EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"IT IS VERY PAINFUL TO TALK ABOUT"

Impact of Attacks on Education on Women and Girls

Global Coalition to
Protect Education from Attack

GCPEA

Global Coalition to **Protect Education from Attack**

The **Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)** was established in 2010 by organizations from the fields of education in emergencies and conflict-affected fragile states, higher education, protection, international human rights, and international humanitarian law who were concerned about ongoing attacks on educational institutions, their students, and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity.

GCPEA is governed by a Steering Committee made up of the following international organizations: CARA (Council for At Risk Academics), Human Rights Watch, Institute of International Education/IIE Scholar Rescue Fund, Plan International, Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, Save the Children, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNHCR. GCPEA is a project of the Tides Center, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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November 2019

Two sisters who lost their teenage brother when in 2018 their girls' school in Nangarhar province in Eastern Afghanistan was attacked. When the first improvised explosive device went off near the school, their brother came to help. He was killed by a second delayed explosion close to the school. The school had been threatened by a militant group simply because it offered girls an education.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In conflict settings around the world, children's access to education and the corresponding potential of education to expand children's life prospects are profoundly undermined by attacks on education and the military use of schools.[1] The impact of attacks on education is devastating for all children, but boys and girls often face different risks and may require different responses to support their recovery and return to education.[2]

Girl students and female teachers are often specifically targeted during attacks on schools. Over the last five years (2014-2018), the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA's) research has shown that female students and teachers were directly targeted for attack at school or along school routes in at least 18 countries facing conflict and insecurity, including in Afghanistan, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo), Egypt, India, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen.[3] These attacks included bombings of girls' schools, abduction, rape, forced "marriage" and other gender-based violence against girl students and female teachers by armed parties. During this same period, armed groups were also reportedly responsible for sexual violence in and around schools or along school routes in at least 17 countries.[4] Not only have attacks on schools increased in the last two decades, but the proportion of attacks that are specifically targeting girls' education appears to have increased significantly during that timeframe.[5]

[1] See UNESCO, "Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report - The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education," 2011, https://news.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/190743e.pdf; "Education for All Global Monitoring Report - Children still battling to go to school," Policy Paper 10, July 2013, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000221668; Education Policy and Data Center, "The Effects of Armed Conflict on Educational Attainment and Inequality," Research Paper No. 18-03, April 2018, https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/Omoeva%20Moussa%20Hatch%20%282018%29%20-%20Impacts%20of%20conflict%20on%20education.pdf.

[2] See United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) and Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Mitigating Threats to Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts: Current Practice, October 2017, http://www.ungei.org/Girls_in_Conflict_Review-Final-Web.pdf (accessed April 12, 2019). See also UNICEF, "Girls worst affected as conflict keeps more than 25 million children out of school," April 24, 2017, https://www.unicef.org/media/media_95861.html; Global Partnership for Education, "The role of education for women and girls in conflict and post-conflict countries," June 19, 2017, https://www.global-partnership.org/blog/role-education-women-and-girls-conflict-and-post-conflict-countries.

[3] Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), "Education suffered over 14,000 armed attacks in last 5 years: Representatives from over 90 countries gather in Palma de Mallorca to build on Safe Schools Declaration," May 26, 2019, http://www.protectingeducation.org/news/education-suffered-over-14000-armed-attacks-last-5-years (accessed May 27, 2019).

[4] Ibid.

[5] See for example, Pauline Rose, "Rape, murder, forced marriage: what girls in conflict zones get instead of education," The Conversation, May 20, 2016, https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/opinion-rape-murder-forced-marriage-what-girls-in-conflict-zones-get-instead-of-education (accessed August 26, 2019), citing the Global Terrorism Database, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.

In the context of armed conflict, government security forces and non-state armed groups have a variety of motives for attacking girls' schools and for targeting female students and teachers.[6] These motives vary depending on the context, and there may be multiple and even contradictory motives for a single attack,[7] including ideological or religious opposition to girls' education, hostility toward education personnel who are perceived as representing unwelcome government authority in a region, or to gain a military advantage, such as to acquire combatants or other types of support for military operations. Armed actors commit sexual violence in and along school routes as part of broader patterns of conflict-related sexual violence. They also recruit or abduct female students and teachers to "reward" combatants, such as by providing them with "wives."

Attacks on education set in motion a range of negative consequences for girls and women such as loss of education, child and forced "marriage", early pregnancy, and stigma associated with sexual violence and children born from war-time rape, which dramatically affect female students' futures. These long-term consequences often exacerbate and are exacerbated by pre-existing forms of gender discrimination and harmful practices that negatively affect girls and women. Attacks on girls' education can be an indication of pervasive inequality and discrimination, as well as harmful practices and beliefs. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has observed that in some contexts, "attacks on education may not be explicitly motivated by hostility toward girls' education as a vehicle for gender

[6] For more on the motives for attacks on education generally, see GCPEA, Education Under Attack 2014, http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/eua_2014_full_0.pdf, p. 47, and GCPEA, Education under Attack 2018, May 2018, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/eua_2018_full.pdf (accessed August 6, 2019), p. 26.

