Resource Overview
This resource provides an instructional plan to raise awareness and encourage action against the occupation of world schools by army and rebel (non-governmental) groups.

Targeted Age
Students aged 14 to 18 years old.

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to:

1. **Learn** that schools around the world are often seized by military and rebel groups.
2. **Describe** the impact military occupations have on both schools and students.
3. **Understand** how organizations advocate to governments for change.
4. **Express** opinions and **take action** related to this issue.

Depending upon level of students:

5. **Analyze** how and why schools are used by military forces in areas of armed conflict.
6. **Explain** how the military use of schools can be a human rights violation against children and teachers.
7. **Understand** how local and global organizations advocate with governments to protect schools from military occupation and uphold international standards in ensuring the universal right to education.
Pacing
This resource consists of six equal parts. Each part should take approximately 15-20 minutes, depending upon level of students. Teachers can allocate 90-120 minutes for the entire lesson, depending upon available schedules and students' level.
Part 1: Introduction and Discussion
Part 2: Vocabulary
Part 3: New Information and Debate
Part 4: Pre-Writing
Part 5: Gathering More Evidence
Part 6: Taking Action

Brief Definition of the Issue for Teacher
Around the world, armies and rebel groups are hijacking schools and universities, turning places of learning into places of war. In these instances, armed forces and non-state armed groups convert schools into barracks and military bases by stacking assault rifles in hallways, hiding grenades under desks, and parking armored vehicles in gymnasiums. Classrooms are overrun with makeshift beds, playing fields are encircled with barbed wire, and playgrounds are transformed into training grounds for soldiers.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child\(^1\), an international law, establishes that all children have the right to free primary education and accessible secondary education. This right to education, however, is meaningless when student lives and safety are placed in harm's way as a result of military occupations of schools.

Part I: Introduction and Discussion
(15-20 Minutes)
1. Share the following quote with students:
   “I had nothing against the soldiers when they were outside the school... But when they moved into the school, I feared there would be an attack on the school, so... I withdrew my children... If there was a hit on the grounds, the children would be hit.”
2. Assign students to pairs, or small groups, to discuss the following questions:
   — Who do you think is speaking?
   — What part of the world, or country, do you think they live in?
   — Why do you think the soldiers moved into the school?
   — What do you think happened after this?
3. Ask each pair/group to share its predictions with the class.
   Optional: Have students take notes in the following graphic organizer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th>Reason for Prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^1\) Article 28 of the Convention on the rights of the child reads:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular: (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all; (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need; (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means; (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children; (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.”

The full text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found at http://www.unicef.org/crc/.

See the additional resources section at the end of this lesson plan for more teaching resources regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Part II: Vocabulary (if appropriate for student level) (10-20 Minutes)

1. Write the word “barracks” for whole class to view, or have the words already on the board. Ask for a definition from the class.

2. Define the meaning of word if the students did not come up with the correct definition.
   Ex: barracks: buildings used to house members of the military

3. Practice how the word might be used in context. Ask the students to use the word in a context.
   Ex: The army troops slept in the crowded barracks.

4. Introduce students to the following vocabulary words, as appropriate by level:
   • detention
   • disturbing
   • facilities
   • human rights
   • interrogation
   • advocate
   • defensive
   • documentation
   • offensive
   • insurgents
   • violation
   • torture
   • non-governmental organization (NGO)
   • non-state armed groups
   • interfere
   • compelling

5. Explain that they will need to know each of these words for this lesson.

6. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to define each word and to use each in context. Optional: Teachers can have students complete the following graphic organizer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Word</th>
<th>Word Definition</th>
<th>Word in Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Barracks</td>
<td>1. Buildings used to house members of the military</td>
<td>1. The army troops slept in the crowded barracks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part III: New Information and Debate (15-20 Minutes)

1. Revisit the quote from the Lesson Introduction and the predictions they made.

2. Tell students that the quote was from the mother of children whose school had been taken over by the military.

3. Explain that they will now learn more information about this issue.
   Students should take notes of key facts and ideas. They will refer back to these notes throughout the lesson.

