

Joint Statement on the International Day to Protect Education from Attack

On the **International Day to Protect Education from Attack**, the Inter-agency for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (the Alliance) jointly condemn all forms of attacks on education and call for all parties to conflict to respect international humanitarian law, to protect schools from attack and military use, and to ensure children can continue their education in safe and protective school environments.

Schools, students, and teachers are not targets. From 2023 to 2024, and now into 2025 we have seen an alarming increase in attacks on education with schools deliberately targeted and destroyed. In this year's [Report of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict](#), grave violations against children increased by 25% from 2023 to 2024. [Globally, 234 million school-age children are affected by conflict, with 85 million children completely out of school due to destruction, attack and displacement.](#) **This has to stop.**

When education facilities are destroyed, it's not just physical buildings that are lost, it's the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of thousands of children; for many children affected by conflict and crisis, school is one of the few places they can feel safe and protected. It's a place where they not only receive education, but also, psychosocial support, a chance to safely socialise with their peers and, in some cases, food, immunisations, and clean water and sanitation.

Quality education functions as a protective service, where child protection and education actors can work together. School can protect children from exposure to child protection risks, including violence and abuse, recruitment into armed forces, child labour, and early marriage. If schools are closed due to attack or military use, children lose the protection they provide.

In too many conflicts in the world today education systems are systematically targeted, from Palestine, to Sudan, to Ukraine, schools are attacked, students and teachers killed and children are denied their right to education. [In Gaza, all schools have been closed with nearly 97% of school buildings damaged or destroyed, meaning 625,000 students have nowhere to learn. In Sudan, attacks on education have increased fourfold year on year, with most schools closed and 18 million children out of school due to the conflict.](#) In Ukraine 3,524 educational institutions have been damaged since the start of the full-scale invasion, with 360 completely destroyed. These devastating figures are just some examples of the extent to which attacks on schools are increasing and how conflict is disrupting education around the world.

Together, INEE and the Alliance call on parties to conflict to ensure children's rights are respected as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that international humanitarian law is upheld, that schools remain safe from attack and military use, and students and teachers are protected as civilians. We call on all states to use

their influence to ensure this basic level of protection for children and education systems is enforced, and violators held to account.

We also call on states to recognise and endorse the [Safe Schools Declaration](#) and guidelines, now in their 10th year; they ask states to commit to keeping schools, teachers, and students safe and accessible during conflict.

Finally, INEE and the Alliance call upon humanitarian leadership, donors, and governments to ensure integrated child protection and education responses are prioritised and funded for the growing number of children impacted by crisis and conflict so they can be better protected, and so education can continue safely.

For information on the legal instruments protecting education during conflict - please see our factsheet [here](#).

INEE and the Alliance are collaborating on an initiative to support joint and integrated child protection and education in emergencies programming; this includes ensuring education can continue safely in conflict and crisis. Our comprehensive guidance note designed to support this cross sector approach can be found online [here](#).