Third International Conference on Safe Schools
(27-29 de mayo de 2019)

Conference Report
The Conference in Palma de Mallorca
was hosted by Spain with the support of the champions on the Safe Schools Declaration, Norway and Argentina.
FOREWORD

Arancha González Laya,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation

Spain is convinced that it is essential for us to systematically incorporate a humanitarian perspective into the many facets of our external action. Respecting and promoting international humanitarian law, protecting civilians, training our troops participating in peacekeeping missions, providing principles-based humanitarian assistance—all of these have been and continue to be a constant part of our actions, both in the United Nations and other international forums.

Spain has undertaken many commitments that particularly target children affected by armed conflict. In 2007, we subscribed to the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. In 2015 we signed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, which directly mention children, as well as the Safe Schools Declaration and its Guidelines. In 2017, we endorsed the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. Furthermore, several months ago we joined the Global Coalition for the Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers created by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

Humanitarian diplomacy also involves a commitment to raising awareness of international humanitarian law and to making the humanitarian and protection agendas a priority for States. Therefore, Spain decided to host the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, held in Palma de Mallorca on 28 and 29 May 2019, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Safe Schools Declaration constitutes an absolute political commitment to guaranteeing the right to education in situations of armed conflict. Since its approval in 2015, 101 States have committed to protecting children and teachers in conflict situations, and to avoiding the use of schools and universities as military resources or targets, thus contributing to preserving the civilian nature of these facilities.

At the Conference in Palma de Mallorca, we focused on two thematic pillars. The first was the gender perspective, and the different ways in which the military use of educational facilities and attacks on education itself affect boys and girls, women and men—a key approach for meeting their specific needs. The second was the improvement of mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and allocation of responsibility regarding attacks on education, to advance on prevention and response.

The presence, among the speakers and other participants, of more 300 representatives from the principal international institutions and organizations in this area, and of Ministries of Defence, of Education, and of Foreign Affairs from 92 countries enable us to consider this event as a major step forward on the path towards effective protection of the human right to education. This broad international response also included the support and involvement of Spanish institutions at the national, regional, and local levels, all contributing to making this event the greatest possible
success. Here, it is especially noteworthy that Her Majesty Queen Letizia of Spain participated in the closing ceremony of the Conference.

This Final Report provides summaries of the presentations, exchanges, and debates over the course of two days. I am convinced that this document will serve to disseminate the work that was done during this Conference, as well as its outcomes, and to leverage them to continue raising awareness worldwide regarding attacks on students, teachers, and educational centres and their military use during armed conflict, as well as to advance towards the goal of universal adhesion to the Safe Schools Declaration.
The organization of international events, with the participation of representatives from governments, international organizations, and leading experts, makes a crucial contribution: raising awareness, creating currents of opinion and, ultimately, stirring society to action. This is because, although people have greater access to information than ever, they need incentives to assess what is truly important when it comes to making decisions.

The success of the Third International Conference on Safe Schools, held in Palma de Mallorca on 28 and 29 May 2019, was due both to the ideals that inspired it—which are inalienable in a free and just society—and to the event’s important outcomes. This is what I am going to focus on here.

In supporting this initiative, armed forces carry out a praiseworthy exercise in humility and dedication, simply by becoming invisible to those whom they are protecting, maintaining a sphere of protection from a distance, aware that their presence in the proximity of schools and educational installations would be a constant reminder of conflict situations. Moreover, by so acting they avoid their very presence being used as an excuse for armed groups to turn up at educational centres and to use these facilities for their own purposes in a conflict situation.

Ultimately, the Ministry of Defence proposes a use of our military that, by deploying the capabilities and the example of the men and women of the Armed Forces of Spain, guarantees conditions enabling universal access to education. Our strong, decisive commitment to the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict is based on a military ideal that considers humility, service and dedication as essential virtues, and education as a fundamental right—and which will, therefore, not tolerate any kind of discrimination in the exercise of that right.

Here, our ambition goes beyond the wishful thinking of imagining safe spaces to be achieved in some vague or distant future. The day-to-day efforts of our troops deployed on peacekeeping operations are already providing these safe havens, making it possible to give shape to a future in peace, now. Our armed forces are committed to peace, which cannot be achieved without educating children. We must create a future of prosperity and freedom in societies that guarantee access to a safe education for all girls and boys, without distinction. The future must not be dominated by war or violence, but by development, education, and peace.

This is why the positive impact of the Conference in Palma de Mallorca—crucial because of the nature of the rights it aspired to protect, and productive because of the results that can be seen in this report—did not end when the event was over. The momentum achieved with this Third International Conference on Safe Schools will enable the organization of an international workshop, coordinated by the Ministries of Defence and of Foreign Affairs of Spain, during the first quarter of 2020. This workshop will be oriented towards a practical realization of the results of the Conference, bringing them into the theatre of peacekeeping operations. Spain is proud of our soldiers’ immaculate record over 30 years of peacekeeping operations. This is why we firmly believe that our experience can, and should, be held up as a model for other armed forces to follow.
Aina Calvo Sastre,
Director of Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

More than 140 million children around the world is estimated to be living in high-intensity conflict zones\(^1\). Besides the serious risks to their physical safety and mental health, their fundamental rights are seriously endangered; this is the case of their right to education, which conditions their entire future life if they are denied basic opportunities for learning and development in their early years. Being aware of this serious situation and the need for a decisive action in favour of childhood, the protection of children and adolescents affected by armed conflict is a priority for Spain’s humanitarian action, as expressed in Spanish Cooperation’s Fifth Master Plan (2018-2021) and Spain’s Humanitarian Action Strategy (2019-2026).

