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PROTECT EDUCATION IN INSECURITY AND CONFLICT  
حماية التعليم في ظروف النزاع وانعدام الأمن

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Monitoring and Reporting to Enhance the Protection of Education  
in Situations of Insecurity and Conflict:

# **SYNTHESIS REPORT**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>STUDY SCOPE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>METHODS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Phase 1: Desk Review and Preparatory Analysis.....	<b>4</b>
Phase 2: Field Research.....	<b>4</b>
A. Field-test and adapt interview guide.....	<b>4</b>
B. Collect qualitative and quantitative data from key informants.....	<b>4</b>
C. Verify sample of reports.....	<b>5</b>
D. Solicit feedback.....	<b>5</b>
<b>SOUTH KIVU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Monitoring and Reporting Systems.....	<b>6</b>
Protection Mechanisms.....	<b>7</b>
Attacks on Education 2012-2014.....	<b>8</b>
<b>MOGADISHU, SOMALIA</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Monitoring and Reporting Systems.....	<b>11</b>
Protection Mechanisms.....	<b>12</b>
Attacks on Education 2013-2015.....	<b>13</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>LIMITATIONS</b> .....	<b>16</b>

**RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 17**

Legislation, policies, and practices ..... 17

Triggering response ..... 18

Integration of local knowledge..... 18

Data collection methods ..... 18

**REFERENCES ..... 20**

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## ACRONYMS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CAR	Central African Republic
CGCA	Columbia Group for Children in Adversity
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EAA	Education Above All
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MoE	Ministry of Education
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territories
OSRSG-CAAC	Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
PEIC	Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United National Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSG	United Nation Secretary-General
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

## INTRODUCTION

Armed violence against schools by militant groups threatens students and school personnel across the world, damaging individuals physically and psychologically, up-ending families and communities, and upsetting systems of learning. Malala Yousafzai has drawn global attention to the need for safe and equitable access to education, after surviving a Taliban assassination attempt when she was 15 and winning the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy in 2014. That same year, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls in a Nigerian school (Segun & Muscati, 2014), the Taliban killed 145 people in a military academy in Pakistan (Tremblay, 2014; Walsh, 2014), and Israeli attacks on schools in Gaza killed 45 people (HRW, 2014). At the time of writing in April 2015, al-Shabaab made the front pages of newspapers for killing 147 people at Garissa University College in Kenya and again for killing 19 at the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Mogadishu (Kushkush & Callimachi, 2015; Ibrahim, 2015). Although these particular events were widely reported by the news media, United Nations (UN) agencies, and human rights groups, many more like them are likely to have gone undocumented due largely to the absence of pragmatic, streamlined, and validated methods for monitoring and reporting disruptions of education by armed groups (GCPEA, 2014).

Recent years have seen considerable efforts to improve data collection and information-sharing among actors involved with education in times of insecurity and conflict. The Education under Attack reports, in particular, first published by the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2007, have played a critical role in exposing attacks on education as common, though frequently unspoken, tactics of war around the globe, and in advancing greater capacities for monitoring, reporting, and responding to these attacks. The most recent report, Education under Attack 2014, published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), is the most comprehensive study of attacks on schools to date, drawing on reports by UN agencies, government bodies, researchers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the news media from 70 countries, as well as questionnaires with members of GCPEA, and semi-structured interviews with organizations in the field (GCPEA, 2014).

The report, which covers January 2009 to September 2013, focuses on the 30 countries where attacks on education are the most pervasive, and groups them into ordinal categories of severity based on “minimum counts” of incidents. Countries are grouped either as “very heavily affected” (1,000 or more incidents or victims), “heavily affected” (between 500 and 999 incidents/victims), or “other affected” (between five and 499 incidents/victims) within the recall period. The report cites a lack of adequately-detailed documentation and of verification procedures as critical challenges, concluding that, “[i]n the majority of countries affected by attacks on education, there remains a need to further strengthen monitoring and reporting partnerships between UN agencies, international NGOs, human rights and development NGOs, and education ministries and district education offices to improve data collection and verification of data, and better inform the range of responses” (GCPEA, 2014).

The UN’s Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), first established by the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) in 2005 following Security Council Resolution 1612, is currently charged with documenting six grave violations against children, including attacks and threats of attacks on schools and school personnel, in a number of conflict situations around the world. In 2011, Security Council Resolution 1998 further prioritized attacks on schools by making them “trigger violations” whose perpetrators were to be listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s Report on Children and Armed Conflict, which publishes the official MRM data annually.

The MRM, however, operates in a limited number of situations that are of high concern to the Security Council, and reports must pass rigorous UN-verification procedures that are not always feasible in times of insecurity, meaning that many cases are likely to go unreported. Indeed, the latest Report on Children and Armed Conflict (2014) indicated that, “[a]ccess by the United Nations remained severely restricted throughout 2013, significantly disrupting the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children.” Moreover, the MRM has traditionally limited its scope to direct attacks on schools that violate international humanitarian law, focusing less on higher education and on indirect acts that may interfere with the right to education, like the military use of schools (Karimova, Giacca, & Casey-Maslen, 2013). Recently, the Security Council has called for greater monitoring of the military use of schools with Resolution 2143 (2014), and the UNSG has asked UN member states to adopt measures to deter such use (2014).

As with the GCPEA, the UN’s guidance note on Resolution 1998 has also recommended stronger collaboration among the protection, education, and health clusters, civil society partners, and community groups to enhance monitoring capacities for attacks against schools and their military use. This follows in part from the premise that local actors are often “best placed to provide first alerts on incidents of attacks” (OSRSG-CAAC, 2014).

## STUDY SCOPE

The Columbia Group for Children in Adversity (CGCA) out of Columbia University’s Program on Forced Migration and Health (hereafter “Columbia University”) was contracted to conduct in-depth studies of attacks on education in South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mogadishu, Somalia in an attempt to fill some of these information gaps and contribute to the development of improved methodologies for monitoring and responding to such attacks.