[7] UNESCO, Education Under Attack, February 10, 2010, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000186809 (accessed March 24, 2019), p. 28.

Girls attend school in the Red Sea port city of Hudaydah, Yemen, on October 24, 2017. The school had recently been damaged by an air strike.

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equality, but reflect, instead, the violence experienced by girls and women in all areas of their public and private lives."[8]

Such inequality makes women and girls more vulnerable to violence during armed conflict and compromises their ability and resources to alleviate harm from such violence. The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) has noted that

> Structural inequalities often intensify during periods of crisis. Because they tend to be at a lower status than men and boys and generally have less access to financial resources, social capital, and legal means to protect themselves when conflict arises, the poorest women and girls can experience greater dependency, socioeconomic disempowerment, and limited social mobility.[9]

This report presents the key findings of GCPEA's multi-country study on the impact of attacks on education on women and girls.[10] GCPEA's research focuses on the types and causes of abuse most typically committed against female students in the context of attacks on education, and the long-term consequences that female students may face as a result of such attacks.[11] GCPEA initiated this study to contribute to a better understanding of the implications for girls and women when education is attacked and to inform our advocacy for better strategies to protect girls and women, prevent attacks and abuse, and diminish harmful consequences against them.

This report relies on previous GCPEA research, including Education Under Attack 2018 and 2014, and updates, and the organization's field research in **Nigeria** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, which focused specifically on the experiences of women and girls when education is attacked. In addition, the report draws from interviews with numerous country and regional experts and an extensive review of secondary data sources, including reports by United Nations (UN) agencies, development and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights organizations, government bodies, and think tanks, including numerous contributions from GCPEA's member organizations.

Key Findings

Threats, Warnings and Attacks on Female Students

Some non-state armed groups attack female students and teachers because of ideological or religious opposition to girls' education. There are numerous examples of non-state armed groups warning girls not to go to school and warning teachers and parents to close girls' schools, as well as efforts to restrict female students' and teachers' dress and movement on the way to and from and at school. In Yemen, for example, education personnel reported an increase in the number of threats against schools on social media in November 2017, including WhatsApp messages threatening that schools would be bombed if girls continued to attend school. Similarly, non-state armed groups have carried out a violent campaign against girls' schools in some regions of Pakistan. In 2015, for example, the Pakistani Taliban sent letters to schools in the Swat region warning the school

School girl in Surkhrod District, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. Her family fled intense fighting in the Shinwar district of Nangarhar province. "Our school was burned, destroyed," she says. By the time they left, though, she couldn't attend classes anyway. "Girls weren't allowed to go to school." 10 April 2019.
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administration to close schools or face attack.[12] In a statement in 2017, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, noted with regard to Afghanistan that the Taliban had directly threatened girls' education and that "similar threats against female teachers or girls were received in Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic."[13]

When girls continue to try to pursue their education despite warnings, armed parties have responded with violence, damaging or destroying their school structures, as well as educational materials. For example, anti-government groups in **Afghanistan** have repeatedly targeted girls' schools. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that the Taliban attacked five mixed or girls' high schools in 2018, including "the burning of schools and the detonation of IEDs [improvised explosive devices] inside the facilities."[14] Similarly, UNAMA reported four Taliban attacks on girls' schools in the first quarter of 2019, which "spread fear" among

8 OHCHR, "Background Paper on Attacks Against Girls Seeking to Access Education," February 2015, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/Report_attacks_on_girls_Feb2015.pdf (accessed March 14, 2019), p. 14.

9 UNGEI and ODI, "Mitigating Threats to Girls' Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts," p.4.

10 For more detailed information and original source references, please refer to the body of the report.

11 GCPEA defines attacks on education as any intentional threat or use of force—carried out for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, religious, or criminal reasons—against students, educators, and education institutions. Attacks on education may be perpetrated by State security forces, including armed forces, law enforcement, paramilitary, and militia forces acting on behalf of the state, as well as by non-state armed groups. Attacks on education include attacks on students of all ages, educators, including schoolteachers, academics, other education personnel, members of teacher unions, and education aid workers. Attacks on education also include attacks on education institutions: any site used for the purposes of education, including all levels of education and non-formal education facilities, and buildings dedicated to the work of ministries of education and other education administration. For more detail, see Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, http://www.protectingeducation.org/what-attack-education.

12 Human Rights Watch, "Dreams Turned into Nightmares: Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan," March 2017, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/pakistan0317_web_0.pdf (accessed May 4, 2019), p. 43.

13 Statement by Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Security Council Arria Meeting on Attacks on Schools, October 16, 2017, https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/statement-by-virginia-gamba-security-council-arria-meeting-on-attacks-on-schools/ (accessed April 23, 2019).

