reportedly detonated an improvised explosive device near Al Buhturi School in Al Bab city, Aleppo governorate, as reported by ACLED and local media;[33] the building was allegedly damaged but no injuries were reported.

- On February 27, 2023, shelling reportedly damaged part of the fence of a non-operational school in Nayr-ab, Idlib governorate, according to ACLED and local media.[34]
- On September 5, 2023, Abu Thar al-Ghafari School in Sfuhun village, Idlib governorate, was directly hit by a rocket, which destroyed the school building, as reported by a human rights monitor.[35]
- On December 24, 2023, a shell allegedly landed in a classroom during class at Jamil Qentar Elementary School in Ein Larouz village, Idlib governorate; the shell injured one child and damaged the school building and interior furnishing, as reported by a human rights monitor.[36]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least ten attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. This represents a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 14 incidents in 2021 and three in 2020.[37]

GCPEA collected eight reports of attacks in 2022.[38] Examples included:

- On March 27, 2022, suspected members of an armed group reportedly shot at a school, wounding ten children, in Mirkan village, Aleppo governorate, as reported by ACLED and local media.[39]
- On April 4, 2022, shelling killed four male students who were on their way to school in Ma'arat al-Na'san city, Idlib governorate, as reported by the UN, ACLED, and an international media outlet.[40]
- On August 7, 2022, police reportedly assaulted a student during student protests over high exam failure rates, in Azaz city, Aleppo governorate, as reported by local media.[41]

GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2023:

- On April 13, 2023, in Al Bab city, Aleppo governorate, members of an armed group allegedly stormed a school, aimed their weapons at students, and detained one student, as reported by ACLED and a human rights monitor.[42]
- On June 4, 2023, in Al Joura neighborhood, Deir-ez-Zor city and governorate, at least one secondary school student was detained during a raid on the student accommodation center.[43]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 80 cases of the military use of schools and universities during the reporting period, an increase as compared to past years. *Education under Attack 2022* included 17 incidents of military use in 2021 and 31 incidents in 2020.[44]

The UN verified 48 cases of military use in 2022.[45] Separately, GCPEA identified 23 cases of military use in 2022.[46] Since it was unclear how many of these attacks overlapped with the UN count, they were not added to the total number, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- On June 25, 2022, armed forces allegedly seized Abdul al Salam al Ajili Primary School in Al Khatouniya village, Raqqa governorate, and used it as a military base, as reported by a human rights monitor.[47]
- As reported on February 9, 2022, and August 4, 2022, an alleged armed party reportedly occupied multiple schools in Afrin city, Aleppo governorate, for use as bases and for interrogation, according to local media reports.[48] GCPEA was unable to establish whether the occupation of these schools was continuous between February and August, or whether the schools were used sporadically.

The UN reported 33 incidents of the military use of schools in 2023.[49] Separately, GCPEA identified at least 21 cases in 2023.[50] Since it was not clear whether some of these overlapped with the UN count, they were not included in the total, to avoid double counting. Examples of incidents identified by GCPEA included:

- On June 25, 2023, in Jisr al-Shoghour city, Idlib governorate, airstrikes allegedly destroyed a school building that was being used as a base by an armed group, as reported by ACLED and a human rights monitor.[51]
- Human Rights Watch reported in August 2023 that two schools in Amuda city, Al Hasakah governorate, and Ein Issa town, Raqqa governorate, were occupied by the Russian military.[52]
- On October 8, 2023, in Abu Hamam village, Abu Kamal district, Deir-ez-Zor governorate, members of an armed group reportedly fired live ammunition when residents, including students, protested against the group using the school as their headquarters, as reported by ACLED and a human rights monitor.[53]

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

GCPEA identified at least five reports of child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school, during the 2022-2023 reporting period. No such reports were identified in the previous reporting period.[54] According to the UN, child recruitment increased during the reporting period, with almost 1,700 children verified as recruited in 2022 alone, despite a reduction in the armed conflict.[55] However, GCPEA was unable to establish how many of these incidents occurred at, or on the way to or from, school.

GCPEA collected three reports of child recruitment in 2022.[56] For example:

- A 13-year-old girl was reportedly abducted for military recruitment as she was leaving a school in Aleppo city and governorate in late March 2022, according to local media.[57]
- On June 22, 2022, members of an alleged non-state armed group reportedly abducted a 14-year-old boy for the purposes of recruitment as he was leaving a school in Aleppo city and governorate, according to local media reports.[58]

GCPEA identified two reports of child recruitment in 2023:

- In January 2023, a girl was allegedly abducted while on the way to school, for the purpose of military conscription, in Tal Ref'at, Aleppo city and governorate, as reported by a human rights monitor.[59]
- In March 2023, a female secondary school student was recruited for military purposes while on the way to school, as reported by the UN.[60]

