

Philippines

Reports of attacks on education linked to armed conflict decreased during the 2024-2025 reporting period, compared to the two-year period covered in the previous report. Sporadic attacks on schools, staff, and higher education were reported, as well as at least one case of the military use of a school.

Context

Violence and human rights abuses persisted in the Philippines during the reporting period. Inter-clan violence increased in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, ahead of elections now delayed until late 2026.¹ Fighting between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the communist insurgency called the New People's Army (CPP-NPA) continued and caused at least 129 deaths in 2024.² According to Human Rights Watch, extrajudicial drug-related killings were perpetrated by both national security forces and unidentified armed actors, with an estimated 633 deaths during the 2024-2025 reporting period.³ The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for the arrest of ex-President Rodrigo Duterte, who is currently awaiting trial on counts of crimes against humanity associated with these killings.⁴

The Philippines is one of the most dangerous countries for human rights activists in Asia, as noted by Amnesty International.⁵ Authorities continued the practice of "red-tagging," labelling educators, Indigenous leaders, and civil society actors as communist or terrorist supporters, and leading to intimidation, arrests, and prosecutions.⁶ Amnesty International documented the online harassment of youth activists, human rights defenders, and Indigenous educators.⁷

Climate and environmental shocks affected communities and impeded children's access to education throughout 2024 and 2025. Typhoons, earthquakes, flooding, and heatwaves damaged thousands of classrooms, forced hundreds of schools to serve as evacuation centers, and disrupted learning for millions of learners.⁸ In October 2024, Storm Trami interrupted the learning of more than 90 percent of children in affected areas.⁹ Also in 2024, volcanic eruptions forced an estimated 385,000 children out of school.¹⁰ Overall, an estimated 26 million learners were affected by extreme heat and weather-related disruptions in 2024, highlighting the scale of the climate crisis on schooling.¹¹

Attacks on schools

GCPEA identified at least two attacks on schools in the 2024-2025 reporting period, representing a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, when 18 were identified in 2023 and five in 2022.¹²

GCPEA identified one attack in 2024. On February 23, 2024, between Tubay town and Cabadbaran city in Agusan del Norte province, an armed clash between members of the New People's Army and the Philippine Army was reported near a primary school, by local media and the Government of the Philippines.¹³ According to reports, six days later, the Department of Social Welfare and Development deployed around 17 social workers and development workers to provide psychosocial support to over 300 affected schoolchildren.

GCPEA identified at least one reported attack on a school during 2025. As reported by ACLED and local media *PhilStar*, on May 7, 2025, in Bangued, Cordillera province, unidentified perpetrators allegedly set the Dangdangla Elementary School on fire. The school was scheduled to be a polling center for the May 12 elections. The main school building was severely impacted with three classrooms destroyed by the fire.¹⁴

Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least one attack on education staff during the 2024-2025 reporting period, a decrease as compared to the previous reporting period, when five were identified in 2023 and one in 2022.¹⁵

On January 8, 2024, in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat province, live ammunition was allegedly fired at the vehicle of an education program supervisor of the Department of Education, as reported by ACLED and local media.¹⁶

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

Military use of schools and universities

GCPEA identified one case of the military use of a school during the current reporting period. This was similar to the previous reporting period, when one such incident was identified in 2023.¹⁷

The UN verified one case of military use in 2024: the Armed Forces of the Philippines occupied a madrasa during an operation against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.¹⁸

At the time of writing, no incidents were identified in 2025.

Attacks on higher education

GCPEA identified at least two attacks on higher education students during the current reporting period, a similar rate as compared to the previous reporting period when one attack on higher education was reported in both 2023 and 2022.¹⁹

GCPEA identified two attacks in 2024:

- On 12 February 2024, in front of the House of Representatives in Quezon City, National Capital Region, police allegedly used shields and truncheons to push protesting students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, wounding and bruising at least seven, as reported by ACLED and local media.²⁰ The students were protesting the National Polytechnic University Bill, which proposed changes to the administration of the university.
- On 16 August 2024, in Tacloban city, Leyte province, police dispersed a protest of at least a hundred delegates from the 57th General Assembly of Student Councils protesting outside the University of the Philippines campus and reportedly arrested at least one student with excessive force, as reported by ACLED and local media.²¹ The protesters were calling for academic freedom.

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