This commitment to protecting children who are trapped in situations of armed conflict, who suffer violence directly or who have been forcibly displaced by it, is being addressed by Spanish Cooperation using different approaches, and following the guidelines of international agencies and of organizations that are working to advance children’s rights, including: in emergency humanitarian response; the protection of displaced persons and refugees; the prevention and eradication of violence, especially against girls and women; education in emergencies and protracted crises; and peacebuilding.

The Spanish International Development Cooperation Agency (AECID) has been following very closely the impetus given to these issues by the Third International Conference on Safe Schools in Palma de Mallorca. Moreover, in addition to our continuing actions to promote the right to education worldwide, we have undertaken to provide continuity to the great efforts made at the Conference and to continue to support this initiative with a practical, on-the-ground approach, in collaboration with the countries that have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. AECID’s contribution will be focused on providing capacity-building and training with a view to making effective the Declaration and its Guidelines to prevent the military use of schools and universities, so that they may be safe spaces for all.

\(^1\) Source: Save the Children.
INTRODUCTION

The Third International Conference on Safe Schools took place from May 27-29, 2019, in Palma de Mallorca. The Conference was hosted by the government of Spain with the support of the governments of Argentina and Norway, and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA).

Delegations of 80 States, and experts from 35 United Nations and civil society organizations came together to discuss practical solutions for improving the protection of education in situations of armed conflict. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Mr. Josep Borrell, opened the conference, and Her Majesty Queen Letizia, closed it. The Conference also saw the participation of the President of the regional government of the Balearic Islands, the Minister of Defence, the Director of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda, and the Director-General for the United Nations and Human Rights. In addition, the conference featured high-level speakers such as UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Stefania Giannini, Education Cannot Wait Executive Director, Yasmine Sherif, and Save the Children International former CEO, Helle Thorning-Schmidt.

Building upon the outcomes of the previous conferences in Oslo in 2015, and Buenos Aires in 2017, the conference provided a forum to raise awareness of the Safe Schools Declaration, an inter-governmental political agreement that provides guidance to states to strengthen the protection of education from attack and restrict the use of schools and universities for military purposes. Coinciding with the fourth anniversary of the Declaration, the conference sought to take stock of progress in implementing the commitments within the Declaration, including the use of the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use.

The two-day conference was preceded by a welcome reception, hosted by Minister Borrell and the local Palma authorities. Also speaking at the reception was Sir Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Diya Nijhowne, GCPEA Executive Director. The Minister officially welcomed countries that had endorsed the Declaration since the 2017 Buenos Aires Conference on Safe Schools.

The conference represented a major step forward in strengthening protections for students, teachers, and educational facilities during armed conflict, with several new countries affirming their commitment to ensuring continuous access to safe education. Nicaragua announced its endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration at the conference, and Benin, Croatia, Equatorial Guinea, Palau, and Samoa endorsed following the conference, showing accelerating commitment and momentum in protecting the right to education in armed conflict.

The Third International Conference was an opportunity for active discussion on challenges and good practices, specifically related to:

- The gendered impact of attacks on education and military use of educational infrastructure;
- Monitoring, reporting, and accountability for attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities; and
- Implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict
The combination of panels, keynote speeches, discussions, and break-out sessions, enabled discussion of good practice in protecting education during armed conflict. Many of the examples shared demonstrated that governments and armed forces are recognizing the negative consequences of military use of schools and have found practical solutions to deter such use.
OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUE OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION

Targeted and indiscriminate attacks on education and military use of schools and universities are all too often a devastating consequence of armed conflict and political violence. They cause death, severe injury, and psychological harm, disproportionately impacting groups who are often already at risk, such as girls and women, minority communities, and persons with disabilities.

Beyond these physical harms, attacks on education reduce access to, and the quality of, education. The multiplier effects that education can bring to the realization of social, economic, and political rights, cannot be achieved if education itself is being attacked. However, instead of schools serving a protective function in situations of armed conflict and insecurity, they are often the sites of violence.

According to research by GCPEA, between 2014 and 2018, more than 14,000 attacks on education were reported in the 34 countries with a systematic pattern of attacks on education. Within the same timeframe, armed forces and armed groups used schools and universities for military purposes such as bases, barracks, firing positions, armories, and detention centres, in at least 30 countries. Military use of schools can lead to an increased risk of violence, including sexual violence, and child recruitment and use, due to the presence of soldiers or combatants within the school.

Girls and women may be differently impacted by attacks on education and military use of schools. In at least 18 countries worldwide, women and girls were targets of attacks on education because of their gender, including in incidents of sexual violence, and in attacks aimed at repressing or stopping girls and women from learning or teaching.

