

## THE PHILIPPINES

*There were killings and abductions of teachers, bombing and shelling of schools and universities, with some incidents related to their use as polling stations. The armed forces continued to use numerous schools for military purposes in breach of Philippines' law.*<sup>1290</sup>

### CONTEXT

Two main conflicts in the Philippines have led to intermittent violence. In the communist insurgency, the New People's Army is fighting the government with the aim of creating a socialist state; and in the Moro conflict, concentrated in the south, militant groups, including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), are fighting for self-rule. Civilians have been targeted via bombings, kidnappings, and the forced recruitment and use of children in fighting forces. Thousands have been killed and hundreds of thousands more displaced.

The Abu Sayyaf Group, which began as an Islamic separatist group but has also become involved in banditry and other crimes, remains active in parts of the southern Philippines. In Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, rival clan disputes and a proliferation of criminal activities have compounded the pattern of violence in the region.<sup>1291</sup>

Recurrent attacks on education in Mindanao and other parts of the country have disrupted schooling for many, causing fear among students, teachers and parents and inflicting damage on learning facilities.<sup>1292</sup>

The UN verified some 43 incidents countrywide involving damage, destruction or occupation of education facilities, placement of landmines and

unexploded ordnance near schools, and violence or threats of violence against teachers and students from 2010 to 2012; and 92 more incidents were recorded but could not be verified due to geographic and human resource constraints.<sup>1293</sup> Collectively, these 135 incidents were estimated to have affected some 8,757 students.<sup>1294</sup>

Net primary enrolment was 88 per cent,<sup>1295</sup> net secondary enrolment was 62 per cent<sup>1296</sup> and gross tertiary enrolment was 28 per cent (2009).<sup>1297</sup> The adult literacy rate was 95 per cent (2008).<sup>1298</sup>

### ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

The UN reported 10 incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals in 2009, resulting from ongoing clashes between the military and armed groups.<sup>1299</sup> Levels of violence appeared to increase around the 2010 elections, during which schools were used as polling stations in May and October, with 41 schools and hospitals attacked that year.<sup>1300</sup> In 2011, there were 52 incidents affecting schools and hospitals, although this number included both direct attacks and military use.<sup>1301</sup> Twenty-seven cases, of which 16 were verified by the UN, were attributed to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its associated auxiliary force, Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGU), including one school being set on fire during an airstrike. Six incidents were attributed to the MILF, four to the New People's Army, three to the Abu Sayyaf Group and another 12 to unknown perpetrators.<sup>1302</sup>

In 2012, at least 19 attacks on schools were recorded by August.<sup>1303</sup> For example, Abu Sayyaf Group fighters partially burned down Tipo-Tipo Central Elementary School in an effort to distract a military pursuit by the national armed forces after skirmishes in Basilan province in July 2012.<sup>1304</sup>

Some 15 landmines and unexploded ordnance were found within the vicinity of schools from 2010 to 2012, and six grenade attacks and three instances of mortar shelling were also recorded.<sup>1305</sup> At least 17 schools were partially damaged and three schools destroyed in the same period.<sup>1306</sup>

### **ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL**

From 2010 to 2012, there was a pattern of attacking teachers. At least 14 teachers were killed, three injured, five threatened or harassed, six abducted and one arbitrarily detained.<sup>1307</sup> Three students were abducted.<sup>1308</sup>

In a number of cases, teachers or students were abducted, sometimes for ransom, by the Abu Sayyaf Group.<sup>1309</sup> For example, in October 2009, Abu Sayyaf gunmen allegedly abducted an elementary school head teacher from a passenger jeep transporting a group of teachers and later beheaded him after his family refused to pay the requested ransom.<sup>1310</sup>

In other incidents there was an observable pattern of targeting teachers in connection with their duty as election poll officers.<sup>1311</sup> During 2010, some 11 teachers were killed,<sup>1312</sup> with a significant number of attacks recorded at the height of the presidential election in May 2010 – although attacks were still taking place in and outside of school premises months later, perpetrated mostly by unidentified assailants – and during local elections.<sup>1313</sup> For example, a few days after the 25 October 2010 barangay (village) elections, the head teacher of Datu Gumbay Elementary School in Maguindanao was shot dead by unidentified gunmen; weeks later, on 2 December 2010, a lone gunman killed another teacher at the same school while he was standing near the gate in sight of students and other teachers.<sup>1314</sup>