14 UNAMA, "Afghanistan: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Annual Report 2018," February 2019, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_annual_protection_of_civilians_report_2018_-_23_feb_2019_-_english.pdf (accessed March 20, 2019), p.15.

Survivors of attack on their primary school in Kazumba territory in Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of Congo in December 2016.

© Holly Cartner, October 2018

girls and their families and "led to school closures, affecting education for almost 3000 girls."[15]

Armed parties hostile to girls' education have also violently attacked female students, both at school and while traveling to or from school. Human Rights Watch reported that in October 2012, militants in Pakistan stopped a school van carrying students on their way to take an exam and "threw acid on the faces of the female students. At least two girls sustained severe burns to their faces."[16] The local Pakistani Taliban commander reportedly told CNN that: "'We will never allow the

girls of this area to go and get a Western education. If and when we find any girl from Parachinar going to university for an education, we will target her [in] same way, so that she might not be able to unveil her face before others.'"[17]

In other contexts, armed parties may consider schools, and by extension education personnel, as representatives of the government. These groups may not be hostile to education or to girls' education per se but may nevertheless target women and girls in ways that are unique to them or that disproportionately affect them.

Sexual Violence Against Female Students at School or On School Routes

Armed parties have perpetrated sexual violence on school routes, including as part of broader patterns of conflict-related sexual violence. Human Rights Watch reported in 2012 that many parents in Somalia, were not willing to send their daughters to school because of the risk of sexual violence on the way to and from school.[18] In July 2019, for example, a nine-year-old girl, going to school in Raga Ceel, Somalia, was raped and badly tortured by a security personnel. The suspect escaped.[19] Similarly, the UN expressed concern about efforts by extremist groups in Mali to impose a strict religious ideology and force the closure of many secular schools.[20] According to the UN, girls who failed to "adhere to strict dress requirements imposed by armed groups" were targeted in 2018 for violence in schools, including sexual violence.[21]

> "One of the militiamen followed me into the bush and was threatening me. If I did not agree to what he wanted, he said he would kill me. What he did to me was so painful. I could not stop crying. He threatened me to keep quiet. After he finished, he went away and left me lying on the ground."
>
> —Chloé M., an 11-year-old student when her school was attacked in Kazumba territory, Congo, in December 2016
>
> GCPEA interview, Bilomba, Congo, October 30, 2018.

Although there is limited data on prevalence rates, GCPEA's research indicates that armed parties commit sexual violence during attacks on schools or while students are fleeing an attack. Armed parties may target both male and female students, as well as teachers, but in most of the contexts GCPEA has reviewed, armed parties appear to disproportionately target adolescent girls and young women for sexual violence, when schools are attacked.[22] Kamuina Nsapu militiamen in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo) raped female students and school staff during attacks on schools or when girls were fleeing an attack. In early March 2017, for example, the Kamuina Nsapu militia attacked a post-secondary institute in Luiza province and assaulted the students, raping ten of the female students and a female administrator, and killing a male department head. Noelle A., a student at the school, told GCPEA how the militiamen had beaten the boy students and then raped the girl students. They were then warned never to go to school again.[23]

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[15] UNAMA, "Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January to 31 March 2019," April 24, 2019, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_-_first_quarter_report_2019_english_.pdf (accessed May 3, 2019), p. 3.

[16] Human Rights Watch, "Dreams Turned into Nightmares," pp. 35-6.

[17] Ibid.

[18] GCPEA consultations, Mogadishu, November 2018.

[19] Local source, as cited in Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), ID Number 5554809, https://www.acleddata.com/data/(data, (accessed August 14, 2019).

[20] Human Rights Council, "Situation of human rights in Mali: Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Mali," January 21, 2019, https://un-docs.org/A/HRC/40/77 (accessed August 24, 2019), para. 55

[21] Theirworld, "10 countries where girls' education has been under attack," https://theirworld.org/news/10-countries-where-girls-education-has-been-attacked (accessed March 24, 2019).

[22] Sexual violence is believed to be underreported because of the associated stigma. It should be noted, however, that there is even less research investigating the prevalence of sexual violence against boys and men, and there is growing recognition that this is an issue demanding greater monitoring and documentation. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "Men Can Experience Sexual Violence in War Too," May 3, 2019, https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/03/men-can-experience-sexual-violence-war-too (accessed May 15, 2019). Therefore, although most data seem to indicate that sexual violence in most conflicts disproportionately affects girls and women, there are significant limitations to current data on this issue.

[23] GCPEA interview with Victor N., Luiza, October 28, 2018, reported in GCPEA, "All that I Have Lost: Impact of Attacks on Education for Women and Girls in Kasai Central Province, Democratic Republic of Congo," April 2019, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/drc_kasai_attacks_on_women_and_girls.pdf, p. 36. The names of survivors and witnesses interviewed by GCPEA who are quoted in this report have been changed to pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Other de-

Students who were abducted in February 2018 from their school in Dapchi, Nigeria, and spent a month in captivity.

