

AFGHANISTAN

Attacks on education accelerated in Afghanistan during the reporting period. In 2018, a dramatic rise in attacks on schools occurred, almost half of which were associated with the use of educational facilities for voter registration and polling; polling-related attacks also occurred throughout the 2019 presidential elections process. Threats and attacks against students and education personnel also increased, particularly in areas of the country controlled by non-state armed groups.

Context

The 2017-2019 reporting period saw increased fighting between the Afghan government, international forces, and non-state armed groups, including the Taliban and the “Islamic State of Khorasan Province” (ISKP) in Afghanistan. In 2019, multiple peace talks between the United States and the Taliban took place in Qatar amidst ongoing fighting, however no peace deal was reached during the reporting period.²³⁸

Fighting between armed parties, along with targeted attacks by the Taliban and “ISKP”, caused substantial numbers of civilian casualties.²³⁹ In 2019, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded 3,403 civilian deaths and 6,989 civilian injuries – the lowest level of civilian casualties recorded since 2013.²⁴⁰ However, significant periods of violence occurred during the year; between July and September 2019, UNAMA recorded the highest number of civilian casualties in a single quarter since 2009.²⁴¹ Violence particularly impacted young people in 2019, when the UN reported that children comprised 30 percent of all civilian casualties and 78 percent of all casualties from explosive remnants of war (ERW) and landmines.²⁴²

Rising insecurity appeared to have a negative effect on school attendance. According to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and Samuel Hall, provinces experiencing higher rates of insecurity also had higher rates of out-of-school children.²⁴³ In 2018, the Afghanistan Education in Emergencies Working Group (EiEWG) found that 31 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan experienced at least one school closure due to insecurity.²⁴⁴ As of October 2019, the UN reported 722 schools as forcibly closed, which affected access to education for approximately 328,094 children;²⁴⁵ Kandahar, Helmand, and Ghazni provinces had the highest number of closed or damaged schools, according to the Afghanistan EiEWG.²⁴⁶

Girls’ education was particularly affected by the conflict, with greater numbers of girls out of school in areas of the country under the control of non-state armed groups. The UN reported in 2018 that the Ministry of Education (MoE), based on previous years’ surveys, estimated that 3.7 million children were out of school in Afghanistan, with girls estimated to be 60 percent of this figure.²⁴⁷ Of households surveyed in the 2019 Whole of Afghanistan assessment, approximately 18 percent of households whose girls did not attend schools reported the reason as insecurity at or on the way to or from school, whereas 32 percent reported cultural reasons as the primary obstacle.²⁴⁸

Attacks on education accelerated during the reporting period, largely related to the use of schools for election-related purposes, crossfire, intimidation, and threats. Between January and May 2018, the Ministry of Education reported 870 attacks on schools, cases of threat or intimidation targeting students, education staff, or education facilities, or fighting in the vicinity of school grounds.²⁴⁹ These included 86 cases in which schools were directly targeted. UN-verified numbers of attacks on education were lower than MoE-consolidated data, but still represented a dramatic increase. In a 2019 survey, Save the Children found that of schools attacked or used by armed forces or armed groups, 58 percent reported that attacks resulted in school closures and 35 percent reported that attacks on educational facilities forced students to study in damaged schools, outdoor areas, or other temporary spaces.²⁵⁰

Attacks on schools

GCPEA collected reports of over 300 attacks on schools between 2017 and 2019, which injured or killed at least 410 students, teachers, or education personnel. Reported attacks on schools escalated during the three-year period, substantially increasing in 2018. Non-state armed groups including “ISKP” were reportedly responsible for violently targeting, and forcing the closure of, schools, particularly girls’ schools, and for the majority of attacks on schools, which often included explosive weapons, arson, crossfire, and threats.²⁵¹ Afghan government forces were responsible for a

minority of attacks on schools, with at least one recorded attack on a madrassa; the attack reportedly targeted the Taliban, according to Afghan officials.²⁵²