The study used semi-structured interviews with a sample of key informants from government, NGOs, UN agencies, and other protection and education actors to assess their respective roles, capacities, and practices in monitoring and reporting attacks on education. The study also attempted to characterize the patterns of incidents in South Kivu and Mogadishu, and to identify important factors contributing to these patterns, though it did not seek to capture the global total of attacks during the study period. Finally, the research team appraised the available measures for safeguarding schools, students, and educational personnel in these two contexts, while exploring strategies to enhance prevention, protection, surveillance, and response.

This research was guided by a reference advisory group comprised of experts from the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Human Rights Watch, the International Rescue Committee, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC), and the GCPEA.

In order to shed further light on the study’s findings, this report will bring to bear the results from a number of previous studies conducted by Columbia University on monitoring and reporting grave violations against children in the DRC, Central African Republic (CAR), Nepal, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the research team will attempt to replicate its findings through a follow-up study in North Kivu, DRC in June of 2015.

## METHODS

### Phase 1: Desk Review and Preparatory Analysis

The study began with a comprehensive literature review of all materials published in English with reference to grave violations on children in general and attacks on education in particular. During this phase, education and protection experts from headquarters and field offices were interviewed and asked to provide relevant unpublished source materials, including grey reports and datasets. They were also asked to provide contact information for other informants that might have pertinent reports or guidance. A reference advisory group meeting was convened during the launch of Education under Attack 2014 in February 2014. The group shared available materials, discussed the study's research methodology, and selected the DRC and Somalia as the field sites for phase two of the research.

Prior to phase two, in-country research teams were recruited and deployed to gather information on logistical and security concerns, to map relevant education and protection actors, and conduct preliminary interviews to gauge the feasibility and appropriateness of such a study. These results informed the development of a semi-structured interview guide, the sampling frame, and logistics planning for phase two.

These field sites were chosen based on evidence of widespread attacks on education as well as accessibility. They are not meant to be globally or even nationally representative of all attacks on education but, instead, present unique case studies for in-depth inquiry. Individually, each site offers a good opportunity to test assumptions about attacks on education, and together, they offer contextual and geographic diversity, while also differing in the functionality and reach of their MRMs. Both DRC and Somalia feature in Education under Attack 2014's list of highly affected countries, with Somalia being considered "very heavily affected" and the DRC "heavily affected."

### Phase 2: Field Research

Field research was conducted in South Kivu from late May to early August 2014 and in Mogadishu from late November 2014 to late February 2015. These field visits consisted of four steps:

**A. Field-test and adapt interview guide.** A team composed of one CGCA researcher and between one and three in-country researchers was established to field-test and adapt the interview guide developed in phase one with a sub-sample of key informants. These key informants were also asked to supply any relevant grey literature or contact information for other potential informants.

**B. Collect qualitative and quantitative data from key informants.** Informants were asked to provide basic descriptions of any attacks on education they were aware of in South Kivu and Mogadishu, respectively, within a year-and-a-half recall period, along with information on the suspected perpetrator and motive of the event, the date the incident took place, and the name and location of the relevant school. Some were interviewed individually and others in groups. The recall period for South Kivu was between December 25, 2012 and July 31, 2014. Because the Mogadishu field study came later, the recall period was between July 1, 2013 and January 31, 2015. Reports were not recorded if they did not meet one of these criteria or if the quality of the report was so poor as to make verification impossible.

“Disruption of education by armed groups” was used as a broad phrase so as not to limit responses to a narrow conception of “attack on school.” To ensure a standard definition, interviewers provided examples from the following list derived from Education under Attack 2014: intimidation, threat, theft, extortion, indoctrination, recruitment, abduction, kidnapping, arbitrary detainment, injury, abuse, torture, sexual- or gender-based violence, forced labor, forced marriage, and murder, whether in school or on the way to school, as well as military use of schools (ie. for shelter, for storage of arms), forced closure of schools, and partial or total destruction of school buildings or other facilities, by an armed group. Although the MRM distinguishes between “attacks” and “military use of schools,” this study considered both “attacks on education,” as both can interfere with the right to education.

The team also asked informants whether they had reported any such incidents through another channel, and whether they were aware of any monitoring system for attacks on education. In Mogadishu, informants were then questioned about measures that were available to protect education as well as measures they might recommend to improve prevention and protection. Finally, informants were asked to provide relevant documentation, databases, or grey literature, and to refer key informant contacts. All informants were assured confidentiality.

**C. Verify sample of reports.** Reports were cross-referenced and de-duplicated. In South Kivu, reports were mapped digitally and about 10% were selected for further study across five territories within the province based on accessibility, security, and diversity of sources that provided the reports. Researchers visited school sites and reports were considered confirmed if they were corroborated by first-hand, on-site informants. The two schools nearest to those being verified were also visited to evaluate the possibility of false negatives. In Mogadishu, severe security restrictions prevented the CGCA researchers from repeating this method. Instead, the in-country team triangulated reports by searching news archives and meeting with on-site informants in person or by phone. Reports were considered confirmed if they were corroborated by on-site informants, if a record of the event was also reported by a reputable media organization, or if the initial key informant had experienced the event directly.

**D. Solicit feedback.** Preliminary findings were presented to in-country informants, including the South Kivu MoE and the education cluster lead for South Kivu; and in Mogadishu, the Deputy Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the MoE. Feedback was used to enhance analytic veracity and to develop workable strategies for improving surveillance and protection in these two contexts. These findings were also presented to members of the reference advisory group, and their feedback incorporated.

## SOUTH KIVU, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The DRC has been wracked by conflict for about two decades, with scores of militias continuing to wreak havoc on communities throughout the eastern provinces. On the border with Rwanda, the small provinces of North and South Kivu have been among the most affected by conflict, with ongoing reports of massacres, mass population displacements, and grave violations against children. Between 2010 and 2013, these two small provinces accounted for more than half of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) throughout the DRC, leading the UNSG to refer to the Kivus as “the epicentre of violence” (2014). This chronically insecure environment

has dire implications for the lives of educators, students, and their loved ones.

