DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Attacks on schools, including widespread looting, damage or destruction of facilities, and fear of abduction and recruitment by armed groups contributed to children missing out on education, particularly in the eastern provinces.\textsuperscript{635}

CONTEXT

Recurring conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), exacerbated by the struggle to control mineral resources in the east and south, has left more than 5 million dead since 1997.\textsuperscript{636} A 2003 peace agreement integrated many former belligerents into a unified national army – the Congolese Army (FARDC) – and created a power-sharing government, but conflict continued in the east. Since then, the main protagonists have been the Congolese Army; the Hutu-led Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR); the Congolese Tutsi-led National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), which subsequently became a political party in 2009 and no longer exists as an armed group; several other armed ‘local defence’ groups known as the Mai Mai; and, from April 2012 to November 2013, the largely Tutsi-led rebel group M23. The Ugandan rebel-group the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has also been fighting in the north since 2006.\textsuperscript{637}

School closures in conflict areas, damage of educational facilities, fear of abduction by armed groups and widespread displacement have led to many children and young people missing out on education in the east.\textsuperscript{638}

The country’s vast size and the remoteness of many of the places where attacks occur, combined with ongoing insecurity, make it difficult to accurately monitor attacks. Many of the areas where they have occurred are not accessible by road, and armed groups are still in control. However, since the conflict began, significant incidents of forced recruitment from schools and along school routes, shooting or abduction of students and staff, sexual violence committed en route to and from school, looting and burning of schools, occupation of education buildings by military forces and armed groups, and persecution of academics have been documented.\textsuperscript{639}

In 2011, gross primary enrolment in DRC was 105 per cent, gross secondary enrolment was 43 per cent and gross tertiary enrolment was 8 per cent.\textsuperscript{640} Adult literacy was 67 per cent in 2010.\textsuperscript{641}

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

Attacks on education during 2009-2012 mostly occurred in the eastern provinces, where rebel groups and the Congolese Army were active. From October 2008 to December 2009, the UN reported 51 attacks on schools by armed forces and armed groups.\textsuperscript{642} In 2010, at least 14 schools were attacked,\textsuperscript{643} while in 2011 the UN recorded 53 incidents against schools and health centres.\textsuperscript{644} Of these, the FDLR was responsible for 21 cases of destruction and looting, and Mai Mai groups for six, but the Congolese Army and the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-Nalu) were also responsible for some incidents.\textsuperscript{645}

In 2012, the reported number of attacks increased significantly, due mainly to fighting between FARDC and M23 forces and the activities of other armed groups who took advantage of the security vacuum created by the army’s focus on the M23. At least 561 incidents of looting and damage, affecting 548 primary schools and 13 secondary schools in North
and South Kivu, were reported by local protection monitors – although the percentage damaged during targeted attacks or military use was not specifically indicated, and not all cases could be confirmed. 646 As of March 2013, the Education Cluster had received 133 reports of schools affected by looting and damage in North Kivu in which the presence or activity of armed forces or armed groups was noted, including the Congolese Army, the FDLR, the M23 and several Mai Mai groups. 647 During attacks on two schools in Haut-Uélé district in January 2012, 10 classrooms were set on fire by alleged LRA elements. 648

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

Two incidents of attacks on students or education personnel were reported. On 4 October 2011, seven education workers belonging to the Banyamulenge ethnic group were killed near Fizi, South Kivu, in an ethnically-driven attack by Mai Mai Yakutumba fighters while on their way to lead a one-month teacher training programme, and on 13 November 2012, shots fired by soldiers and police reportedly killed four primary school students and injured nine others in Kantine during a student march. 650

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

There was widespread military use of schools in 2012, particularly as temporary barracks or bases. Schools were occupied or used by the Congolese Army as well as the FDLR, Mai Mai groups and other militia. 651 In Katanga province, where confrontations between Mai Mai militias and FARDC were ongoing, some 64 schools were reported to have been occupied by armed groups as of March 2013. 652 Soldiers from the Congolese Army reportedly occupied 42 primary and secondary schools in Minova, South Kivu, and Bweremana, North Kivu, for varying lengths of time from 20 November 2012 until at least 24 December, preventing at least 1,100 children from going to school. 654 They used chairs and desks as firewood and looted offices and stores, seriously damaging a majority of the schools they occupied. 655