The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment – championed by Argentina and Norway – that provides countries the opportunity to express political support for the protection of students, teachers, schools, and universities during times of armed conflict. The Declaration was developed through consultations with states in a process led by Norway and Argentina in Geneva in early 2015 and was opened for endorsement at the Oslo Conference on Safe Schools on May 29, 2015.

By June 2020, 104 countries around the world had joined the Declaration, including 28 African Union, 24 European Union, and 19 Organization of American States members.
How does a country endorse the Declaration?

The Norwegian government is the depositary of endorsements. States can confirm their endorsement at any time by sending an endorsement letter (sample letter available here) to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs via its embassies or permanent missions or directly at: Seksjon.for.humanitaere.sporsmal@mfa.no.

States can also announce their endorsement by making a public announcement during a formal meeting in a multilateral forum, followed by a written endorsement issued to Norway according to the same procedure.

By endorsing the Declaration, countries agree to take specific steps to reduce the risk of attacks on education, including: collecting, or facilitating the collection of, data on attacks on education; investigating and prosecuting crimes involving education; assisting victims; and supporting humanitarian programming that promotes the continuation of safe education during war time. By joining the Declaration, states endorse and commit to use the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, a practical tool to guide behaviour during military operations.

The Guidelines provide guidance on how to reduce the military use of educational facilities and mitigate the impact of such use on students’ safety and education. They do not change the law – they merely facilitate compliance with the existing law by effecting a change in practice and behaviour through integration into military policies, legislation, doctrine, and application of good practice. The Guidelines reflect what is practically achievable and acknowledge that parties to armed conflict are invariably faced with difficult dilemmas requiring pragmatic solutions.

Map of endorsing states
Endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration is only the first step in supporting students and teachers under attack in war zones around the world. To safeguard learning in armed conflict, the Declaration commitments must be translated into concrete action. The Declaration should be implemented in a gender-responsive way, taking into account the different ways that girls and women can be targeted and impacted by attacks on education and military use of schools.

In the short time since the Declaration has been opened for endorsement, countries have explicitly banned or regulated military use of schools. In July 2017, Sudan circulated a command order to all divisions to prohibit the military use of schools and offer guidance on protecting schools in areas of active conflict. Denmark\textsuperscript{iii}, New Zealand\textsuperscript{iv}, Switzerland\textsuperscript{v}, have updated their military manuals including explicit protections for schools from military use. The United Kingdom\textsuperscript{vi} have updated their military policies to reflect their commitments.

Civil society and peacekeepers have also conducted successful advocacy drawing on the Safe Schools Declaration, where armed forces and armed groups have vacated schools. The UN Department of Peace Operations developed a Child Protection Policy that builds upon and complements the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions in banning the use of educational facilities by peacekeepers, and notes that UN peace operations have an obligation to promote and adhere to the Guidelines\textsuperscript{vii}. 
OPENING SESSION

The opening session set the tone of the conference, encouraging candid and open discussion and guiding participants to focus on practical recommendations for supporting more effective protection of education. Ambassador Carlos Mario Foradori, Permanent Mission of Argentina in Geneva, who moderated the session, underlined that the special focus of the conference was to examine the gendered impact of attacks on education and military use of educational infrastructure and to discuss how the international community can work together to improve monitoring, reporting, and accountability for attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities. During his opening remarks, he highlighted his country’s leadership in driving the development of the Safe Schools Declaration together with Norway, and noted that Argentina’s Ministry of Defense had reinforced measures to train armed forces on the prohibition of military use of schools.

During the high-level opening segment, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Josep Borrell announced the launch of a technical cooperation and training program that will focus on the application of the Guidelines and their integration into regulatory and operational frameworks. As part of Spain’s firm commitment to protecting education, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence will organize the training in the first half of 2020, which will offer a dedicated space for exchange of examples and lessons learned.

Strong cooperation and information sharing were also highlighted by Marianne Hagen, Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, as instrumental in improving the protection of students, teachers, and education staff. Norway plays a leading role internationally to promote access to safe education in situations of crisis and conflict. In her opening remarks, Minister Hagen announced the establishment of a network of states to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange of good practice regarding key areas of implementation of the Declaration in 2020. Examples of concrete measures to protect students and teachers from attack, and schools and universities from attack and military use can serve as inspiration to fellow States and other stakeholders.

Opening remarks were also made by UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC), Virginia Gamba, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, Ms. Stefania Giannini, and the former Save the Children International CEO, Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt. They all made a strong call for endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration in order to deliver on the promise to ensure the safety, education, and futures of all children.

In particular, Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, referred to UNICEF’s work on the frontlines of conflict to keep schools open and safe and underlined that the international community needs to urgently scale-up efforts in protecting education if we are to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Beyond endorsing the Declaration, she called on governments and donors around the world to commit to flexible, multi-year funding to support education in emergencies for all children.

UNICEF also showcased the impact of attacks on education with the ‘Class of No Tomorrow’ a unique exhibition at Palma De Mallorca Airport. The set of sculptures, made by using materials
from damaged and destroyed schools in Ukraine, South Sudan, Iraq, symbolized the children who lost their right to education due to armed conflicts.