© Timothy Yohanna Ali, March 2018

Abduction, Forced Marriage, Sexual Slavery

In other cases, girl students and female teachers have been abducted from their schools by armed parties. Some of those women and girls interviewed by GCPEA were held for periods ranging from several hours to days; in other cases, they were held for years or have never been heard from since the abduction. Boko Haram,[24] for example, gained international notoriety in 2014, when it abducted 276 girls from their school in Chibok, Nigeria; as of this writing, the whereabouts of more than 100 of the girls remains unknown.[25] In total, GCPEA

estimates that Boko Haram has abducted at least 600 girls from their schools over the course of the 10-year conflict.[26] Armed parties in other countries, including Somalia, Congo, and South Sudan, have also abducted girls from schools.

> "I was so young and innocent. I had such pain. I cried and cried, but he continued to rape me … I continue to have pain to this day."
>
> —Aisha Y., 13 at the time she was abducted from her school and raped repeatedly after being forcibly married to a Boko Haram fighter
> GCPEA interview, Maiduguri, Nigeria, October 10, 2017.

Girls who are abducted may be raped and then abandoned or forcibly "married" to one or multiple fighters. Some have reported being held for extended periods of time for purposes of sexual slavery. In February 2018, almost four years after the Chibok abductions, Boko Haram abducted 111 girl students from the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Dapchi, in northeast Nigeria.[27] Five girls were crushed to death during the abduction. Boko Haram returned all but one of the girls about a month later; one girl was not returned reportedly because she refused to convert to Islam. The UN reported that the schoolgirls were subjected "to forced "marriage", rape and physical and emotional violence."[28] Similarly, in Somalia, Al-Shabaab insurgents have kidnapped girls from schools and forced them to "marry" fighters. One teacher from Mogadishu told Human Rights Watch that Al-Shabaab came to his school, separated the boys from the girls, and then "picked 15- and 16-year-old girls, one was 17 years old. They took 12 girls in total. These girls were taken to be wives..."[29]

Forced Recruitment

Armed forces and non-state armed groups may target educational institutions to gain a military advantage, such as to fill or replenish their ranks and may view schools as convenient places to recruit children as combatants. Girls and women who were abducted from schools (or along school routes) in the countries analyzed by GCPEA appear to have been abducted primarily for sexual violence and forced "marriage." (See discussion on sexual violence above) However, non-state armed groups also sometimes forcibly recruit girls and women from schools to support their military operations, including by cooking, cleaning and carrying supplies.

> "I was given a wooden [kitchen utensil] that was supposed to be a magic gun that the soldiers could not defeat…. After that, I went with [the militia] wherever they went and participated in several battles. I later realized that we would not be able to defeat soldiers with the magic. They were killing us in large numbers."
>
> —Lucia N. recruited by the Kamuina Nsapu militia in the Congo

Girls who are forcibly recruited are used in military operations in a variety of ways, including in direct combat or as suicide bombers.[30] In the Kasai region of the Congo, young girls were recruited by the Kamuina Nsapu militia because they were believed to be able to magically stop bullets by rustling their skirts; they were placed at the front of the militia units going into battle as human shields. In northeastern Nigeria, Boko Haram has used women and children as suicide bombers. Experts believe that many of these children had been abducted

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tails, including the names of the villages, have not been included to protect the identity of interviewees.

24 Boko Haram, the popular name for the Islamist insurgency group, is a Hausa phrase that has been loosely interpreted as "Western education is forbidden." For more detail, see GCPEA, "I Will Never Go Back to School: The Impact of Attacks on Education for Nigerian Women and Girls," October 2018, http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/attacks_on_nigerian_women_and_girls.pdf, footnotes 17-18.

25 See "Five years on more than 100 Chibok girls still missing," TRTWorld, April 13, 2019, https://www.trtworld.com/africa/five-years-on-more-than-100-chibok-girls-still-

missing-25816 (accessed August 28, 2019). VOA News, "112 Abducted Nigerian School Girls Still in Captivity Five Years Later," March 27, 2019, https://www.voanews.com/episode/112-abducted-nigerian-school-girls-still-captivity-five-years-later-3791701 (accessed August 28, 2019).

26 GCPEA, "I Will Never Go Back to School," October 2018, p. 21.

27 See Government Girls Science and Technical College – Dapchi (February 19, 2018), in GCPEA, "I Will Never Go Back to School," pp. 29-31.

28 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence," S/2019/280, March 29, 2019, https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceincon-flict/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/report/s-2019-280/Annual-report-2018.pdf (accessed August 12, 2019), para.119.

29 Human Rights Watch, No Place for Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia," February 2012, https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/02/20/no-place-children/child-recruitment-forced-marriage-and-attacks-schools-somalia (accessed June 6, 2019), pp. 55-6.

