



Protecting the Right to Education in Gaza

حماية الحق في التعليم في قطاع غزة - فلسطين

20 December 2023



Inter-agency
Network for Education
in Emergencies

الشبكة المشتركة لوكالات
التعليم في حالات الطوارئ





Palestinian children play outside an UNRWA school following Israeli airstrikes on Oct. 12, 2023.
(Ashraf Amra/Anadolu via Getty Images)



Objectives:

- Raise awareness and advocate for the protection of educational institutions and the right to education for Palestinian learners.
- Shed light on the current challenges faced by educators and learners in Gaza
- A call for international attention and support for the right to education in Gaza, along with recommendations for actionable steps to protect educational institutions, learners, and school personnel in conflict zones.



Speakers:

- Recorded voice message from the Gaza Strip Dr. Said Abu Aita: Member of INEE (Gaza), Emergency Consultant, and internationally accredited School Safety Trainer.
- Hyam Al Hayek: Member of INEE (Gaza), Director of the Spark Foundation for Innovation and Creativity in Gaza. Spark includes Gaza's first Fab Lab specialist at STEM & Student-Centred Learning. She previously served as Director of Cultural Programs and Activities, Al Kattan Foundation
- Frosse Dabit: UNRWA Senior Education Program Specialist - Headquarters Amman
- Apolline Montoya: Advocacy and Policy Adviser, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)
- Fadi Baidoun: Coordinator of the Education Bloc in Palestine, UNICEF Emergency Education Officer





Recorded voice message from the Gaza Strip

**Dr. Said Abu Aita: Member of INEE (Gaza),
Emergency Consultant, and internationally
accredited School Safety Trainer.**





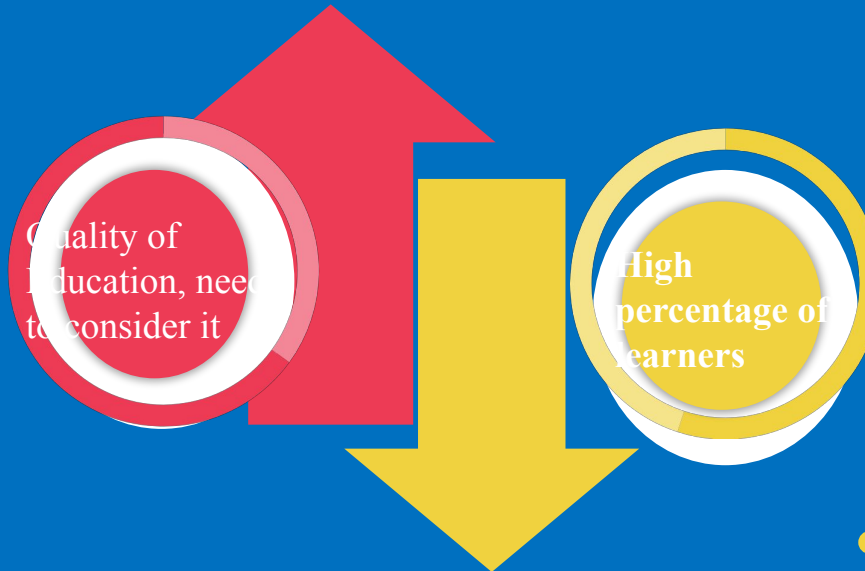
Education During War Hyam Al-Hayek, Gaza, December 2023



Education in the Palestinian context

"After the Nakba (disaster), where we lost everything, our people had only one option: to rise again through science and knowledge" - Abdelmohsin Al-Kattan

Palestine students in the international TIMSS exams occupy the lowest ranking among countries



Palestine's enrolment rates are high according to regional and international standards, clearly reflecting the importance of education for Palestinians, and the enrolment rate for basic school students is 97.9.

Education during conflicts

United Nations Security Council resolution 2601 stipulates that all parties involved in armed conflict must safeguard of Right to Education and ensure the security of schools. "



UN Documents

Posted 29 October 2021

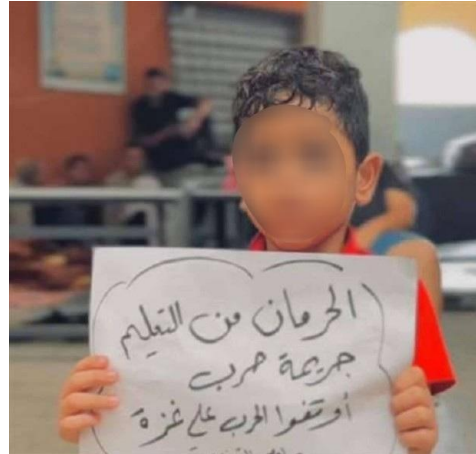
S/RES/2601

Print Share

Overview of Security Council Resolutions

This resolution condemned attacks and threats of attack against schools, educational facilities and civilians connected with schools. It further emphasised the need to facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict. It was co-sponsored by 99 member states.

Download S/RES/2601



The right to education is a fundamental human right, and no child may be deprived of it under any circumstances.

المدارس في غزة : ديسمبر 2023



UNRWA is working to provide the coordinates of its facilities to the parties concerned on a daily basis and is sometimes said to be given twice.