Save the Children highlighted the voices and experiences of children whose education has been impacted by conflict, by sharing a short film featuring school children from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, the occupied Palestinian territories, Ukraine, and Yemen. During her opening remarks, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the former Save the Children International CEO, highlighted how direct attacks on schools, teachers and schoolchildren, and the military use of places of learning, are serious violations of children’s rights. She emphasized how Save the Children is working to protect children in and around schools through their Safe Schools programme. Protecting children from attacks on education is a key dimension of Save the Children’s international plan of action to Stop the War on Children.

Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, reminded participants of how attacks on higher education facilities, university students, professors, and personnel, undermine research and teaching, and perpetuates cycles of unemployment, poverty, violence, and extremism. Higher education facilities, including Iraq’s iconic university of Mosul, have been particularly devastated and come under siege. In 2018, UNESCO launched the “Revive the Spirit of Mosul” initiative to rebuild the heritage and revitalize the educational and cultural institutions of Mosul.

In her statement, the SRSG CAAC, Virginia Gamba, gave prominence to the role of the Safe Schools Declaration as a tool to improve the protection of schools, students, and teachers during armed conflict. She noted that, in her engagement with parties to conflict, she recommends endorsement and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration including as part of joint action plans to address grave violations against children. She referred to the action plan with the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique and the revised action plan in South Sudan, which both include provisions to prevent and address attacks on schools.
THE GENDERED IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND MILITARY USE OF EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The first thematic session, moderated by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, focused on the different ways in which males and females are impacted by attacks on education, and how to respond to their specific needs. In particular, the speakers highlighted how military presence in the vicinity of educational infrastructure increases the risk of child recruitment and sexual violence.

While attacks are devastating for all, girls are often the first to drop out of school and the last to return when there are attacks on education. Once out of school, including due to attacks, girls are less likely to return than boys because of traditional gender roles which prioritize boys’ education and encourage girls to marry or take on domestic responsibilities when schools are closed. Speakers outlined that females and girls’ schools are often targeted for attack, and females face specific negative consequences from attacks, including rape and pregnancy from rape, and the resulting stigma and serious health concerns, all of which further impede the continuation of their education. Being out of school for even a short period increases the risk of early marriage, which further diminishes the chance of girls returning to their education.

Panellists stressed that, in some contexts, boys may be more vulnerable to the impact of attacks on education and military use of educational infrastructure, including child recruitment and abduction. For example, participants noted that boys are more likely to be targeted to prevent them from fighting or being recruited by opposing forces.

While some countries have developed response measures, panellists underlined that there is still a critical need to better protect girls from the devastating impact of attacks on and military use of schools. Panellists urged States to implement the Safe Schools Declaration commitments in a gender-responsive way.

UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and Syrian Refugee, Muzoon Almellehan, spoke of her experience seeking to continue her education amidst the conflict in Syria. Muzoon was only 14 when the Syrian civil war forced her family to leave their home in Daraa in the middle of the night and cross the border into Jordan. The only belongings she took with her were her school books. She highlighted that we should collectively work for a world where children can learn in peace, where the rules of war are respected, and schools protected.

Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, provided her insight on the particular impact of attacks on education on girls in ISIL occupied areas. She underlined that there were reports of schools in the occupied areas being used systematically to detain, rape, and sell women and girls. Girls and women often experience sexual violence as part of an attack on education, and the stigma, medical implications, and pregnancy that often results, further hinders their ability to return to school. Ms. Ruedas urged States to create an environment where women are able to have a voice and to participate constructively in society, as one of the better ways to limit the possibilities of conflict and to safeguard the future of communities.
Concha López, Plan International Spain CEO, provided some background context on the experiences of girls and adolescents from conflict zones where Plan International implements emergency education programs, such as South Sudan, the Lake Chad region, and the Central African Republic. The organization’s research analyzes how these crises have affected girls and their education and incorporates a series of recommendations for their protection, from psychosocial support to victims to the implementation of non-formal education. She shared a video highlighting how going to school becomes a daily challenge for millions of girls who live in warzones: from insecurity in school or on route to school, recruitment by armed groups, and sexual violence by parties to armed conflict.

Cynthia Petrigh, the Founder and Director of the Beyond Peace Initiative (www.beyondpeace.sg) illuminated the realities of survivors of attacks on education by telling the story of a former victim of Boko Haram, who was empowered through education. Girls who have access to safe and quality education during conflict become women who build peace.

Holly Cartner, GCPEA Gender Consultant, highlighted how case studies conducted in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo had documented the long-term consequences of attacks on education on of female students and teachers, some of whom have been forced into early “marriage”, raped, and been subjected to other physical and psychological violence. In the Kasai region of the Congo, young girls were specifically recruited by the armed group, Kamuina Nsapu, 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 and used as human shields, often completely unarmed or armed only with a magical weapon such as a broom or kitchen utensil.

All girls and women have the right to education without fear of threats, harassment, abduction, forced recruitment or sexual and gender-based violence. Governments need to create systematic early warning systems, with accurate, up-to-date security information, including specific information on the risks of sexual violence, and ensure that schools have emergency communications protocols to enable school administrators and teachers to alert students and take appropriate action when a threat is imminent. Moreover, governments should develop better strategies to prevent abuse in the first place and mitigate harm when such attacks happen by supporting survivors’ recovery and return to education.

