



Concept Note

High Level Event to Celebrate the Fifth United Nations International Day to Protect Education from Attack

Date: Tuesday, September 10th, 2024

Time: 12:00 to 13:00 followed by a photo exhibition and a reception from 13:30 to 14:30

Location: Palais des Nations, Building E, **Room XXIV**

Co-organizers: The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations in Geneva, Education Above All (EAA), and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)

Co-sponsors: The Safe Schools Declaration Core Group, the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies, Save the Children, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Geneva Call.

I. Background:

The right to education is a fundamental human right and a stepping stone to other human rights. Yet, around the world, children and other learners living in conflict zones are being continuously denied this right because of attacks on their education.

Attacks on education can destroy, sometimes permanently, education facilities, thereby depriving students of their right to education and jeopardizing their future. Learners and educators can be severely harmed or killed by these attacks, causing long-term psychological and physical trauma that further prevent their return to school. Schools are often used by soldiers for military purposes, turning them into military targets of attacks to opposing forces and further causing damages to the facilities and those taking shelters inside them. This proximity between soldiers and students creates additional risks of child recruitment and sexual violence at or on the way to school, which leads to higher rates of students dropping out, especially for girls.

Given these devastating impacts, prevention and response measures at national, regional and international levels to protect students, teachers, schools, and universities remain critical. This international day serves as a catalytic moment to reflect on the severity of the issue and encourage states to take concrete measures to protect education from attacks, such as through the endorsement and implementation of the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) (SSD) and UN Security Council [resolution 2601](#).

II. High-Level Event:

This year, we celebrate the fifth commemoration of the United Nations International Day to Protect Education from Attack, established by a unanimous [resolution](#) of the UN General Assembly adopted on 28 May 2020 during its 74th session. This landmark resolution, which calls on states to protect students, teachers, and educational institutions, was initially presented by the State of Qatar and co-sponsored by 62 Member States.

The organizers of this event are pleased to invite ministers, diplomats, members of international organizations, and civil society to a high-level event on 10 September 2024, from 12:00 to 13:00, at the Palais des Nations. This event will highlight the scope of attacks on education conducted by armed forces and non-state armed groups and their impact, present new findings on compliance with IHL norms, and call on the need for greater accountability and implementation of the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) - an international political commitment to protect education in conflict, which has been endorsed by [120](#) states since its launch in 2015.

The event will seek to mobilize domestic implementation of international law and the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) for the protection of education particularly from the gravest forms of attack; through three strategic interventions:

1. Law and policy, to implement a legal or policy provision that guarantees safeguards for the right to education from violence as well as measures that provide accountability in the form of restorative and punitive measures;
2. Thought leadership, collaborating with local academia, legal and policy institutions to promote endogenous protections for the right to education; and
3. Advocacy, to work with children, youth and civil society to engage on the crucial issue of safeguarding education and empowering children and youth to remain engaged on this issue through inclusive and open dialogue.

Objectives:

- ❖ Emphasize the centrality of the right to education as a fundamental and enabling human right that is essential for the exercise of all other human rights;
 - ❖ Leverage the International Day to Protect Education from Attack to mobilize greater international political support for the protection of education during armed conflict;
 - ❖ Encourage Member States to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration, in advance of the ten-year anniversary of the Declaration and the Fifth International Conference on Safe Schools taking place in 2025;
 - ❖ Mobilize Member States' implementation of national action plans for the protection of education at a legal, policy and advocacy efforts;
 - ❖ Highlight the most recent facts/data about attacks on education, underscoring the human impact of attacks on education, as the basis of raising awareness and encourage collective action on the part of the international community regarding the urgent need for concrete measures to protect education from attack and to take steps to protect educational institutions;
 - ❖ Identify good practices and gaps that remain in preventing and responding to attacks on education, including among non-state armed groups;
 - ❖ Draw attention to the existing gaps in pursuing accountability for attacks on education and call on Member States, as well as international and national mechanisms, to take measures to strengthen monitoring, investigation, accountability and redress for attacks on education; and
 - ❖ Inspire, mobilize, and create solidarity among young people in order to engage with the agenda for protecting education from attack.
- ❖ **Registration:** Register on the following link: <https://indico.un.org/event/1013289/>

Format: The event will take place in person at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

High-Level segment

Moderated by H.E. Mrs. Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

- **Welcome Remarks**

H.E. Mrs. Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

- **Keynote Addresses (video recordings)**

- His Excellency, Prof. Tahir Mamman, Minister of Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Her Excellency, Ms. Lolwah R M Al-Khater Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar

Panel discussion

Moderated by: Ms. Ilaria Paolazzi, Senior Advocacy and Policy Advisor, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack)

Panelists

- Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl, Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross
- Ms. Hazel De Wet, Deputy Director for Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
- Mr. Alain Déléroz, Director-General of Geneva Call
- Ms. Min Jeong Kim, Director of Education 2030 Division, UNESCO

Closing Remarks

- Ms. Nada Al Nashif , Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR
- Mr. Abdulaziz Al Thani, Education Above All

Exhibition and Reception:

Time: from 13:00 to 13:30

Location: Palais des Nations, Door 40, 2nd Floor Building E

Following the event, guests will be invited to a **photo exhibition** showcasing the impact of attacks on education and the **launch of a comic book developed by Geneva Call**. The exhibition will be on display at the exhibition gallery for the duration of the Human Rights Council session.

Opening remarks to open the exhibition and reception delivered by H.E. Mrs. Hend Abdulrahman Al-Muftah, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

The exhibition will be followed by a reception hosted by the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar in Geneva and Education Above All.