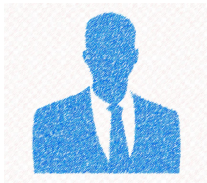


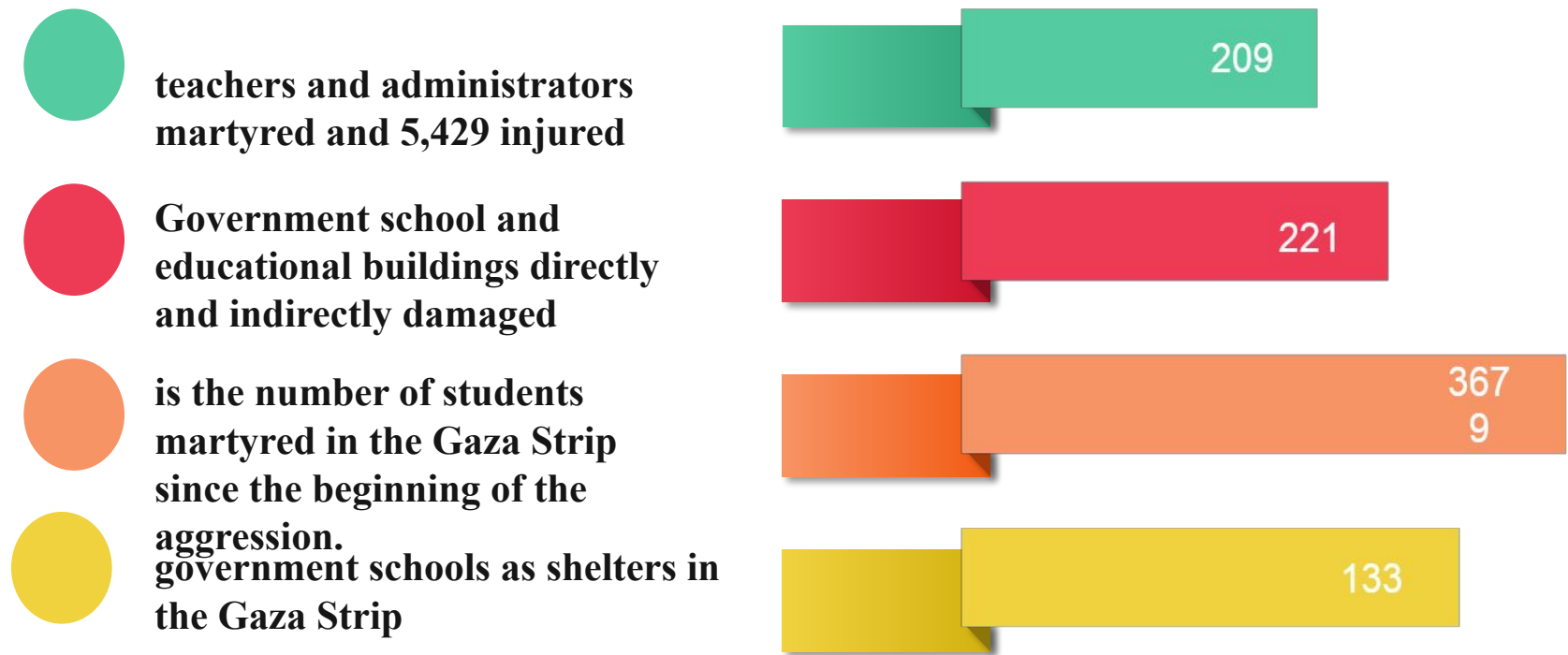
we have received the coordinates and are doing what we can



Washington understands Israel's intention to reduce civilian casualties

But the results what matters



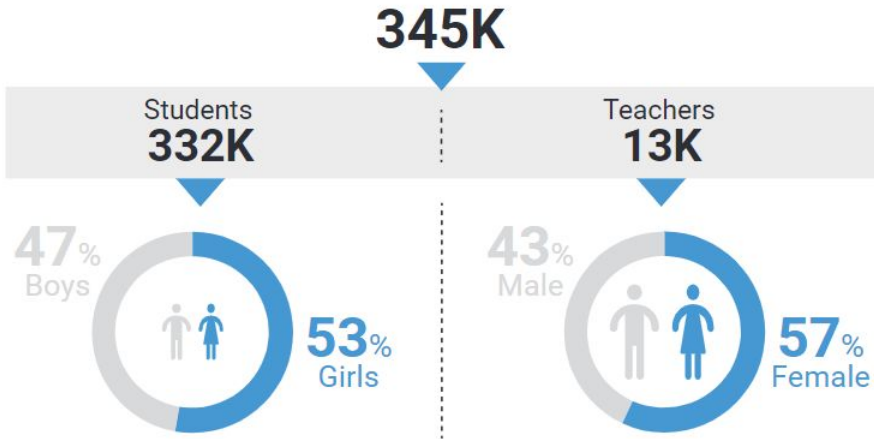


Children's Reality in Gaza:

December 2023

The war brought schools to a standstill and discontinued students' education. Educational facilities have become temporary shelters for tens of

AFFECTED STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (directly affected by the damaged schools)



hundreds of thousands of children are now out of school in Gaza "



According to some reports, about 1 million and 900,000 people (2.3 million people) have been displaced in the Gaza Strip. Displaced persons live in the overcrowded Gaza Strip's schools under extremely harsh conditions



After more than 46 days of Israel's aggression During the truce

85% of assessed schools were hosting displaced persons at the time of the visit (approximately 66,000 displaced persons).

63% of assessed schools do not have access to clean drinking water.

30 schools have empty spaces to carry out activities for displaced persons and children.

82 displaced people trained to do recreational activities.

