

# Pakistan

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Attacks on schools increased in Pakistan in the 2024-2025 reporting period, particularly when 2024 election-related violence contributed to a surge in attacks on schools across the country. Attacks on students, teachers and personnel, and attacks on higher education, continued. Girls continued to be targeted by armed groups in attacks during the reporting period. Sporadic cases of the military use of schools were identified.

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## Context

Armed conflict continued during the reporting period with multiple engagements across the Afghanistan, Indian, and Iranian borders.<sup>1</sup> Cross-border missile attacks and airstrikes with Iran and India impacted civilians in Punjab province and Pakistani-administered Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> Internal political violence, including extensive election violence in early 2024, escalated to its highest levels in years, with a large majority of incidents in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.<sup>3</sup> The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) continued to engage in armed violence with Pakistani armed forces, and allegedly called for increased attacks on schools, hospitals, and government buildings across Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> Drone attacks, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, placed civilians at high risk during the reporting period.<sup>5</sup>

Multiple communities experienced human rights violations in Pakistan during the reporting period. High numbers of enforced disappearances and arrests of Baloch people, including human rights activists and university students, were a widespread trend throughout the reporting period.<sup>6</sup> Many incidents occurred within the context of multiple targeted attacks by the Balochistan Liberation Army against civilians and civilian infrastructures across Balochistan province.<sup>7</sup> Religious minorities, including the Ahmadiyya community, experienced discrimination and targeted violence, including the desecration and destruction of their religious sites.<sup>8</sup> In 2025, the Government of Pakistan forcibly returned at least 662,300 Afghans, many of whom held Proof of Registration cards. Arrests and detentions associated with these actions have most often occurred in Chaghi, Islamabad, and Pishin districts.<sup>9</sup>

Climate extremes continued, further exacerbating poverty levels, which were estimated at 40 percent in 2024 by the World Bank, as reported by Amnesty International.<sup>10</sup> Extreme heat, pollution, heavy rain and flooding impacted access to healthcare, food, housing, and education for Pakistanis,<sup>11</sup> as well as for the approximately 1.6 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> Learning loss continued to accumulate throughout the reporting period. In 2025, approximately 26 million children were out of school, mostly girls.<sup>13</sup> Pakistani girls, already attending schools at lower rates than boys, continued to be targeted by armed groups in attacks, especially in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, according to Amnesty International.<sup>14</sup>

## Attacks on schools

During the current reporting period, GCPEA identified at least 44 attacks on schools. This was an increase over the 2022-2023 reporting period, when GCPEA identified five attacks on schools in 2023 and three in 2022.<sup>15</sup> Most attacks during this reporting period involved the use of explosive weapons and took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Multiple incidents of violence were recorded associated with schools used as polling stations during national and provincial elections in February 2024.<sup>16</sup> Close to the tenth anniversary of the 2014 Army Public School massacre, all public and private schools were closed in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore after authorities allegedly received threats of suicide attacks by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar.<sup>17</sup>

In 2024, GCPEA identified at least 27 attacks on schools, ten of which were at girls' schools.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the UN reported 13 attacks on schools.<sup>19</sup> It was unclear how many attacks from the UN overlapped with reports collected by GCPEA, and therefore, this number was not added to GCPEA's number, to avoid double-counting.

Examples of attacks identified by GCPEA include:

- On February 6, 2024, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Dawn*, members of an armed group allegedly threw a grenade at a government school in Quetta district, Balochistan province, that was intended to be used as a polling station in the upcoming general elections.<sup>20</sup>
- On May 9, 2024, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Dawn*, members of an alleged armed group reportedly detonated two explosive weapons at a private Islamic girls school in Shewa, North Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, destroying the school. While there were no reported fatalities, the school guard was injured during the attack.<sup>21</sup>
- On May 9, 2024, as reported by local media source *Dawn*, police allegedly used teargas against protestors in Daydal tehsil, in Mirpur district, Azad Kashmir province. The gas spread into a school and injured at least three girl students.<sup>22</sup>
- On May 17, 2024, as reported by ACLED and international media sources, an improvised explosive device (IED) attack severely damaged a recently built girls' high school in Karikot village, Wana tehsil, South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Allegedly, the school had previously received threats from armed actors and demands for a percentage of the school's earnings.<sup>23</sup>
- On July 22, 2024, as reported by ACLED and local media *SAMAA TV*, alleged members of an armed group reportedly detonated a bomb at a government-run girls' secondary school in Zeraki village, North Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The school itself was severely damaged, as well as a house nearby. No fatalities were reported.<sup>24</sup>
- On November 17, 2024, as reported by ACLED, and local media outlet *The Nation*, armed actors allegedly fired a rocket propelled grenade towards a government school in Qara

