

Iraq

Reports of attacks on education largely declined in Iraq during the 2024-2025 reporting period. GCPEA identified sporadic attacks on schools and school students, teachers, and staff, as well as one case of the military use of educational facilities, and two attacks on higher education.

Context

In 2024 and 2025, the political and security landscape of Iraq was marked by increased stability, governance challenges, and intensifying regional tensions.¹ After decades of conflict, instability, and economic stagnation, ongoing reconstruction and reintegration efforts offered signs of progress.² Increased coordination between authorities supported gradual improvements in service delivery and infrastructure rehabilitation, particularly in liberated areas formerly held by ISIL.³ Throughout 2024, armed groups affiliated with Iran carried out repeated drone and rocket attacks on targets in Iraq, including the targeting of U.S. air bases.⁴ Airstrikes continued to target ISIL targets.⁵ In January 2024, an Iranian missile strike on Erbil killed four civilians and injured six.⁶ Türkiye intensified its military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK) in federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region in 2024,⁷ including advances into Dohuk governorate and drone strikes that killed three journalists and eight civilians, according to Human Rights Watch.⁸ Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) operations generally declined, with 80 armed clashes reported in 2024 compared to 174 in 2023, according to the Armed Conflict Location Event Data Project (ACLED).⁹

The UN verified 58 grave violations against a total of 50 children in 2024, including 26 who were killed and 16 who were injured by explosive remnants of war.¹⁰ Based on decreased violations and improved protection measures adopted by the Government of Iraq, the UN office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict did not include Iraq in the subsequent report.¹¹ The International Committee of the Red Cross reported that landmines and other explosive remnants of war continued to pose severe risks across Iraq, contaminating large areas of land, injuring civilians, including children, and hindering the safe return of displaced populations.¹² In February 2025, three primary school students were killed in Basrah when a landmine exploded near their school while they were playing football.¹³

The federal government and the Kurdistan Regional government faced increasing tensions related to delayed regional elections, unpayment of government salaries, and freedom-restricting legislation.¹⁴ According to Human Rights Watch, protests often turned violent as security forces used excessive force to disperse crowds and arrested journalists.¹⁵

Humanitarian needs remained high amid declining humanitarian funding. As of the end of 2024, an estimated one million people were internally displaced across Iraq.¹⁶ According to Human Rights Watch, the government ordered the closure of the last IDP camps in the Kurdistan region during 2024.¹⁷ Iraq also hosted approximately 340,000 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2024, mostly Syrians living in the Kurdistan Region, and some faced arbitrary detention and unlawful deportation.¹⁸ Iraq was increasingly vulnerable to climate shocks, including drought, dust storms, and extreme heat, according to the UN.¹⁹ Iraqis continued to experience water and food shortages and extreme temperatures.²⁰

The cumulative effects of conflict, displacement, labor disputes, and extreme weather continued to affect children and education. Severe flooding and heavy rainfall repeatedly disrupted schooling, with school closures due to flash floods reported across cities nationwide in 2024.²¹ Over the reporting period, teachers in the Kurdistan region continued strikes protesting the nonpayment of salaries.²² More than two million children were out of school at the end of 2024.²³

Attacks on schools

GCPEA identified at least four attacks on schools in 2024 and 2025, a similar number as in the previous reporting period when GCPEA identified two attacks in 2023 and four in 2022.²⁴

GCPEA identified three attacks on schools in 2024:

- On March 15, 2024, Iraqi security forces defused an unidentified explosive device near a primary school in Sabaa Al Bour neighborhood, Baghdad, as reported by local media.²⁵
- On December 11, 2024, a shell reportedly struck the outside area of the Nahil School in the Al Amadiya district, Dohuk governorate, leading the school to suspend classes, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁶
- On 16 December 16, 2024, a grenade allegedly detonated near a school in the Al-Khalis district, Diyala governorate, causing minor damage, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁷

GCPEA identified at least one attack on a school in 2025. On July 1, 2025, a drone allegedly crashed into a school in the Derkar Yazidi IDP camp in Dohuk governorate, causing a fire, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁸

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least seven attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2024 and 2025. This was an increase from the previous reporting period when GCPEA identified three attacks, all in 2022.²⁹

GCPEA identified at least three attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2024:

- On March 25, 2024, an unspecified number of teachers were allegedly detained by police in Sulaymaniyah city and governorate, while protesting for the distribution of salaries and other demands, as reported by local media.³⁰
- On October 26, 2024, a student sustained injuries, and later died, from a landmine explosion near Mount Sanaa in Basra governorate, while on a school trip, as reported by ACLED and local media.³¹
- On December 25, 2024, unidentified gunmen allegedly shot and injured a security guard at Al Arish Lower School in Al-Hawija District, Kirkuk governorate, as reported by ACLED and local media.³²

GCPEA identified at least four attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2025.

- On February 9 and 10, 2025, Kurdistan Regional Government security forces allegedly used tear gas and water cannons to disperse protesting teachers who were attempting a march into Erbil city, Erbil governorate, over unpaid salaries, as reported by ACLED and local media sources; 17 were reportedly injured.³³
- On April 8, 2025, federal security forces allegedly dispersed protesting teachers and school staff with tear gas and sound grenades in Dhi Qar governorate, injuring an unspecified number of educators, as reported by ACLED and local media.³⁴
- On June 24, 2025, in Sulaymaniyah city and governorate, police allegedly arrested two teachers who were planning to protest over unpaid salaries, as reported by ACLED and local media.³⁵

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified one case of the military use of a school in the 2024-2025 reporting period. This represents a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period when at least 45 such events were reported in *Education under Attack 2024*.³⁶

On July 24, 2024, a mass grave was discovered during the reconstruction of a school in the Tel Afar district, Nineveh governorate, as reported by ACLED and local media.³⁷

At the time of writing, no cases of the military use of schools or universities were identified in 2025.

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified one attack on higher education students, educators, and personnel in the 2024-2025 reporting period. This was a decrease from *Education under Attack 2024*, which included four attacks in 2023 and nine in 2022.³⁸

On October 28, 2024, recent graduates and health workers protested at the Ministry of Higher Education in Baghdad demanding job opportunities for recent graduates. Police allegedly used force against protesters and assaulted female graduates, as reported by ACLED and local media sources.³⁹

At the time of writing, no attacks on higher education were identified in 2025.