



Statement by Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarčič on the International Day to Protect Education from Attack

Brussels, 8 September 2023

Every child has the right to education. Every child should feel safe in and around school. Yet conflicts and humanitarian emergencies are preventing millions of children from accessing quality learning, causing profound consequences for whole generations of children and their communities worldwide.

Ahead of the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, the EU reaffirms its strong and unwavering commitment to promote and protect the right of every child to grow up in a safe environment and have access to quality education.

Sadly, more than 3,000 attacks on education were identified in 2022, an increase of almost 20% over the previous year. Almost one-third of all attacks took place in just three countries: Ukraine, Myanmar, and Burkina Faso.

Examples from across the world paint a disturbing picture. Deliberate targeting of schools, students and teachers in Central and West Africa has led to an unprecedented total of 13,371 schools being closed as a result of conflict and insecurity.

Moreover, since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine last year, more than 3,750 education institutions have suffered bombing and shelling, with more than 1,300 schools completely destroyed. The EU has dedicated over €100 million for the rehabilitation of damaged school buildings in Ukraine. Around 5.7 million school-aged children in Ukraine experience disruptions to learning. According to the latest enrolment data, only around one third of students in primary and secondary education are learning fully in-person.

Meanwhile, Afghan girls faced yet another year being deprived from access to post-primary education. Since taking power in August 2021, the Taliban has ruined the hopes of many of them to access secondary or tertiary education. There is fear of a lost generation of young girls and women in the country.

The EU strongly condemns these targeted attacks against education and the military use of force against what should be safe environments for children in which to grow.

Collective engagement of the international community and an increase in public funding, as called for by the European Commission and UNICEF during the joint High-Level Conference on Education in Emergencies held in March 2023 in Brussels, is urgently needed.

The EU continues its strong mobilisation for education in emergencies funding, dedicating 10% of its humanitarian aid budget to support access, quality and protection of education. For next year, the EU has set aside around €157 million to support learning for children and youth caught in humanitarian emergencies.

For More Information

[Factsheet - Education in Emergencies](#)

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