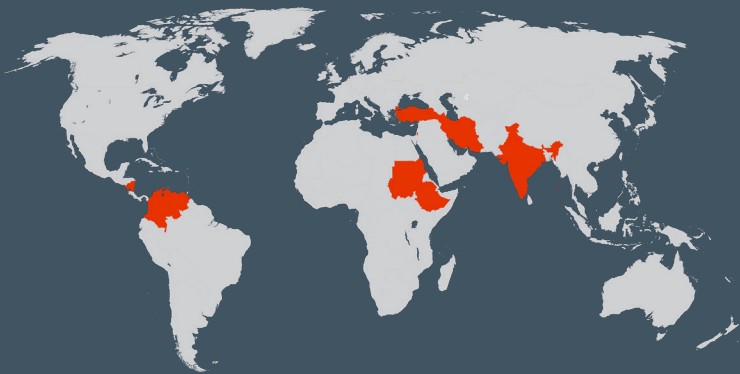# Higher Education Under Attack

Every student has the right to an education without fear of violence or attack. Every educator deserves to teach and research in safety and dignity, even during war. While significant progress has been made to protect schools and universities from attack during armed conflict, educational institutions continue to be bombed and burned, and students and educators continue to be killed, raped, abducted, and injured.

Armed forces and non-state armed groups also use universities for military purposes.

Attacks on higher education not only kill and injure students and academics, they also impact their wider communities for years. With buildings destroyed and teachers and students living in fear, universities close and some students, particularly women, never resume their education, impeding long-term peace and development.

Between 2015-2019
1,200 reported attacks
9,100 students and staff harmed
50 countries affected

Incidents most prominently reported in Ethiopia, Colombia, India, Iran, Nicaragua, Palestine, Sudan, Turkey, and Venezuela
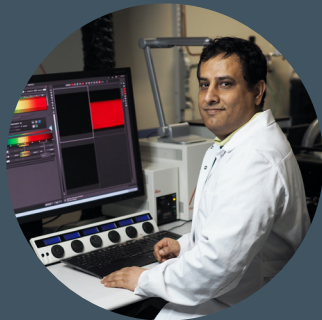
The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)[1] considers the following to qualify as attacks on higher education:

• Attacks on university buildings and infrastructure.
• Attacks on students and staff.
• Sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, university.

The effects of attacks on tertiary education impact entire education systems by disrupting teacher training programs and other advanced certifications or degrees linked to primary and secondary education. Attacks on higher education also hinder academic freedom, undermining teaching, learning, and an education system's capacity to deliver accurate and high-quality information to learners.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) believes that international education builds the groundwork for lasting peace. Since our founding in 1919, IIE has saved the lives and careers of thousands of university students and scholars affected by armed conflict and war. We do this by connecting these scholars and students with colleges and universities around the globe so they can continue their teaching, research, or studies in a safe environment. IIE has been a GCPEA Steering Committee Member since 2010, supporting the vision of a world where all educators and students can teach and learn in safety and free from fear.

Scholar and Student Profiles

"In Yemen, the sound of bullets is louder than the voice of science."

-IIE-SRF fellow from Yemen

-IIE-SRF fellow at the University of Helsinki

Since 2002, the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund has supported nearly 900 scholars from 60 countries in partnership with 425 host institutions in 47 countries.

"Death in Syria did not scare me, but watching my dreams fading away did."

-Mariela, Student supported through the IIE Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis

Since 2010, IIE's Student Emergency Initiatives have supported 2,296 students from over 100 countries through 9 scholarship programs.

Recommendations for States

- Endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.[2]
- Refrain from using universities for military purposes.
- Respect academic freedom and refrain from using physical violence against education personnel and students.
- Strengthen and systematize procedures for reporting attacks on higher education.

Get Involved with IIE

- Join the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund Alliance, a global network of partners offering practical suport to threatened and displaced scholars.
- Support IIE's Student Emergency Initiatives which provide students impacted by armed conflict with the opportunity to carry on their higher education.
- Give to IIE to help us assist scholars and students in times of crisis.

Contact

To learn more about supporting IIE's Student Emergency Initiatives and Scholar Rescue Fund contact: philanthropy@iie.org.

To learn more about hosting scholars, contact srf@iie.org.
To learn more about supporting students, contact sei@iie.org.

Notes:
1 GCPEA, Education under Attack 2020, New York, NY: 2020, https://eua2020.protectingeducation.org/

2 The Safe Schools Declaration, an international political commitment to protect education during armed conflict, has been endorsed by 106 countries.