



Global Coalition to **Protect**  
**Education from Attack**

# Measuring the impact of attacks on education in Palestine

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack  
in partnership with the oPt Education Cluster



March 2022

*A classroom in Gaza, Palestine, sustained damages due to explosive weapons during fighting in May 2021. © 2021/Save the Children*

## Summary

This case study highlights some of the effects of violence on education in Palestine between January 2019 and September 2021, based on an analysis of Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) Education Cluster data. For example, teargas and other weapons firing injured at least 480 students and teaching staff and affected at least 9,650 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during that time-period. Furthermore, explosive weapons affected at least 305 schools and kindergartens in Palestine between January 2019 and September 2021. During an escalation of hostilities in May 2021, around a quarter of all schools in Gaza were damaged due to air-launched or ground-launched bombardments.

This case study also highlights how oPt Education Cluster partners utilized data on attacks on education for a timely and holistic response to such attacks. These approaches may be adapted to similar contexts of violent attacks on students, teachers, and education facilities.

## Recommendations

- Parties to the conflict should protect the civilian character of schools and universities and cease attacks and threats of attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities, including by implementing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.
- Encourage cooperation between government and humanitarian and development partners on collecting and reporting data on attacks on education.
- Integrate needs assessments and incident-level data into humanitarian planning and programs at all stages.
- “Build back better” after attacks on education and ensure funding not only to repair but to improve schools and make them safer and more inclusive to all students and educators.
- Avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, including near schools or universities or along routes to or from them, and develop operational policy based on a presumption against such use.
- Use GCPEA’s *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* to strengthen information gathering and sharing on attacks on education, including attacks with explosive weapons.

## Introduction

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) has counted Palestine among the countries most heavily affected by attacks on education in recent years.<sup>A</sup> Between 2015 and 2019, over 4,000 Palestinian school and university students and educators were reportedly harmed by attacks on education – the highest number worldwide during the five-year period.<sup>B</sup>

The occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) Education Cluster, along with its partners, regularly collect data on both the incidence and impact of attacks on education, including damage to infrastructure or education materials, injury or other harm to students or personnel, and disruptions to teaching and learning. This case study uses GCPEA's *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* to further examine the scope and impacts of attacks on education in Palestine.

Using verified data collected by the Education Cluster between January 2019 and September 2021, the case study analyzes data on two common forms of attacks on education in Palestine: teargas and other weapons firing at students, educators, or schools; and damage to facilities produced by the use of explosive weapons.<sup>C</sup>

The GCPEA analysis of the Education Cluster data found that the use of teargas, stun grenades, and other weapons injured 480 students and educators and caused at least 9,650 to lose time learning or teaching between January 2019 and September 2021. Furthermore, GCPEA found that around a quarter of schools in Gaza were damaged during hostilities in May 2021. Damage to facilities by explosive weapons caused students and teachers to miss out on at least 249 hours of class between January 2019 and February 2021.

This case study also highlights good practices in linking data on attacks on education to timely response. The oPt attacks on education reporting system, along with strong collaboration between education providers and the Education Cluster enabled rapid identification, assessment, verification, and response following attacks on education during the period covered in this report.

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<sup>A</sup> GCPEA, [Education under Attack 2020](#), Global Overview section and Palestine chapter. A very heavily affected country during the 2015-2019 reporting period experienced over 1,000 attacks on education or 1,000 students or educators harmed in attacks on education.

<sup>B</sup> GCPEA, [Education under Attack 2020](#). GCPEA compiles data from United Nations, Education Cluster, non-governmental organizations, and media sources. Details on GCPEA methodology can be found at [eua2020.protectingeducation.org](http://eua2020.protectingeducation.org).

<sup>C</sup> When referencing “attacks on education,” this case study relies on [GCPEA's definition](#): any threatened or actual use of force against students, teachers, academics, education support and transport staff, education officials, education buildings, resources, or facilities (including school buses) perpetrated by armed forces, law enforcement, state security entities, and non-state armed groups. All “education-related incidents” documented by the oPt Education Cluster involving teargas and explosive weapons fall within GCPEA's definition of attacks on education.

## Context

Between 2019 and 2021, attacks on education in Palestine occurred in the context of Israel's military occupation, and armed conflict between Palestinian armed groups in Gaza and Israeli security forces. During the 2019-2021 period, Gaza remained under a land, sea, and air closure as it had for the past 14 years.<sup>1</sup>



*A 16-year old student in Hebron, West Bank, Palestine, drew a scene of the harassment students faced from the Israeli army at, and on the way to and from, school, such as teargas firing, in April 2020. © 2020CH1429232/ Save the Children*

During the period covered in this report, fighting between Israeli security forces and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza escalated sporadically, with the heaviest fighting taking place in May and November 2019 and May 2021.<sup>2</sup> During the 10-day escalation of hostilities in May 2021, Palestinian armed groups fired over 4,000 rockets towards Israel and Israeli security forces launched over 1,500 airstrikes according to the United Nations (UN),<sup>3</sup> making it the most serious outbreak of conflict since 2014.<sup>4</sup> Prior to the Gaza escalation, tensions had increased in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in April and early May 2021, with clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinian citizens inside and around Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan, in addition to unrest surrounding the anticipated eviction of the Palestinian families from Silwan and Shiekh Jarrah neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup>

