

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While advancements in protecting education from attack are notable, GCPEA recognizes that much work remains to be done to protect students, educators, and personnel as well as educational institutions at all levels from attack. The following are GCPEA's key recommendations:

- **States should endorse, implement and support the Safe Schools Declaration to ensure that all students and educators can learn and teach in safety.**
- **Armed forces and armed groups should refrain from using schools and universities for military purposes, including by implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.**
- **States and other monitoring bodies should strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on education, including disaggregating data by type of attack on education, sex, age, location, person or group responsible, number of days the institution was closed, and type of institution to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education.**
- **States and international justice institutions should systematically investigate attacks on education and fairly prosecute those responsible.**
- **States and other institutions should provide nondiscriminatory assistance for all survivors of attacks on education, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or other attributes, while taking into account their distinct needs and experiences based on gender and potential vulnerabilities such as disability and forced displacement.**
- **Education providers should ensure that education promotes peace and provides physical and psychosocial protection for students, including by addressing gender-based stereotypes and barriers that can trigger, exacerbate, and result from attacks on education.**
- **Where feasible, states should maintain safe access to education during armed conflict, including by working with school and university communities and all other relevant stakeholders to develop strategies to reduce the risk of attacks and comprehensive safety and security plans in the event of these attacks.**

## Recommendations to national governments, including ministries of education, higher education, and defense, as well as state security forces:

### *International Commitments*

- 1 Endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and apply its commitments to all levels of education.
- 2 Encourage non-endorsing states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.
- 3 Support GCPEA's Principles of State Responsibility to Protect Higher Education from Attack.
- 4 Encourage regional and international bodies to incorporate the commitments of the Safe Schools Declaration into operational frameworks and rules of engagement.
- 5 Endorse other international commitments that support the protection of education in situations of armed conflict and insecurity, such as the Paris Principles and the Vancouver Principles.
- 6 Endorse and support the Safe to Learn Call to Action which aims to end violence at and around schools.
- 7 State armed forces, parastatal armed forces, and other state actors, including law enforcement should refrain from using schools and universities for military purposes, and from attacking buildings dedicated to education—such as schools and universities—that do not constitute military objectives. Integrate the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into domestic policy, operational frameworks, and training manuals, as far as is possible and appropriate.
- 8 Never target students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities. Never recruit or use children or commit sexual violence. Abide by the laws of war.
- 9 Do not use excessive force or unnecessary lethal force on school and university students and personnel at protests that are either education-related or occur on campus.
- 10 Respect academic freedom and refrain from using physical violence or threats of physical violence against education personnel and students in response to their academic work or status as a teacher, student, or education staff.
- 11 Engage gender and child protection specialists to review military policies and doctrines and hold regular trainings on implementing protections for education that account for the specific needs of male and female students and education personnel.
- 12 Strengthen efforts to recruit women military and law enforcement officers. If officers are stationed near or at schools, ensure gender parity among them, to ensure gender-responsive approaches to girls' and women's needs and concerns.

### *Monitoring and Reporting on Attacks on Education*

- 13 Strengthen and systematize existing efforts to monitor and report on attacks on education and military use of schools, including between the UN, education cluster, ministries of education, and civil society organizations. Promote enhanced information sharing across actors monitoring and reporting on attacks on education, including with GCPEA where possible, and consistency in definitions of attacks on education and standards related to monitoring and reporting on these attacks.
- 14 Promote more consistent disaggregation of data related to attacks on education, including disaggregation by type of attack, location, institution type, and whether the attack was targeted as well as information on the sex and age of victims and survivors of such attacks. For entities documenting recruitment and use or sexual violence against children in conflict, ensure that the nexus between those violations and education is documented, including by documenting whether these violations occurred at or on the way to schools or universities, as appropriate.

- 15 Work with legal, medical, and psychosocial service providers to establish referral mechanisms that allow survivors of attacks on education to consent to sharing anonymized information with monitoring systems.
- 16 Support the creation of a mechanism for reporting attacks on higher education, through either the government, a UN body, or a civil society organization. In the absence of a specialized mechanism, strengthen and systematize procedures for reporting attacks on higher education; for example, ensure attacks are reported to the relevant UN or regional rapporteurs or human rights bodies.
- 17 Ensure the Education Management Information System (EMIS), or other national data repositories, includes a category for attacks on education, for all levels of education.
- 18 Share data concerning attacks on education with GCPEA, where appropriate.