Education under Attack 2014 estimated that between 500 and 999 attacks on education took place in the DRC between 2009 and 2013, most of which were concentrated in the eastern provinces (2014). The UNSG's country report on the DRC estimates that at least 180 schools were directly affected by conflict in the country from January 2010 to December 2013, with 47 schools being destroyed (2014). Indeed, the latest Report on Children and Armed Conflict in 2014 verified 95 such attacks in just the year of 2013, as well as 25 incidents of the military use of schools (2014).

An unpublished study by Columbia University from 2010 using key informant interviews with education and child protection actors documented 167 attacks on schools in the small province of South Kivu alone between late December 2009 and early August 2010. Another study, this time using a three-staged cluster survey in South Kivu, found that, out of 1,558 school-aged children in the sample, 224 (14%) had experienced school disruptions due to conflict over the course of 2010, and that an estimated quarter of school-aged children had been prevented from attending school that year because of the fear of armed group violence (Alfaro et al., 2012). Preliminary interviews with key actors suggested that higher education institutions (HEIs), such as universities, on the other hand, were not usually targeted by attack in South Kivu.

At the beginning of 2013 (latest available data), South Kivu had 4,856 primary and secondary schools officially listed by the MoE, serving about 1,201,780 students. This likely excludes many schools administrated by religious bodies throughout the province.

## Monitoring and Reporting Systems

The DRC has had an active MRM for 10 years, having been selected as a pilot site for the mechanism's rollout in 2005. There is no evidence that any other system exists for monitoring attacks on education at the country level. The MRM's Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting is co-chaired in Kinshasa by the UNICEF Country Representative and the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary-General for the DRC. Functionally, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO)'s child protection section manages the monitoring, reporting, and verification of grave violations, while a UNICEF-funded MRM Specialist within MONUSCO coordinates activities related to response, advocacy, and training (UNICEF, 2013). As the education cluster coordinator, UNICEF is also responsible for training partner organizations to use the MRM and for establishing partnership agreements to expand monitoring capacities. At the national level, protection cluster members have reportedly also been trained to monitor and report grave violations, and the MRM has been included as a fixed agenda item at national Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) meetings (UNICEF, 2013). Because of the country's vast size, the national cluster and working group systems have corresponding bodies at the provincial and city level in priority areas, such as North and South Kivu.

Across the DRC, all monitoring parties are supposed to use a uniform MRM reporting format, which, for confidentiality's sake, does not include the name of the victim, the source of the report, or name of the perpetrator, with the latter two names being coded. No paper forms are carried into the field, and the data are entered electronically at a later point. Local monitors maintain separate MRM email accounts, which are periodically changed, and use the Internet at certain times of the day to report to provincial leads who in turn report to the Task Force at the national level. The Task Force warehouses all reports in a centralized database, established in

2008, which it draws on for its annual reports.

In South Kivu, this system struggles with a number of bottlenecks. Out of 54 informants interviewed during the course of this study from the education and protection clusters, and from the state and religious school administrators across the province, fewer than five systematically documented attacks on education, despite the fact that many had received such reports from teams in the field, school directors, or other partners. A large proportion either had never heard of the MRM or did not know how to file reports of grave violations, suggesting the need for more training opportunities. In a province with poor telecommunications infrastructure and frequent power outages, informants in remote areas found it challenging to transmit official reports to the capital in Bukavu, not to mention that the lag-time between learning about an incident and being able to document it on a computer would affect the quality and completeness of reports, which are critical to UN verification procedures.

On the other hand, many informants from NGOs in cities outside Bukavu had successfully received incident reports from remote villages (Table 1); but when interviewed in Bukavu, their colleagues had no records of these reports, suggesting a breakdown in the relaying systems within these organizations. Of those that were aware of the MRM and had been trained to complete incident reports, some felt discouraged from taking part in the process because they did not believe their reports would catalyze a response, a frustration that has been observed by other groups in the DRC (Watchlist, 2013). The MRM does not have a formal response component, not to mention that if a report makes it to the provincial level and is deemed to be of high quality, it is considered unconfirmed until verified by MONUSCO, which has limited resources for these procedures.

In Bukavu, NGO representatives occasionally report attacks on schools in monthly education cluster meetings, and, although there is no evidence of these reports being systematically documented, they do to a degree inform response coordination. The UNICEF education cluster coordinator in Bukavu also solicits reports of attacks on schools from cluster partners at least once a year, using a template. However, attendance at the cluster meeting while this database was being populated, and interviews with many cluster members, revealed that, although many organizations have the capacity to report incidents—and indeed, did report them to the research team—many choose not to contribute to the coordinator’s annual database. This likely has to do with the fact that the template demands a high level of detail and, without incentives or a belief that reports will be used to benefit the affected communities, members do not consider this effort a priority.

## Protection Mechanisms

The DRC has made considerable advances in strengthening its child protection system in recent years. Notably, in October 2012, the Government and the UN signed an action plan committing to identify children associated with armed conflict, prevent and respond to grave violations against children, and combat impunity for perpetrating these violations. In May 2013, the Ministry of Defence issued a directive to prohibit, among other things, the occupation of schools, punishable by disciplinary measures or military prosecution. To ensure progress on these initiatives, the Ministry of the Interior dispatched high-level focal points to the eastern provinces in July 2013. In Kinshasa, representatives from 18 embassies, delegations, and organizations such as the World Bank and European Union Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform have come together under the auspices of the ‘Friends of CAAC’ to secure ongoing support and funding for the action plan across the international community.

While these steps represent impressive progress in terms of governmental commitments, whether this will measurably improve children's protective environment remains to be seen. Few key informants we interviewed seemed to be aware of the action plan and its commitments. What's more, the Government's policy of integrating militants formerly associated with non-State groups into the national military (the FARDC) risks legitimizing perpetrators of grave violations. Furthermore, the Amnesty Law, adopted in February 2014, which grants amnesty for acts of insurgency, acts of war, and political offenses dating back to 2006 (though not for war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide) may mean that some perpetrators of attacks on education are never tried or convicted (HRW, 2014; Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, 2014).