TÜRKIYE

Attacks on education continued in Türkiye in 2022 and 2023. In addition to attacks on schools, GCPEA collected reports of attacks on school teachers and personnel. Attacks on higher education continued, mainly in the context of protest repression, with over 200 students and staff arrested or detained.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) continued to govern the country after re-election in the May 2023 general elections.[1] Media restrictions were reported ahead of the 2023 parliamentary and presidential elections, according to Human Rights Watch.[2] LGBT protests were re-pressed and over 500 civilians were detained throughout the country during LGBT events in 2022, according to Amnesty International.[3] Authorities banned women's rights marches during the reporting period and used teargas on demonstrators on International Women's Day in 2023.[4]

Armed violence increased between Turkish forces, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the People's Protection Units (YPG), a Syrian affiliate of the PKK, in southeast Türkiye, northern Iraq, and Syria.[5] In October 2023, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device near a ministry building in Ankara; a group affiliated with the PKK claimed responsibility, and the Turkish armed forces reportedly carried out airstrikes in Iraq in response.[6]

Two earthquakes in February 2023 killed over 50,000 people, injured 107,000, and required that three million people be relocated, according to OCHA.[7] Syrian refugees were impacted by the earthquakes, since approximately half of those in Türkiye lived in affected areas.[8] In March 2022, the UN reported that Türkiye continued to host 3.7 million Syrian refugees.[9] Human Rights Watch reported that Syrian refugees were deported to northern Syria during the reporting period.[10]

Following the earthquakes in February 2023, schools were closed for at least two weeks nationwide, and for several months in some affected areas.[11] Save the Children reported that the earthquakes interrupted education for almost four million children, and over 2,400 schools were damaged or destroyed.[12] In addition, schools and universities were used to provide temporary shelter and services to civilians;[13] some universities ceased in-person learning and student housing was vacated to accommodate earthquake victims.[14]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified two attacks on schools during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This was similar to the

2020-2021 reporting period, during which three attacks were reported.[15]

GCPEA identified one attack on a school in 2022. On November 21, 2022, in Karkamış, Gaziantep province, shelling reportedly hit a contiguous kindergarten, primary, and secondary school, damaging all three buildings and killing a female teacher at the secondary school, as reported by ACLED and local media *Haberturk* and *Bianet*.[16] Several other people were allegedly injured, although it was not clear whether they were students or staff at the schools or the kindergarten. The schools were closed for at least one week following the attack.[17]

GCPEA collected one attack on a school in 2023. On May 28, 2023, police reportedly used teargas and rubber bullets at Metin Bostancioğlu Primary School while forcing voters to leave the school in Cizre city, Şırnak province; it was not possible to establish whether the school sustained damages.[18]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

GCPEA identified four attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marks a similar rate as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least two incidents in 2021 and one in 2020.[19]

GCPEA identified four attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2022, all of which involved protest repression.[20] For example:

- As reported by ACLED and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, on August 30, 2022, police allegedly used pepper spray to disperse a teacher demonstration against low salaries in Çankaya district, Ankara. At least seven people were reportedly detained by police, although it was not possible to establish whether they were teachers.[21]
- On September 8, 2022, police reportedly used force to prevent over 40 teachers from reaching the Ministry of Education building in Çankaya district, Ankara, during a protest against new legislation relating to teachers, according to ACLED and local media *Cumhuriyet*.[22]
- On November 2, 2022, in Fatih district, Istanbul, police reportedly used force and detained at least one teacher during a protest against new legislation relating to teachers, according to ACLED and local media *Duvar*.[23]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel in 2023.

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

GCPEA identified at least 25 attacks on higher education during the 2022-2023 reporting period, a slight decrease as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA identified 25 such incidents in 2021, and seven in 2020.[24] Similar to previous years, incidents involved arrests, detentions, and the use of excessive force against protesting students. Scholars at Risk reported that peaceful student demonstrations over LGBT

rights and education-related grievances were met with police repression including arrests.[25]

GCPEA identified 13 attacks on higher education students and staff in 2022, during which over 100 students and staff were arrested.[26] For example:

- On May 20, 2022, at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, police reportedly arrested at least 30 students who were marching peacefully on campus towards an LGBT university club that had been closed, according to Scholars at Risk and international media outlet *AP News*.[27]
- On May 26, 2022, in Tunceli city and province, police allegedly detained 11 students from Munzur University with force, as reported by ACLED and Scholars at Risk; the students were demonstrating on campus against a politically-affiliated center at the university.[28]
- On June 10, 2022, at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, police reportedly used excessive force, including pepper balls, during an on-campus LGBT demonstration calling for equal rights, as reported by Amnesty International and Scholars at Risk.[29]
- On July 18, 2022, police allegedly arrested 20 cleaning staff who were peacefully protesting over working conditions outside Koç University in Sariyer district, Istanbul, as reported by Scholars at Risk, ACLED, and *Bianet*.[30]
- On November 8, 2022, students from Middle East Technical University held a protest in Cankaya district, Ankara, against plans to build on university land. Police reportedly beat protesters and used pepper spray to disperse the group, and arrested at least six protesters, according to Scholars at Risk and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.[31]