Bagh area, Azam Warsak town, Lower South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, damaging the building and school records. Two staff members were reportedly locked in the building before explosives were detonated. The school was closed for three days after the attack.<sup>25</sup>

GCPEA identified at least 17 attacks on schools in 2025, and at least six of which were girls' schools. For example:

- On May 21, 2025, as reported by the UN, armed actors targeted a school bus carrying students attending a Pakistani military-run school in Khuzdar district, in Balochistan province. The IED explosion killed eight people, including six students and two personnel. Additionally, dozens of other students were injured.<sup>26</sup>
- Between August 9-10, 2025, as reported by local media source *Pakistan Today*, armed actors planted an IED at a government high school, at night, in Azam Warsak, Lower South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The following day, the device detonated and completely destroyed the building. A day before this school received threats.<sup>27</sup>
- On October 4, 2025, as reported by *Times of India*, four students were injured when a fourth grade student carried an abandoned mortar shell into his classroom in Jamrud tehsil, Khyber, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The shell exploded after hitting the floor.<sup>28</sup>
- On November 28, 2025, as reported by *The Express Tribune*, armed actors allegedly attacked two different schools in North Waziristan within hours of each other. IEDs reportedly planted by armed actors destroyed a girls' primary school in Kari Umar Khan, and a government school in Akbari, both in North Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It is unclear whether the same actors committed these two incidents.
- On December 25, 2025, as reported by ACLED and *The Express Tribune*, a drone strike at a madrassah in Tank, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa allegedly injured nine students aged 8-15.<sup>29</sup>

## Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least 13 attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel during 2024 and 2025. These attacks killed or injured 31, most of them female students. This marks a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, in which ten attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel occurred in both 2022 and 2023, over 540 teachers were arrested, and over 70, mostly teachers, were injured or killed.<sup>30</sup>

In 2024, GCPEA identified six attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel.<sup>31</sup> For example:

- On May 19, 2024, as reported by *The News International*, unnamed armed actors allegedly attacked a school owner's home in Landi Kotal, Khyber district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province using explosive devices, one week before a similar IED attack on the owner's school in the same region.<sup>32</sup>
- On June 3, 2024, during a protest by teachers in Saddar town, Karachi district, Sindh province, police allegedly used water cannons and baton charges to disperse protesters, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Express Tribune*. Four teachers were detained.<sup>33</sup>
- On July 20, 2024, following increased threats against schools, armed actors allegedly abducted and killed a school teacher from Machan Khel village, Tank district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Pakistan Observer*.<sup>34</sup>
- On November 1, 2024, five schoolgirls were killed when a vehicle-borne IED was detonated outside a girls' school in Chowk, Mastung district, Balochistan province, as reported by international media *Al Jazeera* and local media outlet *Dawn*.<sup>35</sup>
- On November 6, 2024, six school children on their way home from school were hit by shrapnel from mortar allegedly fired by armed actors in Tirah Valley, Orakzai district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as reported by local media outlet *Dawn*.<sup>36</sup>

GCPEA identified at least seven attacks on school students, teachers, and other personnel in 2025. For example:

- On February 13, 2025, as reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn*, during a protest against poor examination results, a Grade 10 student who organized the event was arrested by police in Chilas, Diamir district, Gilgit-Baltistan province.<sup>37</sup>
- On 14 May 2025, as reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn*, during an armed clash with police and security forces in Miryan, Bannu district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, armed actors used girls returning home from school as human shields to escape the area.<sup>38</sup>
- On June 21, 2025, as reported by local media source *Dawn*, students returning home from school were allegedly targeted with an unidentified air launched explosive in Makin tehsil, South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. One child was killed and five others were injured in the attack.<sup>39</sup>
- On August 9, 2025, preceding the explosion of a government high school in Azam Warsak, South Waziristan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on August 10, 2025, pamphlets were circulated allegedly by an armed group threatening students, as reported by local media sources.<sup>40</sup>
- On October 7, 2025, as reported by ACLED and local media *Dawn*, armed actors abducted two government school teachers from Government High School Zindi Musa Khan in Mandati Naika Zyarat, Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.<sup>41</sup>

## Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified at least three reports of the military use of educational facilities during the 2024-2025 reporting period. GCPEA identified one report in the 2022-2023 period covered by *Education under Attack 2024*.<sup>42</sup>

GCPEA identified one report of military use in 2024.

- As reported by ACLED and local media outlet *Dawn*, on February 10, 2024, during an incident of election relation violence, an army camp located at Mono Technical College in Mehar town, located in Dadu district, Sindh province, was allegedly attacked.<sup>43</sup>

GCPEA identified two reports of military use of schools in 2025.

- Between June 16-18, 2025, as reported by ACLED and local media sources, during a security operation in Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police and armed locals evicted the TTP operating from a local religious seminary and government primary school.<sup>44</sup>
- As reported by ACLED and *The News International*, armed actors allegedly occupied a government primary school and a local religious seminary in Kohat, Koh-e-Maidan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in June 2025.<sup>45</sup>

## Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified 11 attacks on higher education during the 2024-2025 reporting period, of which nine were attacks on students and staff. This is a similar rate as compared to the prior reporting period, when GCPEA identified seven and 13 such incidents in 2023 and 2022, respectively.<sup>46</sup> As reported by Scholars at Risk, in 2024 alone, Pakistani armed forces allegedly abducted 13 Baloch students from university student housing in Punjab province in two separate incidents.<sup>47</sup>

GCPEA identified five attacks on higher education in 2024:

- On August 17, 2024, as reported by local media outlet *Quetta Voice*, an improvised explosive device detonated near a university in Quetta district, Balochistan province.<sup>48</sup>
- On September 9, 2024, as reported by local media outlet *Dawn*, armed actors allegedly fired on the Gomal University Vice Chancellor's vehicle as he was leaving the university.<sup>49</sup>
- On October 10, 2024, as reported by Scholars at Risk, Pakistan's armed forces allegedly abducted three Baloch students from their student hostel in Lahore district, Punjab province.<sup>50</sup>
- On October 14, 2024, as reported by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, during a student protest outside of the Punjab Group of Colleges in Lahore, anti-riot police allegedly engaged in violence, injuring 28 students.<sup>51</sup>

- On October 31, 2024, as reported by Scholars at Risk, Pakistani armed forces allegedly abducted ten Baloch students from student housing the day before midterm examinations. They were studying at the National University of Modern Languages in Rawalpindi, and were all released two days later.<sup>52</sup>

GCPEA identified at least six incidents of attacks on higher education in 2025.

- On February 23, 2025, as reported by ACLED and *Scholars at Risk*, University of Peshawar police dispersed a peaceful student protest using batons. Several students were injured during the incident in Peshawar district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.<sup>53</sup>
- On March 11, 2025, as reported by ACLED and local media sources, in Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir district, Kashmir province, police allegedly used tear gas shells and batons to disperse University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir students protesting against university policies. Police reportedly detained 11 students.<sup>54</sup>
- As reported by the UN, on March 21, 2025, while dispersing a peaceful protest in front of the University of Balochistan, Quetta district, Balochistan province, police allegedly shot and killed three protestors.<sup>55</sup>
- On September 3, 2025, Pakistani security forces allegedly abducted four students from the Sindh Agricultural University, as reported by Scholars at Risk.<sup>56</sup>
- According to local media source *Dawn*, on November 10, 2025, armed actors allegedly attacked Cadet College in Wana, South Waziristan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After a two day operation, security forces were able to safely evacuate all students and teachers.<sup>57</sup>
- As reported by Scholars at Risk, a Turbat University lecturer was detained by Pakistani security forces on December 4, 2025 while on his way home from the university and released one day later. Details of this incident are similar to other reported incidents of arbitrary detentions.<sup>58</sup>