In 2021, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) characterized Palestine as a “protracted protection crisis” compounded by several factors, including movement restrictions, demolitions and seizures of Palestinian buildings, and constraints to the provision of humanitarian assistance.<sup>6</sup> OCHA also reported that in recent years Israeli security forces used excessive force, such as employing teargas and live ammunition, against Palestinians during protests and search-and-arrest operations.<sup>7</sup>

## Trends in attacks on education and education-related incidents

Aside from a temporary decline in 2020 during Covid-19 lockdowns, attacks on education between January 2019 and September 2021 occurred at high rates similar to previous years. In 2019, the Education Cluster recorded 328 education-related incidents against schools and students affecting almost 20,000 students and educators.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, education-related incidents declined by over 63 percent in 2020, with 119 incidents affecting over 7,750 students and 615 school personnel.<sup>9</sup> Covid restrictions, which prompted school closures and at-home learning, contributed to the reduction in education-related incidents between March and July 2020.<sup>10</sup> However, in 2021 while schools were either partially or fully open,<sup>11</sup> attacks on education rose again as compared to the prior year, with the oPt Education Cluster recording at least 443 education-related incidents that year in Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

Common forms of attacks on education in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, include: armed clashes near schools; the use of teargas and other weapons in and around schools; search and arrest operations, raids, checkpoints or other restrictions on movement near schools; settler violence affecting schools and personnel; and arrest and intimidation of school children and teachers. In addition, Israeli authorities issued partial or full demolition orders or stop-work orders to dozens of Palestinian schools during the period. The Norwegian Refugee Council reported that Israeli authorities systematically denied Palestinian applications for building permits and frequently demolished or issued stop-work orders on primary or pre-primary schools without necessary permits throughout Area C, with Hebron especially affected in 2020.<sup>13</sup>

In Gaza, the use of air-launched and ground-launched explosive weapons by Israeli security forces caused damage to schools and constituted the most common form of attack on education during the reporting period. The majority of incidents were collateral and occurred during outbreaks of fighting between Palestinian armed groups and Israeli security forces; in 2019, for example, escalations in May, November, and December produced attacks on schools and caused schools to close.<sup>14</sup> In some cases, explosive remnants of war or unexploded ordnances were identified near schools in both Gaza and the West Bank in 2020 and 2021.<sup>15</sup>

GCPEA and oPt Education Cluster have also documented military presence near, or military use of, schools in both the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>16</sup>

## Impacts of teargas and other weapons firing in the West Bank

Israeli security forces fired teargas, stun grenades, rubber-coated metal bullets, and other weapons at schools and students, or in their vicinity, in the West Bank in 160 incidents between January 2019 and September 2021. During this time period, the firing of teargas and other weapons injured at least 480 students, teachers, and education staff and affected at least 9,650 students and educators, meaning they lost time learning or teaching. Of the 160 incidents, about 75 percent involved direct teargas and other weapons firing at schools or students, meaning schools or students were the target of the attack or the attack produced immediate damage or harm to them. The remaining incidents, approximately 25 percent, were indirect teargas and other weapons firing, meaning schools or students, including those traveling to or from classes, were affected but not the targets of attacks. An example of an indirect incident is the firing of teargas during clashes between police and protestors near a school that leaked into the school premises and classrooms.



*Tear gas canisters thrown at Urif school, West Bank, in 2021. © 2021/Save the Children*

Israeli security forces fired teargas and other weapons on schools and students while making arrests at or near schools, while attempting to disperse students congregating at school gates, and while conducting operations in or near schools.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, military and settler presence around schools sometimes prompted clashes with students, school staff, and parents which led soldiers and police to fire teargas canisters and stun grenades.<sup>18</sup> As one example, students allegedly clashed with armed Israeli settlers at the gates of a co-educational high school in Burin village, Nablus governorate, on February 2, 2020, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council, OCHA, and a local human rights monitor. Israeli armed forces then arrived and fired teargas into the schoolyard. A

teargas canister struck an 11-year-old student in the head, inflicting wounds which required treatment at a nearby hospital. The administration closed the school for the day.<sup>19</sup>

Attacks on schools and students involving teargas and other weapons firing were highest in 2019. That year, attacks peaked at 30 or more incidents per month in April and November, but declined to zero in June, July, and August, during school vacations. Following Covid-19-related school closures in March 2020, teargas and other weapons firing on schools and students dropped markedly, then remained at five or fewer attacks per month through August 2020 while learning was virtual or hybrid. However, attacks increased to 11 incidents in September 2021,

after school vacations when students returned to full in-person learning at schools. (See Figure 1). GCPEA has observed a similar trend in attacks on schools or school students and personnel in many countries, namely, attacks declining during periods of school closures due to Covid-19 then increasing to pre-closure levels after school re-openings.<sup>20</sup>