GCPEA identified 12 attacks on higher education students and staff in 2023, which also involved the arrest or detention of over 100 students and academics.[32] For example:

- On January 13, 2023, police reportedly detained seven students at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University in Tuşba district, Van province, during celebrations of Kurdish New Year, according to ACLED and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.[33]
- On February 17, 2023, Scholars at Risk and local media reported that police detained 22 students at Dokuz Eylul University in Konak district, Izmir province, during a demonstration against the government's decision to make university courses remote and for students to vacate state-run dormitories to provide emergency accommodation for people affected by the earthquakes.[34] In a separate incident on February 20, 2023, police reportedly detained 23 students who were protesting the same grievances in Kadıköy district, Istanbul.[35]
- On May 19, 2023, police reportedly detained students as they were leaving Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, as reported by Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.[36] Local media *Bianet* reported that students were strip-searched while in custody.[37]
- On June 9, 2023, police reportedly detained around 15 students on campus at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara; the students were engaged in a peaceful LGBT demonstration, and two students sustained injuries, as reported by Amnesty International and Scholars at Risk.[38]

UKRAINE

After the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, attacks on education in Ukraine increased significantly compared to the previous reporting period. In 2022 and 2023, at least 700 attacks on schools were reported, with the east and south particularly affected; many of the attacks involved explosive weapons including airstrikes, missile strikes, and shelling. Schools and universities were also used for military purposes during the 2022-2023 reporting period.

CONTEXT

On February 24, 2022, Russian armed forces launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[1] In the first months, fighting between Ukrainian and Russian forces occurred in many regions of Ukraine, including in the north near the capital Kyiv; however, by mid-March of that year, much of the combat was centered in eastern and southern regions of the country, as Ukrainian forces regained territory.[2] From mid-2022 through 2023, fighting involved ground combat and artillery in eastern and southern regions; in some regions, such as Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, the Ukrainian armed forces' counteroffensive met Russian forces' defensive lines, while Russian forces went on the offensive elsewhere, for instance in Bakhmut and Avdiivka cities.[3] Before the full-scale invasion, between 2014 and early 2022, Russia annexed Crimea, in the south, and fighting was confined to Donetsk and Luhansk, in the east, along the contact line between Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed armed actors.[4] During the 2022-2023 reporting period, although both parties to the conflict caused damage to civilian infrastructure, Russian forces repeatedly fired missiles targeting Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, killing civilians and leaving them without electricity, water, telecommunications, and other essential services for extended periods, according to the International Crisis Group, Human Rights Watch, and the UN.[5] The Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine documented an array of violations in several regions of Ukraine by Russian forces, including attacks on civilians, sexual violence, and forced transfers and deportations of children.[6]

The number of civilians in need of humanitarian aid reached almost 18 million in mid-2022, with nearly 15 million people still requiring assistance at the end of December 2023.[7] The UN estimated that 7.7 million people were internally displaced between February and May 2022,[8] although the number of internally displaced people decreased to around 3.7 million by December 2023.[9] Persons with disabilities and older persons faced heightened danger due to their inability to leave high-risk areas, according to Amnesty International and the UN.[10] Meanwhile, women and children made up 90 percent of those who fled conflict-affected areas.[11]

Most schools across Ukraine closed in February 2022; by June 2022, 95 percent of regional districts provided distance classes.[12] Around 5.7 million school-aged children in Ukraine experienced disruptions to learning in 2022, according to the UN.[13] Some schools were able to re-open at the start of the school year in September 2022 by putting safety measures in place, such as building bomb shelters; despite these measures, in-person

learning was still not possible in some areas due to shelling or proximity to the contact line.[14] In 2023, one-third of primary and secondary students nationwide were learning fully in-person, with one-third learning hybrid, and one-third learning entirely online.[15] However, both in person and virtual classes were disrupted by electricity cuts from bombings, and financial constraints hindered some students' access to online learning, according to media reports and the UN.[16] Amnesty International and media sources also reported that authorities in Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine imposed new syllabi and curriculum in reopened schools.[17]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

GCPEA identified around 700 attacks on schools in 2022 and 2023; the majority of these attacks involved explosive weapons, including airstrikes, rockets, and shelling. This represented a significant increase in attacks on schools compared to previous years, when GCPEA collected reports of 14 such attacks in 2021 and 17 such attacks in 2020.[18] Although most attacks occurred in eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, other regions were also affected, such as Zhytomyr in the north, where 46 schools and 20 kindergartens were reportedly damaged between February 2022 and September 2023.[19]

In 2022, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) reported that around 3,000 educational institutions were damaged or destroyed by bombing and shelling that year.[20] The Education Cluster reported that, in Kharkiv alone, about 40 percent of all educational institutions, or 304 schools and 199 kindergartens, were damaged or destroyed in 2022.[21] Reports from the MoES and Education Cluster were not included in the total number of attacks on schools to avoid double-counting and because it was unclear if all incidents met GCPEA's criteria for inclusion as attacks on education.

