



#### Afghanistan

This Afghan youth's school was damaged in a bombing that killed the principal and wounded another school employee in Nangarhar province, east of Kabul, Afghanistan. © 2011 AP Rahmat Gul.

In 2010, according to the UN, there were 197 education-related incidents in Afghanistan, including direct attacks that killed or wounded students and staff or damaged school buildings as well as threats and forced school closures. Pro-government forces, including international military forces, occupied at least five schools in 2010.



#### Iraq

In Basra, Iraq in 2003, the University of Basra Central Library was looted and burned within days of the British troops entering Basra with no attempt by the authorities to protect it.



Cover

#### Central African Republic

This girl's school was partially destroyed in an attack by an armed group in the Central African Republic. © 2009 Sven Torfinn.

In parts of the country in 2010, armed groups occupied several schools and abducted and killed teachers, according to UN reports.

*"Schools must be safe places of learning and development for all children. They should be zones of peace. Those who attack schools and hospitals should know that they will be held accountable."*

—Special Representative of the Secretary-General Radhika Coomaraswamy,  
Secretary-General's 10th Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 2011

#### Our Vision

We seek to establish a world in which all who wish to learn, teach and research, at all levels and in all forms of education, and all those who support them, can do so in conditions of safety, security, dignity and equality, free from fear, consistent with the principles of mutual understanding, peace, tolerance and academic freedom.

#### Steering Committee

GCPEA was founded in 2010 and is governed by a small number of organizations that volunteered for the Steering Committee: Council for Assisting Refugee Academics, Education Above All, Education International, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, UNESCO and UNICEF.

#### Affiliated Organizations

Organizations at global, national and local levels that support the mission and goals of GCPEA are encouraged to join as affiliated organizations. For more information please visit our website: [www.protectingeducation.org](http://www.protectingeducation.org).



Global Coalition to **Protect  
Education from Attack**

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# Global Coalition to Protect Education From Attack







#### Thailand

An armed ranger in the schoolyard at Ban Klong Chang Elementary School, Pattani. A camp for 32 paramilitary rangers was established in the school compound.

© 2010 David Hogsholt/Reportage by Getty Images.

From 2004-2010, there were at least 327 arson attacks on government schools in southern Thailand, mostly by separatist insurgents. During 2010, Thai security forces occupied at least 79 schools in Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala provinces.

#### Education under Attack

Students and educators in situations of armed conflict face violence every day. Schools and universities should be safe havens, where they can work toward a better future. Instead, in many places they have become the targets of violent attacks for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, religious or criminal reasons. A UNESCO study found intentional attacks of these types by state security forces or non-state armed groups in at least 31 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East between 2007 and 2009.

#### Impact

Attacks on students, educators and education institutions have a devastating impact. The immediate effects can include death, injury and the destruction of educational facilities, together with disrupted access to education. In the long term, attacks can lead to diminished education quality, loss of teachers and academics, and weakened education systems. The quality and relevance of higher education can be degraded and research and innovation curtailed. Weakened education adversely affects a country's economic, political and social development and undermines efforts to reduce poverty and improve maternal and child health.

#### Attacks on Education Include:

- **Attacks on students and educators at education institutions, including abductions, recruitment into armed groups, forced labor, sexual violence, targeted killings, threats and harassment**
- **Attacks on students and educators outside of education facilities, targeting them specifically because of their status**
- **Attacks on other education personnel, such as administrators and maintenance workers and education aid workers**
- **Attacks on pro-education activists, including teacher unions or any teaching group, because of their activism**
- **Destruction, looting and occupation of education facilities**
- **Damage and destruction of learning materials, student files and administrative records**

#### India

A schoolgirl in Bihar state in the rubble of a classroom in a school bombed by Maoist guerrillas active in the area.

© 2010 Moises Saman /Magnum. Maoists have blown up more than 300 school buildings in India since 2006. During 2010, state security forces were long-term occupiers of at least 30 schools in Bihar state, 31 in Chhattisgarh state, 20 in Jharkhand state and 16 in Tripura state.



#### Our Mission

To catalyse enhanced prevention of attacks on education, effective response to attacks, improved knowledge and understanding, better monitoring and reporting, stronger international norms and standards and increased accountability.

#### Our Goals

- To highlight the incidence and impact of attacks on education in conflict-affected and fragile situations among key actors, and cultivate public support for education in safe and secure environments
- To promote the strengthening of existing monitoring and reporting systems as well as the creation of new systems where needed
- To promote effective, coherent, timely and evidence-based programmatic measures, including prevention and response
- To encourage adherence to existing international law protecting education and the strengthening of international norms and standards as needed
- To fight impunity for attacks on education by promoting and supporting a range of accountability measures

#### Colombia

A billboard on a school in Toribio, Cauca, warns armed persons to stay away from the school property.

© 2009 Stephen Ferry.

Teachers, particularly union members, have been targeted for assassinations and threats. In 2010, at least 32 teachers were killed, according to the Colombian government's human rights body, Observatory for Human Rights (Observatorio Derechos Humanos).

The UN has expressed serious concerns over the occupation of schools by state security forces and armed groups.



#### What International Law Is Violated by Attacks on Education?

- **International humanitarian law and international criminal law.** Attacks on education may violate international humanitarian and criminal law and constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. The use of education institutions by state security forces and other armed groups may place students and educators at risk of attack.
- **The right to education.** During war or peacetime, attacks on students, educators and education institutions violate the right to education enshrined in key international human rights treaties. The use of education institutions by state security forces and other armed groups may displace students and keep them from realizing their right to education.
- **Other human rights violations.** Attacks on education may also violate other human rights enshrined in international treaties, including the rights to life, freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, freedom of expression and freedom of association.

#### What Are Key GCPEA Recommendations for Protecting Education from Attack?

- **Monitor attacks on education.** States, local organizations and relevant international agencies should rigorously monitor attacks on education and use that data to inform responses.
- **Put in place preventive measures and rapid response systems.** Relevant ministries and education actors should put in place preventive measures and rapid response systems. They should also adopt and implement best practices to protect education from attack.
- **Criminalize attacks on education.** States should ensure that their domestic law criminalizes all elements of attacks on education in line with international humanitarian and human rights law.
- **Restrict use of education institutions by state armed forces and other armed groups.** Leaders of governments and non-state armed groups should issue clear military orders against using education institutions for military purposes. States should institute policies, formalized in military and law enforcement manuals, training and rules of engagement, which prohibit or minimize the use of education institutions for military or law enforcement purposes.
- **Investigate and prosecute.** Domestic, regional and international tribunals should consider violations that constitute attacks against education in relevant investigations, and pursue and prosecute serious cases.