190 teachers were identified in 23 of the assessed schools

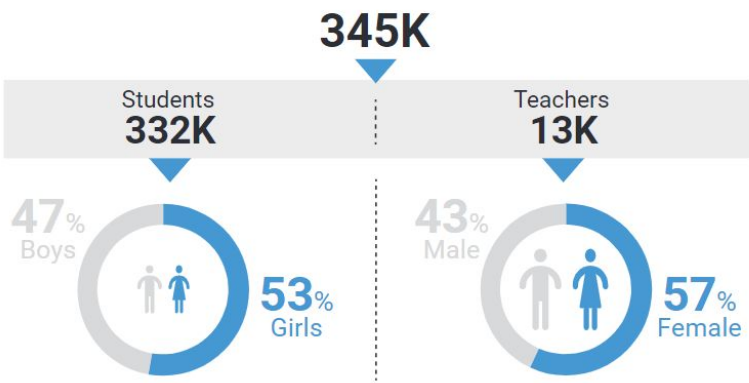


The Gaza Education Cluster conducted a monitoring assessment in Khan Younis, Rafah, and AlWasta from 25 to 27 November in the three southern governorates to assess the level of damage to 41 schools and conduct a preliminary survey of the space available for the establishment of temporary educational places, as well as the presence of teachers

UNICEF and partners in the Gaza Strip have continued and expanded the provision of recreational activities to support 18,350 children and adolescents including 11,569 girls and 265 children with disabilities (CwDs).

AFFECTED STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (directly affected by the damaged schools)

DAY 70



EDUCATION

625K (100%) Students with access to education

Over 69% of all school buildings sustained damage.

Over 18,800 Reported fatalities in addition to ~1,000 fatalities in Israel, including people involved in the 7 October attack

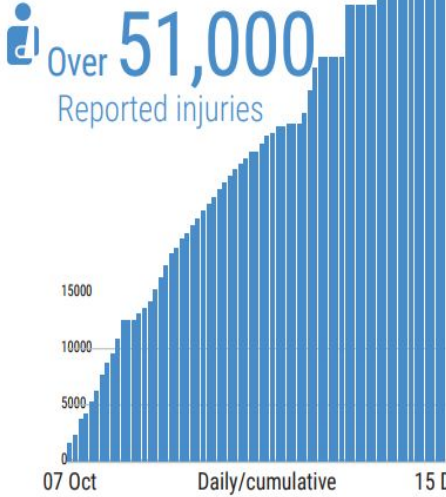
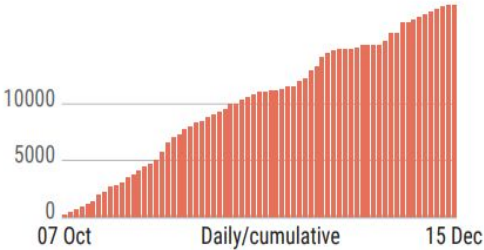
~5,153 Women

~7,729 Children

70% of Reported fatalities as of 11 December 2023

Families with multiple fatalities

1,680



Israel targets Palestinian academics

While the Israeli actions may be characterized by a significant loss of life, a closer examination of the victims' names reveals a deliberate focus on targeting not only children but also the elite members of our community, including youth, men, and women.



What next??

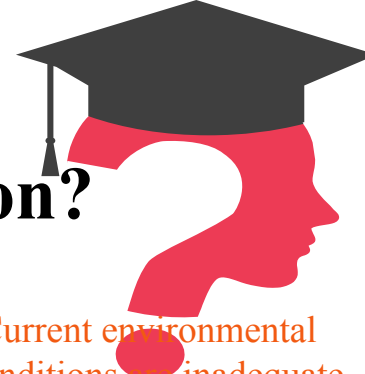


Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General, asserts that UNRWA schools have been severely disrupted by the ongoing war. The organization is deeply concerned that students may face the loss of an additional academic year, compounding the impact of the two previous years affected by the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

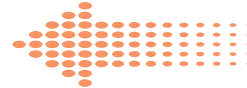


The actions of the occupying forces will markedly contribute to the escalating rates of illiteracy, heightened poverty and unemployment, and the profound psychological toll on children who have lost access to schools, books, teachers, and classmates. Addressing the psychological impact must be prioritized as the foremost challenge, requiring global attention and concerted efforts.

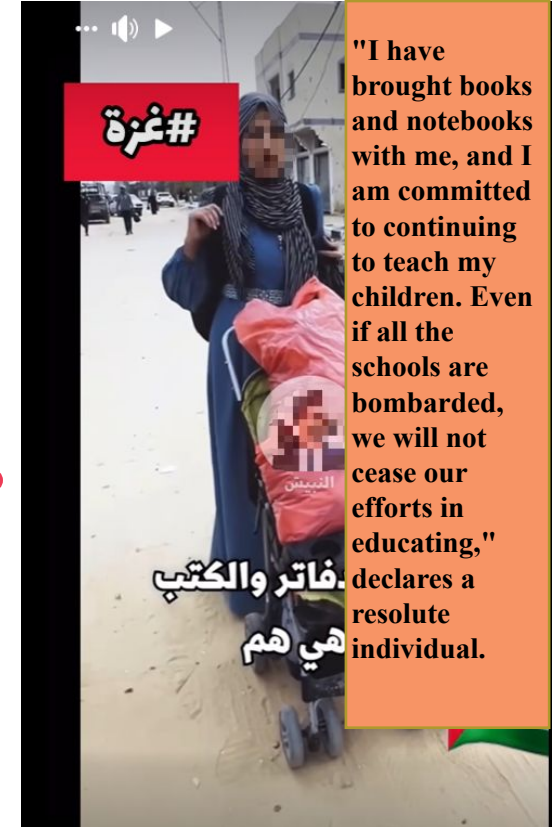
Is there a solution?