In 2022, the UN verified 461 attacks on schools and students or educators in Ukraine; although both Ukrainian and Russian armed forces were responsible for these attacks, the majority were perpetrated by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups.[22] Most of these attacks appeared to be on schools, rather than against students and staff. GCPEA identified individual reports of more than 215 attacks on schools in 2022.[23] Such attacks spiked in March, April, and May of that year. For example:

- On February 25, 2022, shelling damaged School No. 50 in Gorlovka city, Donetsk region, killing two teachers, according to Save the Children and an international news outlet.[24]
- On February 25, the Sonechko nursery and kindergarten in Okhtyrka town, Sumy region, was hit with cluster munitions in an attack that appeared to be carried out by Russian forces, according to Amnesty International.[25] Save the Children and media sources reported that the attack killed at least one child and two other civilians.[26]
- Amnesty International and international news outlets *PBS* and *The Guardian* reported that, on February 26, 2022, shelling struck a kindergarten and started a fire in Chernihiv city and region.[27]
- Human Rights Watch reported that, on March 1, 2022, a boarding school serving blind students was damaged by shelling in Kharkiv city and region during Russian bombing of the city. The attack injured one student and the director of the school.[28]
- The UN reported that, on March 3, 2022, two schools and several apartment buildings were destroyed in

Chernihiv city and region, likely due to airstrikes by Russian forces. The strikes killed 47 civilians.[29]
- The UN and media sources reported that, on March 20, 2022, shelling damaged School No. 36 in Mariupol city, Donetsk region.[30]
- On August 30, 2022, a kindergarten that served about 350 students was reportedly damaged in Kharkiv city and region. Several classrooms and school windows were destroyed, and two assistant teachers were injured as a result, according to media reports.[31]
- On October 2, 2022, local media reported that a secondary school in Kryvyi Rih city, Dnipropetrovsk region, was hit by a drone, damaging two floors of the building.[32]

In late 2023, the MoES reported that nearly half of the educational institutions in Kharkiv and Kherson regions had been damaged during the war, and that over 80 percent of schools had been damaged or destroyed in Donetsk region.[33] The MoES number was not included in the total number of attacks on schools to avoid double counting, and because it was unclear if all incidents met GCPEA's criteria for inclusion as attacks on education.

In 2023, the UN reported some 240 attacks on schools.[34] Separately, GCPEA identified around 155 individual reports of attacks on schools.[35] Since these reports may have overlapped with the UN count, they are not included in the total number of attacks on schools, to avoid double counting. Examples of individual reports identified by GCPEA included:

- On January 22, 2023, a school was damaged by shelling in Oleshky town, Kherson region, as reported by local media outlet *Ukrinform*.[36]
- On January 29, 2023, shelling in Kherson city and region damaged a school, as reported by the United States Agency for International Development.[37]
- On February 8, 2023, shelling reportedly damaged a kindergarten in Novoselivka village, Donetsk region, according to local media and ACLED.[38]
- On March 22, 2023, a drone reportedly struck a specialized secondary school in Rzhyshchiv village, Kyiv region, damaging dormitories and an academic building, according to local media.[39]
- On April 30, 2023, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, as cited in media outlets, reported that missile strikes damaged nine educational institutions in Pavlohrad city, Dnipropetrovsk region.[40]
- The UN and local media reported that, on August 23, 2023, a kindergarten caught fire after it was hit by an airstrike in Kherson city and region.[41]
- On August 23, 2023, a drone reportedly struck and destroyed a school in Romny city, Sumy region. The school director, deputy director, secretary, and a librarian were killed in the attack as they were in the school preparing lessons for the new academic year, according to local news outlet *Ukrainska Pravda* and international outlet *Reuters*.[42]
- On December 29, 2023, missile and drone strikes reportedly damaged three schools and a kindergarten in Lviv city and region.[43]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least six attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. In addition, *BBC* and other media sources citing the MoES reported that teachers in Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine have been tortured because they refused to teach a Russian curriculum.[44]

In 2022, GCEPA identified at least six reported attacks on education personnel.[45] Attacks involved the abduction or detention of educators who reportedly resisted the adoption of Russian curriculum. For example:

- In late March and early April 2022, four school principals were abducted after refusing to change their schools' curricula in Melitopol city, Zaporizhzhia region, according to local media sources and a human rights group.[46]
- As reported in late September 2022, a head teacher in the village of Ivanivka, Kherson region, was detained for 19 days, due to her refusal to adopt a Russian curriculum. According to international media outlet *BBC*, she was beaten while in detention.[47]