30 Although some women choose to join armed groups for a variety of reasons, this section deals only with those female students or teachers who were forcibly re-cruited. To the extent that those being recruited are under the age of 18, they are considered for purposes of this report to be forcibly recruited and to be used in viol-ation of international law. For those children who are under the age of 15, their recruitment and use is a war crime. (See Annex I, Obligations Under International Law.)

The children are told the broomsticks are magic and can protect them from enemy fire. Kasai Province, Democratic Republic of Congo.

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previously, including from schools. In 2018, the UN reported that "Boko Haram continued to recruit children and used 48 (38 girls) for the purpose of bearing and detonating improvised explosive devices…"[31]

Attacks on Female Teachers

When schools are attacked, female teachers may face abuse that is specific to their gender. While both female and male teachers are targeted by non-state armed groups that oppose the way that education is being provided or are hostile toward institutions perceived as representing government authority, female teachers can face gender-specific types of attacks, including rape, sexual slavery, forced "marriage", and threats or attacks related to prescribing their dress or freedom of movement. When groups are specifically hostile to girls' education, teachers of girl students, whether female or male, are also targeted.

> *"It is very painful to talk about. I had three different husbands…. Even now, I cannot forget the smell, the odor, the horror of them coming to rape me. If you tried to resist – to say no – they would just put a gun to your head and threaten to shoot you. And then they would rape you anyway. It was sexual slavery."*
>
> —Sadiya S., a young teacher abducted from her school in Damasak, Nigeria and held for three years by Boko Haram
>
> GCPEA interview, Maiduguri, Nigeria, February 11, 2018.

Attacks on teachers can take many different forms. Non-state armed groups may exert pressure on teachers and school administrators to teach a curriculum different than the government-approved one, or they may prescribe teacher conduct and dress in conformity with their religious or cultural tenets. Conservative religious groups, for example, may demand segregation of students by gender and insist that only women can

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[31] UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary General, Children and Armed Conflict," S/2019/509, June 20, 2019, https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/509&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC (accessed August 10, 2019), para. 207.

teach girl students, or may not allow female teachers to work at all. For example, in March 2017, Mada Masr reported that Sinai Province fighters in Egypt had "stopped a bus traveling from North Sinai's Arish to schools in nearby Rafah," and threatened the teachers with whipping and mutilation with acid if they did not agree to follow an "Islamic dress code" and to "travel accompanied by a male relative."[32] Similarly, the UN reported that in March 2017, unidentified individuals vandalized the Oxford Public School, in the Ghizer Valley of **Pakistan**, and threatened to bomb the school if female teachers did not cover themselves."[33]

Female teachers may also experience the same abuses as their female students, including rape, abduction, forced "marriage," and recruitment. For example, when Boko Haram attacked the Zanna Mobarti Primary School in Damasak, Nigeria, in November 2014, some teachers were abducted along with several hundred children. Sadiya S., a young teacher at the school, was held in captivity for three years, during which time she was kept in a locked room for extended periods of time and raped repeatedly.[34]

> "The militia were coming to the school regularly to check whether soldiers were in our school. When they came, we ran away... When the soldiers came, they were also looking for militia members, who they suspected of being in our school... Finally, I decided to get christened [and join the militia] to protect myself."
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> —Elodie N., a 15-year-old female student from a village near Kananga, Congo
>
> GCPEA interview, Kananga, Congo, November 4, 2018.

Military Use of Schools

GCPEA has previously noted that "government security forces and non-state armed groups are often attracted by the location, solid structure, and ready facilities found in schools, universities, and other education institutions, and use "these sites in a variety of ways, including as military bases, shelters, weapons caches, and outposts."[35] The presence of armed parties, whether a non-state armed group or a government force, in and around schools, exposes students and teachers to increased risks, including the risk of retaliatory attacks. The military use of schools increases the risk that school buildings and infrastructure will be damaged or destroyed, that teaching and other supplies will be looted, and that both students and teaching staff will be too afraid to go to the school, increasing the likelihood that education will be disrupted. The presence of armed forces in or near schools also increases the risk that students will be exposed to a range of abuse, including violence and recruitment. It presents particular dangers for female students, including a heightened risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

In the context of armed conflict, both government security forces and non-state armed groups have used schools for military purposes, including as detention areas, and have held and raped women and girls in the schools. For example, in Iraq the UN reported in January 2017 that the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) had used schools for military purposes including to house abducted Yazidi women until they could be sold off to fighters for sexual slavery. As of the end of 2018, the Kurdistan Regional Government estimated that there were "1,427 women and girls" still missing.[36] In Myanmar, the Tatmadaw (government armed forces) used schools to detain ethnic Rohingya during the October 2016 violence in northern Rakhine State; Tatmadaw soldiers reportedly took women and girls to schools, among other places, and raped them. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in 2017 that it had documented numerous rapes in a number of contexts, including that "women and

Pakistani students in Lahore return to school under high alert security after the December 16, 2014 attack by the Pakistani Taliban on the Army Public School in Peshawar, January 1, 2015.
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girls would be rounded up by military and several of them would be taken to nearby schools, mosques, houses or the forest/jungle to be gang raped."[37]

Long-Term Consequences

Abuses are committed against female students and teachers during attacks on schools and following abduction or recruitment from schools. But the suffering and impact does not end there; girls and young women often continue to experience a wide range of harmful repercussions long after the immediate attack, including loss of education, child and forced "marriage", early pregnancy, and stigma associated with sexual violence and children born of war-time rape.