The UN verified 192 attacks on schools and personnel between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018, tripling from 2017 when 68 such attacks were verified; 123 of those attacks were attributed to the Taliban and another 42 to “ISKP”.²⁵³ Between January and December 2018, 1,021 schools were closed, affecting access to education for 203,000 girls and 341,000 boys.²⁵⁴ According to the UN, the highest numbers of incidents resulting in school closures or damage in 2018 occurred in Faryab (11 percent), Uruzgan (11 percent), and Nangarhar (nine percent) provinces.²⁵⁵ Many of these attacks occurred in the context of parliamentary elections. From January to November 2018, UNAMA identified at least 112 incidents that occurred on election days in which schools used as polling centers were either directly targeted or collaterally affected by violence in their vicinities;²⁵⁶ in October 2018 alone, the UN verified 92 polling-related attacks on schools.²⁵⁷ This violence damaged at least 23 school buildings.²⁵⁸ According to UNAMA, more than half of the 5,000 polling centers in the 2018 elections were schools.²⁵⁹

Threats of attacks on schools used for polling purposes also led to the closure of schools in some instances. For example, on May 2, 2018, armed groups reportedly warned school teachers in Sharana district, Paktika Province, that they would target schools that were used for election purposes. All eight schools in the district reportedly closed in response.²⁶⁰

GCPEA also identified the following reported cases of attacks on schools related to elections:

- On April 17, 2018, according to UNAMA, the Taliban claimed responsibility for setting fire to a school used as a voter registration site and abducting two voter registration staff and two police officers in Chagcharan district, Ghor province.²⁶¹
- On June 6, 2018, international and local media reported that a bomb allegedly exploded at a school used as a voter registration center in Pul-i Khumri city, Baghlan province, killing a member of the police and an election commission employee, and wounding an Afghan National Army soldier and another police person.²⁶²
- On October 20, 2018, two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) placed on the roof and gate of a school that was serving as a polling center in Mihtarlam city, Laghman province, were remotely detonated, injuring two children and 12 men.²⁶³

In addition to election-related violence, non-state armed groups reportedly targeted schools for tactical and ideological reasons, particularly in areas under their control. In 2018, GCPEA identified 65 non-polling-related attacks on schools reported through media, UN, and NGO reports.²⁶⁴ Nearly half of these attacks took place in Nangarhar province, where “ISKP” controlled significant territory.²⁶⁵ The UN also reported school closures arising from armed groups systematically threatening schools, and in particular “ISKP” expressly declaring its intention to attack girls’ schools.²⁶⁶ Reports collected by GCPEA of attacks on schools by non-state armed groups included:

- On March 18, 2018, a suicide bomber at the Kawsar school in Kabul injured 11 students when one of his hand grenades went off, killing him before he was able to detonate his suicide vest.²⁶⁷
- Similarly, on the night of April 11, 2018, armed attackers in Mohammad Agha district, Logar province, reportedly set fire to and destroyed a girls’ high school, after physically assaulting the night watchpersons and locking them in a room. According to the Ministry of Education, the attack affected 981 female students enrolled in the school, and 21 teachers.²⁶⁸
- On June 3, 2018, “ISKP” issued a statement that they would target girls’ schools in Nangarhar province as retribution for civilian casualties caused by airstrikes by US and Afghan forces.²⁶⁹ UNAMA subsequently recorded 13 incidents targeting education, which they attributed to “ISKP,” following that threat.²⁷⁰ According to a media report, more than 80 girls’ schools were closed following the threat, and exams were postponed.²⁷¹
- On July 1, 2018, unidentified armed attackers in Nangarhar province reportedly set fire to a boys’ school, destroying administrative offices and the school library. The attackers also beheaded three school attendants. Government officials blamed “IS” for the attack.²⁷² The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reported that “IS” had previously threatened to attack the school.²⁷³

- One of the deadliest attacks on schools reported during the three-year period took place on August 15, 2018, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives inside a classroom at the Mowud Academy in Kabul. High school students from across the country were at the Academy studying for the national university entrance exam.²⁷⁴ According to UNAMA, the attack killed 40 students and injured 67 others, both male and female.²⁷⁵
- On September 11, 2018, armed attackers carried out a double bombing outside a girls' school in Jalalabad city, Nangarhar province. The second bomb exploded as boys from a nearby school and others rushed to the scene. A 12-year old boy was killed, and several children were injured. That same morning, another school was targeted in Behsood district, also in Nangarhar province.²⁷⁶

In at least one case reported in 2018, an airstrike by Afghan government forces struck an educational institution. Human Rights Watch reported that the attack occurred on April 2, 2018, while a graduation ceremony for students was reportedly taking place at a madrassa in Dasht-e-Archi district, Kunduz province. According to Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense and provincial officials, the airstrike targeted high-ranking Taliban officials.²⁷⁷ According to UNAMA, at least 36 were killed, of whom 30 were children. At least 51 children were injured.²⁷⁸