Case study: gendered impact of attacks on education in Nigeria

During this session, Nkiru Cynthia Osisioma, Deputy Director of the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria, outlined the challenges her government faces in protecting schools from attack. In her presentation, she underlined that according to the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, 10,193,918 children are currently out of school. Approximately 60% are girls and based mostly in the North of the country. Boko Haram, for example, gained international notoriety in 2014, when it abducted 276 girls from their school in Chibok, Nigeria; in total, the group is estimated to have abducted at least 600 girls from their schools over the course of the conflict.

Ms. Osisioma shared an update on the extensive work of the Education in Emergencies Working Group in Nigeria to domesticate the Declaration in national laws and policies. Nigeria endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015 and recently went through a ratification process which
means that its implementation is now a government commitment with legal backing. The Federal Ministry of Education has reportedly developed an action plan for mainstreaming the Safe Schools Declaration in law and policies (2018-2020). Key activities include an amendment to the Armed Forces Act and the development of dedicated legislation on the Safe Schools Declaration. It was also reported that Nigeria’s armed forces have ordered the military teachers to stop openly carrying weapons in schools.
MONITORING, REPORTING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ATTACKS ON STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS

The second panel, moderated by Cristina Gutierrez, Director of the Office of Humanitarian Assistance (AECID) of Spain, emphasized the need to improve monitoring and reporting of attacks on education to better analyse trends on a global level, and to inform prevention, mitigation, and accountability mechanisms. Improved data on attacks on education, and more effective reporting mechanisms, are essential to implement the other commitments in the Safe School Declaration. For example, more systematic and timely data on attacks on educational facilities, was highlighted as necessary in order to develop prevention and protection programs and policies, and to assist victims of attacks on education. Data on attacks can also support accountability mechanisms for attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities, another commitment within the Declaration.

According to research by GCPEA, between 2014 and 2018, more than 14,000 attacks on education were reported in the 34 countries with a systematic pattern of attacks on education. Within the same timeframe, armed forces and armed groups used schools and universities for military purposes such as bases, barracks, firing positions, armoires, and detention centres in at least 30 countries.

Yasmine Sherif, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) Director, highlighted that data on the prevalence and impact of attacks on education has improved significantly in recent years but remains inconsistent across countries. She noted that ECW is supporting the Safe Schools Declaration and implementation of the Guidelines. This support is focused on strengthening data availability, management and analysis on attacks on education and military use of schools, researching the impact of attacks on education on women and girls, and advocating for effective protection.

Stefania Giannini, UNESCO, highlighted that the international community recognized the significance of attacks on education during armed conflict when they added an indicator on attacks to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Four thematic monitoring framework (indicator 4.a.3). The Education under Attack report now published by the GCPEA was approved as the source of information for this indicator, making it the first non-official source endorsed in the international monitoring framework. Attacks on education constitute a primary barrier to the world community’s commitment to achieve inclusive, equitable, quality education for all by the year 2030, as expressed in SDG 4. Universal access to quality education cannot be achieved if students, educators, and educational institutions are not themselves protected.

Dr. Amy Kapit, former GCPEA Research Director, warned that there are still significant challenges to monitoring, reporting, and analysing attacks on education. For one, access to reliable data remains difficult due to factors such as access and resources, and varies across countries and over time. In addition, a lack of harmonisation of definitions and standards for monitoring attacks can make it difficult to compare trends across countries or between different data collecting bodies or instruments. Furthermore, the motivation to report incidents can be weakened if monitoring and reporting is not linked to an effective response.
Dr Kapital also emphasized that different mechanisms exist with different goals, all equally significant: The **UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)** is a mechanism to foster accountability and compliance with international law and child protection standards, while GCPEA-led Education Under Attack analyses patterns and trends in attacks on education and uses that information for advocacy. Others, like national education clusters, inform responses. These mechanisms depend on different sets of information and levels of verification. All of them have strengths and gaps. Investing solely in one type of mechanism could mean that particular sets of information are neglected.

It is necessary to enhance data collection on attacks on education and military use of educational infrastructure in order to improve efforts to prevent and respond to attacks on education. This data should be disaggregated and include information on intersectional violations such as child recruitment and sexual violence occurring at education institutions or on the route to them in the context of armed conflict or political violence. While many stakeholders do track attacks on education, it is important to develop comprehensive and systematic mechanisms for reporting these violations.

The MRM plays a vital role in informing the work of the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict, as well as the UN Secretary-General’s annual list on parties to conflict that commit grave violations against children. The listing process serves as the foundation for the UN to engage with parties to conflict, secure concrete commitments through UN action plans, and create real change for children affected by war. The international community should better value the role of child protection advisors who are carrying the work of monitoring and verifying violations and ensure dedicated child protection capacity within Peace Operations, Special Political Missions and UNICEF. Improved monitoring requires more people on the ground, which necessitates more resources.

Panellists underscored the urgency of strengthening partnerships of different organisations to work together to improve the collection of information and to activate a global mechanism for attacks on education.

The panel also considered how best to encourage investigation of allegations of violations of applicable national and international law and prosecution of perpetrators. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Deputy Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, stressed the importance of holding government armed forces and non-state armed groups accountable for attacking schools in order to deter attacks on education and military use of schools in the future. Human Rights Watch supports the global response and solutions proposed by the Safe Schools Declaration and contributes to monitoring and accountability through their investigations into attacks on students, teachers, and schools and the military use of schools.

