

Kenya

Attacks on schools, and on students, teachers and personnel, continued in the 2024-2025 reporting period. Police continued to use excessive force during teacher and higher education protests. One case of the military use of a school was reported.

Context

Kenya faced persistent insecurity during the reporting period, driven by a combination of non-state armed group violence, intercommunal conflict, and protest repression. Fighting between government forces and the Somali-based armed group al-Shabaab continued in northeastern counties. Al-Shabaab targeted security forces and civilians with small arms and improvised explosive devices, and Kenyan security forces responded with intensified operations in border regions.¹ Renewed attacks in 2024 prompted officials to postpone the reopening of Mandera, Garissa, and Lamu border crossings.² Intercommunal violence in the North Rift region increased, as clashes between pastoralist militias increased despite Kenyan security forces' efforts to curb violence that largely targeted civilians.³

This period was also marked by widespread anti-government protests. In 2024, demonstrations over the rising cost of living, new tax measures, and governance reforms were met with excessive force, including arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings.⁴ Human Rights Watch documented security forces firing live ammunition and tear gas at protesters, killing and injuring dozens and arresting and abducting hundreds, including minors, students, and journalists.⁵

During the reporting period Kenya hosted over 623,000 refugees and asylum seekers, with impact on education and social services.⁶ Ongoing drought and economic hardship contributed to school dropouts and exacerbated vulnerabilities, with aid groups warning of rising child marriage and education loss among girls.⁷ Threats of violence from pastoral militias led to the closure of at least 19 schools in Baringo North county, disrupting education for thousands of students.⁸ In May 2024, 183 schools in the country were closed due to damage or inaccessibility caused by flooding.⁹ Education in Mandera, Garissa, and Lamu counties was affected by overlapping crises. Flooding led to widespread school closures and delayed reopening, while continued insecurity, including perceived threats of attacks, contributed to ongoing teacher shortages and further disruption to schooling.¹⁰

Attacks on schools

GCPEA identified five attacks on schools during the reporting period, a similar rate as compared to the previous reporting period, when two attacks were identified in both 2022 and 2023.¹¹

GCPEA identified three attacks on schools in 2024.

- On March 29, 2024, members of an alleged armed group reportedly set fire to several rooms at a primary school in Baringo county, damaging buildings and destroying school materials.¹² The school had been closed in February amid increasing attacks in the area: ten schools were reportedly attacked and subsequently closed, although GCPEA was unable to establish how many of these attacks took place during the current reporting period.
- On August 12, 2024, in Marsabit county, armed men allegedly affiliated with an armed group reportedly raided the grounds of Odda Mission Church Secondary School at night, as reported by ACLED and local and international media.¹³
- On August 30, 2024, police allegedly threw tear gas into a primary school in Meru county, after demonstrators reportedly entered the school amid politically-motivated protests, as reported by ACLED and local media.¹⁴ At least five students were reported to have fainted.

GCPEA identified two attacks on schools in 2025:

- On April 10, 2025, in Nakuru city, Nakuru county, Rift Valley region, anti-riot police allegedly sealed off part of a school to prevent a play from being performed to an audience, and allegedly fired tear gas on people who were at the school to see the play, as reported by international media *Club of Mozambique*.¹⁵ Police had reportedly detained the playwright the previous day.
- On September 8, 2025, in Turkana county, suspected members of an armed group allegedly raided a secondary school and looted a number of sheep and goats that had been paid as school fees, as reported by ACLED and local media.¹⁶

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified six attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during the reporting period, a similar rate to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified five attacks in 2023 and one in 2022.¹⁷ Attacks included protest repression and attacks by armed groups.