### **Assistance for Survivors**

- 19 Provide nondiscriminatory and gender-responsive legal, medical, and psychosocial assistance to survivors of attacks on education, including sexual and reproductive health services, and engage in outreach to ensure that survivors have access to such services.
- 20 Establish, or contribute to the establishment of, child-friendly and gender-specific safe spaces, such as formal or informal community centers or women's centers, for survivors of attacks on education where they can receive legal, medical, and psychosocial information and services; learn how to continue their education during conflict; and participate in developing and contributing to response and protection measures.

### **Legal Mechanisms and Accountability**

- 21 Reform or promulgate domestic laws and policies in accordance with international law to enable the effective, systematic, and transparent investigation and prosecution of allegations of attacks on educational facilities, students, and teachers, including gender-based attacks.
- 22 Effectively, impartially and transparently investigate alleged violations of applicable national and international law, appropriately prosecute perpetrators—from both state forces and non-state armed groups, and ensure that cases of attacks on educational facilities, students, and teachers are brought to existing national courts or establish ad hoc mechanisms to address such cases.
- 23 Support and cooperate with criminal accountability measures at the state level or, where necessary, through international channels, such as the International Criminal Court, and support the establishment of internationalized or hybrid courts as needed.
- 24 Pursue broad accountability by mandating that transitional justice mechanisms, such as domestic special courts or truth commissions, explicitly recognize attacks on education and redress survivors of such attacks, including through dedicated reparations efforts and programs for these survivors.
- 25 Support national consultations to assess the needs and desires of affected communities and individuals, particularly with respect to justice and reparations for attacks on education and consequent gender-based harms.

### **Planning for and Mitigating the Impact of Attacks on Education**

- 26 Ensure that education continues during armed conflict by collaborating with local civil society organizations and community members to develop early warning systems, contingency plans, comprehensive safety and security plans, and other initiatives to prevent and mitigate the impact of attacks on education at the school and university levels and which respond to the specific needs and experiences of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disabled persons, minorities, internally displaced persons, and refugees.

- 27 Develop educational policies and practices in accordance with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards for Education, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, among other international standards on education in emergencies and gender-based violence in emergencies.
- 28 Collaborate with international agencies and civil society organizations to provide alternative education pathways to mitigate the interruption of learning caused by attacks on education.
- 29 Facilitate reintegration of students whose education was interrupted by attacks on education; for example, encourage administrators to accept various forms of school records or attestations; enroll students displaced by conflict.
- 30 Consult affected and at-risk populations, including women and girls, about their needs, risks, and envisioned protections, particularly with respect to their education, and incorporate their input into service provision and protection plans.
- 31 Engage and educate communities on accepting, rather than stigmatizing, survivors of sexual violence or child forced recruitment, as well as the importance of educating women and girls and keeping them in school or university.
- 32 Ensure that schools remain politically neutral spaces. In contexts of insecurity and conflict, conduct risk assessments to determine whether it is safe to use schools as polling centers and refrain from using them as such if necessary.

## **Recommendations to non-state armed groups:**

### **International Commitments**

- 1 Sign and implement Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict, including as it relates to educational spaces.
- 2 Sign and implement the Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment to prohibit sexual violence and gender discrimination, including in relation to attacks on education and those targeting women and girls.
- 3 Engage in dialogue with the United Nations toward an Action Plan with the UN SRSG CAAC to stop attacks on education, including military use of schools, and other grave violations such as recruitment of children and sexual violence.

### **Military Operations**

- 4 Refrain from using schools and universities for military purposes, and do not attack buildings dedicated to education—such as schools and universities—that do not constitute military objectives. Integrate principles from the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into operational frameworks, trainings, and rules of engagement, as far as is possible and appropriate.
- 5 Never target students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities. Never recruit or use children or commit sexual violence. Abide by the laws of war.
- 6 Engage gender and child protection specialists to review military policies and doctrines and hold regular trainings on implementing protections for education that account for the specific needs of male and female students and education personnel.