He argued that ensuring accountability for attacks on education should not only depend on international processes. Accountability must also occur on a national level both by armed forces for the behaviour of their own soldiers, and by governments through their domestic legal systems. This is why it is important that the international community encourages more governments, armed forces, and even armed non-state actors, to better protect schools and universities from military use, through legislation, court decisions, and military doctrine.
James Stewart, Deputy Prosecutor, International Criminal Court (ICC), underlined that the Rome Statute considers attacks on education a war crime. He reminded the audience that the ICC is the failsafe mechanism to ensure justice if States Parties themselves prove either unable or unwilling to exercise this primary responsibility. It is valuable not only as a mechanism for accountability, but also in its preventive ability to shape public attitudes, and thus those of governments, on issues, such as the need for safe schools in times of armed conflict. To succeed in its goal of contributing to prevention, by functioning as an effective mechanism for accountability, it must have the support and cooperation of States Parties and others.

All panellists agreed that the Declaration and the Guidelines are useful tools to promote compliance with applicable international and national legal frameworks, whose effectiveness is crucial for achieving accountability.

The Panel concluded with the presentation by Roman Greba, the Ukrainian Viceminister of Education and Science. He talked about the measures put in place in his country to re-establish education in the context of conflict in eastern Ukraine and to provide psychosocial support to victims of attacks. He also stressed his government’s partnership with UN and civil society organizations to collect reliable data in order to inform their response.
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION AND THE GUIDELINES

Using the Guidelines: The Operational Perspective

In a session moderated by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom, panelists presented concrete ways that states can bring the Guidelines into relevant domestic legislation, policies, and operational frameworks.

Christine Muhigana, UNICEF Country Representative for the Central African Republic, outlined how the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) had issued a directive drawing on the Guidelines recalling that peacekeepers are prohibited from using schools. In 2016, MINUSCA issued a press release, condemning the military use of some schools by armed groups and calling on them to immediately vacate those schools establish their checkpoints more than 500 meters from any school premises, and not to, in any way, impede the functioning of schools. The Force also used the directive as an advocacy tool with armed groups occupying schools in an effort to get them to vacate them.

Panelists also referred to the importance of working with armed non-state actors and encouraging them to protect education from attack and refrain from military use of schools and universities. They stressed that the Guidelines are also a practical tool for non-state armed groups, and should be integrated into their military rules. Alain Délétrroz, Executive Director of Geneva Call, an organization that works with non-state armed groups to ensure their compliance with humanitarian norms, outlined how the organization is currently engaging with about 50 non-state armed actors on this topic, including members of such groups in Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Myanmar, Syria, and Sudan.

Mary Werntz, Deputy Director of Operations, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), outlined how preserving the civilian character of educational facilities by avoiding to use them for military purposes goes a long way in ensuring the continuity of education and the safety of civilians during armed conflict. Ms. Werntz also pointed out that the Guidelines have been disseminated among ICRC staff as a reference tool for their dialogue with states and non-state armed groups. The ICRC offers legal readings on how the Guidelines relate to international humanitarian law for both endorsing and non-endorsing states and stands ready to provide technical support on the implementation of the Guidelines.

Implementing the Declaration: The State Perspective

Implementation of the commitments in the Safe Schools Declaration can lead to positive changes on the ground. In the short time since the Declaration has been opened for endorsement, evidence has emerged across different regions that its implementation leads to tangible improvements in protecting education.
Inspired by the Safe Schools Declaration, governments have taken concrete steps to ensure continued access to safe education, including by protecting educational facilities from military use in their domestic policies and legislation; disseminating the Guidelines in military training activities; outlining specific measures that armed forces can take to mitigate potential risks for students and teachers; and developing alternative ways of delivering education.

This session allowed state representatives from Afghanistan, Guatemala, Mali, and Somalia to present their country’s experience in implementing the Declaration and the Guidelines, and to share good practice in protecting educational facilities from military use and attack.

**Case study: Afghanistan’s comprehensive school safety framework**

Hamidullah Abawi, Education in Emergencies Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan, outlined his ministry’s extensive advocacy efforts – in partnership with UN and civil society partners – to ensure that schools are not used for military purposes and that they are better protected from attack. According to Afghanistan’s Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and Samuel Hall, provinces experiencing higher rates of insecurity also had higher rates of out-of-school children.

The Ministry, together with education stakeholders, is developing a comprehensive school safety framework, which will be used as an operational tool for addressing hazards students and teachers face in and on the way to school. The framework will be informed by the experiences of communities in protecting education from attack and military use, and the community will play a critical role in translating the framework into action.

**Case study: Guatemala’s safe schools programmes**

Dr. Óscar Hugo López Rivas, Minister of Education of Guatemala, outlined his government’s experience protecting education from attack in a post-conflict setting with high levels of violence and insecurity, and their national strategy to prevent violence in schools.

The Government of Guatemala has established a safe schools programme, which ensures a civil presence in schools by providing teacher training to police officers. Schools are also opened during evenings and weekends and serve as cultural centres to promote peace and community cohesion. The programme also supports the development of safe and secure internet programmes to ensure that students are not recruited into armed groups through the internet, which is a tactic used by gang groups.