In his latest report on the DRC, the UNSG urges the Government "to meet, without further delay, its commitment to preventing and stopping [attacks on schools] and the military use of such facilities" (2014). He also recommends that the FARDC develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) to protect schools and children, while the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict requests that the Country Taskforce prioritize the full implementation of the action plan and reach out to non-State groups for the development of, among other things, an action plan to end attacks on schools (2014).

## Attacks on Education 2012-2014

Over the three-month course of field research, 238 attacks on education were documented in South Kivu, taking place between December 25, 2012 and July 31, 2014. Of these, seven began in 2012 (but continued into 2013), 172 began in 2013, and 59 began in 2014. Key informants in Bukavu reported 173 attacks, while 58 reports came from key informants in smaller cities, including Baraka, Shabunda, Uvira, and Walungu (Table 1). Also, three reports from Walungu and one from Shabunda overlapped with those received in Bukavu.

These reports came from hundreds of interviews with informants from 54 organizations in education and child protection, counting all the subdivisions of catholic school administrations under one umbrella and all protestant subdivisions under another. Of these 54 organizations, 22 were in Bukavu, while the rest were in Baraka, Shabunda, Uvira, and Walungu (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of Reports By City of Informant	
Source of report	Number of reports
Bukavu	173
Uvira	33
Shabunda	8
Baraka	10
Walungu	7
Added during verifications in villages	7
Reports repeated in two or more cities	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>

Slightly more than a third of these organizations supplied information that met the inclusion criteria. Of the 238 reports, 17 (7%) were reported by more than one organization, and 49 (21%) overlapped with UNICEF South Kivu's annual database mentioned above (that database had an additional 53 cases listed, but they did not meet our inclusion criteria, either because

they occurred before the recall period or lacked vital information, such as school names). Local organizations had the greatest knowledge of attacks on education, with 121 reports, followed by education institutions, such as the MoE, with 73 reports, and finally international organizations, including INGOs and UN agencies, with 57 reports (Figure 1). It should be noted that 49 of the 57 (86%) incidents reported by international organizations came from UNICEF, which in turn received them from local organizations and education institutions in the education cluster.

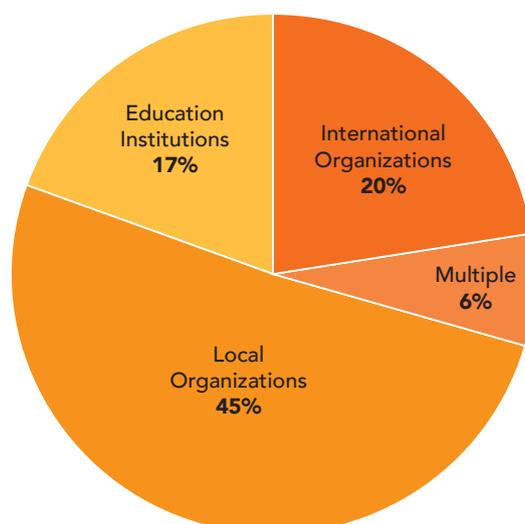
**Table 2. Incidents Reported per Contact by City**

City of Key Informant	Number Contacted	Number Who Provided Reports
Bukavu	22	7
Baraka	9	2
Shabunda	5	2
Uvira	17	9
Walungu	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>21</b>

The attacks affected 217 schools (188 primary, 29 secondary) across seven of the eight territories of South Kivu. Of these schools, 172 were listed either in the official MoE database or the Protestant Coordinator's database for the 2012-2013 school year (latest available data). These schools included a total of 43,171 listed students. There were no reports of attacks on HEIs.

The reports involved everything from military use of schools (i.e. for shelter), looting, and extortion, to rape, abduction of children for forced labor, and torture; though military use and looting were by far the most common. Thirty-one discreet armed groups were identified as perpetrators of these attacks, though many of them were factions of the Mai-Mai and the Raïa Mutomboki (RM). Also included were six reports of IDPs taking over schools by force for use as shelter. Numerous reports were also made of attacks by "unknown bandits"; and hundreds of cases were reported of school being disrupted or closed indefinitely due to insecurity in the village or mass population displacement, though none of these were included in the 238 figure, as they did not match the inclusion criteria.

**Figure 3: Incidents Reported per Type of Organization Reporting, South Kivu**



*Figure 1. Local organizations include Congolese-run NGOs and community-based organizations; international organizations include INGOs and UN agencies; education institutions include government and religious school administrators, school leaders, and school teachers. Some incidents were reported by more than one type of organization.*

Twenty-four schools, drawing on reports by seven different sources, were chosen for verification that they had been attacked, and of these, 18 were confirmed by on-site informants as having been attacked. An additional four attacks were verified by one of the authors before the study period, of which three were confirmed. Altogether, that constitutes a confirmation rate of 79% (22/28 x 100). In four of the six total reports not confirmed, the event took place, but it either occurred before the recall period (telescoping bias), or was perpetrated by “unknown bandits” rather than the armed group in the original report. One of the other reports was of a fire probably set by an armed group, but the school director claimed it to have been caused “by nature” during the verification. Only one report involved events that did not seem to have actually taken place at any time.

During verification, on-site informants reported seven additional attacks on schools. Four of these seven attacks concerned schools that were already being verified, but for previously unreported events. For instance, while confirming one event at a given school, on-site informants reported two additional events at that same school. The three other events were reported when asking on-site informants about attacks on schools nearby those being verified. Lastly, 12 schools were visited that had not been reported by key informants to verify whether they were true negatives or false negatives. On-site informants reported zero attacks in these 12 peripheral schools, indicating that they were indeed true negatives.

## MOGADISHU, SOMALIA

When the Federal Government of Somalia was inaugurated in late 2012, it became the first permanent, central authority the country had seen in over 20 years. Although security in Mogadishu has improved dramatically as a result of the government’s military campaign, aided by AMISOM, the city remains a highly volatile space for education, subject to attack by several armed groups (Barakat et al., 2014). Al-Shabaab in particular remains a highly active force with a penchant for attacking westerners and soft civilian targets, such as schools. Their use of improvised explosive devices, like car bombs, and targeted assassinations pose a constant threat to students, educators, and NGOs alike, forcing many international actors to work remotely from Nairobi, Kenya. Preliminary interviews with key actors in Mogadishu suggested that the capital continued to be the most dangerous place in Somalia for students in early 2015.

