

INDIA

Attacks on schools continued in several eastern states during the 2022-2023 reporting period. GCPEA also identified at least 55 incidents of attacks on school students and teachers, primarily involving the use of excessive force during education-related protests. Attacks on higher education students and personnel increased slightly in 2022 and 2023 as compared to the previous reporting period.

CONTEXT

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, low-grade violence continued in Jammu and Kashmir and the areas affected by the Naxalite insurgency.¹ The National Democratic Alliance-led government remained in power at the central level.²

In 2022, militants carried out targeted attacks on civilians and government workers in Kashmir, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG).³ The attacks forced hundreds to flee the region in May and June 2022.⁴ Amnesty International reported that authorities demolished residential homes in February 2023 in Jammu and Kashmir.⁵ Separately, conflict continued between the Naxalite insurgents and government forces, harming civilians in the central and eastern states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, among others, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and news reports.⁶

In May 2023, communal conflict broke out in Manipur state, according to the UN and ICG.⁷ The violence killed at least 200 people and displaced approximately 60,000 by December of that year.⁸ Human Rights Watch reported that more than 1,700 houses were destroyed, in addition to churches.⁹ In response to the violence, the government restricted internet access in the state, limiting access to essential services including health care, according to *The New Humanitarian* and Human Rights Watch.¹⁰

Government employee, farmer, and student protests occurred at several points during the reporting period.¹¹ In 2023, student protests occurred in Manipur amid continued violence.¹² The government increased restrictions on the right to protest in Jammu and Kashmir during the reporting period.¹³ Natural disasters affected children and access to education. Flooding and landslides occurred in several states during the reporting period, including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam.¹⁴ In June 2022, floods impacted more than four million people including a million children in Assam state; the storms damaged school infrastructure, leading to more than 800,000 out of school children, according to Save the Children.¹⁵ In August 2023, flooding and landslides destroyed infrastructure in Himachal Pradesh, leading to school closures in the state.¹⁶

In February 2022, schools and some universities reopened in-person classes after months of reoccurring Covid-19 closures.¹⁷ The closures disproportionately impacted girls as they faced higher risk of child marriage,

according to Human Rights Watch and Save the Children.¹⁸

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA identified ten reported attacks on schools. The number of attacks remained similar to previous years, when GCPEA collected at least six and two attacks on schools in 2021 and 2020, respectively.¹⁹ In 2022 and 2023, attacks on schools primarily involved the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In 2022, GCPEA collected six reports of attacks on schools from local media reports.²⁰ For example:

- On January 26, 2022, an explosive device was reportedly emplaced in the Upgraded Middle School in Kharki town, Bihar state, according to local media outlet *The Telegraph*. Police reportedly diffused the device.²¹
- On June 5, 2022, an IED was reportedly detonated near the gate of the Little Flower School in Sangaiprou, Imphal city, Manipur state.²²
- On July 16, 2022, an IED was reportedly detonated near a school in Murgiyachak village, Bihar state, injuring at least six students, according to *Times of India*.²³

In 2023, GCPEA identified four reported attacks on schools in.²⁴ For example:

- On March 21, 2023, students reportedly found bomb making equipment at Kharija Falimari AP Primary School in Okrabari village, West Bengal state.²⁵
- On September 1, 2023, three explosive devices detonated near Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya School, a government-run girls' residential secondary school, in Thamnepokpi village, Manipur state.²⁶
- On December 31, 2023, an IED was reportedly found and subsequently diffused at the Princeton International school in Imphal city, Manipur state.²⁷

ATTACKS ON SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

During the 2022-2023 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least 55 reported incidents of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel. The number of attacks remained similar compared to last reporting period; GCPEA identified more than 50 reported incidents of attacks in 2021 and at least four reports of attacks on students, teachers, and personnel from media reports in 2020.²⁸ Incidents in 2022 and 2023 involved the reported arrest or detention of over 2,700 students, teachers, and other education personnel.

In 2022, GCPEA identified 45 reports of attacks on students, teachers, and personnel.²⁹ For example:

- On February 24, 2022, students protested irregularities in the appointment of secondary teachers, outside

the education department in Patna city, Bihar state, according to *Times of India*. The police reportedly used lathi (martial-arts sticks) charge to disperse the protesters.³⁰

- On May 31, 2022, a teacher was reportedly shot and killed by militants outside a school in Kulgam district, Jammu and Kashmir union territory.³¹
- On July 13, 2022, police reportedly used excessive force against unemployed teachers' union protesters and allegedly pulled an unemployed female teacher by the hair, in Sangrur city, Punjab state. The teachers' union members were protesting over the lack of teaching positions in the state, according to a local media outlet.³²
- On September 4, 2022, teachers reportedly protested across the 13 districts in Telangana state, demanding their spouses be transferred to the same district as outlined by governmental regulation. Local media reported that police arrested hundreds of teachers.³³
- On September 26, 2022, a large group of unemployed teachers demanded to be reinstated in Agartala city, Tripura state. Police reportedly fired teargas and water cannons to disperse the protesters, injuring more than 30 teachers.³⁴

