

## SUDAN

***Sporadic violence continued to impact education in Sudan during the 2020-2021 reporting period. GCPEA identified at least ten reports of both attacks on schools and the military use of schools, consistent with the previous reporting period.***

### **Context**

In 2020, Sudan began a transition to democratic rule following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019.<sup>1535</sup> In October 2020, the transitional government signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the Sudan Revolutionary Front,<sup>1536</sup> an alliance of armed political groups, although the Sudan Liberation Army led by Abdul Wahid Al-Nur (SLA-AW) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz El Hilu withheld from signing the agreement.<sup>1537</sup> Both armed groups maintained soldiers and weapons and were opposed to the dominance of the military in the transitional government.<sup>1538</sup> SPLM-N continued to control areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, although United Nations humanitarian agencies were able to enter them for the first time in a decade.<sup>1539</sup> Sporadic violence continued in several areas despite the peace agreement, such as in Darfur where inter-communal fighting killed at least 250 people in January 2021, including three humanitarian workers and at least ten children,<sup>1540</sup> and forced at least 100,000 civilians to flee from internally displaced person camps.<sup>1541</sup>

On October 25, 2021, the military led a coup to remove Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, terminating the transitional government and putting the 2020 peace agreement at risk, according to the UN and media reports.<sup>1542</sup> Human Rights Watch reported that protests broke out across the country, which lasted until the end of the reporting period.<sup>1543</sup>

Protests continued during the reporting period, many related to the cost of living in 2020 and 2021, and then related to the coup.<sup>1544</sup> Human Rights Watch reported that the Central Reserve Police, the Rapid Support Forces, and the Sudan Armed Forces used excessive and lethal force against protesters in October 2020 in eastern Sudan, killing seven and injuring around 25,<sup>1545</sup> and again in May 2021, killing two and injuring over 30, when protesters were commemorating victims of past repression.<sup>1546</sup> In late 2021, Sudanese security forces used teargas and grenades against protesters in Khartoum and other cities including Omdurman and Bahri, during several months of nationwide anti-coup protests in which protesters were killed.<sup>1547</sup>

Several humanitarian crises affected children and their access to education during the reporting period, including flooding and food insecurity. According to the Sudan Education Cluster, severe flooding damaged 559 schools and another 63 were used by flood-affected displaced persons as shelter, in mid-2020.<sup>1548</sup> In 2021, the UN reported that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased to 13.4 million, representing over a quarter of the population;<sup>1549</sup> 7.4 million of those in need were children.<sup>1550</sup> In December 2021, the UN reported more than 3 million internally displaced persons in Sudan.<sup>1551</sup>

The government closed schools in March 2020 to prevent the spread of Covid-19, affecting 8.1 million students; in addition, 3.6 million were out of school before the pandemic.<sup>1552</sup> School reopenings began in January 2021 but were delayed in some states due to insecurity.<sup>1553</sup> At least seven Sudanese universities suspended classes after October 2021 citing safety concerns.<sup>1554</sup>

### **Attacks on schools**

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA collected at least ten reports of attacks on schools. In comparison, the UN verified six attacks on schools in 2019 and 14 attacks in 2018.<sup>1555</sup>

In 2020, the UN verified four attacks on schools in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei, and six in Darfur; in most cases, the perpetrator was unknown.<sup>1556</sup>

In March 2021, the UN reported that 20 schools had been recently damaged or destroyed in West Darfur,<sup>1557</sup> although it was not clear whether the destruction was conflict-related and so the number was not included in the total count of attacks on schools for this reporting period.

Separate from attacks on schools, 26 schools were used as shelters by persons displaced due to communal conflicts

in West Darfur in January 2021.<sup>1558</sup> The schools had chairs, teachers' office furniture, doors, and windows damaged, as well as school meals and learning materials looted. Some schools were damaged beyond repair.<sup>1559</sup>

### **Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel**

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified approximately six reports of attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel, all in 2021. After the decline in reports in 2020, the number of reported attacks on school students and staff in 2021 returned to a similar level as in *Education under Attack 2020*, which included six attacks in 2019 and three in 2018. In both reporting periods, most of the attacks were related to protest repression by police or paramilitary forces.<sup>1560</sup>

In 2021, GCPEA collected approximately six reports of attacks on school students and education personnel from news sources.<sup>1561</sup> For example:

- Around February 23, 2021, police used teargas to disperse demonstrators, including teachers and disabled persons, in Kassala city, Kassala state. Demonstrators were protesting that schools for the disabled had still not reopened after Covid-19 closures, even though other schools had opened two months earlier, as reported by local media outlet *Radio Dabanga*.<sup>1562</sup>
- After the military coup on October 25, 2021, government officials reportedly detained directors from the Education Ministry, in addition to directors from the Ministries of Health and Social Development, Finance, and Urban Planning, in Ed Daein city, East Darfur state.<sup>1563</sup>
- On November 7, 2021, teacher committees reportedly protested outside the Ministry of Education in Khartoum city and state, demanding the reinstatement of former education officials, who were removed after the coup. Local media outlet *Radio Dabanga* reported that military forces used teargas against protesters and detained at least 36.<sup>1564</sup>
- On November 11, 2021, government authorities detained 14 teachers affiliated with the South Darfur Teachers' Committee and the Education Ministry, including several directors of secondary schools, according to local media outlet *Radio Dabanga*.<sup>1565</sup>