GCPEA did not identify any attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2023.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified at least 67 reports of the military use of schools and universities during the 2022-2023 reporting period. This marked a significant increase compared to previous years in which GCPEA identified only sporadic incidents.[48] GCPEA identified reports of armed forces from both sides of the conflict using schools and universities for military purposes,[49] although more reports identified Russian forces and affiliated armed groups as the perpetrator. In several cases, rival forces subsequently targeted the school or university being used, according to media outlets and human rights organizations.[50]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 60 incidents of military use of schools and universities.[51] Separately, the UN reported the use of 23 schools for military purposes that year, with Russian forces and affiliated armed groups perpetrating the majority of cases.[52] Since it was unclear how many of these cases overlapped with reports that GCPEA collected, they were not included in the total number of military use incidents, to avoid double counting. A media outlet reported that, in Zaporizhzhia region, schools were partially occupied while students continued learning in the buildings.[53] Examples of military use of educational facilities included:

- Human Rights Watch and international media outlets reported that from early March until March 29, 2022, Russian forces used both a lyceum and kindergarten as a military base and hospital in Bohdanivka village, Kyiv region.[54]
- Between February 24 and early March, Ukrainian Territorial Defense Force members used School No. 11, located nearby a kindergarten, in Izium city, Kharkiv region, as a base until Russians troops advanced on the city in early March 2022, according to interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch.[55]

- Human Rights Watch reported that Russian forces used a school in Yahidne village, Chernihiv region, as a military base and detention center for 28 days in March and April 2022, holding more than 350 villagers in the basement, including at least 70 children. Ten older people died there during that time due to sickness or the poor conditions.[56]
- In late April 2022, School No. 12, which served about 600 students, was used as a base, in Izium city, Kharkiv region. *The New York Times* reported that, around April 30, opposing forces targeted the school, killing approximately 200 soldiers stationed there.[57]
- On May 21, 2022, a Russian airstrike damaged a university in Bakhmut city, Donetsk region, which was being used as a base by Ukrainian forces, as reported by Amnesty International.[58]
- On May 27, 2022, Russian forces seized Dmytro Motornyi Tavria State Agrotechnological University and Bohdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, in Melitopol city, Zaporizhzhia region, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[59]
- In early September 2022, a school in Orlianske village, Zaporizhzhia region, was reportedly used as a military base on one floor, with military equipment stored in the yard, while school instruction continued on the second floor.[60]
- Human Rights Watch reported that, between March and early September 2022, Russian forces used School No. 10 as a base, positioning military vehicles outside, in Izium city, Kharkiv region. Upon leaving the school, Russian forces reportedly looted it.[61]

GCPEA identified seven incidents of military use of schools or universities in 2023.[62] Separately, the UN verified the military use of two schools.[63] Since the UN count may have overlapped with the reports identified by GCPEA, it was not included in the total, to avoid double counting. For example:

- Around January 30, 2023, a kindergarten in Tavrichesky town, near Skadovsky city, Kherson region, was used as a military hospital, according to local media.[64]
- Around March 18, 2023, a school in Polohy city, Zaporizhzhia region, was reportedly used as a military field hospital, according to local media outlets.[65]
- Around March 22, 2023, a kindergarten located in Vesele village, near Melitopol city, Zaporizhzhia region, was used as a military hospital, according to local media outlets.[66]
- Around April 12, 2023, at least two educational institutions in Skadovsk city, Kherson region, were reportedly used as military bases while students attended classes, according to local media outlets.[67]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

For the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 39 incidents of attacks on higher education in Ukraine, the majority of which were attacks on higher education facilities while the remainder were attacks on students and staff. These incidents took place primarily in Kharkiv and Donetsk regions. Attacks on higher education increased significantly in 2022 and 2023 as compared to the previous reporting period, during which GCPEA did not identify any reports of attacks on higher education.[68]

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 34 reported incidents of attacks on higher education, which included two

attacks on higher education students and personnel.[69] Separately, the MoES reported that, as of December 24, 2022, the "property and premises" of 95 research or higher education institutions had been damaged.[70] Specifically in Kharkiv, 21 out of the 24 higher education institutions had been damaged or destroyed as of July 13, 2022, according to local media citing the MoES.[71] These numbers are not included in the total number of incidents to avoid double counting and because it was unclear whether all the damage met GCPEA's criteria of attacks on education. Examples of attacks on higher education facilities in 2022 included:

- On March 2, 2022, a Russian missile strike destroyed the Faculty of Economics at V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, in Kharkiv city and region, according to Scholars at Risk.[72]
- On March 3, 2022, *PBS* reported that shelling damaged a dormitory and stadium at the University of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine in Irpin city, Kyiv region.[73]
- On July 6, 2022, a Russian missile strike hit the H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University in Kharkiv city and region, reportedly killing a campus security guard and destroying several buildings on the campus, including the main building and the science library, according to Scholars at Risk and a local media outlet.[74]
- On both August 17 and 19, 2022, Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University in Mykolaiv city and region was damaged by rockets fired by Russian forces, according to Scholars at Risk and media sources.[75]
- *PBS* reported that, around September 19, 2022, the Bakhmut Medical College campus was shelled and partially damaged, in Bakhmut city, Donetsk region.[76]
- Amnesty International and local media outlets reported that, on October 10, 2022, Russian forces damaged a building of the Kyiv National Shevchenko University during missile strikes on Kyiv city and region.[77]
- On November 1, 2022, shelling in Mykolaiv city and region reportedly damaged the Mykolaiv Polytechnic Vocational College.[78]