Lost Education

One of the most devastating long-term impacts for girls is often the loss of education. As discussed throughout this report, girls' access to education is, not surprisingly, severely hampered by deteriorating security. The long-term consequences of attacks on education create almost insurmountable obstacles for girls to return to school or enjoy the benefits associated with gaining an education. Plan International has reported that, "if current

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[32] No safe routes to schools: Sinai teachers intercepted by Islamic State loyalists," Mada Masr, March 5, 2017, (accessed August 15, 2019). See also, "Province of Sinai militants release footage of religious policing in North Sinai," Mada Masr, March 29, 2017, https://madamasr.com/en/2017/03/29/news/u/province-of-sinai-militants-release-footage-of-religious-policing-in-north-sinai/ (accessed August 23, 2019)

[33] UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary General, Children and Armed Conflict," S/2018/465, May 16, 2018, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_72_865_s_2018_465.pdf (accessed April 20, 2019), para. 238.

[34] Ibid., p. 36.

[35] See GCPEA, "Protecting Schools and Universities From Military Use," http://www.protectingeducation.org/restricting-military-use-and-occupation.

[36] UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence," S/2019/280, para. 50.

[37] OHCHR, Report of OHCHR mission to Bangladesh: Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016 (Geneva: OHCHR, February 3, 2017), https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MM/FlashReport3Feb2017.pdf, pp. 21.

Delphine Bikajuri is principal of GEPS Youpwe, a government primary school in Douala, Cameroon. Her daughter was kidnapped from her high school along with 150 other students.
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"[After the attack], I went home. I was too afraid and decided not to go back. I told my parents I would never go back to school.... Before [the attack], I was so passionate to study and achieve my dream [of being a lawyer]. But now, this experience completely demoralized me…"

—Hauwa M., a 16-year-old student when her school was attacked in northeastern Nigeria
GCPEA interview, Damaturu, Nigeria, February 7, 2018.

trends continue, by 2030 only one in three girls in crisis-affected countries will have completed upper secondary school."[38] As the security situation worsens in and around schools, parents often pull their children out of school as a precautionary measure. During its field research, GCPEA heard repeatedly from parents, teachers, and students that parents are often more worried about the safety of their daughters, especially due to increased risks of sexual violence, and generally more likely to keep their daughters out of school due to insecurity.

Armed conflict in general and attacks on teachers specifically result in teachers fleeing insecure areas; the absence of trained teachers is an additional obstacle to ensuring uninterrupted access to education in emergency settings. Targeted attacks on female teachers create additional barriers for girls' education, especially in contexts in which parents will not allow their daughters to attend school with male teachers or armed parties insist that girls only be taught by female teachers. When girls' education is suspended or ended prematurely due to attacks on schools and teachers, there are long-term consequences for the training of future generations of female teachers.[39]

Being out of school for even a short period renders girls and young women vulnerable to many risks, including child and forced "marriage", which further diminishes the chance for girls to return to school due to pregnancy, parenting, household responsibilities, or husbands, in-laws, or schools forbidding them to return. The UN Team of International Experts on the situation in the Kasai, Congo, reported that there had been an increase in early marriages in the region as a result of the conflict.[40] Similarly, virtually all principals interviewed by GCPEA in the province of Kasai Central reported that there had been an increase in child marriages of girl students from their schools. The principals stressed that widespread sexual violence during the conflict had caused parents to fear that their daughters would not be able to marry if they were victims of rape. As a result, parents had increasingly opted to marry their daughters early as a perceived form of protection.[41]

Stigma and Social Exclusion

Women and girls who have suffered abduction, forcible recruitment, sexual violence and a range of other abuse, experience serious long-term mental and physical health consequences. Their suffering is often compounded by the stigma and social exclusion that they suffer as victims of sexual violence, as well as their perceived association with militia groups. Ridicule and rejection by family and friends is particularly painful; stigma often prevents survivors from returning to school and seeking medical and psycho-social care. Even girls and young women who have overcome multiple obstacles to return to school after an attack often face significant barriers to reintegration and suffer pervasive stigma, emotional distress, and trauma that negatively affect their learning outcomes. Many continue to feel insecure in school and on school routes long after the attack.[42]

"I went back to school in September 2017, but classmates called me names and said I was a 'wife of the militia.' They laugh at me and make fun of me, even though they do not know how much I have suffered."

