KENYA

Attacks on education by al-Shabaab killed more than 150 people in Kenya. Most of the victims were students at Garissa University, where the armed group perpetrated one of the most globally high-profile attacks on higher education during the 2013-2017 reporting period. Police and private security guards reportedly used excessive force against school and university student protesters, killing several students and injuring many more.

Context

Kenya experienced growing insecurity after 2011, when the country sent troops to fight the Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin, commonly known as al-Shabaab, a Somali armed group that became affiliated with al Qaeda in 2012, in Somalia. In Kenya, al-Shabaab sought to pressure the government to withdraw its armed forces from Somalia.[1259]

The Kenyan government responded by increasing the powers of police and security, passing legislation that curtailed civil rights, and targeting human rights organizations, the media, and Somali refugee communities.[1260] Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International both noted that Kenyan government representatives harassed civil society activists and journalists.[1261] Human Rights Watch also obtained reports that the police perpetrated sexual violence against women and girls after President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election in August 2017. However, such acts had also occurred after the 2007-2008 election, and impunity continued one decade later.[1262]

Kenya's security challenges negatively affected education. According to international media, almost 700 teachers in the county of Mandera in the northeast, near the highly insecure Kenya-Somalia border, did not report for duty at the start of 2015 due to attacks by al-Shabaab that killed many, including teachers.[1263] Instead, they went on strike, demanding that the government transfer them to safer posts.[1264] As part of a security crackdown on perceived extremism and opposition, security forces entered homes, mosques, and Islamic schools, among other civilian properties, and questioned teachers, among others.[1265]

Attacks on education were reported between 2013 and 2017 with similar frequency to what was reported from 2009 to mid-2013, with a slight uptick in attacks on schools in 2017, due to al-Shabaab's increased activity that year. In many cases, the perpetrators were unknown, and it is possible that some incidents included in this profile were not linked to armed groups. However, al-Shabaab was increasingly active in Kenya during the reporting period.

Kenya endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in June 2015.

Attacks on schools

Almost a dozen attacks on schools occurred in Kenya between 2013 and 2017, including IED detonations and arson. Unknown assailants reportedly carried out the majority of the attacks before 2016, while al-Shabaab became more active in the education context from that year into 2017, when reports of attacks on schools increased.

According to local media sources, there were explosive or arson attacks on at least five schools in 2013 and 2014. For example:

- On February 16, 2013, an explosion occurred at a primary school in Garissa city while the unidentified attacker was planting the device. Authorities suspected that the explosive had been intended to target a presidential election rally to be held at the school the next day.[1266]
- A device exploded near a primary school being used as a polling station in Mandera town on March 4, 2013.[1267]
- Unidentified perpetrators threw an explosive device at a school in Mombasa county on February 5, 2014, damaging the building.[1268]
- According to media sources, on February 10, 2014, assailants attacked the Saint Charles Mutego School in the Dagoreti area of Nairobi county and held students hostage. The attackers killed one student, wounded at least 40 others, and kidnapped an unknown number.[1269]
- Another explosive device was found on the playground of a primary school in Garissa county on May 5, 2014.[1270]

No other attacks on schools were recorded until November 22, 2016, when media sources reported that unknown gunmen opened fire on Abaqkorey High School in Wajir county.[1271] Responsibility for the attack was unconfirmed, but media sources speculated that al-Shabaab may have been the perpetrator, given Wajir's location bordering Somalia and the recent occurrence of cross-border raids by the group.[1272]

Such cases continued and increased into 2017. Several attacks on schools occurred that year, the majority perpetrated by al-Shabaab, and one tribal dispute led to a school being caught in the crossfire. For example:

- Local media reported that on February 15, 2017, gunmen opened fire on Kapindasum Primary School in Arabal location, Baringo county. The attack happened as teachers and students were leaving the school. One teacher was killed and another injured. Police believed the incident was part of territorial disputes between the Pokot and Tugen ethnic groups.[1273]

- Local and international media sources reported that on June 1, 2017, members of al-Shabaab attacked a school in Fafi, Garissa county, setting the building on fire, killing one teacher, and kidnapping another. The attack prompted an unspecified number of teachers who were working in the area but were from other parts of Kenya to migrate back to their hometowns, as they feared for their safety.[1274]