### Incidents of teargas and other weapons firing at or near schools in the West Bank, Jan. 2019 - Sep. 2021

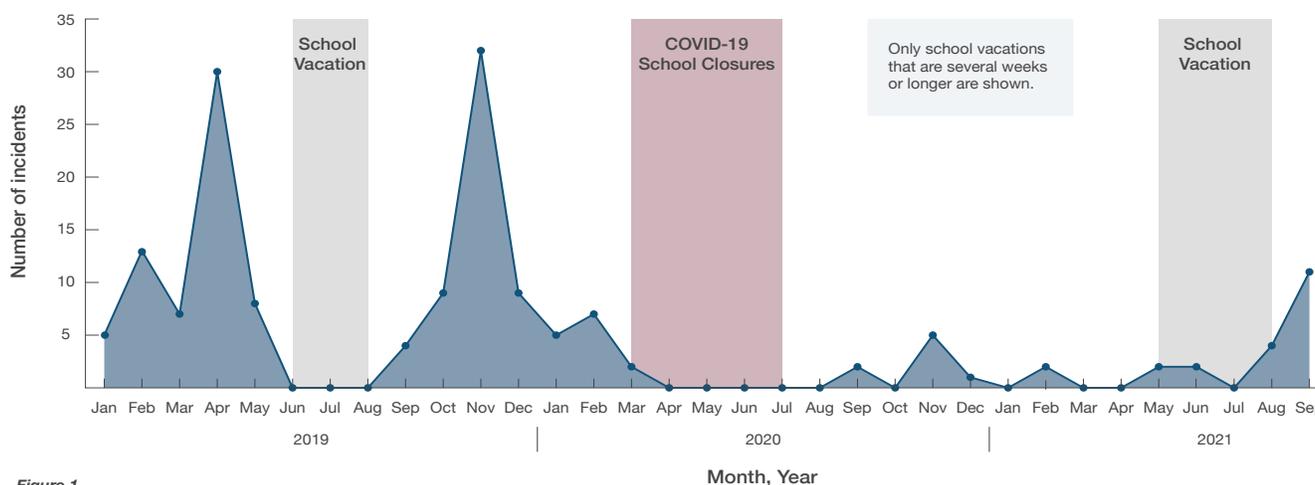


Figure 1.

Teargas was not the only weapon fired in attacks on schools and students. Stun grenades (65 incidents), rubber-coated metal bullets (20 incidents), and live bullets (20 incidents) were also frequently used in the West Bank between January 2019 and September 2021, often, but not always, alongside teargas. For instance, the oPt Education Cluster reported that on March 3, 2020, a rubber-coated bullet fired by Israeli riot police struck a 16-year-old student at the gate of his school in the Obaid neighborhood of Issawiya, in the West Bank. The attack injured the student’s hand and fingers.<sup>21</sup>

Teargas and other weapons firing injured and affected many students and staff in the West Bank between January 2019 and September 2021, with male students and staff often the target of, or otherwise affected by, these attacks. At least 465 students (445 male) and 15 staff (12 male) were injured in these attacks, although the numbers were almost certainly higher since security forces fired teargas and other weapons at or near several schools on a number of occasions, each time producing injuries.<sup>D</sup> Injuries included: breathing difficulties and suffocation from teargas inhalation, in some cases requiring first aid or hospitalization; loss of consciousness, broken bones, or bruising due to impact from teargas canisters; and wounds from live or rubber-coated metal bullets, including the loss of eyesight in some cases, according to Education Cluster reports.

<sup>D</sup> Due to data sensitivity concerns, students’ names or other identifying information were not shared with GCPEA. As such, GCPEA could not determine whether the students and staff harmed in repeat school attacks were newly injured or were the same students and staff harmed for a second or third time. To avoid double counting injured students, GCPEA only counted the number of students injured once during the reporting period (January 2019 through September 2021).

Meanwhile teargas and other weapons firing affected at least 9,050 students (7,139 males) and 600 staff (436 male); affected students and staff were those who lost instructional time due to the incident in addition to those injured.<sup>E</sup> (See Figure 2). Male students were particularly affected by teargas and other weapons firing. In a significant number of incidents, Israeli soldiers and police appear to have fired teargas, stun grenades, and other weapons at male students before or after classes while they congregated near school entrances. Many of these incidents occurred at boys’ schools, so even male students who were not the initial target of teargas firing were in many cases still affected. In some incidents, clashes between the students and security forces or between the students and settlers occurred before the use of teargas, including students throwing stones; in other incidents, security forces appeared to fire teargas and other weapons at male students when no clashes had occurred. For example, on November 30, 2020, Israeli soldiers fired four teargas cannisters at Hebron Basic School for Boys, after threatening the principal to control the school’s students near a checkpoint. The teargas inhalation resulted in required medical intervention for 50 male students and four teachers.<sup>22</sup>

### Number of students and staff injured and affected during teargas and other weapons firing in the West Bank, Jan. 2019 - Sep. 2021