—Joséphine N., a 17-year-old high school student at the time she was abducted from her school by militia men and raped in the Kasai region of Congo
GCPEA interview, Kananga, Congo, November 1, 2018.

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[38] Plan International, "Left Out, Left Behind: Adolescent girls' secondary education in crises," June 2019, https://plan-uk.org/file/plan-uk-left-out-left-behind-reportpdf/download?token=g5uBr7L5 (accessed September 24, 2019), p. 8.

[39] See Robin Kirk, "The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls' Education: Advocacy Brief," (UNESCO: 2006), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000145990. See also Plan International, "Left Out, Left Behind: Adolescent girls' secondary education in crises."

[40] Human Rights Council, "Detailed Report of the Team of International Experts on the situation in the Kasais (Rapport détaillé de l'Equipe d'experts internationaux sur la situation au Kasaï)," A/HRC/38/CRP.1, June 29, 2018, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1637440?ln=en (accessed September 8, 2018)," para. 416.

[41] GCPEA, "All that I Have Lost," April 2019, pp. 45-47.

[42] Plan International, "Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Voices from the Lake Chad Basin," August 2018, https://plan-international.org/publications/adolescent-girls-crisis-lake-chad-basin#download-options (accessed September 22, 2019).

A student goes over blackboard notes for a class in emergency preparedness in case of armed attack at a school in Baigaï, a village near the Nigerian border in Cameroon's Far North region.

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All girls and women have the right to education without fear of threat, harassment, abduction, forced recruitment or sexual and gender-based violence. Governments have a responsibility to protect schools and ensure that they are safe for students and teachers and to adopt effective measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish serious human rights violations. This includes an obligation to protect female students and teachers from the recruitment, abduction, sexual and gender-based violence, torture and other ill-treatment documented in this report, and to develop more effective responses to alleviate the harm that many have suffered due to these abuses.[43]

The Safe Schools Declaration is a tool that all countries should endorse and implement in a gender-responsive way to take into account the specific ways that females are targeted and/or impacted by attacks on education.[44] The following recommendations draw on GCPEA's recommendations in previous reports such as its guidance on gender-responsive implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration, *What can be done to better protect women and girls from attacks on education and military use of educational institutions*.[45]

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[43] The abuses documented in this report violate a number of rights enshrined in international law. The right to life, security of person and bodily integrity, and the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment are guaranteed by numerous international human rights treaties. Sexual violence, which may include rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage and pregnancy, is recognized as a violation of these fundamental rights.

[44] These recommendations were reviewed by GCPEA's working group on protecting women and girls, which is comprised of education in emergencies and gender experts from a range of UN agencies and international NGOs. The recommendations are not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

[45] Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, "What can been done to better protect women and girls from attacks on education and military use of educational institutions," 2018, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what_can_be_done_to_better_protect_women_and_girls.pdf; and "Technical Guide: What Teachers and School Administrators Can Do to Protection Education from Attack," April 2017, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/docu-

Priority Recommendations

Governments should adopt a no-tolerance approach to attacks on education, including abuses against girls and women in the context of such attacks, as a matter of utmost urgency.

As an overarching recommendation, GCPEA calls on all governments to endorse and implement the *Safe Schools Declaration,*[46] including by taking immediate steps to account for the specific needs and experiences of female students and education personnel. The international community, particularly UN agencies, donor governments, and international humanitarian actors, should support national governments to fully implement the commitments in the Declaration in a gender-responsive manner.

In addition, GCPEA urges the following priority action to end attacks on education and address the specific impact of these attacks on women and girls (see also Expanded Recommendations, which include citations).

To Government Authorities

- **Prioritize the protection of civilians in conflict**. Take immediate steps to prevent abductions and sexual violence against female students and education personnel and ensure that this priority is translated into effective military and civilian policies, including by giving a standing order to security forces to respond immediately to calls for help and protection when an attack is imminent or underway at a school;

- **End military use of schools.** Ensure the full implementation of the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict as a minimum standard and train national defense and security forces on the prohibition of sexual violence and on ending the use of educational institutions for military purposes;

- **Create systematic early warning systems**. Provide school administrators, students, teachers, Ministry of Education personnel, and local communities with accurate, up-to-date security information, including specific information on the risks of sexual violence; and enlist the input of those most affected by attacks on schools, including girls and teachers, to create early warning systems and participatory risk mapping and planning;

- **Ensure that schools and non-formal education settings have emergency communication protocols**. Improved communications systems are essential, especially in remote areas, to enable school administrators, teachers, and other education personnel to alert students, and where possible caregivers, and take appropriate action when a threat is imminent.