### **Military use of schools and universities**

GCPEA identified at least 11 incidents of military use of schools during the reporting period. This number represents a slight increase compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA identified four and two reports of military use in 2019 and 2018, respectively.<sup>1566</sup>

In 2020, the UN verified eight instances of military use of schools by government security forces, seven of which occurred in Darfur.<sup>1567</sup>

On June 14, 2020, Human Rights Watch and local media reported that Sudan's Rapid Support Forces occupied a girls' school to use it as a training base. The school was closed at the time to limit the spread of Covid-19. The soldiers reportedly continued to use the school after the new term began on July 2, 2020, preventing students from resuming classes.<sup>1568</sup>

In 2021, GCPEA received reports of three schools occupied by Rapid Support Forces which were later vacated.<sup>1569</sup>

### **Attacks on Higher Education**

During the 2020-2021 reporting period, GCPEA identified three reports of attacks on higher education, all in 2021 and all attacks on students and personnel rather than higher education facilities. This is a reduction in reported attacks as compared to *Education under Attack 2020*, which included 15 and 11 reported attacks on higher education in 2019 and 2018, respectively.<sup>1570</sup>

In 2021, GCPEA identified three attacks on higher education students and academics:

- On August 31, 2021, Central Darfur state security forces reportedly shot live ammunition at protesting students from the University of Zalingei in Zalingei town, Central Darfur state. According to Scholars at Risk and interna-

tional media outlet *University World News*, the students demonstrated against the government's refusal to turn over a former UN peacekeeping force building to the University to use as a dorm. The forces allegedly killed one student and injured four others.<sup>1571</sup>

- On October 7, 2021, students protested over the lack of electricity and water at the University of Khartoum, in Khartoum city and state. Police allegedly fired teargas into the crowd. No fatalities were reported.<sup>1572</sup>
- On October 26, 2021, military forces allegedly stormed female dormitories at Khartoum University in Khartoum city and state. The forces allegedly beat the students and expelled them from the dorms.<sup>1573</sup>

<sup>1535</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2021* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2021), Sudan chapter.

<sup>1536</sup> The World Bank, "Sudan - Country Overview," March 21, 2021.

<sup>1537</sup> Al, *Report 2020/2021: The state of the world's human rights*, (London, UK: Amnesty International, 2021), p. 340. "Safeguarding Sudan's precarious peace agreement," Institute for Security Studies news release, October 1, 2020.

<sup>1538</sup> "Briefing No. 168 / Africa - The Rebels Come to Khartoum: How to Implement Sudan's New Peace Agreement," International Crisis Group, February 23, 2021.

<sup>1539</sup> OCHA, "Situation Report - Sudan - UN agencies in Sudan reach conflict-affected communities in non-government-controlled areas for first time in a decade," June 14, 2021.

<sup>1540</sup> "Sudan: 250 killed, over 100,000 displaced as violence surges in Darfur," UN News, January 22, 2021.

<sup>1541</sup> "Sudan: Fighting in West Darfur triggers rising death toll," UN News, April 6, 2020.

<sup>1542</sup> "UN chief condemns 'ongoing military coup' in Sudan," UN News, October 25, 2021. Elliot Smith, "Sudan's military has seized power in a coup. Here's what you need to know," *CNBC*, October 26, 2021. Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2022: Events of 2021* (New York: Human Rights Watch, January 2022), Sudan chapter.

<sup>1543</sup> "Tear gas fired at Sudan's anti-coup protesters in Khartoum," *Al Jazeera*, December 19, 2021. "Sudan: Ongoing Clampdown on Peaceful Protesters," Human Rights Watch news release, February 3, 2022.

<sup>1544</sup> "Sudanese back on streets to march against dire living conditions," *Al Jazeera*, October 21, 2020. "Sudan declares states of emergency after protests over soaring food prices," *The Guardian*, February 16, 2021. "Tear gas fired at Sudan's anti-coup protesters in Khartoum," *Al Jazeera*, December 19, 2021.

<sup>1545</sup> "Sudan: Security Forces Kill Protesters in Eastern Sudan," Human Rights Watch news release, December 21, 2020.

<sup>1546</sup> "Sudan: Lethal Force Used Against Protesters," Human Rights Watch news release, May 19, 2021.

<sup>1547</sup> "Sudanese security forces kill four anti-coup protesters," *Al Jazeera*, December 30, 2021. "Several anti-coup protesters killed in Sudan as thousands rally," *Al Jazeera*, November 17, 2021. Abdi Latif Dahir, "Anti-Coup Protesters in Sudan Press Their Demand for Return to Civilian Rule," *The New York Times*, December 25, 2021.