With over 1,000 attacks on schools estimated by Education under Attack 2014, Somalia was categorized among the six most heavily affected countries in the world between 2009 and 2013 (2014). The 2014 Report on Children and Armed Conflict verified 54 attacks on schools throughout the country in 2013, and did not report any military use of schools. The UNSG also noted one incident in which al-Shabaab recruited six boys from a koranic school at the beginning of 2013, though this did not constitute an MRM school attack.

Mogadishu’s education system was highly decentralized at the time of the study, in part reflecting the constant restructuring of ministries in the barely three-year-old Federal government. The MoE officially governed public primary and secondary schools and, as of January 12, 2015, had absorbed the former Ministry of Higher Education to also govern HEIs, such as universities.

According to the MoE, all but 12 of Mogadishu's public schools were bolstered by NGOs and UN agencies through the Global Partnership for Education, which the government joined in 2012, and the G-2 School Program, launched in partnership with UNICEF in 2013. The MoE had no available estimate of the number of schools in Mogadishu operated by NGOs at the time of the study, but a UN report estimated that by the end of 2015, humanitarian organizations would reach 340,000 students within Somalia—up from 263,441 in 2014—leaving approximately 1.36 million children without access to education throughout the country (UNOCHA, 2014). UNICEF and Save the Children co-lead the education cluster to coordinate this service delivery, and they appoint one inter-cluster focal point every year.

Private schools have become characteristic of urban education in Mogadishu, with 14 administrative “umbrellas” managing 399 schools that served 89,850 students throughout the city as of late 2014, according to the MoE. There is also a range of informal Islamic schools around the city, which neither the government nor the humanitarian sector formally recognize as education institutions, or regulate. Koranic schools, which form Somalia's most historic education system, are highly regarded community assets playing a fundamental role in the lives of young children. Madrassas offer more in-depth religious guidance for older youth, and are often more formalized than koranic schools, with dedicated facilities, registration processes, and external funding sources.

There were 56 HEIs throughout Somalia as of January 2015, serving about 50,000 students. Although there is no official database of HEIs in Mogadishu, informants believed there to be between 25 and 30; and a recent report estimated that about half of the country's HEI students were enrolled in South Central Zone, mostly in Mogadishu (HIPS, 2013). Contrary to South Kivu, key informants in Mogadishu indicated that HEIs were at high risk of attacks.

## Monitoring and Reporting Systems

Along with the DRC, Somalia was one of the seven pilot countries selected for the rollout of the MRM in 2005. In Somalia, the UN Country Taskforce and the Somali Ministry of Defence co-lead a national Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which develops policies in response to MRM data. In 2010, the Taskforce contracted an INGO on a confidential basis to manage a team of local monitors spread throughout the country. In the event of a grave violation, local monitors document the incident and report it to the INGO, which serves as a quality control step, ensuring compliance with MRM protocols and case definitions before forwarding the report to the Country Taskforce. As in the DRC, the standardized forms are confidential and are filled out by computer, often well after the initial reports were made. The Country Taskforce then further refines the reports before delivering them to the UNSG annually. All the reports that do not qualify as grave violations, or do not have the requisite level of detail, are housed in a database of human rights abuses, though we are unaware of any available publication that disseminates these reports. It is possible they are circulated internally. According to informants, the restrictive definition of grave violations, and the degree of information needed for an event to qualify as a violation, led many incidents to go unreported.

All parties involved in this mechanism asked for their identities to remain strictly confidential, as they faced considerable risk of retaliation by perpetrators. All but two of the key informants interviewed during this study outside of the UN were unaware of the Working Group, the Country Taskforce, and the MRM. A representative of the INGO contracted in confidence by

the Country Taskforce was interviewed, and denied being involved at all in the MRM.

Of the NGO representatives interviewed, only one openly claimed to work with the MRM, and identified an information pathway for reporting disruptions of education by armed groups. This organization had local offices in eight regions, which maintained regular contact with their beneficiary schools. In the event of an attack, these schools contacted the NGO, which then documented the event using an MRM form, alerted local officials, conducted a needs assessment with village elders, women's associations, imams, and youth leaders, and contacted the NGO's headquarters in Mogadishu. At headquarters, the NGO then reported the event to the protection cluster, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, concerned umbrellas, the Parliamentary Commission, and line ministries. While this pathway may still have existed during the time of the study, the NGO's inventory of attacks was far from comprehensive, and representatives from the organization reportedly stopped prioritizing monitoring and reporting in 2011 when they felt that UN support for the MRM had waned.

Outside of the MRM, there did not seem to be any group tasked with monitoring and reporting disruptions of education by armed groups. What's more, few informants reported systematically documenting attacks on schools, students, faculty, or staff; and of those that did, none provided evidence of such systematic reporting.

## Protection Mechanisms

Somalia officially ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on January 20, 2015. At that time, the newly formed Ministry of the Constitution was in the process of creating domestic instruments for the formal adoption of the CRC into Somali law, and the Optional Protocols had been referred to an exploratory panel on the grounds that certain articles may conflict with Islamic codes. The Ministry of Women and Human Rights was also in the final stages of drafting the first national 5-year child protection plan to be released in June 2015, a 3-year sexual violence plan, and a policy against female genital mutilation. Through its staff of child protection officers, this Ministry was also planning to launch the Child Protection Coordination Taskforce, which would work with AMISOM, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the protection cluster, and other ministries to create an integrative child protection system at the national level.

The Federal Government of Somalia also inherited an action plan agreed between the former transitional government and the UN, committing it to: prevent and end the military recruitment and use of children in armed conflict; ensure the dignified reintegration of children found to be involved in armed conflict; train military personnel on children's rights and protection; conduct public awareness campaigns on these issues; and to make child protection an integral part of the security sector reform planning (2012). As part of this action plan, AMISOM and the Ministry of Defence have developed a number of joint SOPs related to handling children associated with armed conflict. AMISOM also has an "indirect fire" policy which states that soldiers should never fire at schools, hospitals, mosques, or markets, even if drawing fire from those sites. The Government has also signed an action plan to end the maiming and killing of children. In August 2014, the SRSG-CAAC called on the Federal Government to comply with these commitments and fully implement the two action plans (UNICEF, 2014).