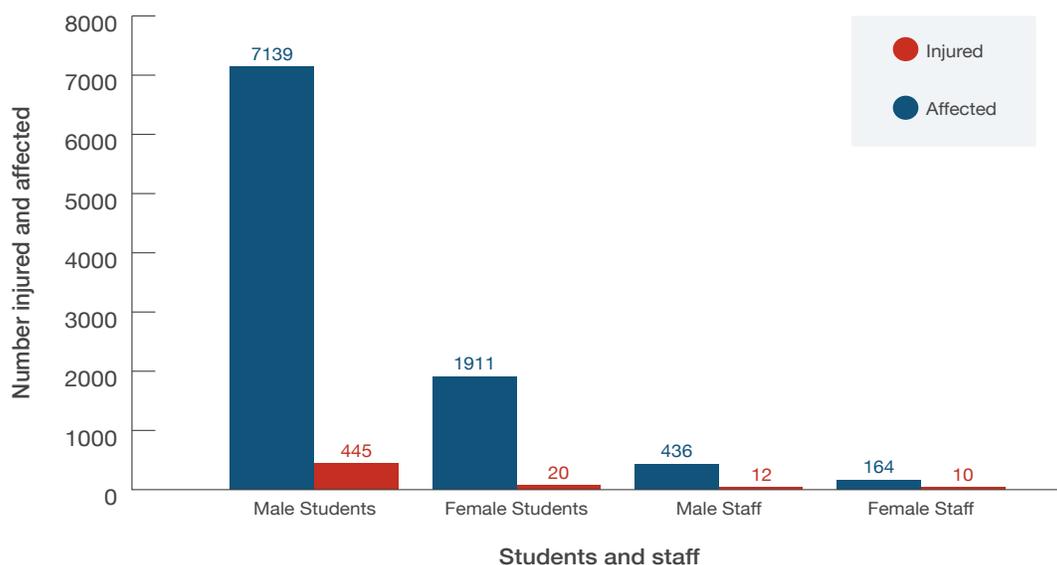


Figure 2.

In comparison, female students were less frequently injured or affected by teargas and, when affected, girls’ schools were more often the site of collateral teargas use, for instance when security forces were targeting a demonstration in the area but canisters landed in girls’ schools, or when girls’ schools were close or adjacent to boys’ schools.

<sup>E</sup> To avoid double counting students whose schools were impacted multiple times, GCPEA only counted the number of students affected once during the reporting period (January 2019 through September 2021).

Israeli soldiers and police firing teargas and other weapons at or near schools and students in the West Bank also forced schools to temporarily stop classes, impacting students’ learning. In 2019, schools lost approximately 103 hours of classes due to these attacks.<sup>23</sup> In 2020, on the other hand, far fewer hours of school were lost due to teargas and other weapons firing on or near schools, since for much of the year students were learning virtually due to Covid-19-related school closures. Schools lost around 13 hours of learning that year. The following year, the number of hours lost due to teargas firing rose to approximately 35 hours between January and September 2021. This number is still far fewer than the number of hours lost in 2019, due to the nine-month timeframe, periods of hybrid learning, and fewer incidents of teargas and other weapons firing in 2021 compared to 2019. (See Figure 3).

**Hours of learning lost due to teargas and other weapons firing on schools and students in the West Bank, Jan. 2019 - Sep. 2021**

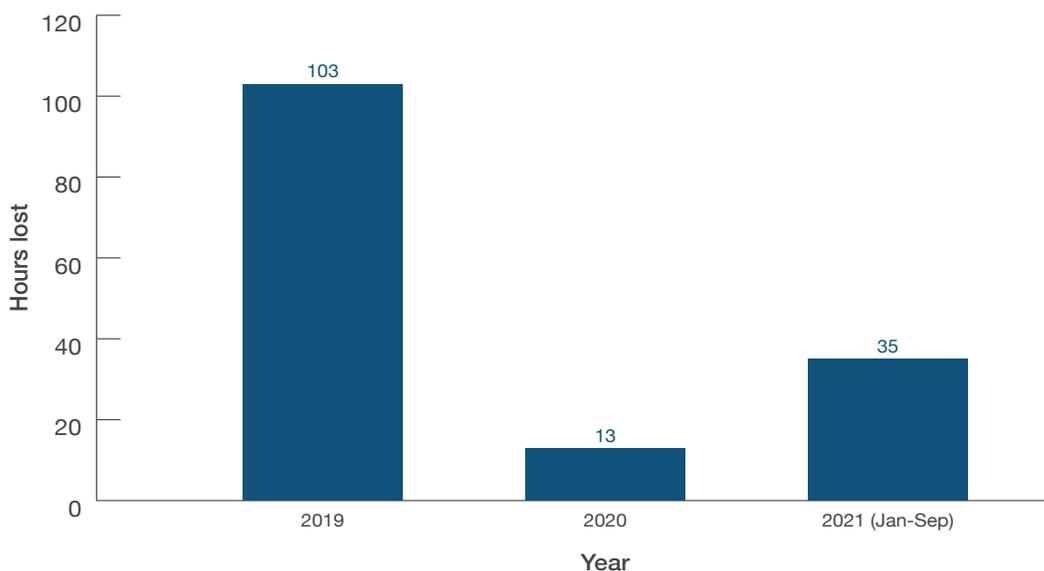


Figure 3.

# Impacts of explosive weapons on education in Palestine

Explosive weapons affected at least 305 schools and kindergartens in Palestine between January 2019 and September 2021, with nearly all incidents occurring in Gaza. In particular, air- or ground-launched explosive weapons impacted at least 300 schools and kindergartens in Gaza while explosive weapons stored near populated areas by armed groups or unexploded ordnance (UXO) affected at least five schools in Gaza and the West Bank. The majority of explosive weapons attacks on schools during this period occurred in May 2021, according to oPt Education Cluster data, and included private, Palestinian Authority (PA, or public), and UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools. (See Figure 4).