- According to local media, on July 5, 2017, members of al-Shabaab attacked Pandanguo village in Lamu county, causing damage to a school and other civilian infrastructure.[1275]

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

Throughout the 2013 to 2017 reporting period, government forces, unidentified assailants, and al-Shabaab targeted students and teachers in at least nine killings and kidnappings. In a few cases, police used excessive force against student and teacher protesters who were demonstrating to call attention to bad school conditions and to protest other education-related policies. These attacks occurred at a rate of between two and four per year between 2013 and 2017, most in the form of abductions and other physical violence by al-Shabaab and unknown armed assailants. Attacks affected more than 100 students, teachers, and other personnel between 2013 and 2017, compared to just over a dozen between 2009 and mid-2013.

Non-state armed groups and unknown perpetrators were responsible for violent attacks on and kidnappings of school-related personnel in 2013. Teachers were particularly affected. Media reports showed that, in early 2013, there was a series of attacks by al-Shabaab along the Kenya-Somalia border in Garissa county, which included the killing of at least one teacher.[1276] Because of the widespread targeting of teachers, the Kenya National Union of Teachers asked teachers in approximately 20 schools to leave the area until the government guaranteed their safety.[1277]

Police and al-Shabaab were each responsible for one incident that affected students and teachers in 2014:

- On June 17, 2014, police shot and killed a secondary school student in Maili Tisa town, Kajiado county. According to the US Department of State and media sources, the students were protesting bad school conditions, including the lack of teachers, textbooks, and a school bus.[1278]

- On November 22, 2014, local and international media sources documented an incident in which al-Shabaab gunmen shot 28 passengers on a bus traveling from the Kenya-Somalia border region to Nairobi. Seventeen of those killed were teachers who were travelling home for the holidays. They were among a group of people who were singled out because of their non-Muslim identities. Most of those killed were shot multiple times in the back.[1279]

In 2015, there was one incident in which state forces responded violently to students who were protesting and three cases of teacher abductions, although it was not always clear whether these individuals were kidnapped because they were education personnel. Al-Shabaab and state security forces were each responsible for at least one abduction, which included the following:

- The UN and international media reported that on January 19, 2015, approximately 40 police officers used batons, teargas, and dogs against a group of approximately 100 people, including school children as young as seven years old, as well as parents, teachers, and activists, all of whom were protesting the government's appropriation

of school playground land at Langata Road Primary School in Nairobi. At least 10 students were hospitalized for injuries, including teargas exposure.[1280]

- According to local media, on April 24, 2015, suspected members of al-Shabaab kidnapped two teachers in Mandera county and took them to Somalia.[1281]

- Human Rights Watch found that government security forces arrested a Quranic teacher at his school on July 8, 2015, and his body was later found buried in a shallow grave in Omar Jillow Location, Mandera county.[1282]

- Local and international media reported that, approximately six months later, on October 12, 2015, assailants from al-Shabaab kidnapped a Kenyan female teacher from Hagadera refugee camp in Dadaab, Garissa county. Kenya Defence Forces, backed by their counterparts from the Somali National Army, successfully rescued the teacher in Somalia four days later.[1283]

There were no reported cases of attacks on students or education personnel in 2016. In 2017, there were three reports of attacks on students or education personnel, including one abduction, one killing of students on their way to school, and one raid on a madrassa:

- Local and international media reported that on March 2, 2017, three gunmen entered the Udha Academy in Hagadera refugee camp, Dadaab, and shot twice into the air before kidnapping three teachers.[1284]

- On June 27, 2017, police offered to transport 14 students from Mararani to Kiunga, Lamu county, as they made their way back to school after Eid celebrations. The police truck hit a land mine and was then shot at by suspected members of al-Shabaab. Four students were killed and five injured in the incident.[1285]

- On December 19, 2017, Kenyan police arrested 95 students and two teachers from a madrassa in Likoni, Mombasa county, accusing the school of indoctrinating children and youth with extremist ideology.[1286] *Reuters* reported that police stated that the students would be released one at a time after they were interrogated.[1287]

Military use of schools

According to Human Rights Watch, in July 2014, government security forces were using Pandanguo Primary School in Lamu county, as a base.[1288] Around that same time, there were media reports that gunmen burned down the office, library, and the house of a teacher at the school.[1289] The school was later closed in 2017 and the students and teachers transferred to other schools because of increased insecurity in the area.[1290] A similar case of military use was documented in one school in *Education under Attack 2014*.

