YEMEN

Shelling, airstrikes, or looting affected over 40 schools during the 2020-2021 reporting period. In addition, teachers in Houthi-controlled areas were reportedly threatened, arrested, or abducted. State forces and non-state armed groups used at least 38 schools for military purposes, including to recruit both male and female students. GCPEA also identified at least 25 reports of attacks on higher education.

Context

Yemen's seven-year conflict escalated during the 2020-2021 reporting period.¹⁷⁸⁴ Houthi forces (also known as Ansar Allah), which controlled much of northern Yemen, and the internationally recognized government of Yemen (IRG) with the support of the Saudi Arabia and Emirati-aligned coalition continued to battle for territorial control.¹⁷⁸⁵ In early 2020, the IRG supported by the Saudi and Emirati-aligned coalition, waged military campaigns to prevent Houthi forces from entering Ma'rib city, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED);¹⁷⁸⁶ battles for Ma'rib reescalated in the first half of 2021, with frontlines shifting frequently, according to Human Rights Watch, the UN, and media sources.¹⁷⁸⁷ In September and October 2021, Houthi forces took several key districts of Ma'rib, Shebwa, and Abyan governorates, further consolidating their control.¹⁷⁸⁸

In southern Yemen, clashes continued in 2020 between the internationally recognized government (IRG) of President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), an Emirati-backed group. The STC fought for sovereignty from Hadi's government; fighting between the two groups slowed following a December 2020 power sharing deal.

During the reporting period, the use of explosive weapons by parties to conflict caused a significant number of civilian casualties, including children. ¹⁷⁹² In 2020 alone, at least 2,087 civilians were reported as killed, with children making up a quarter of reported civilian casualties. ¹⁷⁹³ While the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) reported a 35 percent decrease in the overall number of civilians killed in 2020 as compared to 2019, some governates in the north experienced increases in civilian casualties. ¹⁷⁹⁴

During the 2020-2021 period, Yemen was among the world's worst humanitarian crises, ¹⁷⁹⁵ with the UN reporting that over 24 million Yemenis needed humanitarian aid in 2020. ¹⁷⁹⁶ In 2021, at least 4 million Yemeni people were internally displaced, around half of whom were children, ¹⁷⁹⁷ and at least 153,000 of whom were newly displaced in during the year, according to the UN. ¹⁷⁹⁸

According to the UN, over two million children were out of school due to the conflict in Yemen in 2021. 1799 School closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic affected a further 5.8 million children between March and October 2020. 1800 Furthermore, a survey conducted by Mwatana for Human Rights found that over 60 percent of children whose schools had been attacked subsequently dropped out of education. 1801 The UN reported in 2021 that two-thirds of Yemeni teachers had not received regular salary payments for four years. 1802 In 2020, the UN concluded that the Houthi's military use of schools, violations against education personnel, and propaganda activities at school seriously inhibited quality education. 1803 In areas under Houthi control, authorities sought to control higher education and use universities as recruitment centers by enforcing new curricula and overtaking university boards. 1804

Attacks on schools

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 48 reported attacks on schools in Yemen. Schools were damaged by airstrikes, shelling, or other explosives, or were caught in crossfire. Attacks on schools decreased in frequency over the two years, a trend that began during the period covered in *Education under Attack 2020*. For instance, GCPEA identified over 30 reported incidents of attacks on schools in 2019, as compared to 40 reported incidents in 2018. Yemen was one of the most heavily affected countries by attacks on education in the period covered by *Education under Attack 2020*, with nearly 1,800 incidents of damage or destruction to schools due to conflict between March 2015 and December 2018, as reported in a Yemen Education Cluster assessment. 1806

In 2020, the UN verified 16 attacks on schools. Separately, in 2020, GCPEA collected reports of at least 28 incidents of attacks on education from the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP), the Yemen Data Project, ACLED, NGO, and

media reports. 1808 Many attacks involved the use of explosive weapons (19), with shelling and ground-launched strikes the most common form of attack. Taizz (9) and Al Hudaydah (6) governorates were most affected by attacks on schools. In 2020, the Yemen Education Cluster reported that, in most governorates, 50 percent of schools were physically affected by conflict. 1809 Examples included:

- Local media and conflict monitors reported that on February 25, 2020, shelling struck al-Salah School in Majzar district, Ma'rib governorate. 1810
- The New Arab reported that on August 1, 2020, an explosive device detonated near Neama Rassam school in Taizz city. The school was located near a military headquarters; while one soldier was reported killed, no children were harmed in the attack.¹⁸¹¹
- On September 25, 2020, CIMP and Arab News reported that a missile struck Al-Mithaq School in Ma'rib city and governorate. No fatalities were reported; however, hundreds of students had allegedly left the school prior to the attack.¹⁸¹²
- On October 11, 2020, artillery shells struck May 22 School in Salh district, Taizz governorate, according to Yemen Data Project and CIMP. The strike killed one child and injured three children and two adults, according to CIMP. 1813
- In early December 2020, media sources reported that militia members raided five religious schools in Sana'a
 and forced them to close. The report also noted that the militia members forced other religious centers to close
 outside Sana'a; however, GCPEA could not determine whether the incidents involved threats against schools.¹⁸¹⁴