"Current environmental conditions are inadequate and unsuitable for the teaching process, yet we make do with what is available," remarks Tariq Annabi, a young English teacher.



"We are determined to see through educational processes using whatever means available, even with limited resources and the simplest educational strategies; Daily Storytelling," asserts Asma Ramadan Mustafa, an English language teacher in Palestine.



"I have brought books and notebooks with me, and I am committed to continuing to teach my children. Even if all the schools are bombarded, we will not cease our efforts in educating," declares a resolute individual.



Tamer Anwar, Owner
of the Gaza
Children's Online
School Initiative



Egyptian Teachers Establish Online School for Gaza Children

More than half of the curriculum for the first semester has been uploaded in all grades, and within days the other half will be added. More than 500 volunteers are now working at the Online School, and they are growing because of the desire to provide support and aid to Palestinians.

Looking ahead to Future Solutions

No schools
before a year



Field
Classes



Mobile

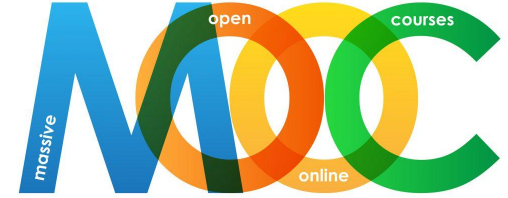


Looking ahead to Future Solutions

No schools



Online Schools



مساقات تعليمية شاملة مفتوحة
(Massive Open Online
Courses MOOCs)

Online Learning Platforms





THANK YOU

UNRWA Education in Gaza



INEE Webinar: Protecting the Right to Education in Gaza
20 December 2023

General situation in the Gaza Strip

1.9 M INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs).

More than **85%** of the population



1.4 M IDPs are sheltering in UNRWA facilities.

The average number of IDPs in UNRWA shelters is **12,387**, more than **four times their capacity**

155 UNRWA facilities, primarily schools, **used as shelters**



174 INCIDENTS impacting **UNRWA premises**

54 UNRWA installations directly hit

61 UNRWA installations sustained collateral damage

18 incidents of military use and/or interference



135 UNRWA staff killed, the majority are teachers



On day 71 of the hostilities

18,787 Palestinians have been killed (over **70%** are women and children)

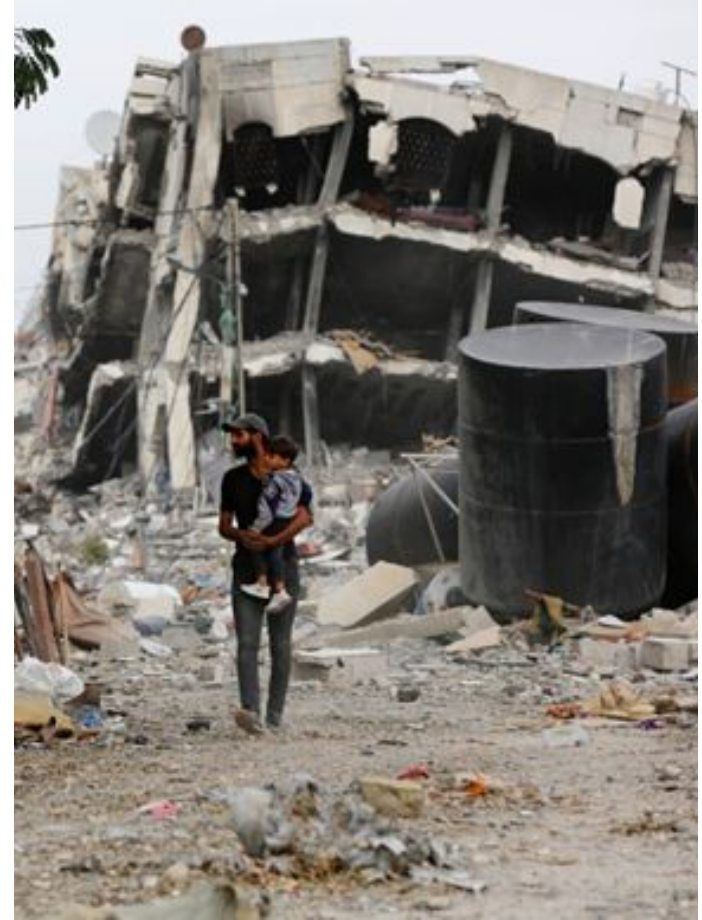
50,589 Palestinians injured

Nowhere is safe in Gaza

At least 297 IDPs sheltering in UNRWA facilities have been killed and at least 1,032 injured since the start of the hostilities.