- **Investigate and prosecute sexual violence.** Impartially investigate and prosecute alleged perpetrators of attacks on education, including sexual violence committed against students and teachers in the context of such attacks, and hold accountable any high-level officers who knew or should have known about abuses committed by those under their command but did not take appropriate action. Ensure that anyone convicted of such crimes is prohibited from remaining in or rejoining the security forces in any location;

- **Invest in emergency preparedness training** and monitoring capacity. Provide teachers and other formal and non-formal education personnel with appropriate emergency preparedness training, including by conducting regular school drills and review of security protocols, to ensure that students and staff understand what types

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ments/technical_guide_2017.pdf. http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what_ministries.pdf. See also, GCPEA, "What Schools Can Do to Protect Education from Attack and Military Use," September 2016, pp. 38-39, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/what_schools.pdf, (accessed August 30, 2017); and "What Ministries Can Do to Protect Education from Attack," December 2015.

[46] The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express support for protecting education from attack during times of armed conflict; the importance of the continuation of safe education during war; and the implementation of concrete measures to deter the military use of schools. See Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, "Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict," http://www.protectingeducation.org/safeschoolsdeclaration.

of events trigger an emergency response and to enhance their ability to implement relevant security protocols;

- **Strengthen monitoring and reporting.** Strengthen and systematize data collection related to school security, including on specific threats to female students and teachers. Strengthen monitoring and reporting of attacks on formal and non-formal education and military use of schools and universities, including by collecting and reporting data that is disaggregated by gender, age, level(s) of formal and/or non-formal education, as well as type of school (all-girl, all-boy, mixed) affected;

- **Report on sexual violence.** Document and report incidents of sexual violence, and include the location of the violence at school or on route to school, and during or in the wake of an attack on a school, so that this violence can be captured as attacks on education; and

- **Develop targeted reintegration interventions.** Develop a comprehensive strategy, of adequate duration and backed by sufficient funding, for the reintegration of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, abductions, or recruitment and use, as well as their children born of wartime rape. Include measures to increase availability of and access to services for the physical and psychological treatment of sexual violence;

To Leaders of Non-State Armed Groups

- **Cease attacks on schools.** End all attacks on education, including attacks on schools, students, and teachers, and the specific abuses against female students, teachers and other education personnel documented in this report;

- **End all recruitment and use of children.** Stop recruitment and use of children under 18 years of age and suspend from their positions, pending investigations, any commanders who are credibly alleged to have recruited and used child soldiers, including the use of girls for any reason;

- **Prevent sexual and gender-based violence.** Take all steps necessary to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by combatants, including by halting all forced and child marriages, and hold combatants accountable, in accordance with international standards; and

- **Comply with international law.** Take all measures necessary to ensure that combatants strictly comply with international humanitarian law and the principles of international human rights law, including by issuing command orders, adopting internal policies, or creating a code of conduct that incorporate international humanitarian law obligations regarding the protection of education and the prohibition against sexual violence and recruitment and use of children.

To the International Community

- **Support recommendations in this report.** Privately and publicly urge relevant governments to adopt the recommendations included in this report, and increase donor and humanitarian agency support for the interventions recommended;

- **Support enhanced protection measures.** Expand support for enhanced security measures, including emergency communications systems, especially for rural communities, systematic early warning systems, the development of comprehensive school-based safety and security plans, and programs to provide security training for educators and students;

- **Support school security as component of UN peacekeeping mandates.** Ensure that peacekeeping missions have the mandate where relevant and the capacity to monitor, report, and respond to attacks on schools, military use of schools, and abductions and recruitment of students and education personnel.

- **Support specialized outreach to female victims of attacks on education.** Support the expansion of specialized outreach to female survivors of attacks on education, including those who have suffered from recruitment, abduction, sexual violence, and other abuses documented in this report, in order to identify the

Names of missing Chibok school girls kidnapped by Boko Haram insurgency five years ago are displayed during the 5th year anniversary of their abduction, in Abuja, Nigeria April 14, 2019.
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numbers of survivors and their specific needs. Continue to support, and where possible, expand the provision of medical and psychosocial assistance to survivors of attacks on education, taking into account the specific needs and experiences of women and girls;

- **Support targeted reintegration interventions.** Support the development of comprehensive country-specific strategies, of adequate duration and backed by sufficient funding, for the reintegration of girls formerly associated with non-state armed groups;

- **Support international accountability measures.** Continue to promote and support international accountability measures with relevant governments, including through international channels, such as the International Criminal Court, the UN Human Rights Council, UN Security Council, and UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies, among others; and

- **Support efforts to strengthen monitoring and reporting at national level.** International organizations and influential governments should advocate with conflict-affected governments to strengthen and systematize data collection related to school security, including data on specific threats to the safety of female students and teachers and incidents and threats of sexual violence that occur at or on the way to schools, or before, during, or in the wake of an attack on a school, so that this violence can also be captured as attacks on education.

(cover) Girl abducted by Kamuina Nsapu militia during an attack on her secondary school in Dimbelenge in November 2016. She was later assaulted at the "tshiota" (initiation fire), and harassed by soldiers until she abandoned her school and fled the area.

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