## Recommendations to UN and international agencies:

### International Commitments

- 1 Advocate for states that have not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration to do so.
- 2 Support states in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration at all levels of education.
- 3 Encourage states to support GCPEA's *Principles of State Responsibility to Protect Higher Education from Attack*.
- 4 Encourage regional and international armed forces to incorporate the commitments of the Safe Schools Declaration into operational frameworks and rules of engagement.
- 5 List state and non-state parties who perpetrate attacks on schools in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict and engage with parties to conflict to commit to Action Plans to end and prevent attacks on education.

### Operations by International Peacekeeping Forces

- 6 Abide by the laws of war and never target students or teachers who are not taking direct part in hostilities. Never attack buildings dedicated to education—such as schools and universities—that do not constitute military objectives.
- 7 Refrain from using schools and universities for military purposes, in keeping with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' 2017 child protection policy and the UN *Infantry Battalion Manual, and integrate the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into operations, as far as is possible and appropriate.
- 8 Engage gender specialists to review security force policies and doctrines—for both state and UN forces—and hold regular trainings on good practices to protect against attacks on education that account for specific experiences, such as conflict-related sexual violence, which appears to disproportionately affect women and girls.
- 9 Ensure that peacekeeping missions have dedicated Child Protection Advisers who support the integration of child protection standards into peace and political processes.
- 10 Strengthen efforts to recruit women officers into peacekeeping missions and, if officers are stationed near or at schools, ensure gender parity among them, to ensure gender-responsive approaches to girls' and women's needs and concerns.

### Monitoring and Reporting

- 11 Strengthen and systematize existing efforts to monitor and report on attacks on education and military use of schools, including between the UN, education cluster, ministries of education, and civil society organizations. Promote enhanced information sharing across actors monitoring and reporting on attacks on education, including with GCPEA where possible, and consistency in definitions of attacks on education and standards related to monitoring and reporting on these attacks.
- 12 Promote more consistent disaggregation of data related to attacks on education, including disaggregation by type of attack, location, institution type, and whether the attack was targeted as well as information on the sex and age of victims and survivors of such attacks. For entities documenting recruitment and use or sexual violence against children in conflict, ensure that the nexus between those violations and education is documented, including by documenting whether these violations occurred at or on the way to schools or universities, as appropriate.

- 13 Support the advancement of mechanisms reporting on attacks on education by including reporting on higher education attacks, through either a UN body, the government, or a civil society organization. In the absence of a specialized mechanism, strengthen and systematize procedures for reporting attacks on higher education; for example, ensure attacks are reported to the relevant UN or regional rapporteurs or human rights bodies.
- 14 Support national governments and civil society organizations to work with legal, medical, and psychosocial service providers to establish referral mechanisms that allow survivors of attacks on education to consent to sharing anonymized information with monitoring systems.
- 15 Support governments as they ensure Education Management Information System (EMIS), or other national data repositories, include a category on attacks on education, for all levels of education.
- 16 Share data concerning attacks on education with GCPEA, where appropriate.

### Assistance for Survivors

- 17 Provide nondiscriminatory, gender-responsive legal, medical and psychosocial assistance to survivors of attacks on education, including sexual and reproductive health services, and engage in outreach to ensure that survivors have access to such services. Support local civil society organizations to do the same.
- 18 Establish, or contribute to the establishment of, child-friendly and gender-specific safe spaces, such as formal or informal community centers or women's centers, for survivors of attacks on education where they can receive legal, medical, and psychosocial information and services; learn how to continue their education during conflict; and participate in developing and contributing to response and protection measures. Support local civil society organizations to do the same.