The UN verified 18 attacks on schools in 2021. 1815 Separately, in 2021, GCPEA identified at least 20 reported incidents of attacks on schools, 1816 most of which involved the use of explosive weapons. For example, Save the Children reported that in March 2021, attacks on four schools in Taizz and one school in Sana'a interrupted the education of over 30,000 children. 1817 Other examples included:

- Save the Children and Yemen Data Project reported that on March 7, 2021, artillery shells struck near a school in Taizz city, injuring seven students as they left the building in the afternoon. Save the Children reported that artillery shells had also hit the area three days earlier.
- On March 11, 2021, an unknown armed group detonated an explosive device near a school in Al Hamra, Tuban district, Lahij governorate, as reported by *Yemen News Agency* and other local media. 1819
- The Civilian Impact Monitoring Project (CIMP) reported that on May 27, 2021, a drone strike hit a school in Tuhayat city, Al Hudaydah governorate. The blast injured four school students who were in the schoolyard. 1820
- On July 20, 2021, a ballistic missile allegedly hit Ath Thawra school in Jabal Murad district, Ma'rib governorate. No fatalities occurred, according to local media sources. 1821
- According to Yemen Data Project, on August 8, 2021, dynamite reportedly detonated at Al Wai Basic School in the village of Ar Ribat, Al Hudaydah governorate.
- On September 19, 2021, an explosion allegedly occurred in Qard al Maafari school in Al Azariq district, Ad Dali governorate. The explosion damaged the school building, according to local news sources. 1823

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

For the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified 13 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel. These incidents involved the abduction or assault of over 100 school students and personnel. Compared to 2018 and 2019, attacks occurred at a similar rate, with three reported incidents occurring annually. However, attacks in 2020 and 2021 appeared less fatal than in earlier years; for example, over 60 students were killed or injured by such attacks in 2018. 1824

Information on attacks on students and teachers covering 2020 and earlier years was released in 2020 by both media and UN sources. For instance, the Yemen Teachers Syndicate alleged that Houthi forces had killed at least 1,579 educators and wounded 2,642 between September 2014 and October 2020. In addition, in the period between September 2014 and October 2020.

tember 2014 and June 2020, the UN Group of Experts found that Houthis had attacked educators who opposed or did not carry out activities such as child recruitment or indoctrination in schools. The group collated 55 reports of threats, attacks, unlawful dismissals, financial, and administrative sanctions against teachers. In addition, on unspecified dates, they verified the detention and abuse of a school principal and a principal's son, and 26 other reports of educators detained and abused for refusing to recruit students.¹⁸²⁶

In 2020, GCPEA collated at least six reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, or other education personnel, which harmed around 40 people. In some instances, women and girls appeared to be directly targeted. These attacks, which consisted off arrests, abductions, and assault, took place in several governorates throughout the year. In addition, in 2020, Mwatana for Human Rights reported that children described experiencing airstrikes or armed clashes on their journeys to or from school; 45 percent of children surveyed by Mwatana reported military presence on the way to or from school. For example:

- On February 1, 2020, the UN reported that dozens of students protested the military use of a school in Al-Khubar, Habba district, Shabwa governorate. On February 2, 2020, special security forces allegedly raided the town in search of students who had demonstrated, and arrested two teenage boys, accusing them of being affiliated with STC forces. The security forces later opened fire on a group of men that attempted to negotiate the students' release.
- On March 16, 2020, armed assailants allegedly abducted seven female school principals in Sana'a, according to Yemen Data Project. 1830 No reason was given for the abduction.
- Local media reported that on November 12, 2020, members of an armed group stormed a Salafi Mosque in Al
 Mashannah district, Ibb governorate, and fought with and abducted several students of the mosque. The attackers allegedly carried light and medium weapons and took photos of the students without their consent.

