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.\textsuperscript{1290}

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.\textsuperscript{1291}

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.\textsuperscript{1292}

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.\textsuperscript{1293} Collectively, these 135 incidents were estimated to have affected some 8,757 students.\textsuperscript{1294}

Net primary enrolment was 88 per cent,\textsuperscript{1295} net secondary enrolment was 62 per cent\textsuperscript{1296} and gross tertiary enrolment was 28 per cent (2009).\textsuperscript{1297} The adult literacy rate was 95 per cent (2008).\textsuperscript{1298}

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.\textsuperscript{1299} 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.\textsuperscript{1300} In 2011, there were 52 incidents affecting schools and hospitals, although this number included both direct attacks and military use.\textsuperscript{1301} 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.\textsuperscript{1302}

In 2012, at least 19 attacks on schools were recorded by August.\textsuperscript{1303} 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.\textsuperscript{1304}
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. At least 17 schools were partially damaged and three schools destroyed in the same period.

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. Three students were abducted.

In a number of cases, teachers or students were abducted, sometimes for ransom, by the Abu Sayyaf Group. 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.

In other incidents there was an observable pattern of targeting teachers in connection with their duty as election poll officers. During 2010, some 11 teachers were killed, 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. 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.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

The practice of military use of schools is explicitly banned in the Philippines, both under national legislation and military policy. 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. 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.

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 and, in 2011, used at least 14 schools during the course of counterinsurgency operations. Troops slept in teacher housing and also used several classrooms at Nagaan Elementary School in Mindanao for at least seven months. 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.

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.
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.1323

**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.1324 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.1325 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.1326

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.1327 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.1328

In higher education, a bomb planted by unknown militants exploded on the University of Southern Mindanao campus, causing widespread panic among staff and students.1329
This profile covers attacks on education in 2009-2012, with an additional section on attacks in 2013.


Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.


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.

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.


Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.


Information provided by a UN respondent on 23 January 2013.