In 2019, reported attacks on schools occurred at a lower rate than in 2018. UNAMA verified 70 incidents of attacks on schools,²⁷⁹ including six reported attacks on girls' schools in Farah province.²⁸⁰ In 2019, GCPEA also collected over 50 reports on schools from media, NGO, and UN sources.²⁸¹ In July 2019, explosions from car bombs damaged several schools and harmed over 100 students. Examples of these reported incidents included:

- On January 20, 2019, *The New York Times* and *Tolo News* reported that unknown actors set fire to the Shaid Banafsha Girls' School, in Farah province, damaging parts of the building. This impacted approximately 1,000 girls enrolled at the institution.²⁸² Also, in Farah city and province, on January 30, 2019, one girls' school was reportedly destroyed by explosives, affecting the education of hundreds of girls. No group took responsibility.²⁸³
- *Al Jazeera* and *AFP* reported that on March 29, 2019, an explosion from a suspected mortar attack struck a school in Andar district, in eastern Ghazni province, during fighting between state security forces and the Taliban. This resulted in the death of four students and the injury of at least 15 students and two teachers.²⁸⁴
- On April 14, 2019, an unknown armed group reportedly detonated an explosive device or devices inside Benafsha Girls High School on the outskirts of Farah city. The school had reportedly been affected by an arson attack in 2018 and had received multiple threats. The school, which served 500 girls, was reported to have sustained significant damage but no casualties or injuries were reported.²⁸⁵
- International and local media reported that on April 15, 2019, another girls' school was targeted on the outskirts of Farah city. Unknown armed assailants reportedly set fire to, and detonated an explosive device within, Amir Shir Ali Khan High School. The school, which served 1,000 girls, was reportedly destroyed, including all school supplies, furniture, and records; however, no fatalities or injuries were recorded.²⁸⁶
- On July 1, 2019, the UN, Save the Children, and multiple media sources reported that at least 51 school students were injured when a car bomb detonated near a school; at least 40 civilians were also killed in the same attack.²⁸⁷ Five nearby schools reportedly sustained damages, according to the Ministry of Education, as reported to *CNN*.²⁸⁸
- On July 7, 2019, international media outlets reported that a car bomb attack carried out by the Taliban injured 60 students and damaged one private school. The attack, which targeted the National Directorate of Security, located in a densely populated area of Ghazni city and province, killed at least 12 adults and wounded nearly 200.²⁸⁹

Presidential elections held on September 28, 2019, resulted in at least 23 polling-related attacks on schools, according to reports collected by GCPEA.²⁹⁰ The Afghanistan EiEWG reported that over 5,700 schools served as polling centers in the presidential elections, and over 70 percent of schools in Kabul were used for this purpose.²⁹¹ In August 2019, the Taliban threatened polling centers ahead of the elections, including 4,600 schools used as polling centers, according to UNAMA.²⁹² Despite the government's securing of polling centers and IED defusals, UNAMA documented 12 incidents

of attacks that damaged school buildings, along with 120 reported incidents of threat, intimidation and harassment, including unexploded IEDs planted at or near polling stations.²⁹³ Examples documented by UNAMA included:

- On September 28, 2019, in Bar Kunar district, Kunar province, the Taliban claimed responsibility for attacks on two polling stations located at Paloso Naw School and Shangar Boys High School; that attack included indirect fire and small arms fire.²⁹⁴
- On September 28, 2019, the Taliban launched rockets towards a school used as a polling center in the administrative center of Sia Gird district, Parwan province. Three girls were injured and one was killed when a rocket struck a residence.²⁹⁵
- Also on the day of the election, in Fayzabad district, Jawzjan province, the Taliban fired a mortar round of mortar that struck close to the Latifa Shahid Female High School while it was in use as a polling station. The resulting impact damaged its water tank and broke the school's windows.²⁹⁶

Attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel

For the 2017-2019 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least 75 reports of attacks on students, teachers and other education personnel in Afghanistan from UN, NGO, and media sources. Much of UN-verified data did not disaggregate between attacks on schools and attacks on education personnel. Thus, to avoid any duplication, these combined numbers were reported in the previous section. However, some of the individual incidents collected by GCPEA may have been included in UN-verified counts.

In 2017, GCPEA collected information indicating that there were at least 40 attacks on students, teachers, or other education personnel, including abductions and targeted killings. These incidents led to the injury, death, or detention of at least 370 students, teachers, or other education personnel.²⁹⁷ Non-state armed groups perpetrated the majority of these incidents.