Source: UNRWA Situation Report #53, 16 December 2023





UNRWA Education in Gaza – September 2023



288 SCHOOLS in 183 BUILDINGS

- Operating on double and triple shifts

2 VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTERS (VTCs)

- Gaza Training Center (GTC)
- Khan Younis Training Centre



298,363 Basic Education STUDENTS

- Average of **1000 students per school** and **40 students per class**

2000 TVET STUDENTS



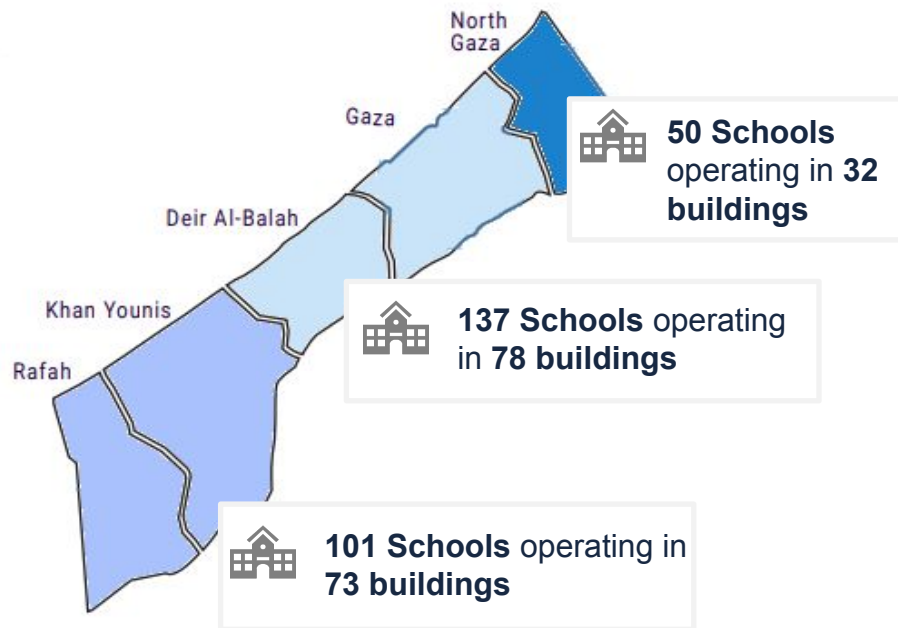
9,349 Teachers

281 Schools principals

231 Deputy school principals



81 School Counsellors



*Data from scholastic year 2023/2024

UNRWA Education in Gaza - Today

THE EDUCATION OF 298,000 UNRWA BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS AND 2000 UNRWA TVET STUDENTS HAS BEEN DISRUPTED SINCE OCTOBER 8



93 UNRWA SCHOOLS and VTCs suffered damage

- **46 Education facilities directly impacted**
- **47 Education facilities suffered collateral damage**



75% of 135 UNRWA Staff killed is Education staff

UNRWA employs almost 10.000 teachers in Gaza.

At the moment, UNRWA is not able to fully account for their whereabouts.

Source: UNRWA Situation Report #53, 16 December 2023



UNRWA Education in Emergency approach

UNRWA has a **three phased plan** to support the psycho-social wellbeing and restore the right to education of Palestine Refugee children and youth in the Gaza Strip, in line with its **Education in Emergency approach**.



Phase 1: Provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)



Phase 2: Provision of MHPSS and Non-Formal Learning



Phase 3: Provision of MHPSS and Formal Education

Phase 1: MHPSS

Phase 1: Provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)



- Rapid Needs Assessment
- Basic MHPSS for children, all education staff and parents
- Child protection and risk education
- Trauma support
- Recreational and PSS kits
- Recreational activities

Assumptions and Preconditions

- Humanitarian access shall be granted
- Basic supplies enter Gaza
- Procurement and distribution of MHPSS supplies shall be possible
- Open safe spaces for implementation of activities are identified within and outside shelters.
- Partners capacities

UNRWA is currently providing MHPSS

MHPSS

Individual and family consultations

Counseling Sessions (Scheduled visits to the shelters and providing Sessions on “tips to deal with : loss , trauma , grieve “)

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)

Staff Support (in-person and remote support)

Identification and addressing protection cases (Violence , Suicide attempts , Unaccompanied children)

Recreational activities for children



284 school counselors have provided a total of **39,275 PSS sessions** benefiting **365,576 IDPs**.

205, 025 CHILDREN have taken part to recreational activities in **UNRWA shelters**.

Phase 2: MHPSS and Learning

Phase 2: Provision of MHPSS and Temporary Learning



- Establishment of Safe and secure temporary learning spaces
- Basic MHPSS for children, all education staff and parents
- Implementation of non-formal education (educational games)
- Provision of Learning kits and pedagogical materials

Assumptions and Preconditions

- Ceasefire and safe movement is in place.
- Education centers (schools and VTCs) can be partially used as safe and secure temporary learning spaces, as some students, parents and education staff will still be in shelters.
- More temporary safe learning spaces can be set up with basic infrastructure.
- There are enough teachers and counsellors to provide temporary learning.
- Supplies for the resumption of teaching and learning are available.

Phase 3: MHPSS and Formal Education

Phase 3: Provision of MHPSS and Formal Education



- Teaching and learning for grades 1-9 and youth in VTCs
- Learning Catch-up Programme
- Provision of student material support to enable access to schools and VTCs (back to school kits, assistive devices, transport, etc.)
- MHPSS

Assumptions and preconditions

- Education centers (schools and VTCs) return to their normal use (or enough learning spaces).
- School rehab is completed and school furniture available
- The number of teachers and counsellors is sufficient for formal education to be resumed.


Thank you!