Child recruitment at, or en route to or from, school

Throughout the reporting period, violent extremist groups and individuals associated with them were accused of recruiting students from schools, although there was little direct evidence to substantiate these reports. During 2013, for example, international and local media reported that al-Shabaab was using secondary schools and Islamic schools in Nairobi and Mombasa to radicalize and recruit students, but they did not provide specifics.[1291] Similarly, in October 2015, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea noted that it had received general reports of al-Shabaab recruiting children from madrassas in Kenya and using them for both support functions and in direct combat.[1292]

In *Education under Attack 2014,* child recruitment in Kenya was documented only in 2013, and the same information is included in this report. Therefore, the additional incidents of child recruitment reported after 2013 may represent increased reporting, more activity by al-Shabaab, or a combination of the two.

In several cases between 2013 and 2017, teachers were accused, convicted, and sentenced for indoctrinating and recruiting their students. For example:

- A news source reported in November 2014 that a student in Nairobi told his mother that his science teacher had taught his class how to dismantle and reassemble a gun and shoot at targets.[1293]

- Local media reported that on June 19, 2015, a teacher at Gandini Primary School in Kaloleini, Kilifi county, was accused of recruiting seven students between the ages of 4 and 16, after allegedly urging them to fight non-Muslims.[1294]

- Six months later, international media sources documented an incident in which the same teacher at Gandini Primary School was arrested and charged with radicalizing children and being affiliated with al-Shabaab. On January 7, 2016, the teacher was acquitted of being affiliated with al-Shabaab but found guilty of attempting to radicalize children. He received a 20-year prison sentence.[1295]

Attacks on higher education

Attacks on higher education occurred at a rate of between one and three per year during the current reporting period. This was more frequent than during the period covered by *Education under Attack 2014,* when only one attack on higher education was reported. These incidents affected university students most heavily and primarily took the form of excessive use of police force against student demonstrations. There were anecdotal reports that cases in which police killed university students took place throughout the second half of the reporting period, but these cases were not commonly reported, and it was unclear how often they occurred.[1296]

However, the most high-profile attack on higher education was an al-Shabaab attack on Garissa University College. On April 2, 2015, five gunmen from al-Shabaab forcibly entered the university campus, shot students in their dormitories, and took other students hostage. The assailants targeted non-Muslim students, killing 147 people and injuring more than 79, the majority of whom were students.[1297]

Over the course of the reporting period, police killed, injured, and arrested university student demonstrators on six different dates, according to local and international media reports.[1298] For example:

- On November 3, 2013, police shot and killed a university student during protests near Laikipia University in the town of Nyahururu. He and other students were protesting the killing of another student by a speeding police car near the university. The group of students stopped traffic, set the implicated police car on fire, and threw stones at police. In response, police launched teargas canisters at the students and reportedly fired live ammunition, killing one student who was enrolled in Chuka University in Meru.[1299]

- Scholars at Risk and the media also reported that on December 14, 2013, police shot and killed another university student during violent protests at the University of Nairobi. The students threw stones at cars and damaged property as they protested the custodial death of a fellow student who had been arrested on suspicion of committing arson on university property. The police intervened by firing teargas canisters and live ammunition, killing one of the protesters and injuring another.[1300]

- According to local media, police shot and killed a Mount Kenya University student in Thika on March 6, 2015, while he was taking part in a demonstration against the killing of another student by common criminals.[1301]

- According to local media, on January 21, 2016, police arrested 15 Laikipia University students following a violent strike on the streets of Nyahururu town. The students were protesting a recommendation by the Commission of University Education to close the town campus. Police said that the protest was illegal and used teargas to disperse the students, leaving scores injured. However, the students said they had notified the police of the plans for a peaceful demonstration. The majority of those arrested were female.[1302]

There was one attack on university personnel in 2017. On October 10, 2017, gunmen killed two university staff members, when they fired on vehicles carrying them and students to campus. The identify of the gunmen was not clear.[1303]

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