Dr. Rivas also highlighted the efforts of his ministry to support students who have dropped out of school as a result of violence and insecurity to return to school, and to develop rules and standards for peaceful co-existence in schools.

**Case study: progress on implementing the Safe Schools Declaration in Mali**

Mamadou Kanté, the Deputy National Director for Basic Education of Mali, outlined the development of a multi-stakeholder technical committee to oversee implementation of the Declaration, composed of representatives from nine ministries.
His Ministry has organized meetings, workshops, trainings, and other activities aimed at raising awareness and effecting change in practice and behavior. For example, in November 2018, the ministry organized an inter-community meeting to address the issue of school closures as a result of insecurity in the Mopti region, where more than 60% of schools are currently closed.

Mr. Kanté also highlighted a study on the national legal framework for protecting education from attack during armed conflict, conducted in January and February 2019, which resulted in the recommendation to draft a national bill on safe schools to domesticate the commitments outlined in the Safe Schools Declaration and Guidelines.

**Case study: addressing military use of schools in Somalia**

Sonkor Geyre, Director General of the Ministry of Defense of Somalia, discussed the evacuation of AMISOM from Somali National University in 2017 and how educational facilities have been rehabilitated, cleared of unexploded ordnance, and returned to civilian use.

In July 2017, AMISOM vacated the Somali National University and returned control of the facility to the authorities in a handover ceremony, which was presided over by Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Somalia, and the Minister of Education, Deputy Minister of Finance, and the Deputy Governor.

Prior to the hand-over, the UN Support Office in Somalia supported the clearance of all unexploded ordnance and cleaned the buildings occupied by the troops. This was the third education facility handed over to the federal government of Somalia in 2017.

Dr. Geyre also highlighted the Child Protection Unit of the Ministry of Defense had launched a national outreach campaign to raise awareness about child recruitment and use and to encourage parents to reject efforts for their children to be recruited.

**Tabletop exercise on using the Guidelines**

To develop participants’ engagement with the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines as practical tools that can be used to protect civilians during armed conflict, an innovative exercise to work through their application and utility in different scenarios was undertaken.

The exercise was coordinated by the NGO Article 36 in partnership with the Ministries of Defence of Spain and Argentina, and GCPEA. The exercise was presided over by Elena Gómez Castro, Director General for Defense Policy, Spain. The participants were divided into ten groups working in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Trainers from GCPEA, Geneva Call, Human Rights Watch, ICRC, the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, Save the Children, the United Nations Development Program, the Ministry of Defense of Argentina and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. Participants were invited to consider how the commitments in the Declaration and the Guidelines offer operational flexibility, but also require a particular focus on protecting civilians and education. It also encouraged them to consider how the perspectives of different actors in such scenarios can and should be taken into account.
In the first scenario, groups considered actions that could be taken prior to, during and following a military response to avoid harm to students, education workers and their educational facilities and minimize disruption to education. Participants proposed the establishment of early warning mechanisms to ensure safe evacuation prior to an attack, and the provision of alternative learning spaces to ensure continuous access to education.

Participants also considered the role that might be taken by NGOs in developing a military response, such as providing guidance on the rules of engagement to minimize harm to civilians and ensuring the provision of mental health and psychosocial support for students and education workers who have been affected by the conflict to support their learning and recovery.

In the second scenario, groups discussed factors that military commanders should consider when staging an assault involving the use of educational facilities in order to protect their civilian character. Participants proposed strategies such as limiting the period of occupation of the facility to reduce the risk of identification of the facility as a military target by other groups and establishing temporary multi-stakeholder committees to develop longer-term response plans.

In scenario three, groups developed possible strategies for responding to attacks and threats against students and education workers, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that a military response is used only as a last resort once all other avenues have been exhausted. Participants also considered the ways in which different stakeholders might assess priorities and risks in the situation, and the different roles that students, teachers, caregivers, police, military and local government can play when planning a response.

The discussions reflected participants’ commitment to advancing protection of civilians and education in armed conflict. Participants reported that the exercise to a better understanding of the issues, as well as the practical utility of the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines in national contexts.
CONCLUSIONS

The conference marked a critical step forward for the protection of education from attack in conflict and highlighted the significant progress that has been made to date by governments and civil society to ensure that schools are safe and protective. It also provided an occasion for participants to identify practical solutions to improve protection of education in situations of armed conflict, and to discuss opportunities for future cooperation in implementing the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict. During the panels, speakers called on every Member State to protect education in situations of armed conflict, including through training and the adoption of measures to deter the military use of schools and ensure that military operations do not target schools or result in school attacks. Furthermore, they highlighted the need to strengthen the collective capacity to monitor and report incidents affecting the right to education in situations of conflict.

Several new countries affirmed their commitment to ensuring continuous access to safe education. Nicaragua announced its endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration at the conference, and Benin, Croatia, Equatorial Guinea, Palau, and Samoa endorsed following the conference. States that have not yet endorsed, were encouraged to do so.