In 2018, GCPEA identified 22 reported incidents of attacks targeting students, teachers, and education personnel, decreasing by half from 2017.²⁹⁸ Reports indicated that at least 68 were harmed and 135 detained. According to the UN, four attacks targeting education personnel occurred between April 1 and June 30, 2018, and were related to elections.²⁹⁹ Examples of attacks on education personnel included:

- UNAMA and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that on August 26, 2018, the Taliban threatened school principals in Baraki Barak district, Logar province, ordering female teachers of grades one to 12 and female students from grades seven to 12 to stop attending school. As a result, classes for girls above grade six were suspended and female teachers were replaced.³⁰⁰
- On October 23, 2018, UNAMA and OHCHR reported that the Taliban abducted 125 education personnel in Ghazni province. The motive for this attack was that the victims had been paid their salaries via bank accounts, as opposed to manually whereby the Taliban would have profited.³⁰¹

In addition, there was at least one significant attack targeting education officials in Nangarhar province. On July 11, 2018, armed gunmen carried out a four-hour assault on the education department office in Jalalabad city, killing ten people. According to a spokesperson for the education department, teachers were delivering exam results when the attack occurred.³⁰²

In 2019, GCPEA identified reports of at least 11 attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel, which injured or killed at least 30 people.³⁰³ One example includes the reported murder of the Director of Education for Marja district, Helmand province, on March 13, 2019. *The New York Times* reported that he and his brother were allegedly killed after attending a meeting in which the Taliban had participated.³⁰⁴

Attacks also affected children on the way to or from school. For example, local and international media, including *Al Jazeera*, reported that on November 2, 2019, a roadside bomb exploded in Darqad district, Takhar province, killing nine children. The victims, aged between eight and 11 years according to sources, were walking to school when the fatal explosion occurred.³⁰⁵ In a survey conducted in four provinces of Afghanistan in 2019, Save the Children found that two-thirds of parents reported that their children feared explosions, abduction, or other forms of severe violence on their

way to or from school, and two-thirds of children reported feeling unsafe at school.³⁰⁶

Military use of schools and universities

According to information reported by the UN, military use of educational facilities appeared to decline during the reporting period. In 2017, the UN verified 16 incidents in which schools or hospitals were used for military purposes.³⁰⁷ In 2018, the UN verified just five cases in which the Afghan National Army (4) or “ISKP” (1) used schools for military purposes.³⁰⁸

However, NGO and media sources continued to report cases of schools affected by military use throughout 2018. For example, the NRC reported that, from April until November 2018, armed forces or armed groups occupied at least ten schools in Faryab province alone. These included nine schools occupied by Afghan security forces and one school occupied by armed opposition groups. As of November 2018, most of these schools had been vacated, but NRC reported significant damages to the structures, and that children were continuing to stay home from school because of security concerns.³⁰⁹

Similarly, on March 21, 2018, Pakistan’s online local-regional media site *The Frontier Post* reported cases of military checkpoints established in schools in Lashkargah and Nad Ali districts, Helmand province, Afghanistan, noting that local sources reported significant damage to the school buildings. At Nad Ali High School, a student reported that the school building was no longer functional.³¹⁰

In 2019, the UN verified the military use of seven schools.³¹¹ GCPEA also received reports of two schools used for military purposes.³¹² For example, *The New York Times* and *The National* reported, in March and April of 2019, that Assad Suri Primary School, in Zhari district, Kandahar province had been used for ten years, most recently by government armed forces, as well as by international forces and non-state armed groups in previous years. At the time of reporting, the school partially functioned, while police used several classrooms and erected a barracks within meters of the building. Reports also suggested that the school had sustained significant damages due to attacks.³¹³

Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

No incidents of child recruitment were reported at school or while children were en route to or from school during the reporting period. However, there was evidence that families at least perceived that recruitment was a risk for their children in and around school settings. According to OCHA, in 2018, three percent of primary school students and four percent of secondary school students were out of school because of fear of recruitment.³¹⁴

In addition, GCPEA also received anecdotal evidence that non-state armed groups recruited children from madrassas during the reporting period.³¹⁵ GCPEA also identified evidence of this during the previous reporting period covered in *Education under Attack 2018*.³¹⁶

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA recorded reports of 23 attacks on higher education, including seven attacks in 2017,³¹⁷ ten attacks in 2018,³¹⁸ and six in 2019,³¹⁹ which harmed over 100 students and education personnel. This rate was similar to the rate reported at the end of the 2013-2017 period covered in *Education under Attack 2018*. Many of the reported incidents involved detonation or defusal of explosive devices at or near university campuses, or attached to vehicles transporting university staff and students. In other incidents, armed actors fired ammunition at facilities or higher education students and personnel.