GCPEA identified five attacks in 2024:

- As reported on March 23, 2024, alleged members of an armed group reportedly beat teachers at a primary school in Baringo county, as reported by local media.¹⁸
- On April 1, 2024, in Isiolo county, alleged members of an armed group reportedly shot and killed a female secondary school student who was on her way home from school, when they attacked the bus she was traveling on, as reported by ACLED and local media.¹⁹
- On May 20, 2024, in Vihiga county, police reportedly responded with tear gas to a group of intern teachers who were protesting employment terms, according to ACLED and local media.²⁰
- On July 23, 2024, in Laikipia county, during political protests, police reportedly fired rubber bullets, one of which injured a female secondary school student who was on her way home from school, as reported by ACLED and local media.²¹ The student required stitches for the wound on her leg.
- On September 2, 2024, outside a boys' secondary school in Embu county, police reportedly used tear gas to disperse teachers who were protesting employment conditions, as reported by ACLED and local media.²²

One attack on school students was identified in 2025: on November 19, 2025, police reportedly used tear gas to disperse a group of students who were protesting against exam conditions at Samoei Boys High School in Nandi Hills, Nandi county, as reported by ACLED and local media.²³

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least one case of the military use of a school during the reporting period. No cases of military use were identified in the 2022-2023 reporting period.

As reported on August 19, 2025, in Mandera town, Mandera county, suspected members of paramilitary forces allegedly occupied a primary school for the purposes of operating a training camp, following ongoing clashes with the Somali National Army in Bula Hawa, Somalia, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁴

Attacks on higher education

Reports of attacks on higher education increased during the 2024-2025 reporting period, with at least 16 attacks identified, compared to six in 2023 and two in 2022.²⁵

GCPEA identified nine attacks on higher education students and staff in 2024.²⁶ Between March and September 2024, GCPEA found that excessive force was reportedly used in response to student protests across the country, including in Vihiga, Nakuru, Meru, Embu, and Nairobi counties. Examples included:

- On June 6, 2024, police reportedly used tear gas and live ammunition against student protesters at the Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology in Nakuru city and county, as reported by Scholars at Risk and ACLED.²⁷ Students were protesting the management of the institute, which was subsequently closed indefinitely.
- On September 23, 2024, in Nairobi city and county, police allegedly used tear gas to disperse protesting lecturers and staff from the University Academy Staff Union and the Kenya Universities Staff Union, and arrested a number of them, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁸ A week later on September 30, police allegedly used tear gas and arrested protesters during another protest, as reported by Scholars at Risk.²⁹
- On October 3, 2024, in Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu county, police reportedly used tear gas to disperse a student protest where students were demonstrating against disruptions to learning, as reported by ACLED and local media *The Eastleigh Voice*.³⁰
- On October 8, 2024, in Kanduyi, Bungoma county, a female student from Bungoma National Polytechnic was reportedly killed when police fired live rounds at students who were protesting the administration of the Polytechnic, as reported by ACLED and local media.³¹
- As reported by ACLED, local media and Scholars at Risk, on October 22, 2024 in Starehe, Nairobi county, police arrested 108 students who were protesting against the sudden increase of school fees outside the Nairobi Technical Training Institute campus. At least 102 students were released the following day. The training institute was closed indefinitely after this incident.³²

In 2025, GCPEA identified at least seven attacks on higher education students and staff.³³ Examples included:

- As reported by ACLED, local media and Scholars at Risk, on February 25, 2025, police allegedly used tear gas to disperse a group of students from the Technical University of Kenya who were protesting the indefinite closure of the university following a staff strike, and were marching from the institution to the Ministry of Education headquarters in Nairobi city and county.³⁴
- On March 17, 2025, in Mombasa city and county, police allegedly used tear gas to disperse students protesting outside Bandari Maritime Academy against poor management, among other concerns, as reported by ACLED and local media.³⁵ According to reports, one student was arrested and one was injured after being hit by a tear gas canister.
- On September 3, 2025, in Nairobi city and county, police allegedly used tear gas to disperse medical students at the University of Nairobi who were protesting at the medical campus against exam-related issues that were affecting their progression, as reported by local media and Scholars at Risk.³⁶
- On September 17, 2025, in Kisumu city and county, police allegedly arrested a number of students who were protesting fee increases and claims of corruption at the Kisumu National Polytechnic, as reported by ACLED and local media.³⁷

Endnotes

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