### Legal Mechanisms and Accountability

- 19 Support criminal accountability measures at the state level or, where necessary, escalate to international mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), and support the establishment of internationalized or hybrid courts as needed.
- 20 Request that existing and future human rights and accountability mechanisms, including commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions, and investigations more systematically consider attacks on education.
- 21 Highlight attacks on education through UN human rights treaty bodies (including the CRC, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), and CEDAW; UN country and thematic special procedures of the HRC, such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women; and relevant special representatives, such as for children and armed conflict and on sexual violence in conflict), identify such violations as attacks on education, and recommend that UN Member States investigate, prosecute, and otherwise hold accountable the perpetrators of attacks on education, relative to their mandate.
- 22 Support broad accountability through transitional justice mechanisms, such as domestic special courts or truth commissions, that explicitly recognize attacks on education and redress survivors of such attacks, including through dedicated reparations efforts and programs for these survivors.
- 23 Support national consultations to assess the needs and desires of affected communities and individuals, particularly with respect to justice and reparations for attacks on education and consequent gender-based harms.

### ***Planning for and Mitigating the Impact of Attacks on Education***

- 24 Support ministries of education and higher education in preventing, mitigating, and responding to attacks on education by collaborating with local civil society and community members to develop early warning systems, contingency plans, comprehensive safety and security plans, and other initiatives to prevent and mitigate the impact of attacks on education at the school and university levels, which will respond to the specific needs and experiences of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disabled persons, minorities, internally displaced persons, and refugees.
- 25 Support educational policies and practices in accordance with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, IASC's Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, among other international standards on education in emergencies and gender-based violence in emergencies.
- 26 Consult affected and at-risk populations, including women and girls, about their needs, risks, and envisioned protections, particularly with respect to their education, and incorporate their inputs into service provision and protection plans.
- 27 Engage and educate communities on accepting, rather than stigmatizing, survivors of sexual violence or child forced recruitment, as well as the importance of educating women and girls and keeping them in school or university.

## **Recommendations to local civil society, including school and university communities:**

### ***International Commitments***

- 1 Advocate for states that have not yet endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration to do so.
- 2 Support states in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration at all levels of education. If operating in an endorsing country, monitor implementation, remind the government of the commitments that come with endorsing, and publicize violations, where possible and appropriate.
- 3 Advocate for state authorities to demonstrate a commitment to GCPEA's Principles of State Responsibility to Protect Higher Education from Attack, including by advocating for and assisting in the review of relevant national policies and laws.

### ***Monitoring and Reporting***

- 4 Strengthen and systematize existing efforts to monitor and report on attacks on education and military use of schools, including between the UN, education cluster, ministries of education, and civil society organizations. Promote enhanced information sharing across actors monitoring and reporting on attacks on education, including with GCPEA where possible, and consistency in definitions of attacks on education and standards related to monitoring and reporting on these attacks.
- 5 Promote more consistent disaggregation of data related to attacks on education, including disaggregation by type of attack, location, institution type, and whether the attack was targeted as well as information on the sex and age of victims and survivors of such attacks. For entities documenting recruitment and use or sexual violence against children in conflict, ensure that the nexus between those violations and education is documented, including by documenting whether these violations occurred at or on the way to schools or universities, as appropriate.

- 6 In the absence of a specialized mechanism, strengthen and systematize procedures for reporting attacks on higher education; for example, ensure attacks are reported to the relevant UN or regional rapporteurs or human rights bodies.
- 7 Work with legal, medical, and psychosocial service providers to establish referral mechanisms that allow survivors of attacks on education to consent to sharing anonymized information with monitoring systems.
- 8 Support governments as they ensure Education Management Information System (EMIS), or other national data repositories, include a category on attacks on education, for all levels of education.
- 9 Share data concerning attacks on education with GCPEA, where appropriate.

### ***Assistance for Survivors***

- 10 Provide nondiscriminatory and gender-responsive legal, medical, and psychosocial assistance to survivors of attacks on education, including sexual and reproductive health services, and engage in outreach to ensure that survivors have access to such services.
- 11 Establish, or contribute to the establishment of, child-friendly and gender-specific safe spaces, such as formal or informal community centers or women's centers, for survivors of attacks on education where they can receive legal, medical, and psychosocial information and services; learn how to continue their education during conflict; and participate in developing and contributing to response and protection measures.