Attacks on higher education in 2018 included the following incidents:

- On April 15, 2018, gunmen riding a motorcycle opened fire on three guards outside Nangarhar University in Jalalabad City, Nangarhar province, killing all three of them, according to *The New York Times*.³²⁰ A similar attack occurred at Badakhshan University in Faizabad city, Badakhshan province, on August 23, 2018, when gunmen reportedly killed two policemen guarding the university.³²¹
- On July 28, 2018, armed assailants attacked a school where at least 48 female students, most 18 or 19 years old, were enrolled in a two-year midwife program in Jalalabad city, Nangarhar province.³²² The assault reportedly

lasted for seven hours. According to *The New York Times*, most of the students were evacuated or barricaded in a safe room. Three of the female students were injured, two male employees were killed, and five other employees were injured.³²³

- A local media source reported that “ISKP” issued threats against institutions of higher education in Nangarhar in July 2018, leading several universities to shut down, including Nangarhar University, Nangarhar Medical University, and Nangarhar Computer Science Faculty.³²⁴

In 2019, incidents of attack on higher education reportedly targeted both institutional facilities and people, often through explosive devices. For example:

- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) reported that on June 2, 2019, a magnetic IED was reportedly detonated on a school bus transporting female students of the Shaheed Prof Rabbani University in Kabul, injuring ten female students and killing one adult.³²⁵ A second roadside explosion, reportedly targeting medical responders, injured at least seven others.
- According to Scholars at Risk, on July 19, 2019, at Kabul University, an unidentified perpetrator detonated an explosive device at the south gate of the campus, reportedly killing eight people and injuring 33.³²⁶
- Scholars at Risk reported that on October 8, 2019, a bomb detonated in a classroom in the Faculty of Arts at Ghazni University, Ghazni province, while classes took place. At least 20 students were injured.³²⁷ A month earlier, a magnetic explosive device planted by an armed group reportedly detonated on a bus carrying Ghazni university students, injuring five students and killing the bus driver.³²⁸

On November 19, 2019, the Government of Afghanistan negotiated the release of two foreign professors from the American University of Afghanistan who were abducted by the Taliban in May 2016,³²⁹ as reported in *Education under Attack 2018*.³³⁰ A prisoner exchange between the Taliban and the government secured their freedom.

³²³ Shereena Qazi, “‘Peace deal is near’: What we know so far about US-Taliban talks,” *Al Jazeera*, August 13, 2019; UNAMA, “Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January to 30 September 2019,” October 17, 2019, p. 3; Mujib Mashal, “In Afghanistan, Trump Creates Confusion Over U.S. Policy on Taliban,” *The New York Times*, November 29, 2019.

³²⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2018), Afghanistan chapter.

³²⁵ UNAMA, “Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2019,” February 2020, p. 5.

³²⁶ UNAMA, “Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2019,” p. 5.

³²⁷ UNAMA, “Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2019,” pp. 21-22.

³²⁸ Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, UNICEF, and Samuel Hall, *All in School and Learning: Global Initiative on Out-Of-School Children – Afghanistan Country Study* (Kabul, Afghanistan: Ministry of Education, UNICEF, Samuel Hall and USAID, 2018), p.32.

³²⁹ Education in Emergencies Working Group Afghanistan (EiEWG Afghanistan), “Attacks on Education Advocacy Brief,” July 2019, p. 1.

³³⁰ OCHA, *2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan*, (Kabul, Afghanistan: December 2019), p. 24-25.

³³¹ EiEWG Afghanistan, “Attacks on Education Advocacy Brief,” July 2019, p. 1.

³³² Ministry of Education et al., “Ongoing conflict leaves nearly half of children in Afghanistan out-of-school,” UNICEF news release, June 3, 2018, p. 35; OCHA, *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan*, (Kabul, Afghanistan, December 2018), p. 32.

³³³ OCHA, *2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan*, p. 25.

³³⁴ UNICEF, “Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report: January - June 2018,” September 6, 2018, p. 2.

³³⁵ Save the Children in Afghanistan, *Afraid to Go Outside: The Impact of conflict on children in Afghanistan*, (Kabul: Save the Children Afghanistan, 2019), p. 4.