In 2021, GCPEA identified at least seven reported incidents of attacks on school teachers and other education personnel, affecting over 60 staff and students in Aden, Sana'a, and Taizz governorates. As in prior years, armed groups allegedly abducted or detained staff or otherwise targeted them. Furthermore, GCPEA identified at least one report of a student affected by armed violence on the way home from school. Examples included:

- A local civil society organization reported to local media that, on January 20, 2021, an armed group raided homes in Al-Ta'iziyah district, Taizz governorate and allegedly abducted the principal of Oqba bin Nafeh school, the representative of Al-Amal school, and six teachers. They were reportedly detained in a school, as described in the following section.¹⁸³³
- Around February 4, 2021, Houthi armed actors allegedly abducted around 50 educators and staff from the main
 office of the Ministry of Education in Sana'a, according to local media reports. Media stated that Houthi forces
 had waged a campaign to remove education staff that refused to implement their new curriculum.¹⁸³⁴
- On December 8, 2021, armed parties reportedly shot the head of the Aden Ministry of Education near a school in Aden city. According to local media sources, the head of the Ministry of Education survived the attack. 1835
- On December 27, 2021, an alleged Houthi fighter reportedly shot and killed a 12-year-old student while he was
 walking home from school in the Usayfarah area of Al Qahirah district, Taizz governorate, according to media
 reports.¹⁸³⁶

Military use of schools and universities

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at that at least 49 schools were used for military purposes. Many cases occurred in Taizz governorate, according to media and NGO reporting. Schools were used as barracks, bases, or to launch attacks, and several of the schools were later attacked. The UN verified the use of 37 schools in 2019¹⁸³⁷ and 32 schools in 2018,¹⁸³⁸ most of which were attributed to Houthi forces.

In 2020, the UN verified the military use of 34 schools, with around 30 attributed to the Houthis and the remainder to the Yemen Armed Forces. ¹⁸³⁹ The UN also reported that during school closures in 2020, the Houthis occupied empty schools and used them for barracks and training. ¹⁸⁴⁰ In the same year, GCPEA identified UN, media, and government re-

ports of 14 cases of military use of schools, primarily in Taizz governorate (9), ¹⁸⁴¹ and with single cases in Ad Dali, Al Jawf, Lahij, Ma'rib, and Shabwa governorates. ¹⁸⁴² Some of these incidents may overlap with the UN's count. For example:

- The UN reported that in early January 2020, Special Security Forces of the IRG began using Al-Aram secondary school near Al-Khubar village, Haban district, Shabwa Governorate, as military barracks. In February 2020, as noted above, security forces arrested students accused of protesting the use of the school.¹⁸⁴³
- Around May 5, 2020, officials working in the Office of Education in Taizz allegedly allowed an armed group to transform several schools into barracks, according to ACLED.¹⁸⁴⁴
- On December 9, 2020, the Al Jawf governorate's Office of Education issued a statement saying that Houthi
 forces allegedly burned down Mubarraz school in al Hazm district, Al Jawf governorate, the day before, after reportedly using the school as barracks for three months. 1845

In 2021, the UN verified the military use of 49 schools. 1846 Separately, in 2021, GCPEA identified four reported incidents of military use of schools in Taizz governorate. Parties to conflict allegedly used schools for bases, detention centers, and weapons depots. State forces also used a school for an operation. Examples included:

- A local human rights monitor informed Al Masdar News that an armed group had kidnapped eight teachers and education personnel and had detained them in a school in Al-Ta'iziyah District, Taizz governorate, on January 20, 2021.¹⁸⁴⁷
- In early March 2021, pro-government forces took control of a school from alleged Houthi forces in Kadha district, Taizz governorate, during a campaign to regain control over the district. On March 14, 2021, missiles allegedly fired by Houthi forces struck the school and killed 15 government soldiers who were inside the building, and three children nearby, according to *Reuters* and *Arab News*. 1848
- On March 10, 2021, an armed group allegedly detonated weapons that it had stored in Al Anwar School in Maqbanah district, Taizz governorate, according to local media sources. Reports indicated that government, or pro-government, forces had advanced in the area, which caused the group to destroy their weapons store.¹⁸⁴⁹

Between July 2020 and June 2021, the UN also reported that armed forces attacked two schools that had been used for military purposes since approximately 2018. Also in 2021, GCPEA identified anecdotal evidence that Houthi forces had used schools as detention centers during a nearly month-long siege of Abedia district, Ma'rib governorate.

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

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA received reports of the recruitment of children from schools in Yemen. In 2018, the UN documented that Houthis had used 20 schools to recruit and train children, including girls. 1852

In 2020, the Group of Experts released a report on human rights abuses from 2014 to mid-2020, which included detailed accounts of Houthi forces' systematic use of schools to recruit both male and female students. The Group noted that the practice of child recruitment at school became more common after 2017, when the government stopped salary payments to over 100,000 teachers in Houthi-controlled governorates, causing many teachers to vacate their positions, which Houthis later filled with "volunteer" education personnel. These "volunteer" teachers conducted weapon demonstrations and military trainings in school yards and required students to listen to speeches mobilizing them to "go to the frontlines," and taught a curriculum with classes on sectarian ideology. These activities were also documented and shared on social media. While most activities were directed towards male students, female students were also recruited at schools, often to take roles such as educators, guards, or medics; some girls were also used to recruit at schools or universities.