GCPEA identified two attacks on higher education staff in 2022:

- On June 4, 2022, Russian forces detained the dean of the Agronomy Faculty at Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University for two days, in Kherson city and region, as reported by Scholars at Risk.[79]
- Scholars at Risk and media outlets reported that, around June 14, 2022, Russian forces detained the vice-rector of Kherson State University for a week before releasing him, in Kherson city and region.[80]

In 2023, GCPEA identified five attacks on higher education, all of which were attacks on facilities.[81] For instance:

- On January 8, 2023, two college dormitories were reportedly damaged by a missile strike in Kramatorsk city, Donetsk region, according to *Reuters* and the *Associated Press*.[82]
- On February 5, 2023, a missile strike in Kharkiv city and region reportedly damaged the Beketov National University of Urban Economy building and injured a campus security guard.[83]
- On October 12, 2023, shelling in Kherson city and region damaged a building at Kherson State University, according to local media outlets.[84]

YEMEN

At least 55 attacks on schools and higher education facilities occurred during the 2022-2023 reporting period, many involving the use of explosive weapons, including airstrikes, shelling, and the emplacement of improvised explosive devices. Around 100 educational facilities were also used for military purposes. In addition, GCPEA identified reports of child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, educational institutions.

CONTEXT

Conflict continued in Yemen during the 2022-2023 reporting period, despite a six months-long truce. Houthi forces (also known as Ansar Allah) controlled much of the north and west of Yemen, including Sana'a; the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen (IRG), supported by the Saudi- and United Arab Emirates-led Coalition (the Coalition), controlled parts of the south and much of the east; and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), an Emirati-backed group, controlled much of the rest of the south of the country.[1] In April 2022, IRG President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi resigned and transferred power to a Presidential Leadership Council, which was made up of influential leaders from across Yemen who were opposed to the Houthis, as reported by Amnesty International, International Crisis Group, and media outlets.[2] Fighting escalated in early 2022;[3] however, in April of that year, Houthi forces and the IRG agreed to a UN-mediated truce that included the cessation of military activities.[4] The two-month truce was extended twice and ended in October 2022, although it largely endured in practice through the end of the reporting period.[5] Fighting, and violations against civilians, including children, decreased during the six-month truce;[6] however, political violence and human rights abuses persisted, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and a local human rights organization.[7] In December 2023, the parties to the conflict agreed to implement a ceasefire and take steps toward resuming the peace process led by the UN.

In January 2022, the Coalition conducted three airstrikes that killed at least 80 civilians, including three children, as well as damaging civilian buildings, according to Human Rights Watch.[8] Houthi forces conducted ground strikes across Yemen which resulted in civilian casualties and forced displacement during the reporting period;[9] in July 2022, the non-state armed group reportedly shelled a neighborhood in Taizz city, killing one child and injuring eleven.[10] Save the Children reported that the highest number of weekly child casualties over a two-year period in Yemen occurred in July 2022;[11] that year, landmines and unexploded ordnance were responsible for more than half of all child casualties.[12] In addition, state forces and non-state armed groups recruited or used 105 children in 2022, according to the UN.[13]

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, Yemen continued to experience an acute humanitarian crisis, with 21.6 million people in need of aid, including 11.1 million children.[14] However, movement restrictions inhibited access to humanitarian support, disproportionately affecting women.[15] In 2023, 4.5 million people were inter-

nally displaced, according to the UN.[16] The economy further contracted in 2022 and 2023, and drought and floods compounded the humanitarian crisis.[17]

Conflict and natural disasters continued to impact education during the 2022-2023 reporting period. Around 2.7 million children were out of school in 2022 and 2023, around half of whom were girls.[18] Between 2015 and 2022, 2,783 schools were damaged or not used for educational purposes, and around 368 others were affected by floods in 2022 alone, further hindering access to education.[19] In addition, more than 155,000 teachers continued to work without receiving salary payments in 2022 and 2023.[20]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 47 reported attacks on schools in Yemen. Attacks included airstrikes, shelling, the use of other explosive weapons, raids, and crossfire. This represents a similar number of attacks on schools as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA collected 20 and 28 reports of such attacks in 2021 and 2020, respectively.[21]