Safe Schools Declaration

Apolline Montoya – Advocacy and Policy Advisor

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)

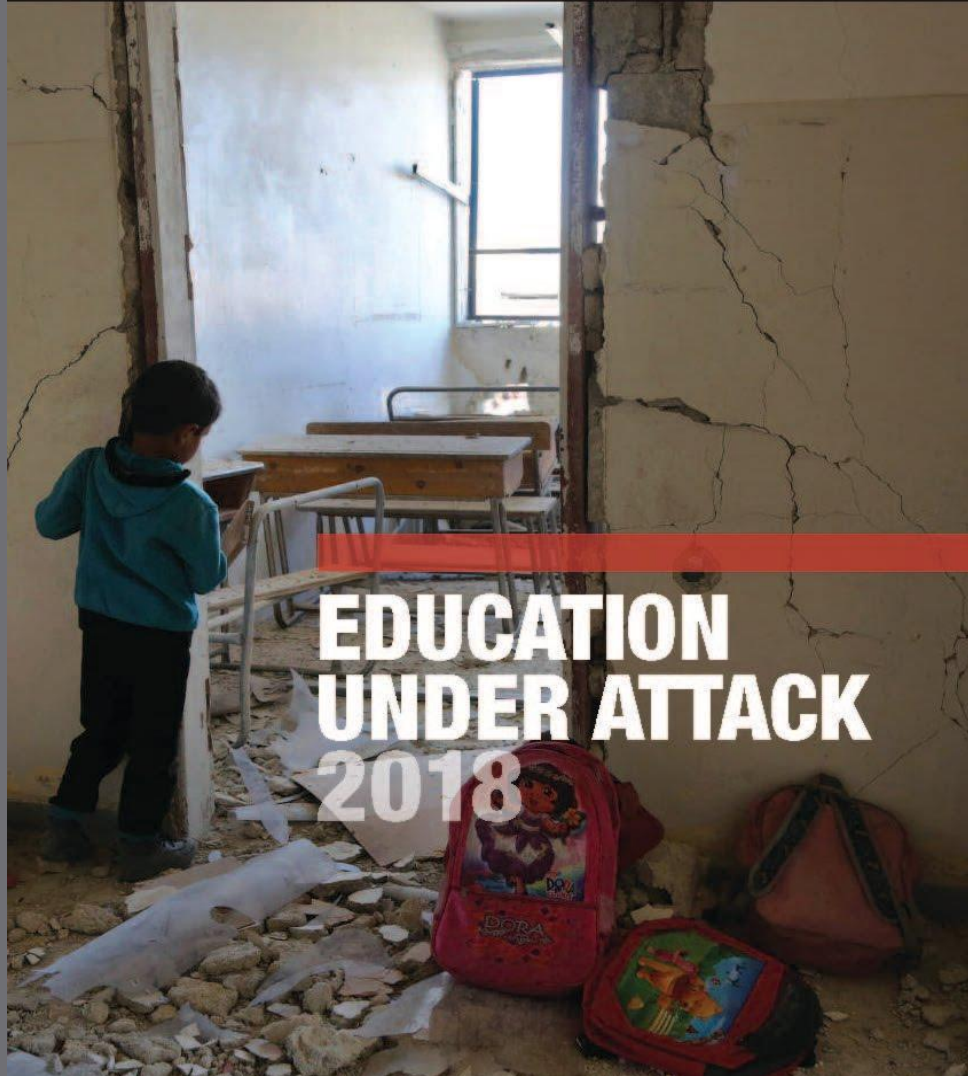


How attacks on students, teachers, schools and universities have impacted the right to education in Gaza since **at least 2009**, according to GCPEA research...

Between 2009 and 2012,
hundreds of incidents of
attacks on education
—including killing and
injury of students and
teachers, and damage to
schools during the
fighting — were
documented in
Israel/Palestine by the
UN



EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2014



EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2018

Between 2014 and 2017, air strikes and mortar shells damaged or destroyed hundreds of Palestinian schools and universities

Multiple parties used dozens of schools and universities for military purposes, turning them into legitimate targets of attacks.

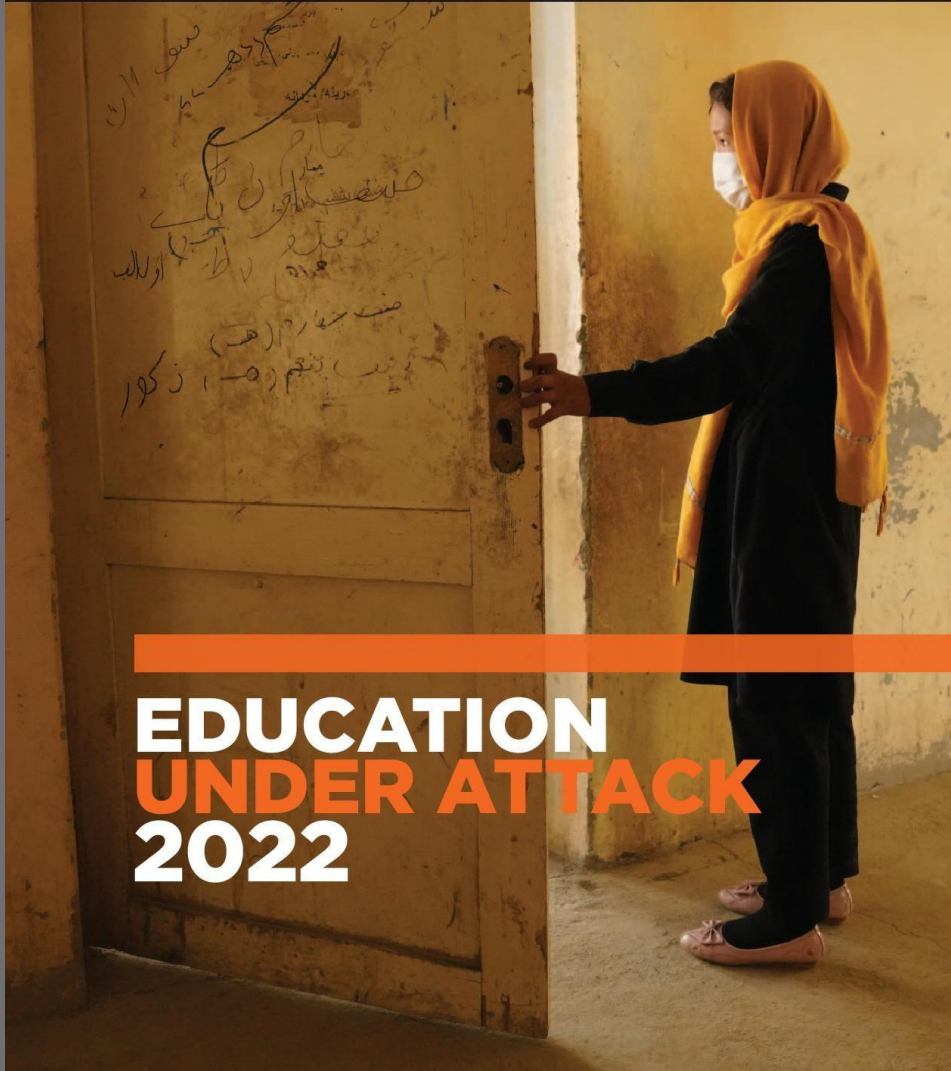
The overall level of reported attacks on schools was higher than in the period covered in *Education under Attack 2014*.

