Protecting Education in Conflict

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Education under Attack 2024

Protecting Education in Conflict Webinar
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Attacks on education and military use of schools and universities in profiled countries, 2022-2023
The Al-Fakhoora educational facility in Al Rimal neighborhood, Gaza, Palestine, was attacked on October 10, 2023, in an early morning bombing.

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Profiled countries with reports of sexual violence occurring at or on the way to or from, school or university, 2022-2023

Countries with reports of child recruitment occurring at or on the way to or from, school, 2022-2023

• Affected Countries
The Lviv National Agrarian University in Lviv, Ukraine, was damaged in an attack on January 1, 2023. © 2023 UNESCO/Tetiana Balukova
Profiled countries with reports of attacks on education that uniquely targeted girls or women, 2022-2023
Recommendations

- Parties to armed conflict should immediately **cease attacks** on education.
- States should endorse and implement the **Safe Schools Declaration with a gender perspective and intersectionality**.
- Avoid using schools and universities for military purposes, including by implementing **the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict**.
- **Strengthen monitoring and reporting** of attacks on education.
- **Promptly and impartially investigate attacks** on education and prosecute those responsible.
- Develop comprehensive school safety and security **plans that account for risks posed by climate insecurity** and attacks on education.
- **Cross-sectoral approach** is essential.
PROTECTING AND ENSURING SAFE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

THE ICRC’S EXPERIENCE AND APPROACH IN ARMED CONFLICT AND OTHER SITUATIONS OF VIOLENCE
WHY DOES ICRC DO ACCESS TO EDUCATION?
WHY DOES ICRC DO ACCESS TO EDUCATION?

Addressing need & responding to the priorities of the affected population

IHL – Protection of education is enshrined in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols

Our access to parties to conflict, and affected areas gives us real added value

The place of education in the International RC/RC Movement
The report draws on our work and experience over decades responding to education related humanitarian needs in situations of armed conflict and violence.

The report covers
• Why access to education is part of the ICRC's humanitarian response
• How the ICRC supports access to education in areas affected by armed conflict and other violence
• How IHL relates to education
• What we have learned so far
• Our call to states, donors and practitioners
ICRC GLOBAL APPROACH

• Education protects the children we work with and prevents their exposure to further risks. It improves mental well-being and healthy development and reduces the risk of abuse and exploitation (child labour, child marriage, sexual abuse, and child recruitment). Education systems allow delivery of other services such as health services, social services, feeding programmes, water distribution. Education provides hope, resilience, stability and helps mitigate the risk of armed conflict and violence in the future.

• ICRC engages in protection of access to education when:
  • Education is affected by armed conflict or violence
  • There are limited other actors that can protect or restore access to education
  • It is part of ICRC’s protection response to particularly vulnerable groups
IHL – CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT

• All children under 15, orphaned or separated as a result of war (Art 24 GCIV)
• Occupation (Art 50 GCIV)
• Civilian internment (Art 94, 108)
• Prisoners of War (Arts 38, 72)
• Evacuation of children (Art 78 AP I)
• Obligation to provide ICRC all facilities for visiting internees and prisoners of war including to distribute material intended for e.g. educational purposes (142 GCIV, 125 GCIII)

NON-INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT

• Children must receive an education (Art 4.3(a) APII)

CIHL (IAC/NIAC)

• Children entitled to special respect and protection, which can comprise education (Rule 135 CIHL)
Does IHL protect schools, teachers, students against attack in armed conflicts?

• Yes: Presumption of protection

• However: No protection from direct attack if:
  • Schools are turned into a military objective
  • Civilians directly participate in hostilities or become fighters

Reference: conduct of hostilities rules and principles

• Distinction
• Precautions
• Proportionality
ICRC’S RESPONSE

• Protecting schools, learners and education personnel in areas affected by armed conflict and other violence
  • Dialogue with parties to conflict
  • Passive security and risk management in schools
  • Risk awareness and safer behaviour

• Material and individualized support to restore or safeguard access to education and boost resilience
  • Rehabilitation & reconstruction
  • Lifting financial barriers
  • Increasing knowledge skills and resilience
  • Focus on vulnerable groups
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

• The ICRC makes a valuable contribution to the education-in-emergencies sector
• Small-scale approaches have strategic value
• We have a large number of transferable skills that can support access to education
• Dialogue is an approach that works
• Partnerships with local organizations, specifically National Societies, are key.
• It is possible to support access to education, even in polarized contexts, while remaining neutral, impartial and independent
OUR CALL TO STATES, DONORS, PRACTITIONERS

• Engage with the ICRC to implement and promote respect for IHL rules related to education.
• Address the education needs of front line and marginalized communities.
• Invest in preparedness and risk management to reduce the disruption to education during armed conflict and other violence, ensuring policies, plans and resources are in place for emergency education.
• Strengthen and protect education staff in countries affected by armed conflict and other violence.

• The report can be downloaded for free here.
• For more information, contact Mark Chapple – Head of Education on mchapple@icrc.org
Joint Initiative
Supporting greater collaboration between Education in Emergencies and Child Protection in Humanitarian Action
INEE & The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action have been collaborating on the CPHA EIE initiative since 2020.

The initiative brings together actors from both networks to look at the overlap, compatibility and complementary nature of the sectors, with the express aim of encouraging better collaboration and integration.

In 2021 a position paper was published setting out the rationale behind closer collaboration, and noting the need for practitioner focused guidance.

The research piece into the impact of Covid on Education and Child Protection outcomes, highlighting that when children are unable to attend school, child protection risks increase, particularly for the most vulnerable.
Why is Integration Important?

● Can improve **child well-being**

● Child protection elements can:
  ○ improve **learning outcomes** eg PSS, improving family and community **well-being**
  ○ support **access** to education and **reduce drop-out**

● Supports **child-centered approach** to humanitarian response - prevents children and young people ‘**slipping through the gaps**’

● **Cost effective** and prevents duplication.

● Aligns with ‘New Way of Working’, humanitarian-development **nexus**, and **locally-led** approaches
Collective Action

- **Compile, disseminate, and support** uptake of an easily accessible set of resources in an Implementation Pack that support integrated child protection and education in practice
  - Including the GEC-CPAoR Collaborative Framework and other key resources
- **Establish an Evidence and Learning Strategy**, including a *Theory of Change* and Education-Child Protection in Humanitarian Action *indicator framework* to continue lifting up best practices and inform stronger responses
- Establish a **joint advocacy approach** and capacity sharing to support it