<sup>1548</sup> UN Security Council, "Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan - Report of the Secretary-General," S/2020/1155, December 1, 2020, para. 30. Hadeel Agab Ashii, "A better Environment for Education in Sudan", UNICEF press release, August 17, 2021. "Sudan Education Sector: Impact of the Floods on Education," Sudan Education Sector, October 5, 2020.

<sup>1549</sup> OCHA, "Sudan: Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 (January 2021)," February 21, 2021, pp. 6, 9, 12.

<sup>1550</sup> OCHA, "Sudan: Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 (January 2021)," February 21, 2021, p. 9.

<sup>1551</sup> UNHCR, "Sudan - Factsheet, December 2021," January 25, 2022.

<sup>1552</sup> Salma Ismail and Wail Shuaib Mohammed, "How UNICEF Sudan is supporting children and families affected by school closures," UNICEF, July 14, 2020.

<sup>1553</sup> UNICEF, "Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report, 1 Jan - 31 Mar 2021," June 2, 2021, p.4. UNICEF, "Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report, End of Year 2020," December 31, 2020, p.5. Hadeel Agab Ashi, "Safe return to school in Red Sea state amid COVID-19," UNICEF, February 16, 2021.

<sup>1554</sup> Wad Madani, "Third Sudanese university in recess as El Gezira suspends studies," *Dabanga Sudan*, November 8, 2021. "Four More Sudan Universities Suspend Studies", *Afric Info*, November 11, 2021.

<sup>1555</sup> GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2020* (New York, GCPEA: 2021), pp. 221-222. UN General Assembly and Security Council, "Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General," A/75/873-S/2021/437, May 6, 2020, para. 166. UN Security Council, "Letter dated 14 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2020/36, January 14, 2020, para. 117 and Figure XI.

<sup>1556</sup> UN General Assembly and Security Council, "Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General," A/75/873-S/2021/437, May 6, 2020, paras. 166, 172.

<sup>1557</sup> Sudan Education Cluster, "West Darfur Education Sector Response February 2021," March 4, 2021.

<sup>1558</sup> OCHA, "Sudan - Flash Update #4 - Conflict, West Darfur and South Darfur, 26 Jan 2021," January 26, 2021.

<sup>1559</sup> Information received from an international NGO respondent via email on November 19, 2021.

<sup>1560</sup> GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2020* (New York, GCPEA: 2021), p. 222.

- <sup>1561</sup> A full list of references can be found on GCPEA's website, [https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua\\_2022\\_references.pdf](https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2022_references.pdf)
- <sup>1562</sup> *Al Sudani*; *Radio Dabanga*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID SUD14835. "New protests and strikes throughout Sudan," *Radio Dabanga*, February 23, 2021.
- <sup>1563</sup> "Sudan putschists continue detention campaign in the states," *Dabanga Sudan*, October 29, 2021.
- <sup>1564</sup> *Radio Dabanga*; *Al Rakoba*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID SUD1582. "Sudan coup: 36 teachers still detained after Khartoum protest," *Dabanga Sudan*, November 8, 2021.
- <sup>1565</sup> "More teachers detained in South Darfur," *Dabanga Sudan*, November 11, 2021.
- <sup>1566</sup> GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2020* (New York, GCPEA: 2021), p. 223.
- <sup>1567</sup> UN General Assembly and Security Council, "Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General," A/75/873-S/2021/437, May 6, 2021, paras. 167, 172.
- <sup>1568</sup> Alex Firth, "Sudanese School Closed by Pandemic, Kept Closed by Armed Forces," Human Rights Watch dispatch. "Sudan's Rapid Support Forces occupy school in South Kordofan," *Radio Dabanga*, July 12, 2020. "RSF forcefully occupied school facilities and used them for military training in Kadogli, Sudan," Hudo Centre, July 9, 2020.
- <sup>1569</sup> Information received from an international NGO respondent via email on November 19, 2021.
- <sup>1570</sup> GCPEA, *Education under Attack 2020* (New York, GCPEA: 2021), pp. 224-225.
- <sup>1571</sup> *Darfur 24*; *Radio Dabanga*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID SUD15398. Scholars at Risk Network, Academic Freedom Monitor, University of Zalingei, August 31, 2021. Wagdy Sawahel, "Student shot dead, others injured after protest over housing," *University World News*, September 2, 2021.
- <sup>1572</sup> *Alnilin*; *GardaWorld*; *Alintibaha*; *Radio Dabanga*, as cited in ACLED, Event ID SUD15647. "Sudan: Clashes reported between security forces and students at the University of Khartoum Oct. 7," *GardaWorld*, October 7, 2021.
- <sup>1573</sup> Twitter, as cited in ACLED, Event ID SUD15778. "End attacks on Sudanese women protestors and WHRDs," *International Service for Human Rights*, November 18, 2021.