Attacks on schools and school students and personnel decreased during this reporting period. However, the killing of two schoolteachers in Wajir county in February 2018 led to the closure of at least 200 schools. In addition, attacks on higher education, primarily involving arrests and excessive use of force to disperse student protests, occurred at a higher rate than in the previous reporting period.

Context

Al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based armed group that the Kenyan government has engaged in conflict both at home and in Somalia since 2011, continued to carry out attacks in Wajir, Mandera, and Garissa counties, and in the capital, Nairobi, between 2017 and 2019. In 2018, ACLED listed 45 reports of violent events involving al-Shabaab in Kenya. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported that the threat of attacks remained high, despite government efforts to conduct community outreach with at-risk youth and improve intelligence gathering.

Al-Shabaab continued to target civilians in Kenya and Somalia at a similar rate as in previous years, while also engaging in armed conflicts with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), a peacekeeping force to which Kenya contributes troops. For example, on January 15, 2019, al-Shabaab led an 18-hour siege on a Nairobi hotel, killing 21 people. Local and international media outlets also reported that in April 2019, two Cuban doctors were abducted by suspected al-Shabaab members in Mandera county near the Somalia border. ACLED also collected reports that al-Shabaab increased cross-border attacks and threats in April and May, 2019.

Inter-ethnic conflict, as well as inter-communal conflict among pastoral communities, and between pastoral communities and the police, occurred throughout the reporting period in several counties, including Isiolo, Laikipia, and Marsabit. Severe drought increased cattle raiding and forcibly displaced pastoral communities onto land used by other ethnic groups, increasing inter-communal tensions. In September 2018, ICG noted that political instability and ethnic tensions posed a greater threat to security than al-Shabaab, whose influence in Kenya had reportedly waned since 2015.

In addition, the government limited freedom of the press and freedom of expression during this reporting period. Human Rights Watch reported that in 2018 a lack of accountability for human rights violations endured, including for sexual violence and killing of opposition protesters by the police. Human Rights Watch also documented abuse, harassment and arbitrary arrests of journalists and environmental rights activists by police and the military in 2018 and 2019.

Al-Shabaab’s targeting of schools affected education. After an attack on a school in Wajir county in February 2018, the Teachers Service Commission – the national regulatory body of teachers – transferred over 1,120 teachers, 900 from Wajir county alone, forcing hundreds of schools to close or to remain only with a headteacher. Following the abduction of two Cuban doctors in April 2019, the Teacher Service Commission reportedly removed several teachers from Mandera county. In addition, since 2017, school closures due to pastoral inter-communal violence in West Pokot and Baringo counties have reportedly prevented thousands of children from attending school.

In June 2019, a Nairobi court convicted three members of al-Shabaab for their involvement in the attack on Garissa University on April 2, 2015, which killed 148 people. In July, the court sentenced one attacker to life in prison and the remaining two to 41 years in prison. The attack was covered in Education under Attack 2018.

Attacks on schools

During the 2017-2019 reporting period, GCPEA collected eight reports of attacks on schools. During the previous period, which covered 2013-2017, reports of incidents peaked in 2013 and 2014, including reported improvised explosive device (IED) detonations at or near schools, before attacks declined in 2015 and 2016.

In 2017, GCPEA collected approximately seven reported attacks on schools, several allegedly carried out by al-Shabaab. Among these attacks were several incidents identified after the publication of Education under Attack 2018. In one such incident, individuals armed with knives reportedly entered Hola Secondary School, used at the time as a
vote tallying center, on August 9, 2017, in Hola, Tana River county. According to Reuters, an election official was killed in the attack; the police reportedly shot dead the assailants.\(^{1068}\)

In 2018, one attack on a school was reported. On February 16, 2018, al-Shabaab allegedly attacked Qarsa Primary School, in Wajir county. Two teachers were killed in the attack, according to media reports; Daily Nation also reported that the militants planted an explosive device en route to the school.\(^ {1069}\) The teachers who died were reportedly not from the area, causing hundreds of non-local teachers to flee or be transferred, and at least 250 schools to close.\(^ {1070}\)

In April 2019, ICG reported that nearly 100 schools in Garissa, Mandera, and Wajir counties remained without full teaching staffs.\(^ {1071}\)

In addition, the global children’s non-profit organization Theirworld reported that bandit attacks and flooding led to the closure of over 30 schools in Baringo county, preventing more than 5,000 children from attending school.\(^ {1072}\) An earlier local media report from February 2017 also noted that 30 schools had been closed due to insecurity in Baringo county.\(^ {1073}\)

**Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel**

During the 2017-2019 reporting period, GCPEA collected 11 reports of attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel. Students and teachers continued to be targeted and killed by unidentified assailants and armed group al-Shabaab at a similar rate, as compared to the previous reporting period, which covered 2013-2017, when 11 reported attacks affected more than 120 students.\(^ {1074}\)

In 2017, seven attacks on school students and personnel occurred.\(^ {1075}\) GCPEA identified four of these reports after the publication of *Education under Attack 2018*. For instance:

- On February 15, 2017, unidentified assailants reportedly shot and killed a primary school teacher while the teacher and students walked home after class, in Chepkesin, Baringo county, according to local media outlet Daily Nation. Three nearby primary schools closed following the attack, as parents and students reportedly left the area.\(^ {1076}\)

