

Mozambique

Attacks on education increased in the 2024-2025 reporting period as non-state armed group violence continued to target education. Attacks on education were also reported in the context of election-related violence. Reports of the military use of schools declined.

Context

Armed conflict and violence, including against civilians, carried out by the non-state armed group affiliated with Islamic State (IS) continued in Cabo Delgado province,¹ and extended to Nampula province, and increased in 2025.² The UN also reported that grave violations against children increased by 525 percent in 2024 compared to 2023.³ Human Rights Watch reported that the non-state armed group operating in northern Mozambique recruited and used child soldiers during the reporting period.⁴ The UN reported that unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) posed a threat to civilians, including children, in Cabo Delgado province, killing five children in June 2024 alone.⁵

General elections on October 9, 2024 were contested, when both Daniel Chapo of the ruling party Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, FRELIMO) and Venâncio Mondlane, an independent candidate supported by the leading opposition party, Partido Optimista pelo Desenvolvimento de Moçambique, (Optimistic People for the Development of Mozambique, PODEMOS), claimed victory.⁶ Security forces, under the FRELIMO government, used excessive force during protests following the elections,⁷ and DECIDE Platform, a non-governmental organization that monitors post-election violence in Mozambique, reported that at least 315 people were killed during election-related violence in 2024 and 2025, including children.⁸

The humanitarian situation deteriorated in Mozambique during the reporting period as a result of violence, insecurity, displacement, and climate shocks, as well as funding gaps.⁹ The UN reported in 2025 that 1.3 million people had been displaced by the conflict since it began in 2017.¹⁰ In 2024, the UN reported that 4.8 million people needed humanitarian assistance, double the number of the previous year, and including 3.5 million children.¹¹ In December 2024 and January 2025, tropical cyclones Dikeledi and Chido impacted over 730,000 people and damaged or destroyed more than 70,000 houses and over 250 schools, according to the UN.¹²

The education sector faced multiple challenges during the reporting period and school closures due to insecurity increased. In February 2024, the UN reported that at least 125 schools were closed because of insecurity, mostly in Cabo Delgado province, affecting over 68,000 children.¹³ After an attack in May 2024, all schools in Macomia district, Cabo

Delgado region, were closed for almost four months.¹⁴ In 2025, the UN reported that education was disrupted by conflict in 16 districts in Cabo Delgado.¹⁵ At the end of 2025, the UN reported that school closures resulting from attacks on schools left 50,000 children without access to education.¹⁶ In March and April 2024, tropical storms damaged or destroyed over 350 schools, particularly in Maputo city and province, and in Inhambane province.¹⁷ Between December 2024 and March 2025, more than 4,800 classrooms were damaged by tropical cyclones, as reported by the UN.¹⁸

Attacks on schools

GCPEA identified at least 29 attacks on schools during the current reporting period, as non-state armed group violence continued to target education. This was an increase compared to the previous reporting period, when none were identified in 2023, and six in 2022.¹⁹

In 2024, GCPEA identified at least 20 attacks on schools, most of which were allegedly perpetrated by non-state armed group members, and took place in Cabo Delgado province, with sporadic attacks also reported in Nampula province.²⁰ The UN reported that UXO and IEDs were found in schools in Macomia district, Cabo Delgado province.²¹

Examples of attacks included:

- Between April 19 and 22, 2024, around 50 members of a non-state armed group attacked the village of Nanao A, Ancube district, Cabo Delgado province, and set fire to the school, as reported by international media the *BBC* and local media *Carta de Mocambique*.²² The armed group claimed the attack.
- On April 26, 2024, in Manika, Erati district, Nampula province, members of a non-state armed group set fire to a school, as well as a church, as reported by ACLED and local media.²³ The armed group claimed the attack.
- On May 5, 2024, in Siripa village, Chiure district, Cabo Delgado province, members of a non-state armed group allegedly set fire to a school, as well as two churches and over 100 houses, as reported by ACLED and *Agenzia Fides*.²⁴
- On June 10, 2024, during an attack on Nacoba, Quissanga district, Cabo Delgado province members of a non-state armed group allegedly set fire to a school, as reported by the UN and local media.²⁵
- On November 4, 2024, in Tete province, amid post-election violence, security forces allegedly used tear gas inside or near a school, causing children who were at the school, which was in session, to flee, as reported by Human Rights Watch.²⁶

GCPEA identified at least nine attacks on schools in 2025, which were concentrated in the second half of the year, when non-state armed group violence increased.²⁷ Examples included:

- On September 28, 2025, in Pavala, Memba district, Nampula province, members of a non-state armed group allegedly burned a school, as reported by the UN.²⁸
- On September 30 and October 3, 2025, during an attack on the administrative posts of Lúrio and Chipene, Memba district, Nampula province, arson attacks destroyed a primary school, and chairs were burned in another educational institution, as reported by international media *DW*.²⁹
- Between October 10 and 11, 2025, in Napala village, Cabo Delgado province, a school was allegedly set on fire, interrupting access to education for more than 500 students, as reported by local media *Club of Mozambique*.³⁰
- In early October 2025, in Erati district, Nampula province, non-state armed groups allegedly attacked and burned a school, as reported by the UN.³¹

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least ten attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel in 2024-2025, the majority in Cabo Delgado province. This represented an increase compared to the previous reporting period, when no such incidents were identified.³² In May 2024, local media reported that teachers had fled schools in Macomia and Quissanga, Cabo Delgado province, allegedly because they were being targeted by armed groups, although GCPEA was unable to identify any attacks or threats at that time.³³

In 2024, GCPEA identified four attacks, during some of which teachers were targeted by armed non-state groups, while other attacks involved protest repression:

- On February 5, 2024, in the Mahete-Sede locality, Quissanga district, Cabo Delgado province, members of an armed group allegedly abducted a teacher, as reported by local media *Carta de Moçambique*.³⁴ The teacher was subsequently released.
- On March 6, 2024, in Metuge, Cabo Delgado province, members of an armed group allegedly abducted nine children as they were leaving Metuge Secondary School, as reported by ACLED, and local and international media.³⁵
- On November 16, 2024, police reportedly fired tear gas and detained five teachers when teachers protested in Maputo, as reported by ACLED and international media.³⁶
- On November 21, 2024, in Moma town, Moma district, Nampula province, police allegedly fired live ammunition which killed a student who was on his way home from school, as reported by a civil society organization; the incident occurred during a political protest in the context of post-election violence.³⁷

GCPEA identified at least six attacks on school students, teachers, and staff, in 2025.³⁸ For example:

- On April 7, 2025, members of an armed group allegedly killed a teacher in Ntotwe village, Mocímboa da Praia district, Cabo Delgado province, as reported by local media *Zitamar* and *Carta de Mocambique*.³⁹ The village had been targeted in an attack by a non-state armed group at least once before.⁴⁰

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least three reports of the military use of schools during the reporting period. This was a decrease compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified at least 12 such cases.⁴¹

In 2024, GCPEA identified at least two reports of military use:

- On February 9, 2024, an armed group reportedly attacked three villages in Chiure district, Cabo Delgado province, and occupied a school in one of the villages, Nacoja, as reported by local and international media.⁴²
- In February 2024, the UN reported that military forces were occupying a school in Erati, Nampula province.⁴³

One incident of military use was found in 2025. In Ancuabe district, Cabo Delgado province,, the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces allegedly used the secondary school of Intutupwe as a military base in December 2025 in the Ancuabe district.⁴⁴