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| Template: Country Advocacy Plan Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict |

*This template can assist organizations that are active in the same country coordinate messages and activities. It may also serve as a basis to keep track and report on updates and progress.*

**Purpose of advocacy:**

* Phase 1 (now until June 2015): encourage states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration in Oslo on June 1st and, for supportive states, to start reviewing existing domestic framework to identify gaps relating to the protection of schools from military use ahead of the Oslo conference. For non-supportive states: encourage nonetheless other concrete measures to protect schools and universities from military use
* Phase 2 (post June 2015): monitor how states who endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration are upholding their commitments; encourage states that haven’t endorsed the Declaration yet to do so. For non-supportive states: encourage nonetheless other concrete measures to protect schools and universities from military use.

**Key messages (to be adapted and tailored to context):**

* Schools provide critical protective benefits[[1]](#footnote-1) for students during crises, and can facilitate eventual solutions[[2]](#footnote-2) for those who are displaced. Military use of schools prevents students from accessing these benefits.
* As a general rule, education facilities are recognized as civilian objects and are protected under international humanitarian law. Using schools for military purposes can convert them into military objects and can turn them into a target for attack. This creates safety risks for students and education personnel and compromises access to education.
* The military use of schools and universities during armed conflict, even if partial, punctual or confined to a particular area, creates a sense that places of education are not safe places anywhere in the context of armed conflict.
* Even where states are not the main perpetrators of this problem, it is nonetheless important that they commit to these principles. State endorsement and implementation of the Guidelines, will also contribute to establishing best practices, including among armed groups, and thereby enhance the protection of schools.
* Where available, use evidence to demonstrate the scale and impact of the problem locally.

**Advocacy Targets for Phase 1 Advocacy (adapt as needed):**

* National Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
  + Purpose: share information about Guidelines and the endorsement process, encourage active participation in consultations on the Safe Schools Declaration through their Permanent Mission in Geneva, encourage mobilization of inter-ministerial support for endorsement of Declaration and implementation of the Guidelines, in particular preliminary review of existing domestic framework to identify gaps relating to the protection of schools from military use.
* National Ministry of Defense:
  + Purpose: share information about Guidelines, encourage active participation in inter-ministerial mobilization for endorsement of Declaration and implementation of the Guidelines, encourage preliminary review of existing domestic framework to identify gaps relating to the protection of schools from military use.
* National Ministry of Education (insert relevant):
  + Purpose: share information about Guidelines, encourage active participation in inter-ministerial mobilization for endorsement of Declaration and implementation of the Guidelines.
* Local authorities (insert relevant):
  + Purpose: share information about Guidelines, encourage them to do internal advocacy with their national level counterparts to encourage endorsement of Declaration and implementation of the Guidelines.
* Education cluster, child-protection WG, or other:
  + Purpose: mobilize a larger network of relevant actors to do advocacy, encourage use of the Guidelines in dialogues with armed actors regarding prevention of and response to military use of schools.
* Local school principals, teachers unions, PTAs, or other:
  + Purpose: inform and mobilize to do advocacy for the implementation of the Guidelines, empower them to take concrete action to protect their schools from military use.

**Division of Labor and updates:**

[organization name] will:

Update:

[organization name] will:

Update:

[organization name] will:

Update:

**Communication and Information Sharing:**

* [organization(s)] will meet [insert periodicity] to discuss progress with advocacy, and adapt plan as needed. Next meeting will be held on xx.xx.15

***\*\*\*Note: Please share this form with Geneva/your organization’s focal point after each meeting.***

1. Protective benefits can include: Schools provide a link to services, can act as a safe space away from potential dangers such as recruitment to armed groups or sexual exploitation, can assist in psycho-social recovery and a return to normalcy, and can educate children about the risks they may encounter in displacement. For girls, education can lead to empowerment, and support them to have increased autonomy in making their own choices. For boys, schools can build up socially responsible behaviors and instill more inclusive attitudes and choices. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Schools provide skills training that will make it easier for students to eventually find a job either in their areas of origin, through integrating locally, or by resettling in a third country. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)