- *The Telegraph* reported that police used teargas when entering a nursery school in Nyalenda, Kisumu city, on October 13, 2017. Several schoolchildren were reportedly taken to hospital as a result. The reported incident occurred in the context of protests over rerun elections scheduled for the end of the month.\(^ {1077}\) One and a half weeks earlier, police reportedly used teargas at another nursery school in the same part of Kisumu city, on October 3, 2017.\(^ {1078}\)

GCPEA compiled two reports of killing and injury of students and education personnel in 2018, in violent attacks related both to al-Shabaab and pastoralist conflicts:

- According to the NGO Theirworld, on May 8, 2018, unidentified assailants shot and killed three students traveling in a car en route to school in Kapedo, Baringo county. The area is reported to have experienced inter-communal violence for the past several years.\(^ {1079}\)

- *Associated Press* reported that suspected armed group al-Shabaab, targeting non-Muslim teachers, threw an explosive device at a house within a school compound in Mandera county, killing two teachers, on October 10, 2018. The armed group took responsibility for the attack and for killing non-Muslim teachers.\(^ {1080}\)

In addition, one reported instance of repression of protesting schoolteachers by police occurred in 2018. On October 23, 2018, in Litein, Kericho county, high school teachers, led by officials from the Kenya Union of Post-Primary Education, reportedly protested against a stalled police investigation into the murder of a teacher and his wife that occurred months earlier. Police forcefully dispersed the protesters using teargas and shooting bullets in the air after the demonstration turned violent, according to local media sources.\(^ {1081}\)

GCPEA identified one reported attack in 2019. Local news outlet *Standard Media* reported allegations of the police using excessive force against students at Mathemba Secondary School, in Mathemba, Makueni county on September 12, 2019. The police reportedly entered the school to prevent a student strike over dormitory quality and the administration’s use of student fees. Police allegedly beat students, reportedly leaving three girls and eight boys with injuries.\(^ {1082}\)
Attacks on higher education

Attacks on higher education increased during this reporting period as compared to 2013-2017, when they occurred at a rate of between one and three per year.\textsuperscript{1083} As in previous years, reported attacks on higher education primarily related to repression of student protests by police.

In 2017, GCPEA documented two reported attacks on higher education, one of which was identified after the publication of Education under Attack 2018.\textsuperscript{1084} In the newly identified incident, police reportedly used batons against protesting students at the University of Nairobi, in Nairobi, at the end of September 2017, according to Scholars at Risk and the NGO Article 19.\textsuperscript{1085} At least 25 students were reportedly injured during the incident.\textsuperscript{1086}

In comparison, GCPEA compiled 13 reported attacks on higher education in 2018 and 2019 from NGO reports and media sources.\textsuperscript{1087} Of these 13, 12 incidents involved the police arresting students or using excessive force during protests, including the following:

- On February 27, 2018, police dispersed a student protest at Meru University of Science and Technology, in Meru county, during which they reportedly shot and killed a prominent student protest leader.\textsuperscript{1088} Human Rights Watch reported that a police officer was charged with his murder in July 2018 but, as of January 2019, was awaiting trial.\textsuperscript{1089}
- On April 11, 2018, police reportedly used teargas to disperse student protesters at Daystar University in Nairobi who were demonstrating against the institution’s administration, according to local media; no injuries were reported.\textsuperscript{1090}
- Between September 24 and 26, 2018, students at the University of Machakos, in Machakos county, protested against increased tuition fees. On September 24, police reportedly used teargas to disperse students, and on the following day arrested a student leader.\textsuperscript{1091} In a separate incident on September 26, police again dispersed protesters, although the report does not indicate whether excessive force was used. The university closed for three weeks following the incidents.\textsuperscript{1092}
- On November 3, 2018, police reportedly detained two students from Maseno University, Kisumu county, who had attempted to file a report at the Maseno police station following an attack on fellow students in the context of growing insecurity on the campus. On November 4, students protested their detention; no excessive force by police was reported in Daily Nation.\textsuperscript{1093}
- On December 3, 2018, police reportedly fired live ammunition into the air to disperse student protesters who were demonstrating off-campus against restrictions enacted by the Technical University of Mombasa, in Mombasa city and county, according to local outlet Daily Nation. The students had allegedly blockaded a road and thrown stones at police; 20 students were arrested.\textsuperscript{1094}
- On March 22 and 23, 2019, students at Kibabi University, Bungoma county, held demonstrations after a car accident on campus injured a student; police reportedly used teargas to break up the protest, as reported in local media outlet The Star.\textsuperscript{1095}
- On December 4, 2019, at Egerton University in Njoro, Nakuru county, students protested over increased fees and the regulation that students could not take exams if their university fees were in arrears; students reportedly destroyed university property during the demonstrations. In response, the police used teargas and arrested two students, according to local media reports. The university was closed indefinitely after the events.\textsuperscript{1096}

One attack on higher education facilities reportedly occurred on February 6, 2018, at the University of Nairobi, when an explosive device was thrown at the Civil Engineering block from the Central Police station, adjacent to the campus. Local media speculated on whether the explosion related to student protests or the arrest and detention of a political opposition leader.\textsuperscript{1097}
Kenya News, as cited in ACLED, Event ID KEN6675; Scholars at Risk Network, Academic Freedom Monitor, Machakos University, September 24, 2018.

News24 (South Africa), as cited in ACLED, Event ID KEN6675; “Machakos University closed over student riots,” The Informer, September 27, 2018.


Carolyn Tanui, “Explosion occurs at UON,” Kenyans.co.ke, February 6, 2018.