



Global Coalition to **Protect
Education from Attack**

Education Under Attack 2014

Frequently Asked Questions about the Study

What constitutes an ‘attack on education’ under the scope of this study?

Broadly speaking, it encompasses a physical attack on any education facility, including buildings and transport, as well as threats or actual violence against students of any age as well as teachers, academics and other education staff. Although not technically an attack, the study also examines the use of school and university buildings and grounds for military purposes – which either involves the closure of the school or university or puts students and staff at risk of attack by opposing forces. Importantly, the study focuses on the deliberate use of force against schools, universities, students, teachers or academics – as distinct from collateral damage and unintentional casualties of war. These are targeted attacks. It also covers incidents involving the intentional use of violence in the vicinity of education buildings where the likely effect is to harm students, education staff or facilities.

Who perpetrated the attacks?

The types of perpetrators covered by the study include armed forces (including international armed forces), police forces, intelligence services, paramilitaries and militias acting on behalf of the state, and armed non-state groups, including rebel forces or any other armed military, ethnic, political, religious or sectarian group. Perpetrators may also include violent mobs that are not organized as an armed group but are animated by similar motives. Although the study does not generally include attacks of a criminal nature, it does look at the phenomenon of attacks by armed organized criminal groups, including drug cartels, and the impact of related security operations in those situations where violence is widespread and there is a pattern of attacking education targets.

Overall, are attacks on the rise, based on the study’s findings?

Unfortunately, it is impossible to answer that question. Although UNESCO conducted and published similar studies in 2007 and 2010, the present study was much more extensive, – it focused in-depth on two additional areas of research (military use of education facilities and attacks on higher education) and looked more deeply at Francophone countries than previous research – providing an opportunity for researchers to identify more incidents. In addition, efforts to monitor and document attacks on education have improved substantially since 2010 – especially by the United Nations (UN), although even the UN does not monitor attacks in all the affected countries. So although this study found many more documented attacks worldwide and in more countries than shown by previous research, those changes could merely reflect better

reporting, improved monitoring and more extensive research. What is most important is the large scale and serious nature of attacks on education in recent years. This study found that the problem of attacks on education is far more widespread than previously reported.

What can we do prevent attacks on education?

There is a range of measures that can enhance protection of schools, universities, students, teachers, academics and staff. These can involve improving security, such as providing armed or unarmed guards, building walls around schools to protect them, or making housing available for students on campus or near schools. They can involve the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators to deter further attacks; or negotiations between armed groups and armed forces to reach agreement not to attack schools. Other responses may address the perceived motives for attack – for instance, changing curricula to make education inclusive of different religious beliefs or ethnic cultural identities. Among its key recommendations, the study calls for officials at the highest levels of government as well as leaders of armed non-state groups to publicly condemn attacks on education; issue policies and military orders that protect schools, students and teachers; and adopt the [*Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*](#). It also calls for an end to impunity for such attacks, and for better and increased monitoring and reporting to understand the problem and inform responses.

What are the Lucens Guidelines?

Drawing on humanitarian and international human rights law, as well as good practice, the Lucens Guidelines are intended to help states and armed non-state groups protect schools and universities from military use during armed conflict. The Guidelines were developed through a process initiated by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) involving representatives from states, as well as UN agencies and NGOs.

During two expert meetings in 2012, the representatives discussed the scale and scope of the problem as well as its devastating consequences, and how to prevent military use of schools whenever possible. Based on input from these meetings, a former British naval officer with 30 years of experience prepared an initial version of the Guidelines that was refined by a drafting committee of legal, military and education experts from states and international agencies. The Draft Guidelines were released in June 2013, and GCPEA is currently working with states to finalize and endorse them and to incorporate their content into their domestic laws and military doctrines to keep soldiers out of schools and weapons away from classrooms.

Who conducted the study?

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) initiated and guided the study. GCPEA commissioned a small team of experts to conduct the research and report on their findings.

What sources of information did the researchers review to gather the data presented in this study?

The research team undertook a comprehensive review of the literature in English and conducted research into and analysis of information made available by the UN, human rights and development organizations, government bodies, scholar rescue organizations and trade unions, as well as media reports. Specific incidents were researched both via a systematic search of online media and human rights sources in English, French and Spanish, and limited searches in Arabic, using a detailed list of combinations of search terms for each country, and via information requests to UN and human rights agencies working in those countries and education ministries. Researchers also conducted interviews with human rights experts, development experts, education officials and teacher trade unionists via telephone or in some cases in person.

The researchers collated and cross-checked information from thousands of sources for reliability and accuracy, and to avoid counting a single incident more than once. In addition, outside experts in research methodology, human rights, international law, and education-in-emergencies helped to guide the research and reviewed the study in draft form.

What is GCPEA?

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) is an inter-agency coalition formed in 2010 by international organizations that were concerned about and working to prevent attacks on schools, students and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity. GCPEA's member organizations include: the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), Human Rights Watch, the Institute of International Education/IIIE's Scholar Rescue Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, Save the Children, the Scholars at Risk Network, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). GCPEA is a project of the Tides Center, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

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