In 2022, GCPEA collected at least 21 reports of attacks on schools.[22] Separately, the UN verified seven attacks on schools, students, or teachers.[23] In addition, a human rights organization reported 106 attacks on schools and incidents of military use of educational facilities, primarily perpetrated by the Houthis, followed by the IRG and the Coalition.[24] However, the UN and rights organization-reported incidents were not included in the total for this attack category, since it was unclear how many incidents were attacks on schools, rather than attacks on protected persons or military use. Examples of incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- On January 2, 2022, an airstrike hit a school in the Sawad Asr area of Maain district, Sana'a, according to the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP).[25]
- Artillery shells struck Al Huda School in Maqbanah district, Taizz governorate, on January 19, 2022, killing one student and injuring six others, as reported by CIMP and *Al Masdar*.[26]
- On February 19, 2022, a drone equipped with explosives hit Al Wahdah School in Hareb district, Mareb governorate, killing three students, according to *Arab News*, *Khabar Agency*, and ACLED.[27]
- Unidentified gunmen raided Salah Ad Din School in Salh district, Taizz governorate, in August and September 2022, as reported by ACLED and news outlet *Al Masdar*.[28]
- On October 26, 2022, a Houthi-made explosive device was found within 50 meters of Al-Kifah School in Hays district, Taizz governorate, according to the Panel of Experts on Yemen. A non-governmental organization safely disposed of the device. The name of the location was not detailed in the report.[29]
- On December 28, 2022, a grenade was thrown into a school in the Musayk neighborhood of Sana'a, causing damage to the building but no casualties, according to CIMP.[30]

In 2023, GCPEA collected at least 26 reports of attacks on schools.[31] Separately, the UN reported 20 attacks on schools.[32] A human rights organization also reported 144 attacks on schools and incidents of military use of schools, perpetrated primarily by the Houthis, followed by the IRG, STC, and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.[33] However, the UN count and rights organization-reported incidents were not included in the total to

avoid double counting, and since it was unclear how many incidents were attacks on schools, rather than military use, in the latter case. Examples of incidents collected by GCPEA included:

- On March 19, 2023, an explosive device was reportedly dropped from a drone on An Nur School in Ar Rawn village, Al Hudaydah governorate.[34]
- Parties to conflict reportedly clashed near Muhammad Ali Uthman School in the Wadi al Qadhi area of Taizz city and governorate on March 20, 2023, according to Yemen Data Project as cited in ACLED.[35]
- On April 21, 2023, shellfire struck a school in Hays district, Al Hudaydah governorate, injuring a boy, as reported by CIMP. GCPEA could not determine whether the child was a student at the school.[36]
- On May 28, 2023, parties to the conflict reportedly clashed near Arwa School in Ataq city, Shabwa governorate.[37]
- On November 1, 2023, a drone strike hit near a school in Qa'atabah district, Ad Dali, governorate, killing one boy student and injuring at least eight others, according to CIMP and ACLED.[38]

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA collected 26 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel. These incidents involved the killing, abduction, or injury of over 25 school students and personnel. Such attacks increased as compared to the previous reporting period, when at least seven and six incidents were collected in 2021 and 2020 respectively.[39]

In 2022, GCPEA identified eight reports of attacks on school students and staff.[40] For example:

- Gunmen allegedly shot at a school vehicle taking students to classes on August 23, 2022, in Ibb city and governorate, as reported by international media outlet *Al Masdar*.[41]
- On October 10, 2022, an alleged armed group attacked several teachers in front of their students in a school in Khanabah village, Ibb governorate, after the teachers declined to participate in celebrations organized by the group, as reported by news outlet *Al Maqea Post*.[42]
- Save the Children reported that, on October 29, 2022, a shell struck an alley in Taizz city and governorate while three students were on their way home from school. The explosion caused two of the children to lose legs while the third child was hit by shrapnel in his stomach, arm, and leg.[43]
- In late December 2022, the principal of Ar Rawn School was reportedly abducted in Kusmah district, Raymah governorate, after the administration refused to incorporate a Houthi curriculum.[44]

GCPEA collected 18 reported attacks on school students and staff in 2023.[45] Abductions and detentions were the most common forms of attack, while others involved threats, small arms fire, or the use of explosive weapons. For instance:

- On January 7, 2023, two girl students were reportedly abducted from Naimah School in Naimah village, Lahj governorate. The principal was also injured for attempting to stop the abduction.[46]
- A drone reportedly dropped an explosive device on a road in Uzlat al Majanih region, Ad Dali governorate,

on February 14, 2023, killing one student and injuring two others while they were on their way to school.[47]

- Several teachers were allegedly detained by IRG-affiliate forces in Jajd al Bard school in Al Maqatirah district, Lahj governorate, as reported by Yemen Data Project and ACLED.[48]
- On October 8, 2023, the leader of a teachers' union was abducted from his home in Sana'a after the union made demands for the payment of teachers and other public employees, as reported by international media outlet *Arab News*.[49]
- On October 19, 2023, a student was reportedly injured by crossfire on his way home from school in Ibb city and governorate. The day before, a teacher was hit by a bullet and injured after leaving a different school south of the same city.[50]