³³⁶ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf

³³⁷ Patricia Grossman, “Another Airstrike in Kunduz, and More Civilian Deaths,” Human Rights Watch op-ed, April 11, 2018.

³³⁸ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General,” S/2019/509, June 20, 2019, para. 23; UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General,” A/72/865-S/2018/465, May 16, 2018, para. 26.

³³⁹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Response Plan Year-End Report of Financing, Achievements and Response Challenges*, (OCHA, 2019), p. 5.

³⁴⁰ OCHA, *2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan*, (Kabul, Afghanistan, December 2018), pp. 16, 32.

³⁴¹ UNAMA, *Special Report: 2018 Elections Violence*, (OCHA, 2018), p. 6.

³⁴² UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General,” S/2019/509, June 20, 2018, para. 23.

³⁴³ UNAMA, *Special Report: 2018 Elections Violence*, (OCHA, 2018), p. 6.

³⁴⁴ UNAMA, *Special Report: 2018 Elections Violence*, p. 6.

³⁴⁵ UNAMA, “Election-Related Attacks and Abuses during the Initial Voter Registration Period,” May 10, 2018, p. 3.

- ²⁶¹ UNAMA, “Election-Related Attacks and Abuses during the Initial Voter Registration Period,” p. 2.
- ²⁶² *BBC Monitoring; Tolo News TV; Negah TV; Agence France Presse; Pajhwok Afghan News; Xinhua General News Service*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID AFG10484; “Two Dead in Bombing at Baghlan Voter Registration Centre,” *Ariana News*, June 6, 2018.
- ²⁶³ UNAMA, *Special Report: 2018 Elections Violence*, p. 5.
- ²⁶⁴ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ²⁶⁵ Jeff Seldin, “IS in Afghanistan Just Won’t Go Away, US Officials Say,” *Voice of America*, August 7, 2018.
- ²⁶⁶ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General,” S/2019/509, June 20, 2019, para. 23.
- ²⁶⁷ “Afghanistan attack targets Kabul classroom with 600 children inside,” Norwegian Refugee Council news release, March 19, 2018.
- ²⁶⁸ Najim Rahim and Jawad Sukhanyar, “Attacks in Afghanistan Leave Dozens Dead and 2 Schools Burned,” *The New York Times*, April 15, 2018.
- ²⁶⁹ “Displaced, Denied, Destroyed,” Norwegian Refugee Council briefing note, July 2018, p. 2; Ben Farmer, “Eighty Afghan girls’ schools close over Islamic State threat,” *The Telegraph*, June 6, 2018.
- ²⁷⁰ UNAMA, “Midyear update on the protection of civilians in armed conflict: 1 January to 30 June 2018,” July 15, 2018, p. 3.
- ²⁷¹ Ben Farmer, “Eighty Afghan girls’ schools close over Islamic State threat,” *The Telegraph*, June 6, 2018.
- ²⁷² “Three Afghans beheaded, school torched in suspected Islamic State attack,” *Reuters*, July 1, 2018.
- ²⁷³ Roald Høvrving, “Armed men cut the throats of three school employees,” Norwegian Refugee Council news release, August 16, 2018.
- ²⁷⁴ Pamela Constable and Sharif Hassan, “‘It was a horror scene’: Scores of Afghan students killed in Kabul suicide bombing aimed at minority Shiites,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 2018; Murtaza Mohammadi, “Risking their lives to get an education,” UNICEF news release, September 13, 2018; “United Nations condemns attack deliberately targeting students at school,” UNAMA news release, August 18, 2018.
- ²⁷⁵ Fereshta Abbasi, “Afghan Students Defy Attackers and Return to Class,” Human Rights Watch dispatch, August 20, 2018; “United Nations condemns attack deliberately targeting students at school,” UNAMA press release, August 18, 2018.
- ²⁷⁶ AFP, “Student killed in twin bomb attack near Afghanistan girls’ school,” *The Guardian Nigeria*, September 11, 2018; “UNAMA condemns series of bombings in Nangarhar targeting civilians and schools,” UNAMA news release, September 11, 2018.
- ²⁷⁷ Patricia Grossman, “Another Airstrike in Kunduz, and More Civilian Deaths,” Human Rights Watch op-ed, April 11, 2018.
- ²⁷⁸ UNAMA, Special Report Airstrikes in Dasht-e-Archi district, Kunduz Province, 2 April 2018; Shereena Qazi, “Afghan air attack ‘kills children’ at Kunduz religious school,” *Al Jazeera*, April 3, 2018; “Latest Afghan school attack must be investigated,” Norwegian Refugee Council news release, April 3, 2018.
- ²⁷⁹ UNAMA, “Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2019,” p. 27.