Furthermore, in January 2020, the UN verified that in Sahar District, Sa'dah Governorate, Houthi authorities used a primary school to convene a political meeting, after which a recruitment committee remained on site at the school building for three days. Fearing attacks on the school due to the military presence, parents kept their children home from school. 1855

The UN reported that from May 2015 to June 2020, Houthis had recruited children from 34 schools and had recruited 49

boys and nine girls. 1856 Between June 2015 and June 2020, the Euro-Med Monitor estimated that 150 schools in Yemen had been used for child recruitment. 1857

In 2021, GCPEA received anecdotal evidence that Houthi forces used schools as sites of indoctrination of children. 1858

Attacks on higher education

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 24 incidents of attacks on higher education. Of these, ten were attacks on higher education facilities and 14 included attacks on higher education students or staff. Attacks on higher education appeared to occur at similar rates to earlier years. In 2018 and 2019, GCPEA identified 28 reported incidents of attacks on higher education;¹⁸⁵⁹ however, the majority (24) of these were attacks on university facilities, as compared to this period, when GCPEA identified an equal number of reported attacks on students and staff.

In 2020, GCPEA collected reports of at least eight incidents of attacks on higher education facilities. Attacks on university facilities primarily involved shelling, with CIMP reporting several incidents of shelling on the Hudaydah University Faculty of Engineering, which was located on a frontline. Examples included:

- On January 1, 2020, an armed group allegedly looted medical equipment from Ibb University, in Al Mashannah district, Ibb governorate, according to local media. 1862
- On July 1, 2020, an airstrike allegedly hit the Faculty of Engineering at Sana'a University, according to Scholars at Risk and media sources.¹⁸⁶³
- CIMP reported that on July 17, 2020, and August 17, 2020, artillery shells hit the Faculty of Engineering in Al Hali District, Al Hudaydah governorate. 1864

Also in 2020, GCPEA identified reports of ten incidents of attacks on higher education students and staff. These attacks typically occurred in Sana'a governorate or in areas under Houthi control. The involved the arrest, abduction, threat, injury, or killing of students and staff, with reports indicating that individuals were targeted for not supporting the Houthi authorities. For instance:

- Scholars at Risk and News Yemen reported that on February 2, 2020, armed Houthi forces raided a classroom at Sana'a University and attacked a member of the university's sociology department. Scholars at Risk noted that the faculty member had been accused of speaking out against a recent appointment of a Dean of the Faculty of Arts who was related to a military commander. After the assault, the lecturer was taken away from campus and reportedly banned from returning to the campus. 1866
- The UN reported that on April 6, 2020, alleged STC forces killed a 19-year-old male student who was on his way home from Al-Mimlah Technical Institute in Al-Mualla district, Aden governorate. The student had been stopped at a checkpoint with another female student in his car.¹⁸⁶⁷
- On April 28, 2020, Houthi armed forces allegedly detained at least 20 students from Dhamar University, according to Scholars at Risk. They were taken to an undisclosed location and few details were known about the reason for their abduction.¹⁸⁶⁸
- Yemen Data Project and Scholars at risk reported that Houthi forces abducted a professor of psychology as he
 was entering Sana'a University, on September 9, 2020. The forces released him on October 6, 2020.¹⁸⁶⁹

In 2021, GCPEA identified two reports of attacks on higher education facilities, marking a decline as compared to 2020. Attacks on facilities included ground and air-launched explosives:

- On March 21, 2021, shelling struck the Faculty of Arts of Taizz University, according to CIMP, local media, and *Al Jazeera*. *Al-Sharea* local media reported that mortar shells landed near the entrance to the university, killing a civilian and wounding others. The university closed for a week following the attack. 1870
- On December 7, 2021, ACLED reported that air strikes hit Sana'a-Iman University in Aththaorah district, Amanat al Asimah governorate.¹⁸⁷¹

In 2021, GCPEA collected four reports of attacks on higher education students and personnel. ¹⁸⁷² Examples included:

• On August 4, 2021, militia members allegedly shot and killed a Yemeni professor at Sana'a University in Amanat

- al Asimah governorate, according to ACLED. This incident occurred hours after the professor posted on social media to request that the government distribute and increase salaries for public employees. 1873
- On September 1, 2021, militia members allegedly attacked female students at Ibb University in Ibb governorate, during a celebratory party that the students hosted. According to local media sources, no fatalities occurred.¹⁸⁷⁴
- Media sources reported that on October 23, 2021, militia members raided and looted university residences for retired faculty or family of deceased faculty, and threatened to use force against residents.¹⁸⁷⁵
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