Child recruitment and sexual violence at, or en route to or from, schools

A range of armed groups and the Congolese army have recruited children and some of the recruitment has taken place at schools. In April 2009, schools in the northern Masisi-Walikale border zone were temporarily closed in response to threats of recruitment by Mai Mai forces. 656 Ongoing recruitment of children and threats of re-recruitment, including from schools in Masisi and Rutshuru territories in 2010 by former CNDP elements integrated within FARDC, were also documented. 657 In November, ex-CNDP FARDC members who refused to leave North Kivu despite government orders reportedly visited schools and demanded lists of recently demobilized children. 658 Between 19 April and 4 May 2012, M23 rebels forcibly recruited at least 48 boys around Kilolirwe, Kingi, Kabati and other locations on the road to Kitchanga, in Masisi, North Kivu province, according to Human Rights Watch; some of them were recruited at schools or on the way to or from school. 659 On 19 April 2012, near Kingi, Masisi territory, M23 forces rounded up at least 32 male students at Mapendano secondary school. 660

At least one incident of sexual violence was perpetrated on the road from a school. On 25 June 2009, a Congolese army colonel in South Kivu allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl on her way back from school, and forced her to follow him on his redeployment after he learned she was pregnant – although she eventually managed to escape. 661
ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

There were two reported incidents involving higher education. In January 2011, university students protesting insecurity on the campus of the University of Kinshasa, following the murders of two of their classmates, clashed with police. The university administration reported three deaths resulting from police gunfire, though police said there were only injuries, and several buildings and vehicles were looted or set on fire. Student protests over tuition fee increases in April 2011 also resulted in the damage of administrative buildings and the deaths of a science student and a security guard.

ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

Destruction, looting and occupation of schools and the presence of unexploded ordnance in and around schools continued in 2013, as did the threat of recruitment from schools and along school routes in eastern DRC. As of late September, the UN had documented at least 49 attacks on schools and health facilities by armed groups. From 15 February to 18 March, the UN verified some six attacks on schools and hospitals during fighting in North and South Kivu and Orientale provinces. In March, UNICEF reported that 18 schools had been systematically destroyed in Katanga province. A joint investigation by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and local authorities in the Kamango area, Beni territory, North Kivu, found that the armed group ADF had ransacked 11 schools in July alone, destroying school furniture; the group had attacked at least one school in the preceding months. It also found that a FARDC integrated brigade had temporarily occupied five schools, burning the furniture as firewood. During clashes between armed groups in North Kivu on 27 September, witnesses reported the kidnapping of dozens of children and three teachers after their school was burned down.

University students and police clashed on at least two occasions, one of which reportedly resulted in casualties. In March, violence broke out at the Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural in Lubao, where students began protesting after a regional administrator allegedly made derogatory remarks about them on a local television channel. The police claimed that warning shots had been fired on the second day of protests but a student representative said that the police had opened fire on the protesters, some of whom were throwing stones, and had killed two students and wounded at least five others.
ENDNOTES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

635 This profile covers attacks in the period 2009-2012, with an additional section on 2013.

636 Insight on Conflict, “DR Congo: Conflict Profile,” last updated August 2011.


640 UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), “Education (all levels) Profile – Democratic Republic of the Congo,” UIS Statistics in Brief (2011). The figure is higher than 100 per cent because gross enrolment means the total number enrolled, regardless of age, as a percentage of the age cohort.


645 Ibid.

646 Information provided by a UN respondent, November 2012; interview with Eastern DRC Education Cluster Coordinator on 18 March 2013; information provided by Human Rights Watch on 6 November 2013.

647 Information provided by the Eastern DRC Education Cluster on 6 April 2013.


653 Information provided by Human Rights Watch on 6 November 2013.


655 Ibid.

656 UNSC, Letter dated 23 November 2009 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to


660 Ibid.


669 Ibid., 2.