## Attacks on Education 2013-2015

Over the course of this study, 52 attacks on education were documented in Mogadishu occurring between July 2013 and January 2015. Of these, 18 began in or after July 2013 (34.6%), 30 in 2014 (57.7%), and 4 (7.7%) in January 2015.

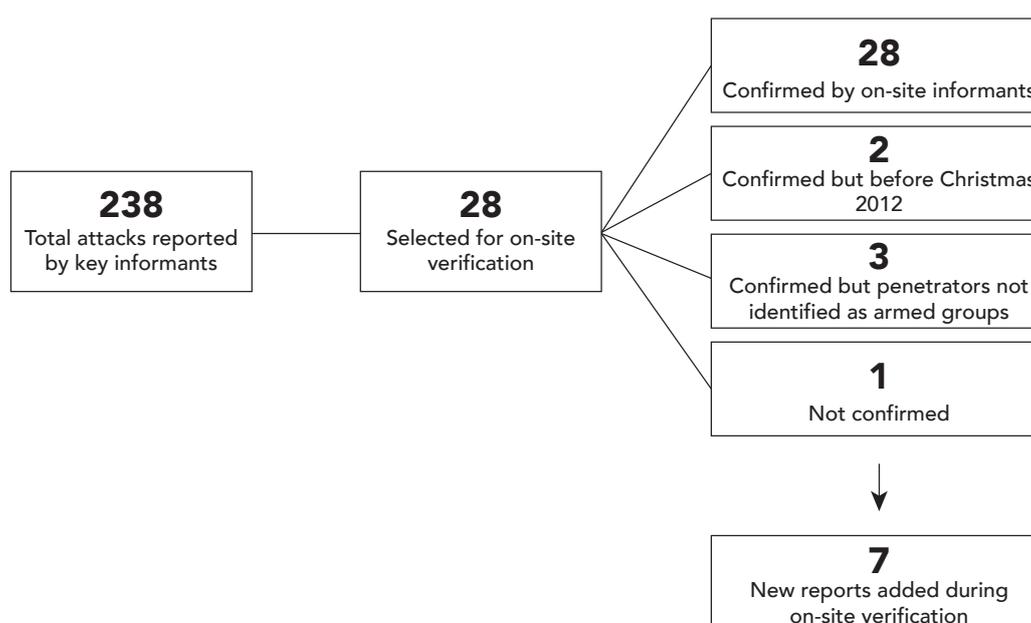


Figure 2. Local organizations include Somali-run NGOs, community-based organizations, and media groups; international organizations include INGOs and UN agencies; education institutions include government, private, and religious school administrators, school leaders, and school teachers, including from koranic schools. Some incidents were reported by more than one type of organization. Reports from individual survivors not associated with organizations are excluded from this table.

The reports came from interviews with informants from 26 organizations or groups in education and child protection based in Mogadishu, including the leaders of five umbrellas and teachers of four koranic schools. Of these key informants, 17 (65.4%) were able to provide at least one report of an attack on schools. Eight of the 52 (15.4%) events were reported independently by more than one key informant. The attacks touched 10 of Mogadishu's 17 districts, affecting 23 schools, four universities, and one child-friendly space used primarily for teaching.

Education institutions had the greatest wealth of knowledge about attacks on education, with 33 reports, followed by local organizations and international organizations, each with 12 reports (Figure 2). Of the 52 documented events, eight (15.4%) were MRM events provided by members of the UN Country Taskforce (three additional reports provided by the Taskforce were not admitted because they lacked school names), and these reports had no overlap with any of the 44 incidents reported by the other key informants. None of the key informants outside of UN agencies completed MRM forms for any of the attacks they reported. Of the 44 incidents not within the MRM system, 15 (28.8%) had been previously reported to another monitoring authority, mostly district commissioners, of which only three resulted in help being dispatched (i.e. the district commissioners intervened). In at least four instances, attempts to receive support led to repeated violence.

Reported attacks included rape, bombing, looting, abduction, extortion, forced closure, assault, murder, arbitrary detention, and threats, both in person and by phone, and many incidents involved multiple types of attack. Despite broad heterogeneity in the types of attacks reported by informants, a number of patterns were identified throughout the course of the study. Far from being incidental to the conflict, there was ample evidence that attacks on schools were used instrumentally and systematically by various groups to advance military, political, clan, and business objectives. Alleged perpetrators included al-Shabaab, clan and sub-clan militias, IDP camp security, neighborhood groups, the national and local police, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, the Somali Armed Forces, and unknown armed groups.

Of the 52 reports, three were confirmed by on-site informants, two were confirmed by media reports, one was confirmed by a YouTube video in which the perpetrator admitted to his crime, and 26 were reported by people who experienced the events directly. Altogether, 32 (61.5%) of the reports were considered confirmed. No attempt to verify cases indicated a false report. Additionally, as noted above, eight of these 52 reports were confirmed by the Country Taskforce during MRM verification.

## DISCUSSION

The numerous commonalities between the findings in South Kivu and Mogadishu offer valuable insight into existing systems for surveilling attacks on education in two of the world's most dangerous places to be a student. Furthermore, these findings present an opportunity to better inspect the roles that key actors play in these systems, and in protecting the right to education more generally. The DRC and Somalia are both characterized by fragile child protection frameworks and fragmented mechanisms for detecting human rights violations. While some policy progress is being made—with the Somali Minister of Women and Human Rights developing the country's first national child protection plan, for instance—political will, coordination, and stability remain sizeable challenges. The action plans both governments have signed with the UN constitute an especially important step in securing legal protections for children; but to date no action plans have been developed specifically to safeguard learning and teaching. What's more, the MRM, with its focus on grave violations against children, and the corresponding "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign, excludes adult students and university personnel who are also at risk. Altogether, the protection of education was considered a low priority in state and humanitarian agendas alike in both countries during the study period, with key informants regularly reporting that the issue received little if no attention. As one government informant in Somalia put it, "there is no concept here of protecting schools."