In 2023, GCPEA collected ten incidents of attacks on students, teachers, and education personnel.³⁵ For example:

- On January 4, 2023, police reportedly used a lathi charge to disperse a group of teachers protesting in Jammu city, Jammu and Kashmir union territory, injuring several teachers. The protest was to demand the reinstatement of teaching posts.³⁶
- On March 18, 2023, students protesting the leak of exam answers were reportedly detained in Dhalpur village, Assam state. As reported by a local media outlet, a police officer allegedly tortured the students while they were in custody.³⁷
- On July 1, 2023, police reportedly used a lathi charge to disperse a group of teachers demanding the regularization of their jobs in Sangrur city, Punjab state.³⁸
- On October 5, 2023, police reportedly arrested more than 1,000 teachers protesting to demand increased salaries in Chennai city, Tamil Nadu state.³⁹

ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2022 and 2023, GCPEA identified at least 80 reported attacks on higher education. The police reportedly used excessive force against higher education students and personnel during this reporting period, including detaining or arresting more than 1,200 students and academics. Attacks on higher education involved repression of on-campus or education-related protests in 2022 and 2023, rather than attacks on higher education facilities, continuing a trend from *Education under Attack 2022*. Attacks on higher education increased slightly compared to last reporting period, when GCPEA collected approximately 65 incidents in 2020 and 2021.⁴⁰

In 2022, GCPEA identified at least 55 reported incidents of attacks on higher education.⁴¹ For example:

- On January 31, 2022, students reportedly protested at Bangalore University in Bangalore city, Karnataka

state, against a delay in the release of their grades, including two groups of students arguing with one another, according to Scholars at Risk. Local media sources reported that the police injured some students when they used lathi charge to disperse the protests.⁴²

- On April 4, 2022, police reportedly detained several protesting students that demanded their final exams be conducted online due to the increase in Covid-19 infections at Delhi University, in New Delhi city, Delhi state, according to local media sources.⁴³
- On June 9, 2022, members of several student organizations, including the Student Federation of India, Punjab Students Union, and Students for Society, reportedly protested against the proposed plan to centralize Panjab University, in Chandigarh city. When students attempted to cross police barricades, police used lathi charges, injuring around nine students, according to Scholars at Risk and local media sources.⁴⁴
- On November 4, 2022, police reportedly used water cannon against and detained at least 200 students from the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Rohtak city, Haryana state. The students were protesting against increased course fees, according to Scholars at Risk.⁴⁵
- On December 12, 2022, police reportedly detained at least 100 students during a protest outside the Ministry of Education in Agartala city, Tripura state, according to local media sources and Scholars at Risk.⁴⁶ Two student groups were protesting the termination of a fellowship originally established to support students from minority communities.⁴⁷

In 2023, GCPEA identified at least 25 reported attacks on higher education from media reports, most of which consisted of protest repression.⁴⁸ For instance:

- On February 15, 2023, students from Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak city, Haryana state, protested against the Haryana Chief Minister's campus visit. Police detained several students, according to Scholars at Risk.⁴⁹
- Students from Dhanamanjuri University, in Imphal city, Manipur state, protested against faculty classifications at the university on March 6, 2023. According to local media, the police used lathi charge against the students when they attempted to enter the administrative block, injuring several students.⁵⁰
- On March 31, 2023, police detained several students during a protest at the University of Delhi and the Indraprastha College for Women in New Delhi, according to Scholars at Risk. The students reportedly demanded the resignation of the principal of the women's college.⁵¹
- Police detained around 30 students during a protest at the Delhi University's Arts Faculty in New Delhi on May 3, 2023, according to local media.⁵²
- On June 28, 2023, police reportedly detained 12 students protesting at Rajasthan University, in Jaipur city, Rajasthan state. Among other grievances, the students demanded reduced housing costs and university fees, according to Scholars at Risk.⁵³
- On August 11, 2023, students protested outside the Rajasthan University gate against the administration for having not yet declared the schedule for the students' union election, in Jaipur city, Rajasthan state. According to local media outlet *Times of India*, students were reportedly injured when police used lathi charges.⁵⁴
- On September 5, 2023, police reportedly tortured several students after they had been detained during a protest at Kakatiya University over irregularities in PhD admissions in Hanamkonda city, Telangana state.⁵⁵

ENDNOTES

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