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

In the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 99 incidents of schools used for military purposes. In comparison, Education under Attack 2022, which covered 2020 and 2021, included at least 49 cases of military use.[51]

In 2022, the UN verified the military use of 67 schools, perpetrated by the parties to the conflict including the Houthis and the Yemen Armed Forces.[52] Separately, a human rights organization reported 121 cases of schools used for military purposes between September 2021 and August 2022.[53] In addition, the same organization documented 20 incidents of military use perpetrated by the Houthis during the truce in fighting between April 2 and October 2, 2022, in governorates including Taizz, Raymah, Ibb, Amran, and Sa'ada.[54] However, these counts were not included in the total number of military use incidents for this reporting period, since it was unclear how many occurred in 2022, rather than 2021, in the first instance, and because some incidents may have overlapped with the UN count.

In 2023, the UN reported the military use of 32 schools.[55] Separately, GCPEA identified approximately seven individual reports of military use that year;[56] these reports were not included in the total since they may have overlapped with the UN count. For instance:

- In early April 2023, a school was allegedly used as a detention center in Wadi al Hasin region, Taizz governorate.[57]
- Around September 2023, two schools were reportedly closed and occupied in Hubaysh Junction area and Al Ma'ayen town in Ibb governorate.[58]
- In late 2023, a military checkpoint was established near a girls' school in Al Akisha district, Taizz governorate, as reported by local media outlets *Yemeni Education News Network* and *Al Ayyam*.[59]
- In late 2023, several schools in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah governorates were allegedly turned into military training centers.[60]

CHILD RECRUITMENT AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least three reports of child recruitment at school. Education under Attack 2022 included several reports detailing child recruitment or indoctrination at schools or along school routes.[61]

In mid-January 2022, two boy students, aged ten and 12, were recruited from their school in Sana'a for use as fighters, as reported by ACLED and local news outlet Al Masdar.[62] In addition, the UN reported that Houthi members recruited children by threatening their teachers, in a report covering December 2021 to March 2022.[63]

In late 2023, students were reportedly recruited from secondary schools in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah governorates, according to local media outlet Al Mashhad Al Yemeni.[64]

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT, OR ON THE WAY TO OR FROM, SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

GCPEA collected one report of sexual violence at, or en route to, school and university during the 2022-2023 reporting period. In December 2022, a member of an alleged armed party abducted a girl student while she returned home from school in Sana'a with the purpose of forcing her to marry him, as reported by ACLED and news outlets Mareb Press and Tihama 24.[65]

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified 18 incidents of attacks on higher education. Of these, more than half were attacks on higher education facilities and the remainder included attacks on higher education students or staff. Reported attacks on higher education appear to have increased slightly in 2022 as compared to 2021, when GCPEA collected six such reports. However, the number of identified attacks declined compared to 2020, when 18 such attacks were identified.[66]

In 2022, GCPEA collected ten reports of attacks on higher education.[67] The attacks on university facilities primarily involved the use of explosive weapons, while attacks on higher education students or staff included abduction and protest repression. For example:

- On January 15, 2022, an airstrike hit a vocational institute in Al-Sawma'ah district, Bayda governorate, according to the Yemen Data Project and CIMP.[68]
- On January 20, 2022, Houthi forces beat and arrested students during an on-campus demonstration at Sana'a University in Sana'a, as reported by Scholars at Risk and news outlet Al Arabiya.[69]
- On May 31, 2022, artillery shells struck the College of Literature in Taizz city and governorate, injuring one female student, according to local news outlet *Yeni Yemen* and ACLED.[70]
- On June 27, 2022, Houthi forces entered the Faculty of Arts at Dhamar University, Dhamar city and gov-

ernorate, assaulting personnel and damaging the university, as reported by Scholars at Risk and *Sahafaty* news outlet.[71]

- On December 8, 2022, members of an alleged armed party stormed a dormitory and reportedly abducted two students from the College of Oils and Minerals in Ataq city, Shabwa governorate.[72]

In 2023, GCPEA collected eight reports of attacks on higher education.[73] For instance:

- Clashes between alleged armed parties reportedly broke out near Taizz University in Taizz city and governorate on January 22, 2023.[74]
- On April 4, 2023, an improvised explosive device reportedly detonated near National University in Taizz city and governorate.[75]
- On May 24, 2023, a professor was reportedly shot and killed in Juban town, Ad Dali governorate.[76]
- Members of a defense force affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council stormed a student dormitory in Ataq city, Shabwa governorate, where they detained students on August 30, 2023, according to Scholars at Risk and a media report.[77]
- On October 4, 2023, armed men allegedly fired live bullets into the air to disperse students demonstrating at the College of Medicine at Dhamar University in Dhamar city and governorate. The students were reportedly protesting over the murder of a peer, according to media outlet *Yemen Shabab*.[78]

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

1   A systematic pattern was defined as ten reported attacks on education or military use of educational facilities in 2021 and 2022 combined.

2   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; and attacks on higher education.

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