**Number of explosive weapons attacks on schools in Palestine, Jan. 2019 - Sep. 2021**

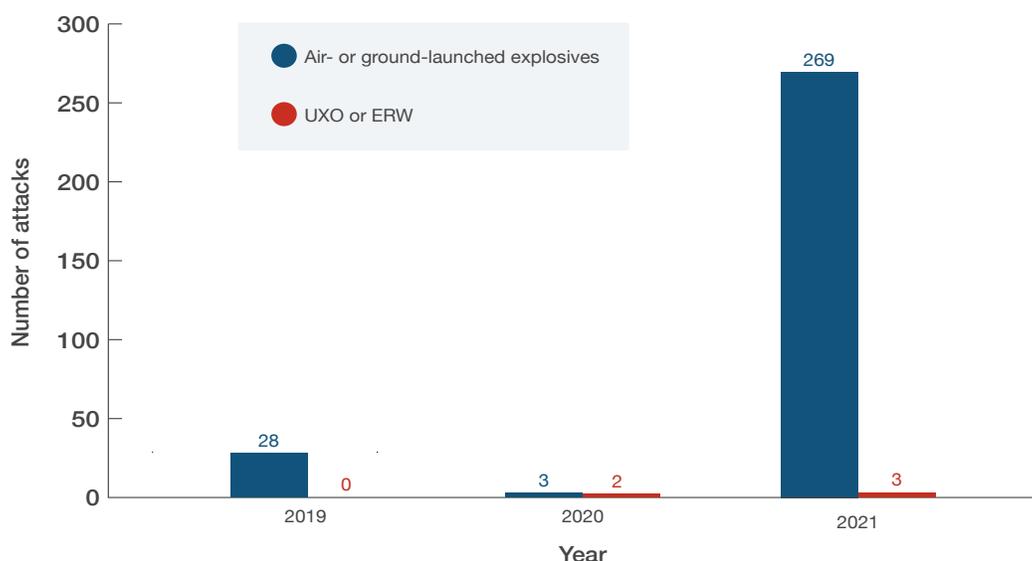


Figure 4.

Attacks in which schools were affected by explosive weapons did not result in the injury of any students or education personnel, according to oPt Education Cluster data. One explanation for this may be that schools closed during escalations and requested that students stay home for their safety. In the case of UXOs, weapons tended to be defused or safely removed without detonating on school premises.<sup>24</sup> For example, on April 21, 2020, military gear and a hand grenade were found on the grounds of an UNRWA school in Gaza while the facility was closed due to Covid-19; the explosive was safely removed.<sup>25</sup>

However, these attacks often forced schools to close and disrupted learning time. In the 36 incidents involving explosive weapons which occurred between January 2019 and February 2021, schools a total of 249 hours of classroom time, which affected over 9,060 students and

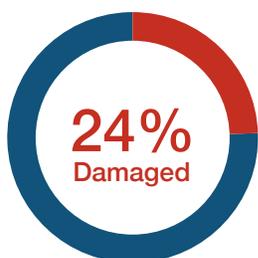
380 school personnel. Due to the May 2021 hostilities, all public and UNRWA schools – which were operating in a hybrid model – ended their academic year weeks earlier than planned due to challenges caused by the hostilities, including electricity and internet disruptions and damages to schools and school routes.<sup>26</sup>

Needs assessments conducted by the oPt Education Cluster, the Ministry of Education, and other partners revealed that around 270 schools were damaged by explosive weapons during the May 2021 hostilities. In addition, 63 schools operated by UNRWA sustained damages while used as emergency shelters during the crisis. At least 169,300 students from UNRWA and public schools and over 10,530 kindergarten students were enrolled in schools damaged by the hostilities; these numbers equate to approximately 28 and 18 percent, respectively, of all students attending schools and kindergartens in Gaza at the time of hostilities.

GCPEA determined that 19 percent of all schools and kindergartens in Gaza experienced some degree of damage due to explosive weapons attacks in May 2021, based on Ministry of Education data for 2021. 24 percent of all public, private, and UNRWA schools combined sustained damages while 13 percent of all kindergartens in Gaza were damaged. (See Figures 5 and 6).

The majority of damaged schools (public, private, and UNRWA) and kindergartens sustained mild or moderate damage, with ten schools experiencing major damage affecting the structural integrity of buildings. The majority of damage to public schools took place in the West Gaza directorate, according to the oPt Education Cluster.<sup>27</sup> Typical damages included: broken windows or doors, cracked walls, and damage to water tanks, solar panels, latrines, and learning materials. Public and UNRWA schools were also damaged, as reported in media and by the UN. For example, on May 11 and 12, 2021, air-launched strikes hit two UNRWA schools, damaging around 29 classrooms and the exterior wall of the compound.<sup>28</sup>

**Proportion of schools damaged in May 2021 hostilities**



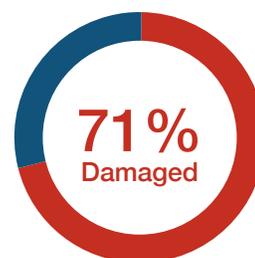
**Figure 5.** The chart includes public, private, and UNRWA schools. 189 schools were damaged in the May 2021 hostilities; 584 schools remained undamaged.