4. Present the following facts to students.
   • Around the world, armed soldiers and fighters take schools by force and use them for military purposes. In doing so, they often endanger the lives and safety of students and teachers, and violate these students’ right to education.
   • Schools have been converted into military bases when operations are planned and implemented. Classrooms have been filled with beds for soldiers to sleep in, turning them into barracks. Playing fields have been encircled with barbed wire, and used as places to drill and train soldiers. Armies and rebels have established fortifications atop of school buildings from which to survey the surrounding area, and they have positioned snipers in classroom windows. They have used schools to store and even hide weapons and ammunition, and parked armoured vehicles in gymnasiums.
   • The result is that students are forced to either stay at home and interrupt their education or study alongside armed fighters, potentially placing themselves in the line of fire. Sometimes this lasts for only a few days, but often it can last for weeks, or even months and years.

   Teacher can ask 2-3 student volunteers to share how they would feel if a military took over their school. Prompt further discussion by asking whether it matters what purpose the school is used for: a place to sleep, a place to store weapons, a place to detain people, a place to train soldiers, a place to observe the enemy, a place to shoot from. Prompt further discussion by asking if it matters
whether students and teachers are at the school at the time that the army uses the school. Teacher can try to get a variety of perspectives and encourage students to debate the different opinions. As opinions are expressed, teachers can encourage students to take notes.

- Between 2005 and 2012, national armed forces and non-state armed groups used schools and universities in at least 24 countries with conflicts across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and South America.

  Depending upon the level of the students, and if Internet access is available, show students the map of 24 countries where military use of schools has been documented, available at:

  Teacher can ask what advantages and disadvantages might come from having a military or army move into a school, and set up a base or barracks there. Teacher should encourage students to debate the different perspectives. As perspectives are expressed, teachers should encourage students to take notes.

- Students and teachers have been caught in schools as they came under attack from enemy forces. In the worst cases, students and teachers have been injured and even killed.

  Teacher can ask why they think militaries or armies chose to set up bases in schools, as opposed to other places. (Reasons may include: schools often have walls or fences that provide extra security; schools are often located in the center of towns or villages; many schools are run by the government, so government forces believe there is an affiliation with the schools; many schools have water, electricity, a kitchen, toilets and even showers, all of which are useful to soldiers.) Teacher should encourage students to express different ideas. As ideas are expressed, teacher should encourage students to take notes.

- Military use of schools interferes with students’ access to education.

  Depending upon students’ level, teacher can ask students to:

  Describe how their school experience would be different if tomorrow their school was occupied by the military. What things would be different? What would be challenging for them? How would they feel about attending school?

  How might teachers or parents respond if the school was taken over by an army?

  As ideas are expressed, teachers should encourage students to take notes.

- When schools and universities are used for military purposes, students don’t attend school as often, or drop out altogether, to avoid having to study alongside armed fighters. Some students who drop out of school never return to studies. Female students in particular are likely to stop going to the school, because of real or perceived concerns about sexual harassment by the armed fighters.

  New students are less likely to enroll in a school being used for military purposes.

  (Citation for above information: Report of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Lessons in War: Military Use of Schools and Other Education Institutions during Conflict, 2011, available online at:

5. If classroom or students have internet access watch a 2-minute video on the topic with video and photos of schools being used, available at:
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cabVbazqu0k

  Depending upon students’ skill levels, consider providing a note-taking guide. For example:

**GUIDED LECTURE NOTES:**

1. What is the issue: ________________________________

2. Consequences of this happening:
   a. ___________________________________________
   b. ___________________________________________
   c. ___________________________________________

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3. Classmate's perspectives: ______________________
   a.________________________________________
   b.________________________________________
   c.________________________________________
4. Where does this occur? _______________________
5. Why is this a problem?
   a.________________________________________
   b.________________________________________
   c.________________________________________
   d.________________________________________
   e.________________________________________

Part IV: Pre-writing
(15-20 Minutes)

Given the new vocabulary words and information from the previous section, ask students to:

1. Read the following three quotes:

   “Some men came to our village. I tried to escape, but they took me to jail. Except it wasn’t a jail—it was my old school. It’s ironic—they took me there to torture me, in the same place I used to go to school to learn . . . They had taken over the school and made it into a torture center.”
   —KHALID, 15, SYRIA