### **MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS**

The practice of military use of schools is explicitly banned in the Philippines, both under national legislation and military policy.<sup>1315</sup> Despite this, at least 56 incidents of military use of schools, mostly involving use by government armed forces, were recorded by the UN from 2010 to 2012.<sup>1316</sup> School buildings, particularly in remote areas, offered convenient protection and were often used as temporary barracks or for other military purposes ranging from a period of one week to more than a year.<sup>1317</sup>

For instance, according to the UN, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units used functioning schools as weapons and ammunition stores in 2010<sup>1318</sup> and, in 2011, used at least 14 schools during the course of counterinsurgency operations.<sup>1319</sup> Troops slept in teacher housing and also used several classrooms at Nagaan Elementary School in Mindanao for at least seven months.<sup>1320</sup> In 2012, the UN verified four incidents involving the stationing of national armed forces' military units in public elementary schools in Mindanao, as well as the establishment of a detachment next to Salipongan Primary School in Tugaya municipality, Lanao del Sur province, that closed the school for two weeks.<sup>1321</sup>

### **ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Media reports documented several attacks or attempted attacks on university buildings and grounds, including one related to use of the buildings as polling stations: on an election day in 2010, two bombs exploded at Mindanao State University where several polling stations were based.<sup>1322</sup>

In August 2012, the main campus of Mindanao State University was sealed off by the Armed Forces of the Philippines after gunmen opened fire in an attack inside the campus during which three soldiers were killed and 10 others wounded.<sup>1323</sup>

### ATTACKS ON EDUCATION IN 2013

Abduction and killing of teachers were reported in 2013. Three teachers and three head teachers were reported to have been shot dead or in one case shot and 'disappeared' in separate incidents.<sup>1324</sup> Mostly, the attackers were unidentified and the motives were not confirmed. In one of the incidents, on 22 January, Sheikh Bashier Mursalum, a respected Muslim scholar and the principal of a madrassa, was reportedly shot and abducted by suspected state security agents in Zamboanga City; he remained missing at the end of August.<sup>1325</sup> On 31 July, it was reported that Abu Sayyaf Group rebels had released abductee Alrashid Rojas, an employee of Western Mindanao State University, and head teacher Floredeliza Ongchua, who had been forcibly taken from her home by 13 men in June.<sup>1326</sup>

On 11 September, during a battle between Muslim insurgents and the Philippine army in Zamboanga, soldiers used a school as a base for an unspecified period.<sup>1327</sup> In September, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters used nine teachers as human shields during fighting with government forces after earlier holding 13 teachers and some students hostage at a school.<sup>1328</sup>

In higher education, a bomb planted by unknown militants exploded on the University of Southern Mindanao campus, causing widespread panic among staff and students.<sup>1329</sup>

## ENDNOTES THE PHILIPPINES

<sup>1290</sup> This profile covers attacks on education in 2009-2012, with an additional section on attacks in 2013.

<sup>1291</sup> Yul Olaya, "Philippines Country Summary," (prepared for GCPEA Knowledge Roundtable: Programmatic Measures in Prevention, Intervention, and Response to Attacks on Education, Phuket, Thailand, November 8, 2011) and email communication, 21 October 2011, as cited in GCPEA, *Study on Field-Based Programmatic Measures to Protect Education from Attack* (New York: GCPEA, December 2011), 60.

<sup>1292</sup> Brenda K. Diaries, "A Situational Assessment of Attacks on Education in the Philippines," Save the Children International, 23 November 2012, 6-11.

<sup>1293</sup> Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.

<sup>1294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1295</sup> The World Bank, "School enrollment – primary (% net)," The World Bank Data (2009).

<sup>1296</sup> The World Bank, "School enrollment – secondary (% net)," The World Bank Data (2009).

<sup>1297</sup> The World Bank, "School enrollment – tertiary (% gross)," The World Bank Data (2009).

<sup>1298</sup> The World Bank, "Literacy rate – Adult, total," The World Bank Data (2008).

<sup>1299</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/64/742-S/2010/181, 13 April 2010, para 143.

