



End Military Use of Schools (EMUS) Background Information

Around the world, armies and rebel groups are taking over schools and universities, and turning safe places of learning into places of war. Human Rights Watch has documented the military use of schools in more than 25 countries since 2009. These reports show that time and time again, when these schools are used for military purposes, it either endangers or completely destroys the students' right to education.

Schools and universities have been used as:

- Bases, barracks and military training facilities.
- Detention facilities and interrogation and torture centers.
- Defensive or offensive positions, including observation posts.
- Weapons and ammunition storage.

Military use of schools and universities can result in:

- The school's conversion into a legitimate military target under international humanitarian law.
- Death or injury to students, teachers and school staff.
- Damage or destruction to education buildings and support structures, requiring expensive reconstruction and rehabilitation.
- Long-term school closures.
- Displacement of students to schools away from their home communities.
- Declines in student attendance, enrollment, and rates of transition to higher levels.
- Declines in availability of teachers.
- Negative psychological impacts on students, teachers and communities.
- Disproportionate impacts on girls.

EMUS Campaign encourages governments to:

- Recognize the incidence and impact of military use.
- Adhere to international law.
- Monitor and report military use of schools.
- Take preventative measures to avoid military use of schools.
- Improve negotiations with national armed forces and armed groups to stop or prevent their use of schools.
- Seek accountability from those who use schools in a manner that violates international humanitarian law.
- Strengthen legal standards.
- Incorporate new rules into their policies for their armed forces to say that they will not use schools for military purposes in the future through the *Draft Lucens Guidelines to Protect Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.

Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)

These Guidelines have been drawn up with the aim of reducing the use of schools and universities by parties to armed conflict in support of their military effort, and to minimize the negative impact that armed conflict has on students' safety and education. They are intended to serve as guidance for those involved in the planning and execution of military operations, in relation to decisions over the use and targeting of institutions dedicated to education. These Guidelines may also serve as a tool for inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations engaged in monitoring, programming, and advocacy related to the conduct of armed conflict.

States and intergovernmental bodies are urged to encourage all parties to armed conflicts to act in accordance with these Guidelines, and help enable them to do so. The Guidelines have been formulated taking into account the following basic considerations:

- The Guidelines respect international law as it stands; they do not propose changes to it. They are not legally binding in themselves and do not affect existing obligations under international law. The Guidelines are intended to lead to a shift in behavior that will lead to better protections for schools and universities in times of armed conflict and, in particular, to a reduction in their use by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in support of the military effort. States and non-state parties to armed conflicts are invited to adopt the Guidelines in the spirit in which they are promulgated, and to adapt them in practice to suit their specific circumstances.
- The Guidelines are based on what is practically achievable. They acknowledge that parties to armed conflict are invariably faced with difficult dilemmas requiring pragmatic solutions.
- The Guidelines reflect evidence of good practice already applied by some parties to armed conflict for the protection of schools and universities during military operations. This evidence includes statements of intended practice contained in such documents as training handbooks, promulgated doctrine, and legal manuals.
- The Guidelines have been produced for the use of all parties to armed conflict. They are intended, therefore, for wide dissemination and implementation by both states and non-state parties to armed conflicts.
- While the Guidelines have been produced specifically for application during armed conflict, they may also be useful and instructive for post-conflict situations and other comparable situations, including those with the potential to turn into armed conflict.