- ²⁸⁰ UNAMA, “Midyear Update on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January To 30 June 2019,” p. 4.
- ²⁸¹ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ²⁸² “Girls School Torched in Farah,” *Tolo News*, January 21, 2019; Najim Rahim and David Zucchini, “Attacks on Girls’ Schools on the Rise as Taliban Make Gains,” *The New York Times*, May 21, 2019.
- ²⁸³ “Girls school dynamited in Farah capital,” *Pajhwok Afghan News English*, January 31, 2019.
- ²⁸⁴ “Explosion, Taliban attacks kill dozens across Afghanistan,” *Al Jazeera*, March 30, 2019; AFP, as cited in ACLED, Event ID AFG17236.
- ²⁸⁵ “Unknown Armed Men ‘Destroy’ Girls’ School In Farah,” *Tolo News*, April 15, 2019; “Militants blow up girls’ school in western Afghanistan: police,” *Xinhua*, April 15, 2019; Najim Rahim and David Zucchini, “Attacks on Girls’ Schools on the Rise as Taliban Make Gains”; *Xinhua*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID AFG17497.
- ²⁸⁶ “Militants bomb another girls’ school in W. Afghanistan,” *Xinhua*, April 16, 2019; Najim Rahim and David Zucchini, “Attacks on Girls’ Schools on the Rise as Taliban Make Gains,”; *Xinhua*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID AFG17495.
- ²⁸⁷ “Children Injured, Killed in Afghanistan: UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Strongly Condemns the Attack,” UN Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict news release, July 2, 2019; “Save the Children Statement on Attack in Kabul, Afghanistan,” Save the Children news release, July 1, 2019; Eshan Popalzai and Tara John, “Six killed, 51 schoolchildren injured in Taliban attack on Kabul,” *CNN*, July 1, 2019; Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Rod Nordland, “Bombing Kills Dozens and Hurts Schoolchildren as Taliban Talks Resume,” *The New York Times*, July 1, 2019.
- ²⁸⁸ Eshan Popalzai and Tara John, “Six killed, 51 schoolchildren injured in Taliban attack on Kabul,” *CNN*, July 1, 2019.
- ²⁸⁹ “At Least 12 Dead In Afghan Suicide Bombing Claimed By Taliban,” *RFERL*, July 7, 2019; Pamela Constable, “Taliban car bomb hits intelligence compound in Afghanistan, killing at least 12 and wounding schoolchildren,” *The Washington Post*, July 7, 2019; “Afghan car bomb kills 14 and wounds dozens, including students,” *The Guardian*, July 7, 2019.
- ²⁹⁰ Information from a confidential source and not otherwise available; UNAMA, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report: 2019: Election-Related Violence,” October 2019, pp. 4-6.
- ²⁹¹ Information received from an humanitarian aid worker, November 5, 2019.
- ²⁹² UNICEF, “Afghanistan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2,” September 30, 2019, p. 1.
- ²⁹³ UNAMA, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report: 2019: Election-Related Violence,” pp. 5-6.
- ²⁹⁴ UNAMA, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report: 2019: Election-Related Violence,” p. 5.
- ²⁹⁵ UNAMA, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report: 2019: Election-Related Violence,” pp. 4-5.
- ²⁹⁶ UNAMA, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Special Report: 2019: Election-Related Violence,” p. 6.
- ²⁹⁷ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ²⁹⁸ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ²⁹⁹ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General,” A/73/374-S/2018/824, September 10, 2018, para. 34.
- ³⁰⁰ UNAMA and UNOHCHR, Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Annual Report 2018 (Kabul, Afghanistan: UNAMA and UNOHCHR, February 2019), p. 16.
- ³⁰¹ UNAMA and UNOHCHR, Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Annual Report 2018 (Kabul, Afghanistan: UNAMA and UNOHCHR, February 2019), p. 16; “Taliban kidnap 125 teachers, education staff in Ghazni,” *MENAFN*, October 23, 2018.
- ³⁰² Rod Nordland and Fahim Abed, “Afghan Army Takes Over After ISIS Attacks a Refugee Office,” *The New York Times*, July 31, 2018; Ahmad Sultan, “Ten killed in attack in Afghan city of Jalalabad; assault over,” *Reuters*, July 11, 2018; “Afghanistan: Gunmen attack Jalalabad education building,” *Al Jazeera*, July 11, 2018.
- ³⁰³ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf

- ³⁰⁴ “Afghan War Casualty Report: March 8-14,” *The New York Times*, March 15, 2019.
- ³⁰⁵ “9 school children killed in blast in Afghanistan’s Darqad district,” *ANI News*, November 2, 2019; “Nine children killed in Afghanistan landmine blast,” *Al Jazeera*, November 2, 2019; “World Digest: Nov. 2, 2019,” *The Washington Post*, November 2, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/world-digest-nov-2-2019/2019/11/02/of2c3e1a-fd7e-11e9-8190-6be4deb56e01_story.html (accessed November 12, 2019).
- ³⁰⁶ “Many Afghan Children Are Afraid to Go Outside, New Survey by Save the Children Finds,” Save the Children news release, November 19, 2019.
- ³⁰⁷ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General,” *A/72/361-S/2017/821*, May 16, 2018, para. 28.
- ³⁰⁸ UN General Assembly and Security Council, “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary General,” *S/2019/509*, June 20, 2019, para. 25.
- ³⁰⁹ “Afghanistan: Amid progress talks in Geneva, military use of schools put thousands of children at risk,” Norwegian Refugee Council news release, November 28, 2018.
- ³¹⁰ “20 Helmand schools used as security bases: official,” *Frontier Post*, March 21, 2018.
- ³¹¹ Information from a UN respondent received via email on May 21, 2020.
- ³¹² Information from a confidential source not otherwise available.
- ³¹³ Mujib Mashal, “Homes Lost and Lives Trampled, Rural Afghans Urgently Want Peace,” *The New York Times*, March 5, 2019; Stefanie Glinski, “Afghanistan schools occupied by security forces and targeted by militants,” *The National*, April 18, 2019.
- ³¹⁴ OCHA, 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Afghanistan (Kabul, Afghanistan, November 2018), p. 33.
- ³¹⁵ Information shared by a UN respondent via email on March 27, 2020. See also: Ghulam Mohammad Qane and Mohammed Naqib Ishan Jan, “Madrasas and Recruitment of Child Soldiers: The Scenario in Afghanistan,” *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, May 2019, (8:1C2), pp. 371-380.
- ³¹⁶ GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2018*, p. 83.
- ³¹⁷ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ³¹⁸ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ³¹⁹ A full list of references can be found on GCPEA’s website, https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2020_references.pdf
- ³²⁰ Najim Rahim and Jawad Sukhanyar, “Attacks in Afghanistan Leave Dozens Dead and 2 Schools Burned,” April 15, 2018, *The New York Times*.
- ³²¹ “3 police officers killed in attacks in Afghanistan,” *Xinhua*, August 23, 2018.
- ³²² “Afghanistan: Gunmen storm Jalalabad medical building,” *Al Jazeera*, July 28, 2018; Zabihullah Ghazi and Rod Nordland, “Extremists Kill 2 at Afghan School for Midwives, but Students Escape,” *The New York Times*, July 28, 2018.
- ³²³ Zabihullah Ghazi and Rod Nordland, “Extremists Kill 2 at Afghan School for Midwives, but Students Escape.”
- ³²⁴ Ruchi Kumar, “ISIS forcing universities to close in eastern Afghanistan,” *The National*, August 8, 2018.
- ³²⁵ “Afghanistan - Explosions (DG ECHO) (ECHO Daily Flash of 04 June 2019),” European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, June 4, 2019.
- ³²⁶ Scholars at Risk Network, Academic Freedom Monitor, Kabul University, July 19, 2019.
- ³²⁷ Scholars at Risk Network, Academic Freedom Monitor, Ghazni University, October 8, 2019; “Afghanistan: IED explosion reported in Ghazni University October 8,” Garda World Security Alert, October 8, 2019.
- ³²⁸ Scholars at Risk Network, Academic Freedom Monitor, Ghazni University, September 16, 2019.
- ³²⁹ Shadi Khan Saif, “Taliban insurgents free American, Australian professors,” *World University News*, November 19, 2019; David Zucchino and Adam Goldman. “Two Western Hostages Are Freed in Afghanistan in Deal With Taliban,” *The New York Times*, November 19, 2019.
- ³³⁰ GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2018*, p. 84.