   “When they tortured the old man here, we got very scared. They beat him and electrocuted him right in the courtyard of the school. It was during recess.”
   —AHLAM, 13, YEMEN

   “[Al-Shabaab fighters] set up a [surface to air rocket launcher] and started launching from inside the school compound. They set it up in the playing area . . . There was incoming fire back at our direction. There were five rockets hitting around the school compound. One landed as we were released and it killed eight students.”
   —XARID, 18, SOMALIA

   For more advanced students with internet access: encourage them to find longer testimonies inside Human Rights Watch reports online. Depending upon research skills of students, give more or less direction to find:

   (1) The case of Tankuppa High School in the report Sabotaged Schooling: Naxalite Attacks and Police Occupation of Schools in India's Bihar and Jharkand States (pages 28-29), available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india1209webwcover_0.pdf


2. Select the quote or case study that is most compelling or disturbing.

3. Write, in one or two paragraphs, about how it supports the facts previously provided, and why you selected this quote or case study as the most compelling/disturbing.

   Depending upon level of student, responses should be supported by at least two pieces of evidence from their notes, prior knowledge, or other sources.

Part V: Gathering More Evidence
(15-20 Minutes)

1. Teacher can ask student volunteers to share their writing with the class.

   Teacher can ensure that students explain why they selected the particular quote or case study and how they have argued that it supports the facts previously provided.

2. To extend the conversation, teacher should ask students to brainstorm solutions to address the problem of armies and rebels using schools for military purposes.

   Optional: To deepen the discussion, teacher may use the following prompts:
   a. Is it easier—or more difficult—to convince an army to promise not to use a school in the future if it is already using schools, versus if the army is not using schools?
   b. When armies need places to stay, what alternatives should they consider to taking over an occupying a school?
c. How might solutions or responses to the practice of military use of schools change if you are trying to get rebel groups to change their behavior versus government armies?

d. Is the military use of schools a practice that people should try to stop, or is it a natural consequence of war?

e. What could students themselves do to help end this practice of the military use of schools?

**Part VI: Taking Action**
**(15-20 Minutes)**

1. **Inform** students that one way they can take action is to participate in the “End Military Use of Schools” campaign: [www.emuscampaign.org](http://www.emuscampaign.org)

2. Other options for taking action include:

   a. Write a letter to government leaders voicing your opinion on this issue.

   b. Create a list of solutions that can be implemented to address this issue.

   c. Develop an original campaign and explain its mission, goals, and process.

   For more advanced students:

   d. Read two “opinion”/Op-Ed pieces written by Human Rights Watch researchers, then write their own Op-Ed piece expressing their own views:

      —“A law that can make the Philippines a leader,” in the *Philippines Daily Inquirer*: [http://opinion.inquirer.net/41311/a-law-that-can-make-ph-a-leader](http://opinion.inquirer.net/41311/a-law-that-can-make-ph-a-leader)


      Teachers are encouraged to add other ideas to this list of options and/or modify the expectations as appropriate for their students.

**Additional Resources:**

**The Laws of War / International Humanitarian Law**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provides the “Exploring Humanitarian Law” education program that introduces young people between 13 and 18 years of age to the basic rules and principles of the laws of war. The program uses case studies, and builds upon students’ own experiences and way of thinking to examine the destructiveness of war.

Visit the “Exploring Humanitarian Law” virtual campus at: [http://www.ehl.icrc.org](http://www.ehl.icrc.org)

**The Convention on the Rights of the Child**

UNICEF, the United Nation’s children’s agency, offers a collection of lesson plans, videos, multimedia, and stories intended to raise students’ awareness of child and family rights, specifically looking at the international treaty, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Information is arranged by topic and student level.

Visit UNICEF’s collection of teacher resources at: [http://teachunicef.org](http://teachunicef.org)

**Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights Watch is one of the world’s leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights. By focusing international attention where human rights are violated, we give voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes. Our rigorous, objective investigations and strategic, targeted advocacy build intense pressure for action and raise the cost of human rights abuse. For more than 30 years, Human Rights Watch has worked tenaciously to lay the legal and moral groundwork for deep-rooted change and has fought to bring greater justice and security to people around the world.

Students and teachers can watch a video about how we work at: [http://www.hrw.org/about](http://www.hrw.org/about)