Attacks on education and military use of schools and universities continued between 2018 and 2019.

In Gaza, Israeli airstrikes and Palestinian rockets reportedly damaged over 35 schools between 2017 and 2019

A photograph of a man in a dark shirt and pants standing in a room with significant structural damage. He is writing on a large green chalkboard. To his left, a window is broken, with debris hanging from the frame. The floor is covered in rubble and debris. The overall scene suggests a school or educational facility that has been damaged.

EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2020



EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK 2022

Over 420 attacks on, or interferences to education occurred in Palestine in 2020-2021.

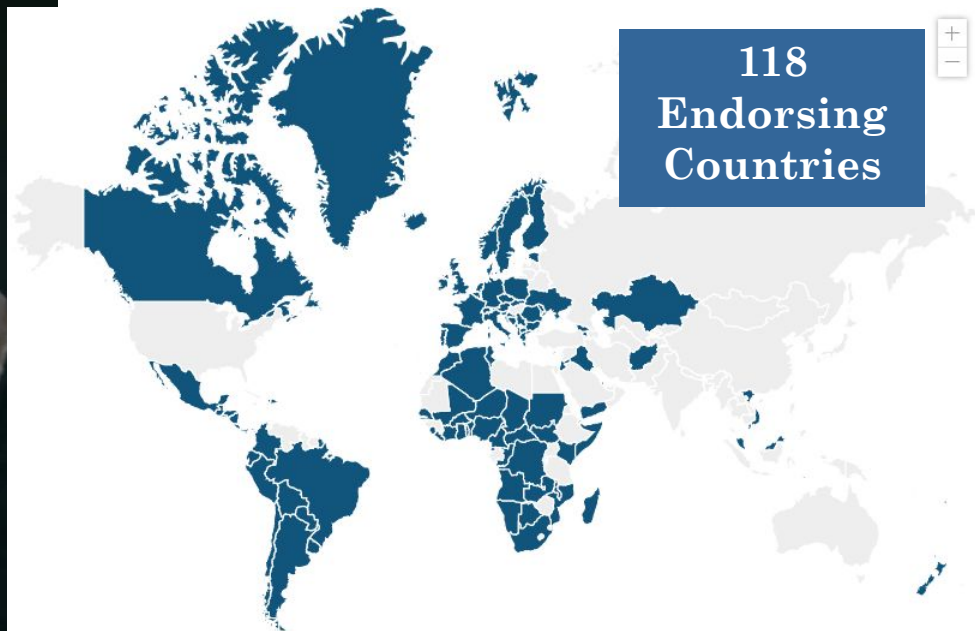
Attacks peaked in May 2021, when bombardments affected over 290 kindergartens, schools, and higher education facilities in Gaza.

Education under Attack 2024

(to be published in May 2024)

- GCPEA collected over 295 attacks on education in 2022 alone. Many attacks on schools involved the use of explosive weapons.
- The military use of schools, as well as attacks on higher education, also continued.
- GCPEA collected around 145 incidents involving Israeli security forces firing teargas, rubber bullets, or live ammunition, at or near education facilities or students, in the West Bank and Gaza in 2022-2023.
- Attacks continued into 2023, with a peak in May, October, and November of this year.

Safe Schools Declaration (SSD)



SSD: 8 Commitments

1. **Use** the *Guidelines*, and bring them into domestic policy and operational frameworks
2. **Collect** reliable *data* on attacks on education
3. **Investigate** allegations of violations of applicable law and *prosecute perpetrators*
4. **Provide** *assistance* to victims
5. **Develop, adopt and promote** *conflict-sensitive* approaches to education
6. **Ensure** the *continuation of education* during armed conflict and **promote** programs working to prevent or respond to attacks on education
7. **Support** the efforts of the *Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict* and other relevant UN organs, entities and agencies
8. **Meet** on a regular basis *to review the implementation* of the Safe Schools Declaration and its *Guidelines*

Implementing the SSD and its Guidelines

Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, New Zealand, and Switzerland have updated their military manuals including explicit protections for schools from military use.

The **United Kingdom** and **Norway** have updated their military policies to reflect their commitments.

Mali established a National Committee to oversee the implementation of the SSD along with 9 regional and 2 local committees, each with its action plan.

In August 2018, the **Palestinian Ministry of Education**, with support from Save the Children and Defense for Children International, developed an action plan on implementing the Declaration.