**Proportion of kindergartens damaged in May 2021 hostilities**



**Figure 6.** 80 kindergartens were damaged in the May 2021 hostilities; 557 kindergartens remained undamaged.

**Proportion of higher education institutions damaged in May 2021 hostilities**



**Figure 7.** 12 higher education institutions were damaged in the May 2021 hostilities; 5 higher education institutions remained undamaged.



### Impact of explosive weapons on higher education

In addition to schools and kindergartens, hostilities also damaged higher education facilities during the period covered in this report. An assessment by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Ministry of Education found that education facilities at 12 higher education institutions were damaged during the May 2021 escalation of hostilities out of a total 17 institutions.<sup>29</sup> As such, over 70 percent of higher education institutions in Gaza experienced damage to their facilities during the May 2021 hostilities.<sup>F</sup> (See Figure 7). The oPt Education Cluster does not document attacks on higher education and did not provide data for this analysis.

In one example, a local human rights monitor reported that on May 13, 2021, air-launched strikes damaged two tertiary education facilities in the al-Sheikh Zayed area of North Gaza: Al Quds Open University and a vocational center.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>F</sup> Since relatively few higher education institutions exist in Gaza, it was possible for a higher proportion of these to be damaged during hostilities than schools or kindergartens, even though the total number of higher education facilities damaged was far fewer than the total number of schools or kindergartens damaged. This percentage was calculated using the number of attacks reported and official data on the total number of institutions from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

## Using data to respond to attacks on education in Palestine

The oPt Education Cluster's data on attacks on education is directly linked into humanitarian response. After assessing the impacts of an attack on education, the Cluster determines whether and what type of response is required, and which Cluster partners are best placed to respond. The Cluster sends alerts to partners to respond to a range of attack impacts, including through: mental health and psychosocial support, recreational activities, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programs, cash transfers, emergency educational supplies, legal aid, advocacy for access to school, distribution of school furniture, repair or rehabilitation of schools, or catch-up classes or other remedial learning.

In the case of the conflict escalation in Gaza in May 2021, the Education Cluster deployed an Assessment Team to conduct a needs assessment and incident verification for schools run by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, while UNRWA assessed its own schools, and Save the Children and the United Nations Development Programme assessed kindergartens and private schools. Following the assessments, Task Forces of oPt Education Cluster members were activated to support the response, based on organizations' geographic area of operation, resources, and programmatic expertise. The oPt Education Cluster's assessment revealed that around US\$3.55 million would be required to repair damaged schools.<sup>6</sup>

The Education Cluster confirmed that the data supported Cluster partners to respond to the attacks on schools in Gaza.<sup>31</sup> Based on the data, the Cluster developed Task Forces around areas of response such as catch-up classes and other summer activities, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services, and school repair and rehabilitation. The needs assessment spreadsheet also included a column for partners to track their response. For example, 17 Cluster partners provided summer activities to around 190,000 school children in Gaza.<sup>32</sup> By the end of 2021, Education Cluster partners had supported the full rehabilitation of 70 percent of the schools damaged, while the remaining 30 percent were undergoing repairs.<sup>33</sup>

Cluster partners and the Ministry of Education acquired funding to repair schools that had been damaged in May 2021 but did not receive sufficient resources to implement “build back better” renovations including improving water and sanitation facilities or access for children with disabilities, according to the UN.<sup>34</sup>

The Education Cluster also uses data on attacks on education throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. For example, data on attacks in the West Bank and Gaza feed into indicators on the number of students and schools affected by attacks on education and in need of intervention. The Cluster also uses the data to report on attacks and responses to attacks in humanitarian publications such as situation reports, flash appeal reports, or humanitarian response plans.

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<sup>6</sup> The oPt Education Cluster assessment team was an operational group composed of ten staff from ten different Education Cluster partner organizations.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This case study spotlighted the devastating impacts teargas and explosive weapons attacks have on schools and their students and educators. In response to such attacks, good practices and policies were highlighted that humanitarian and development organizations, governments, and civil society organizations can adopt. This study concludes with recommendations for protecting schools, students, and educators from attack in Palestine and globally.

Palestine experienced a high number of attacks on education in recent years which significantly affected students, teachers, and education infrastructure. However, the availability of high-quality and timely data enabled the Education Cluster and its partners, including Palestinian education authorities, to respond to and mitigate the impacts of these attacks. This case study has highlighted how detailed data facilitated a timely and holistic response to attacks on education, which addressed the various impacts of attacks, ranging from damage to school buildings to lost learning.

GCPEA calls on all states, including the Government of Israel, to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration including its *Guidelines* and for international agencies and civil society organizations to support these efforts. Palestine endorsed the Declaration in May 2015,<sup>35</sup> but like many other states, must still take steps to fulfill the commitments. GCPEA recommends specific actions below to reduce and mitigate the impact of attacks on education involving explosive weapons, both in Palestine and globally.

