

Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict

Global Coalition to
Protect Education from Attack



THE GUIDELINES PROCESS

The development of these guidelines was initiated by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA). GCPEA is a unique inter-agency coalition formed in 2010 to address targeted attacks on students, teachers, schools, and other education institutions during armed conflict. It is led by a steering committee comprised of eight international organisations: Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA), Human Rights Watch, Institute of International Education/IIE Scholar Rescue Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, Save the Children, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Additional members of the Coalition involved in the development of these guidelines include the Norwegian Refugee Council, Scholars at Risk, Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund), and War Child Holland.

In May 2012, GCPEA organised an expert consultation hosted by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Attendees included representatives from the armed forces of the Philippines and Qatar; the ministries of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, the Philippines, and Switzerland; the inter-governmental organisations UNICEF and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the non-governmental organisations Education Above All, Geneva Call, Human Rights Watch, and the International Committee of the Red Cross; and academics. GCPEA presented research concerning the prevalence, scale, and consequences of the use of schools and universities by parties to armed conflict, as well as examples of good practice to address such use.

In response to encouragement from attendees at the May 2012 consultation, a second, larger, expert conference was held in November 2012, at Château de Lucens, in the canton of Vaud, in Switzerland. Participants included representatives from the armed forces of Finland and Qatar; the Canadian Department of National Defence; the ministries of education in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Nepal; the ministries of foreign affairs in Argentina, Germany, Norway, and Switzerland; the Office of the President of the Philippines; the inter-governmental organisations the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict, UNICEF, and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations; and the non-governmental organisations Amnesty International, Education Above All, Geneva Call, Human Rights Watch, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Education Cluster, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Participants reviewed and provided significant feedback and suggestions on an initial draft of the guidelines to protect schools and universities from use by parties to armed conflict. This initial draft was prepared by Dr. Steven Haines, professor of public international law at the University of Greenwich, who is a former senior officer in the British Armed Forces, and former chair of the editorial board of the United Kingdom's Joint Service Manual on the Law of Armed Conflict (2004).

Dr. Haines incorporated revisions to the draft guidelines proposed by participants at the Lucens Conference, and at the suggestion of participants, a drafting committee was formed to review the revisions. Following the review and editing process by the committee, the revised draft guidelines were shared with all participants at the Lucens conference, who were again invited to provide additional input. Additional consultations were held during this revision process with representatives from the ministries of defence, education, and foreign affairs of the Netherlands; the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights; and Save the Children.

The resulting *Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* were released in conjunction with a presentation of the *Draft Guidelines* to a meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on June 4, 2013.

Following the public release of the *Draft Guidelines*, representatives from the member organisations within GCPEA held further meetings and consultations with representatives from the armed forces and/or the ministries of defence, education, and/or foreign affairs of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay. In addition, representatives from the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were also consulted. As of November 1, 2014, 29 countries had publicly stated their support for the process of developing and finalizing the guidelines (see <http://protectingeducation.org/guidelines/support>). Additional feedback and comments were provided following many of these meetings, which resulted in further refinement of the *Guidelines*.

This finalized version of the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* was released publicly on December 16, 2014, at an event held at the Palais de Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland.

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