With little perceived priority accorded to attacks on education by governments, international agencies, or donors, few organizations in the two study samples—whether local or international—allocated resources to monitoring and reporting attacks on education. Key informants were also discouraged by the belief that reports would not result in a commensurate response or by the fear that reports would lead to retribution by the perpetrator, both of which concerns were substantiated by documented incidents. An unpublished study in South Kivu by Columbia University found similar results in 2010, with organizations listing a need for greater financial, security, and technical support to promote monitoring and reporting. Interestingly, another Columbia University study from 2010, this time evaluating the MRM's detection of killing and injury of children in the West Bank and Gaza, found that, despite some monitors fearing retribution and others not believing that reports would catalyze a response, the oPt's MRM had a highly active membership. In contrast to the Somalia and DRC cases, the oPt benefited from

strong institutional motivation for monitoring and reporting grave violations against children. In fact, the MRM was not even formally mandated in the country; it was voluntarily established and widely participated in by a broad range of local monitors. This momentum contributed to the oPt's MRM having the greatest ability to detect grave violations of all the mechanisms studied by the Columbia University team, with Gaza's having an estimated sensitivity (percentage of total incidents reported to the MRM) of 15% in 2010 and the West Bank's 50%, compared to just under 5% for MRMs in other countries. Population-based samples in CAR in 2009 and South Kivu in 2010, for example, found that those MRMs had estimated sensitivities of less than 1% (Potts, Myer, & Roberts, 2011; Alfaro et al., 2012).

Although reports of attacks on schools in the DRC and Somalia's MRMs have increased steadily since Security Council Resolution 1998 went into force in 2011, in part implying greater surveillance coverage, the findings from this study suggest that in both countries a considerable proportion of attacks continued to go undocumented by the MRM, or any other system. Not only did key informant interviews capture sizeably more reports of incidents than the MRMs in both settings during the recall period; but the marginal degree of overlap between our reports and UNICEF's in South Kivu, not to mention the complete lack of overlap between our reports and those of the UN Country Taskforce in Mogadishu, suggest that many more attacks likely took place during the recall period than were reported here. The fact that only 7% of reports in the DRC and 15.4% in Somalia were reported independently by more than one key informant further supports that likelihood.

Previous Columbia University studies in the DRC, CAR, and Sri Lanka indicate that surveys with probability-based sampling are much better-suited than key informant interviews for generating externally valid estimates of grave violation incidents in a population. On the other hand, surveys are prohibitively resource-intensive, their data are not geared towards mobilizing timely responses to individual incidents, and their highly structured nature make them less equipped for exploring sensitive questions. Semi-structured interviews with a targeted sample of key actors from government, school administrations, international agencies, and NGOs, as demonstrated here, offer a pragmatic, cost-effective, and rapid method for expanding monitoring and reporting coverage of attacks on education, even in rural and insecure settings. The fact that, in South Kivu, informants in just two cities were able to provide 87% (206/238) of the total amount of reports, and that fewer than half of the key informants in the province had usable reports, indicates that, by selecting the strongest informants in those cities, future provincial surveillance efforts could achieve similar findings even more efficiently.

Of course, surveillance systems depend on the quality of reports as well as their quantity. The verification procedures used in South Kivu and Mogadishu were designed to evaluate the reliability of the key informant reports, especially with regard to the likeliness of false positives, without compromising coverage. The confirmation rate found in the South Kivu sample suggests that about four out of every five reports received were strongly credible, and that a shorter recall period could improve this credibility by reducing telescoping bias. Assuming the confirmation rate is constant throughout the sample, at least 141 ( $0.79 \times 179$ ) attacks would have taken place in South Kivu alone in 2013, compared to the 120 attacks (including military use of schools) reported by the MRM for the entire country that year. A 21% risk of a false positive may be a reasonable tradeoff for the ability to capture and respond to that many more incidents.

In Somalia, there was no evidence of any of the documented reports being invalid. Altogether, 40 of the 52 (77%) reports were verified and confirmed either by the team (32 reports) or by the UN Country Taskforce (eight reports). Despite the logistical difficulty of working in

Mogadishu, the capital's functional telecommunications infrastructure and high cellphone uptake make it feasible to assure quality reportage while still securing staff safety.

Finally, what emerges from these findings is the great wealth of knowledge that local NGOs and education institutions harbor about attacks on education. In both South Kivu and Mogadishu, over 70% of incidents were reported by local organizations and institutions—groups that often had no contact with UN agencies or the cluster system. Local NGOs tended to serve populations in less accessible and typically more dangerous areas, and thus required timely situational information in order to ensure operational safety for their staff. These organizations also tended to employ members of the communities they served, and had strong relationships with local leaders, which not only engendered trust, but also meant that NGO workers had a personal stake in monitoring and reporting violent incidents. In Somalia, local media organizations were among the most aware of attacks, at least within Mogadishu; but they rarely reported attacks on schools for fear of retribution, unless these were terrorist attacks geared at attracting media attention, like car bombs, which were usually publically claimed by groups like al-Shabaab. For their part, education institutions, including ministries of education and private and religious school administrators, often had some records of attacks on their schools, though these were usually incomplete and used internally rather than being shared. Otherwise, administrators were frequently able to collect attack reports from schools under their control.