GCPEA found that the **overall reported incidents of military use of schools and universities declined by more than half between 2015 and 2020** among earlier endorses of the Declaration where military use had been reported.

The **UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations** developed a child protection policy that strengthens its policy banning use of educational facilities by peacekeepers, and notes that UN peace operations have an obligation to promote and adhere to the Guidelines. **GCPEA has not identified any reports of military use of schools or universities by UN peacekeeping forces since early 2017.**

GCPEA Recommendations

- We call on all parties to **respect the civilian character of schools and immediately cease attacks on, and threats of attacks against, schools, students, and teachers;**
- We call on all parties to **refrain from using schools and universities for military purposes**, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2601 (2021) and the Safe Schools Declaration, and to take steps to implement the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*;
- All parties to conflict should **take immediate action to evacuate schools and universities being used for military purposes**, and prioritize the rebuilding and rehabilitation of damaged or destroyed schools and universities;

GCPEA Recommendations

- All parties should **avoid the use of explosive weapons** with wide-area effects in populated areas, including near schools or universities or along routes to or from them;
- We encourage the **Government of Palestine** to respect its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration and call on the **Government of Israel** to endorse and implement the Declaration to keep students, teachers, and schools safe amid conflict;
- We call for **accountability and redress for attacks on education**, including by investigating allegations of violations of applicable national and international law, duly prosecuting perpetrators, and providing non-discriminatory assistance to victims of attacks.

Thank you

Gaza: Education under attack

Fadi Baidoun - National Coordinator, oPt Education Cluster



**Inter-agency
Network for Education
in Emergencies**

EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK

Gaza

Since October **2023**

100% of schools
closed leaving
625k+ students
& 23k education
personnel
out of school



#StopTheWarOnChildren



**#NotATarget
#LetMeLearn
#SafeToLearn
#RightToEducation**

“Children have
no more hope.”
—MoE



352 education
facilities
attacked



2 in 3
schools
100+ majorly
damaged
or destroyed

Collapsed Education System



- **No access to Education or a safe place for more than 625,000 students and more than 22,564 teachers in Gaza.**
- **Damage to infrastructure:** As of 8th Dec, **352** school buildings sustained damages (more than 71% of all school buildings in Gaza, 8 schools fully destroyed, 97 severely damaged, 118 with moderate damages, and 129 with minor damages).
Education cluster observation exercise, on November 25-27th in the three Southern governorates: All 41 schools that were assessed sustained some level of damage.
- **Education personnel casualties:** As of 11 Dec, **209** educational staff have been killed, and 619 teachers injured in the Gaza Strip.
- Over **3,679** students have been killed, and more than 5,429 students injured.
UNRWA reports that between 7th October and 12th Dec, 288 IDPs sheltering in UNRWA shelters (majority are schools) have been killed and 998 have been injured.

Collapsed Education System

- **Schools used as shelters:** An estimated **1.2M** people are sheltering in 145 UNRWA Schools, and more than **200K** IDPs at 110 public schools. Of the 80 damaged UNRWA schools, at least 65 serve as shelters for IDPs
- **Schools under attack:** Several schools including UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip were directly hit by Israeli strikes or tank shells. See the videos [here](#) and [here](#). Several concerning reports, pictures, and videos, show that schools are being used for military operations by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) including used as detention and interrogation centers, and military bases.

UNRWA has been able to verify **156** incidents at 103 UNRWA premises (including 80 schools) since the beginning of the war.

In addition, UNRWA has received reports of the military use of its facilities on at least 12 occasions.



Education Cluster Response

- **10** Education partners currently active in the Gaza strip:
HI, CMBM, UNICEF, Tamer, Ma'an, Nafs, TCC, Right to Play, SCI, SYFS
- Reached **84,262** students and teachers (51%M, 49%F):
 - 52,653 emergency learning and recreational supplies kits
 - 64,854 reached with psychosocial support
 - 83,262 reached with recreational activities

- **Recommendations** for Education stakeholders:
 - Expand partners' response for formal learning in non-formal settings and MHPSS and recreational activities
 - Conduct a full teacher mapping in all shelters, prioritize schools to be reconstructed/rehabilitated,
 - Prioritize locations for setting up TLS
 - Continue the assessment of school damage if/when security allows



Gaps and challenges



- **De-prioritization of Education**
- Funding needs for education: USD \$105 M for Gaza to allow partners to respond to the dire education and wellbeing needs of children and school staff.
Funding gap 97%
- Lack of access - **no Education response** in Gaza and North Gaza governorates
- **Limited operational and partner capacity**
- **Logistical challenges:** access to office, internet, electricity, fuel

We need your help

- We need a **ceasefire**, we need the war to stop
- **Unprecedented crisis** – There is now no safe space, diseases spreading, schools used as shelters, no school furniture, no textbooks. This is not a typical education in emergencies response.
- **All contingency scenarios we had planned for have been surpassed**
- **Education is life-saving**: it brings a sense of normalcy and a contributes to the wellbeing of children and teachers, parents and caregivers.
- Enormous needs in psychosocial support for all affected
- We need to safeguard schools, and invest in the quick recovery of a fully collapsed sector

We need your help



Occupied
Palestinian Territory
Education Cluster



**Safeguard schools and other learning spaces,
upholding international law.**



**Close the 97% funding gap
\$102M**



**Immediate and long-term
ceasefire and stop the conflict**

Useful links

[Education cluster interactive dashboard on school damage](#)

[Occupied Palestinian Territory Education cluster webpage](#)

[Updated Flash Appeal](#)





inee.org/ar