<sup>1300</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/65/820-S/2011/250, 23 April 2011, para 178. For examples, see also: "Gunmen burn 4 classrooms in Basilan: military," *Philippine Star*, 13 May 2010; "Akbar school rooms burned down by rebels," *The Phil South Angle*, 14 May 2010; "Armed men attack polling place in Sultan Kudarat," *Sun Star*, 25 October 2010; and Gilbert Guevarra, Working Paper on the Use of Schools and Deployment of Teachers During Elections in Hot Spot Areas, November 2012, 7-8.

<sup>1301</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/66/782-S/2012/261, 26 April 2012, para 150.

<sup>1302</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/66/782-S/2012/261, 26 April 2012, paras 150-151.

<sup>1303</sup> Philippine Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting Technical Working Group (CTFMR TWG), "Total 2010 incidents monitored as of 01 Aug2012," (Manila, Philippines: CTFMR TWG, August, 2012).

<sup>1304</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/845-S/2013/245, 15 May 2013, para 195.

<sup>1305</sup> Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.

<sup>1306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1309</sup> Ibid; UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in the Philippines, S/2010/36, 21 January 2010, para 6; Simmons College, "Abu Sayyaf still holds Philippines to ransom," 29 April 2009.

<sup>1310</sup> Dennis Carcamo, "Kidnapped school principal beheaded in Sulu," *Philippine Star*, 9 November 2009; and "Beheading draws attention to forgotten Philippine war," *The Examiner*, 10 November 2009.

<sup>1311</sup> Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013; and UNSC, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in the Philippines, S/2010/36, 21 January 2010.

<sup>1312</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/65/820-S/2011/250, 23 April 2011, para 178.

<sup>1313</sup> Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.

<sup>1314</sup> Julia Alipala, "Another teacher killed in Maguindanao-report," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2 December 2010.

<sup>1315</sup> RA No. 7610, An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination, Providing Penalties for its Violation and Other Purposes, 17 June 1992, art. X(22)(e) and Armed Forces of the Philippines Letter Directive No. 34, GHQ AFP, 24 November 2009, para. 7, as cited in GCPEA, *Lessons in War: Military Use of Schools and Other Education Institutions during Conflict* (New York: GCPEA, November 2012), 45, 47.

<sup>1316</sup> Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.

<sup>1317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1318</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/65/820-S/2011/250, 23 April 2011, para 179.

<sup>1319</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/66/782-S/2012/261, 26 April 2012, para 150.

<sup>1320</sup> Bede Sheppard, "Some Things Don't Mix," Philippines Daily Inquirer, 24 April 2012.

<sup>1321</sup> UNSC, Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/845-S/2013/245, 15 May 2013, para 196.

<sup>1322</sup> "Grenade found in Pasig school," Sun Star, 23 August 2010; Gilbert Guevarra, Working Paper on the Use of Schools and Deployment of Teachers during Elections in Hot Spot Areas, November 2012, 7.

<sup>1323</sup> "Army seals off MSU campus after attack," Philippine Daily Inquirer, 9 August 2012.

<sup>1324</sup> Campaign for Human Rights in the Philippines, "Philippines stuck in an Orwellian 1984," 30 August 2013; Malu Cadelifña Manar, "Public school teacher shot dead in Cotabato," Sunstar, 17 January 2013; Dennis Arcon, "Head teacher of Maguindanao school gunned down," InterAskyon, 8 May 2013; Raymund Catindig, "Isabela teacher shot dead in her home," The Philippine Star, 14 May 2013; Ramil Bajo, "Sarangani teacher shot dead," The Philippine Star, 24 August 2013; and "Teacher shot dead," Cebu Daily News, 30 September 2013.

<sup>1325</sup> Campaign for Human Rights in the Philippines, "Philippines stuck in an Orwellian 1984," 30 August 2013.

<sup>1326</sup> "Kidnapped Zambo university staff freed in Sulu," CBN News, 31 July 2013.

<sup>1327</sup> Bullit Marquez, "Filipino rebels attack second Southern town," AP, 11 September 2013.

<sup>1328</sup> Cris Larano and Josephine Cuneta, "Rebels Release Hostages in Southern Philippines," Wall Street Journal, 24 September 2013; Denis Arcon and Jaime Sinapit, "BIFF still has 9 teachers as 'human shields': 6 dead in Cotabato clashes," InterAskyon, 23 September 2013; and John Unson, "BIFF bandits retreat, free Midsayap hostages," The Philippine Star, 25 September 2013.

<sup>1329</sup> "Bomb explodes in University of the Southern Mindanao campus," The Philippine Star, 29 July 2013.