The unique capacity of local organizations and institutions to monitor and report attacks on education is a common finding among Columbia University studies of grave violations surveillance. The South Kivu study from 2010, for instance, found that religious administrators of schools and local NGOs were the most informed about attacks on schools, but that their reporting channels were uncoordinated, and thus, events were rarely captured by the MRM. In the oPt study, similarly, 56% of killing and injury incidents reported in Gaza came from government schools and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, while an additional 9% came from UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools. In Gaza, 12% of reports came from government schools while 23% came from UNRWA schools. In a rapid ethnographic study of Nepal's child protection issues, furthermore, the Columbia University team found that education professionals and local NGOs were among the most trusted sources of information about grave violations, with attack survivors typically preferring to contact these organizations than turn to external organizations.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has a number of limitations. Because we did not use probability-based sampling techniques, these findings should not be interpreted as being representative of all attacks on education within South Kivu and Mogadishu during their respective recall periods. The strict definition of "attacks," the need to document the names of schools and suspected perpetrators, and the focus on informants in urban centers, further limit the scale of events reported, likely neglecting a host of violent events that are less direct but potentially no less consequential to the lives of students and educators. Similarly, the concept of "attacks on education" is subjective, leading informants to have differing views about what events constituted a valid attack. Probes and examples were used to reduce this subjectivity, but it was still possible that events that met our inclusion criteria were not considered valid by informants, and were therefore not reported.

The non-probability-based sampling of the verification sites in both settings prevents us from generalizing the confirmation rates to the entire samples with confidence, as the credibility of reports may not be evenly distributed. This was considered a necessary compromise to ensure

the safety of the research teams, but it also reduces confidence in the veracity of the unverified reports.

The fact that this study drew primarily on recall information affected the quality of the reports in some cases, leading us to exclude events that may have actually taken place. It is also possible that informants underreported cases that took place earlier in the recall period, or telescoped events that actually took place before the recall period. In the DRC, there was also some discordance in report details when incidents were reported by multiple independent informants, suggesting that reports were more useful for determining the basic elements of an event than for understanding its causes and consequences, especially for oral reports given about events long past.

In both settings, we were unable to meet with a number of child protection and education actors that would have offered helpful perspectives. Some organizations refused to be interviewed, or when interviewed, refused to provide any reports of attacks. In Mogadishu, concentrated al-Shabaab attacks on AMISOM headquarters during the field research phase further restricted access, as many international organizations were mandated to work from home and local actors felt it was too dangerous to travel. These interviews would have increased confidence in the comprehensiveness and veracity of the findings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite these limitations, this study provides important insight into South Kivu and Mogadishu's capacities for surveilling and protecting education from attack. What follows are recommendations based on these findings and on specific suggestions made by key informants in each field site. Although listed separately, many of these recommendations would likely be most effective if undertaken in conjunction with other recommendations.

### Legislation, policies, and practices

Both Somalia and the DRC have seen recent progress in strengthening their child protection environments, but much remains to be done in order to prevent attacks on education and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. Beyond continuing to engage with the UN on negotiating and implementing action plans, leaders of both countries should ensure that their armed forces act in accordance with the new Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (2014). Key informants noted a lack of military SOPs specifically covering schools and universities and felt that it was necessary for all government bodies overseeing armed forces to disseminate unambiguous guidance and conduct trainings to secure the right to education. They also noted the fragmentation of government presence in the most dangerous areas, and noted that efforts should be made to ensure that policies and protocols issued at the capitals are taken up uniformly in the provinces. Echoing the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, it will also be critical for the governments of both countries, together with the UN—and in Somalia's case, the African Union—to negotiate action plans with non-State armed groups to protect education from attack, including universities.

## Triggering response

With the strengthening of legislation around child protection, it will be important to ensure that executive and judicial actions follow suit to end impunity for these violations. Relatedly, all monitoring efforts should be tightly linked to formal reporting channels that alert law enforcers and humanitarian responders, and to referral pathways so that attack survivors may seek help locally, when available.

It will be important to integrate protection activities more firmly with education activities, knowing that schools affiliated with western NGOs are particularly likely to be considered soft targets. By working more closely, the education and protection clusters could assure that alerts shared during monthly meetings are not only quickly acted upon by cluster members, but also communicated to legal bodies within the government, such as the Ministry of Justice, and documented within a centralized and easily accessible database. Such collaboration could also augment contingency planning and staff training for protection concerns.

The findings from this study suggest that such enhancement of the triggering capability of attack reports would have the secondary benefit of improving reporting by key actors over the long run, as they come to have more confidence in the value of their reports.

## Integration of local knowledge

This study joins a number of previous Columbia University studies in finding that local organizations and education institutions are natural, though often overlooked, sources of credible information on grave violations against children. This reaffirms the recommendations offered by GCPEA and the UN in their guidance note on Security Council Resolution 1998 cited at the beginning of this report that priority should be given to strengthening partnerships among civil society organizations, education administrators, and the international community (GCPEA, 2014; OSRSG-CAAC, 2014).

Improving legislation and response pathways for attack reports should encourage greater reporting by local actors; but key informants indicated that, in order to mobilize the full potential of local monitoring, government and international groups should take steps to integrate them into a streamlined surveillance system. This would involve regular outreach to education institutions and local NGOs, training in documenting, triangulating, and databasing, and the provision of security measures for those reporting. A standard definition of “attack on education” would be useful as it would create comparability across regions within a country, enabling rigorous analysis and response prioritization; but it is also important for local groups to identify—and receive support for—their own monitoring concerns, even if these do not violate international humanitarian laws.

## Data collection methods

A number of methods can, and should, be used to better monitor and understand attacks on education. This study drew on semi-structured interviews with key informants, which previous Columbia University studies have found to elicit reliable information on sensitive issues in a timely and cost-effective manner. This method has the advantage of requiring comparatively little technical training and few human resources, and thereby can be replicated readily across contexts. It also has an advantage on passive surveillance methods, such as drawing on reports from the MoE annually, in that key informant interviews encourage active participation in data

sharing and are thereby likely to yield a more comprehensive representation of the global total of incidents. Key informant interviews, however, cannot produce population-level estimates of attacks on education. To achieve these estimates, which would go a long way towards characterizing the true risk faced by students and educators, and tracking the trends of these attacks over time, the gold standard remains surveys using probability-based sampling methods. Group interviews were often similarly productive for recording attack incidents as individual interviews, though in some groups the members did not agree on event details. Group settings were also effective at shedding light on causes and consequences of attacks, and at generating strategies for improving surveillance. Based on their various strengths and weaknesses, all of these methods should factor into future attempts to enhance monitoring and reporting of attacks on education.

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