### **Militaries, other state security forces, and non-state armed groups, and those with influence over these parties, should:**

- Protect the civilian character of schools and universities and cease attacks and threats of attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities, including by implementing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.
- Take into account all foreseeable harm to civilians and the reverberating effects of explosive weapons before carrying out attacks.
- In law enforcement situations, do not use excessive or unnecessary lethal force on school and university students and personnel. The Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should be followed.<sup>36</sup>
- In armed conflict situations, never attack students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities.
- Avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, including near schools or universities or along routes to or from them, and develop operational policy based on a presumption against such use.

- In endorsing states such as Palestine, strengthen and support the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration to better protect the civilian character of schools and universities and cease attacks and threats of attacks against students, teachers, and educational facilities, including by implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.

#### **States and organizations collecting data on attacks on education should:**

- Encourage cooperation between government and humanitarian and development partners on collecting and reporting data on attacks on education.
- Integrate needs assessments and incident-level data into humanitarian planning and programs at all stages.
- Ensure that the impacts of attacks on education are measured in order to better assess damages and harm to students and plan for response.
- Where possible, make every effort to collect and share disaggregated data on attacks on education so that the impacts of such attacks can be better understood, and prevention and response measures can be developed.
- Adopt guidance from GCPEA's *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education* in developing monitoring systems and humanitarian or sectoral needs assessments.

#### **Ministries of education, donors, and humanitarian and development actors should:**

- “Build back better” after attacks on education and ensure funding not only to repair but to improve schools and make them safer and more inclusive for all students and educators.
- Prioritize and fund measures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to attacks on education, such as by developing risk assessments, education continuity plans, and comprehensive safety and security plans, within humanitarian response and development programs.
- Extend distance learning innovations that may have been implemented during Covid-19 to learners and teachers who are affected by attacks on education.

## Methodology

This case study analyzes data from the oPt Education Cluster dataset that was shared with GCPEA for the purposes of this report. GCPEA had access to relevant portions of the oPt Education Cluster dataset from January 1, 2019, through October 2021. The oPt Education Cluster collected and verified incidents in its dataset to its own established standards.

GCPEA defines attacks on education as any threatened or actual use of force against students, education personnel, education facilities, or education resources. Attacks on education and military use of schools are intentionally or indiscriminately perpetrated by armed forces, other state security forces, or non-state armed groups for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, or religious motivations. For a full set of definitions, see GCPEA's [Education under Attack Dataset Codebook](#).

While the oPt Education Cluster uses its own categories and definitions of education-related incidents, these generally fall within GCPEA's definitions of attacks on education. For the purposes of this case study, GCPEA used its own sub-categories of attacks, found in the *Dataset Codebook* and *Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education*, to code and analyze data. For example, the oPt Education Cluster dataset did not use the category of air-launched or ground-launched strikes; based on incident descriptions, GCPEA coded incidents based on the weapon sub-type.

This case study focused on teargas and other weapons firing, as well as the use of explosive weapons for a number of reasons. First, doing so allowed GCPEA to test and refine indicators in its *Toolkit* related to: attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel; attacks on schools; and attacks on higher education facilities. These types of attacks occurred frequently in Palestine in recent years, and thus sufficient data were available to assess their impacts. These were also some of the more prevalent attacks occurring in Palestine during the reporting period making their exploration relevant, and the oPt Education Cluster had not yet run analyses available in the *Toolkit* on these attacks so efforts were not duplicated. However, the oPt Education Cluster collected data on other attacks on education and their impacts over the reporting period. More details on these can be found in the oPt Education Clusters' annual reporting on education-related incidents.

GCPEA used information from the Palestine Ministry of Education's Statistical Yearbook to calculate the proportion of schools and kindergartens damaged in different governorates, as well as information from the Palestine Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to calculate the proportion of higher education institutions damaged.

## The Toolkit

To produce the analyses in this case study, GCPEA used data collection methods and calculations available in the [\*Toolkit for Collecting and Analyzing Data on Attacks on Education\*](#). The *Toolkit* offers indicators to analyze different attack types and their impacts on students, personnel, and educational infrastructure. Specifically, GCPEA relied on *Toolkit* indicators:

- 1.1.1 Number of reported attacks on schools
- 1.2.1 Proportion of schools reported as damaged or destroyed by attacks
- 1.3.1 Number of students and education personnel reported injured or killed in attacks on schools
- 1.4.1 Number of school days reportedly missed due to attacks on schools
- 1.4.2 Reported number of students or education personnel whose education or work was affected by attacks on schools
- 2.1.1 Number of reported attacks on students, teachers, and other education personnel
- 2.2.1 Number of students or education personnel reportedly injured, killed, or abducted in targeted violence
- 6.1.1 Number of reported attacks on higher education institutions
- 6.2.1 Proportion of higher education institutions reported as damaged or destroyed by attacks

To learn more about the scope and impact of attacks on education in Afghanistan and globally, explore [GCPEA's webpage](#) and the *Education under Attack 2020* [report](#) and [interactive website](#).

GCPEA is grateful for the support it receives from the Education Above All Foundation, Education Cannot Wait, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and an anonymous donor.