### ***Legal Mechanisms and Accountability***

- 12 Support criminal accountability by providing documentation on attacks on education to criminal investigators and prosecutors with the consent of survivors and in accordance with established standards whereby no specific details are made public that could breach the dignity, confidentiality, safety, and security of the survivor, education facility, and community.
- 13 Hold national consultations to assess the needs and desires of affected communities and individuals, particularly with respect to justice and reparations for attacks on education and consequent gender-based harms.
- 14 Support broad accountability through transitional justice mechanisms, such as domestic special courts or truth commissions, that explicitly recognize attacks on education and redress survivors of such attacks, including through dedicated reparations efforts and programs for these survivors.
- 15 Highlight attacks on education through UN human rights treaty bodies (including the CRC, CESCR, and CEDAW; UN country and thematic special procedures of the HRC, such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education and the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women; and relevant special representatives, such as for children and armed conflict and on sexual violence in conflict), identify such violations as attacks on education, and recommend that UN Member States investigate, prosecute, and otherwise hold accountable the perpetrators of attacks on education, relative to their mandate.

### ***Planning for and Mitigating the Impact of Attacks on Education***

- 16 Support the continuation of education during armed conflict and the development of risk-reduction strategies, comprehensive safety and security plans, and other initiatives to prevent and mitigate the impact of attacks on education at the school and university levels that respond to the specific needs and experiences of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disabled persons, minorities, internally displaced persons, and refugees.

- 17 Support educational policies and practices in accordance with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, IASC's Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, among other international standards on education in emergencies and gender-based violence in emergencies.
- 18 Consult affected and at-risk populations, including women and girls, about their needs, risks, and envisioned protections, particularly with respect to their education, and incorporate their input into service provision and protection plans.
- 19 Engage and educate communities on accepting, rather than stigmatizing, survivors of sexual violence or child forced recruitment, as well as the importance of educating women and girls and keeping them in school or university.
- 20 Provide alternative education pathways to mitigate the interruption of learning caused by attacks on education.

## Recommendations for donors:

### *International Commitments*

- 1 Support the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration at all levels of education.
- 2 Support GCPEA's Principles of State Responsibility to Protect Higher Education from Attack.
- 3 Assist international agencies and civil society organizations as they advocate for states to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.

### *Monitoring and Reporting*

- 4 Provide funding and technical support to improve upon monitoring and reporting mechanisms for attacks on higher education, including collaborative efforts between the UN-led MRM, Education Cluster, ministries of education, and civil society organizations.
- 5 Support efforts to establish, strengthen, and systematize monitoring and reporting partnerships between the UN-led MRM, Education Cluster, ministries of education, and civil society organizations through funding, capacity building, or other means.

### *Assistance for Survivors*

- 6 Provide financial support to international agencies, governments, and civil society organizations working to ensure that survivors of attacks on education can access legal, medical, and psychosocial assistance, as well as child-friendly and gender-specific safe spaces.
- 7 Provide financial assistance to international agencies, governments, and civil society organizations for the establishment of child-friendly and gender-specific safe spaces, such as formal or informal community centers or women's centers, where survivors of attacks on education can receive legal, medical, and psychosocial information and services; learn how to continue their education during conflict; and participate in developing and contributing to response and protection measures.

### *Legal Mechanisms and Accountability*

- 8 Provide financial or expert support to international agencies, governments, and civil society organizations for investigations of alleged violations of applicable national and international law.

## *Planning for and Mitigating the Impact of Attacks on Education*

- 9 Provide financial support for the continuation of education during armed conflict and the development of risk-reduction strategies, comprehensive safety and security plans, and other initiatives to prevent and mitigate the impact of attacks on education at the school and university levels, and which will respond to the specific needs and experiences of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disabled persons, minorities, internally displaced persons, and refugees.
- 10 Provide financial support for educational policies and practices in accordance with the INEE Minimum Standards for Education, IASC's Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, and UNFPA's Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, among other international standards on education in emergencies and gender-based violence in emergencies.
- 11 Consult affected and at-risk populations, including women and girls, about their needs, risks, and envisioned protections, particularly with respect to their education, and incorporate their input into grant-making and funding priorities.
- 12 Support pooled funds for education in conflict-affected countries including Education Cannot Wait.
- 13 Provide funding and expertise to international agencies, governments, and civil society organizations to provide alternative education pathways to mitigate the interruption of learning caused by attacks on education.