KYRGYZSTAN

During a brief escalation of hostilities between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in September 2022, more than 20 schools and kindergartens were damaged or destroyed by fighting. At least one school was used for military purposes.

CONTEXT

In 2022, hostilities between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan escalated along the disputed border in the area covering the south-western Kyrgyz region of Batken and the region of Sughd in northern Tajikistan, which includes the Tajik enclave of Vorukh. Border guards reportedly fired at each other, and clashes occurred in January, April, June, and September 2022, as reported by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). These incidents were among at least 20 border clashes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan since 2017, which involved both government forces and civilians. Violence peaked in September 2022, when hostilities lasted for four days and resulted in 62 deaths, as reported by Human Rights Watch. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan reached a ceasefire on September 16, 2022, which generally held for the remainder of the reporting period, despite reports of sporadic shelling from both sides.

In south-western Kyrgyzstan, the UN reported that over 140,000 people were displaced by the hostilities in Batken region, including some to neighboring Osh region. Although many returned in the months that followed, some homes had been destroyed and over 3,900 people remained displaced as of December 2022. The International Organization for Migration reported the lowest temperatures in fifteen years across the region during the 2022-2023 winter, leaving those displaced in the Batken and Osh regions in need of humanitarian aid. In September 2022, 53 schools in Batken town were converted into shelters to accommodate families, as reported by Human Rights Watch, and 26 schools and 30 kindergartens closed, some as a result of damage caused by hostilities. According to the UN, learning was disrupted for over 130,000 students as 161 schools in Batken and Osh regions were temporarily closed, and children suffered psychosocial trauma. As of October 2022, nearly all education facilities had reopened.

Kyrgyzstan was not profiled in Education under Attack 2022 so no comparison can be made with the previous reporting period.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

During the reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 23 attacks on schools in Kyrgyzstan, primarily from UN reports. According to the UN, the government of Kyrgyzstan reported that 12 schools and 11 kindergartens were damaged in the Batken region during conflict in September 2022. As reported by Human Rights Watch, some schools and kindergartens were damaged by shrapnel. GCPEA was unable to identify details about individual incidents.

In Tajikistan, during the conflict, Human Rights Watch reported that School No. 64 in Somoniyon town, Sughd region, was burned down on September 16, 2022, affecting 450 children. Also in Tajikistan, in Khojai Alo village, Sughd region, a teacher was reportedly killed as he was attempting to protect his students during fighting. However, GCPEA could not determine whether these incidents constituted attacks on education as per GCPEA definitions. Therefore, Tajikistan did not have a sufficient number of attacks on education for a profile in this reporting period, as per the report’s methodology.

GCPEA did not identify any reports of attacks on schools in 2023.

MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

GCPEA identified one report of the military occupation of a school in Kyrgyzstan during the reporting period. As reported by Human Rights Watch and local media, on September 16, 2022, Tajik armed forces used a school as a military base in Ak-Sai in Batken district and region, for two days.

GCPEA did not identify any reports of the military use of schools or universities in 2023.
ENDNOTES


11 Information received from a UN respondent via email on February 20, 2024.