GCPEA is a coalition of organizations that includes: Amnesty International, Education Above All Foundation, the Institute of International Education (IIE), Human Rights Watch, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Plan International, Save the Children, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

This case study is the result of independent research conducted by GCPEA with support from the oPt Education Cluster. It is independent of the individual member organizations of the Steering Committee of GCPEA and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Steering Committee member organization.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Human Right Watch, World Report 2021: Events of 2020 (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021), Israel/Palestine Chapter. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, “In Focus: The Effects of Israel’s Tightened Blockade on the Economic and Humanitarian Conditions in the Gaza Strip 10 May 16 June 2021,” Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, July 5, 2021, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF, “State of Palestine: Humanitarian Situation Report End of Year 2019,” UNICEF, January 2020, p. 2. “Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (as delivered by UN Special Coordinator Wennesland), 27 May 2021,” UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process statement, May 27, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> “Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question (as delivered by UN Special Coordinator Wennesland), 27 May 2021,” UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process statement, May 27, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank with the European Union and United Nations, “Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment June 2021,” p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> “Escalation in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #1 as of 17:00, 11 May 2021,” OCHA, May 11, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview oPt, December 2021, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview oPt, December 2020, p. 27.

<sup>8</sup> oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2019,” p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020,” p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021, p. 34; “After teargas use against West Bank students double, Coronavirus restrictions see incidents drop to zero,” Save the Children news release, April 29, 2020. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020”.

<sup>11</sup> See UNESCO, Global Monitoring of school closures caused by Covid-19.

<sup>12</sup> oPt Education Cluster Attacks on Education database.

<sup>13</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, Raided and Razed: Attacks on West Bank Education (NRC: Oslo, October 2020). oPt Education Cluster, Education-Related Incidents in oPt: Annual Report January - December 2020.

<sup>14</sup> oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020,” p. 1. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2019,” p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020,” p. 1. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2019,” p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2019,” p. 1. GCPEA, Education under Attack 2020, Palestine Chapter.

<sup>17</sup> GCPEA, Education under Attack 2020, Palestine Chapter. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020,” p. 1. oPt Education Cluster, “Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2019,” p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Information received from a UN respondent via email on January 5, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> OCHA, “Protection of Civilians Report | 21 January - 3 February 2020,” February 6, 2020, p. 1. PCHR, “PCHR Weekly Report On Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (30 January – 05 February 2020),” IMEMC News, February 6, 2020. Norwegian Refugee Council, Raided and Razed: Attacks on West Bank Education, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> GCPEA, “Supporting Safe Education in the Central Sahel,” September 2020.

- <sup>21</sup> oPt Education Cluster, "[Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020](#)," p. 4.
- <sup>22</sup> oPt Education Cluster, "[Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020](#)," p. 2.
- <sup>23</sup> oPt Education Cluster Attacks on Education database. Hours of classes lost refers to the amount of time schools were not imparting instruction due to an attack. To calculate the hours of class time lost, GCPEA summed the minutes lost in each incident during the relevant time period then divided by 60 (minutes in an hour).
- <sup>24</sup> GCPEA counts any threatened or actual use of an explosive weapon as an attack on education, even if the device fails to detonate or produce damage.
- <sup>25</sup> oPt Education Cluster, "[Education-Related Incidents in oPt Annual Report January – December 2020](#)."
- <sup>26</sup> Information received from a UN respondent on December 16, 2021. oPt Education Cluster, "[Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip](#)," p. 2.
- <sup>27</sup> Gaza has six Ministry of Education directorates (East Gaza, West Gaza, North Gaza, Rafah, Khan Younis, and Middle Area). See: oPt Education Cluster, "[Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip](#)," p. 6.
- <sup>28</sup> Received from UNRWA via email on May 13, 2021. Tovah Lazaroff, "[Two UNRWA schools hit during IDF air strikes on Gaza](#)," The Jerusalem Post, May 13, 2021. Nidal Al-mughrabi and Jeffrey Helle, "[Gaza conflict intensifies with rocket barrages and air strikes](#)," Reuters, May 14, 2021.
- <sup>29</sup> oPt Education Cluster, "[Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip](#)," p. 3. "Distribution of Higher Education Institutions in Palestine by Type of Institution and Region, 2020/2021," from the Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, 2021. Higher Education Statistical Yearbook for Scholastic Year 2020/2021. oPt Education Cluster, "[Education Cluster Report on Damage in Educational Facilities Gaza Strip](#)," p. 3.
- <sup>30</sup> PCHR, "[Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian 11 -19 May 2021](#)," Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, May 20, 2021.
- <sup>31</sup> Information received from a UN respondent on December 16, 2021.
- <sup>32</sup> "[Response to the escalation in the oPt | Situation Report No. 10 \(September 2021\)](#)," OCHA, October 14, 2021.
- <sup>33</sup> "[State of Palestine Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4 \(January – December 2021\)](#)," UNICEF, 2022, p. 5.
- <sup>34</sup> "[Response to the escalation in the oPt | Situation Report No. 10 \(September 2021\)](#)," OCHA, October 14, 2021.
- <sup>35</sup> [Safe Schools Declaration Endorsements](#) (as of January 2022).
- <sup>36</sup> OHCHR, [Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement](#) (New York: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020).