Closing Remarks

In closing the meeting, Marcos Gómez, Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights, (MAEUEC), Spain, expressed his government’s sincere gratitude to the government delegations and representatives from international organizations and civil society for their engagement during the discussions, and invited them to continue their efforts to protect education during armed conflict. He emphasized that the conference aimed to build on the political momentum around the issue and lead to practical working lines that will guide action for the future. He made a call for states to bring the issue of protecting education during armed conflict to the top of the political agenda in their own countries.

Cristina Gallach, High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda of Spain, highlighted that education must be placed in the spotlight to mobilise resources for more development in the world. She underlined that we must stress the close ties between Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights and SDG 4 to transpose aspirations of the Safe Schools Declaration onto the 2030 agenda. She concluded her speech by underlining that now is the time to put in practice what is needed to achieve this transformation, so millions of children don’t lose their present and future.

Margarita Robles, Minister of Defence of Spain, underscored her Ministry’s commitment to protecting children and their education. She spoke about how whenever Spanish militaries are stationed abroad, they protect schools and share the values of peace for children. She urged the international community to be firm in reacting to attacks on schools, and called on participants to return to their countries with concrete instructions on how to work for children’s education and commit to peace.
Francina Armengol, President of the Government of the Balearic Islands, underlined that education is a pillar for creating and building future societies and is a basic pillar of democracy and human rights. She shared how children's dreams are often as simple as to stand in front of a blackboard to learn to add and subtract. Perhaps in the future they would like to sit at a similar international conference to address the problems of the world. In her concluding thoughts, she reiterated the call to the international community to find urgent solutions, including by endorsing and implementing the Safe Schools Declaration.

Queen Letizia of Spain addressed the conference at its closing, and urged all countries to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. During her remarks, Queen Letizia emphasized that access to safe education for all boys and girls is our shared responsibility. At the end, a delegation of children from Ses Rotes Velles school in Santa Ponça presented a manifesto on protecting education from attack to Queen Letizia of Spain.
ANNEXES

Safe School Declaration

The impact of armed conflict on education presents urgent humanitarian, development and wider social challenges. Worldwide, schools and universities have been bombed, shelled and burned, and children, students, teachers and academics have been killed, maimed, abducted or arbitrarily detained. Educational facilities have been used by parties to armed conflict as, inter alia, bases, barracks or detention centres. Such actions expose students and education personnel to harm, deny large numbers of children and students their right to education and so deprive communities of the foundations on which to build their future. In many countries, armed conflict continues to destroy not just school infrastructure, but the hopes and ambitions of a whole generation of children.

Attacks on education include violence against educational facilities, students and education personnel. Attacks, and threats of attack, can cause severe and long-lasting harm to individuals and societies. Access to education may be undermined; the functioning of educational facilities may be blocked, or education personnel and students may stay away, fearing for their safety. Attacks on schools and universities have been used to promote intolerance and exclusion – to further gender discrimination, for example by preventing the education of girls, to perpetuate conflict between certain communities, to restrict cultural diversity, and to deny academic freedom or the right of association. Where educational facilities are used for military purposes it can increase the risk of the recruitment and use of children by armed actors or may leave children and youth vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation. In particular, it may increase the likelihood that education institutions are attacked.

By contrast, education can help to protect children and youth from death, injury and exploitation; it can alleviate the psychological impact of armed conflict by offering routine and stability and can provide links to other vital services. Education that is ‘conflict sensitive’ avoids contributing to conflict and pursues a contribution to peace. Education is fundamental to development and to the full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. We will do our utmost to see that places of education are places of safety.

We welcome initiatives by individual States to promote and protect the right to education and to facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict. Continuation of education can provide life-saving health information as well as advice on specific risks in societies facing armed conflict.

We commend the work of the United Nations Security Council on children and armed conflict and acknowledge the importance of the monitoring and reporting mechanism for grave violations against children in armed conflict. We emphasize the importance of Security Council resolution 1998 (2011), and 2143 (2014) which, inter alia, urges all parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education and encourages Member States to consider concrete measures to deter the use of schools by armed forces and armed non-State groups in contravention of applicable international law.
We welcome the development of the Guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflict. The Guidelines are non-legally binding, voluntary guidelines that do not affect existing international law. They draw on existing good practice and aim to provide guidance that will further reduce the impact of armed conflict on education. We welcome efforts to disseminate these guidelines and to promote their implementation among armed forces, armed groups and other relevant actors.

We stress the importance, in all circumstances, of full respect for applicable international law, including the need to comply with the relevant obligations to end impunity.

Recognizing the right to education and the role of education in promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations; determined progressively to strengthen in practice the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and of children and youth in particular; committed to working together towards safe schools for all; we endorse the Guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflict, and will:

• Use the Guidelines, and bring them into domestic policy and operational frameworks as far as possible and appropriate;

• Make every effort at a national level to collect reliable relevant data on attacks on educational facilities, on the victims of attacks, and on military use of schools and universities during armed conflict, including through existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms; to facilitate such data collection; and to provide assistance to victims, in a non-discriminatory manner;

• Investigate allegations of violations of applicable national and international law and, where appropriate, duly prosecute perpetrators;

• Develop, adopt and promote ‘conflict-sensitive’ approaches to education in international humanitarian and development programmes, and at a national level where relevant;

• Seek to ensure the continuation of education during armed conflict, support the re-establishment of educational facilities and, where in a position to do so, provide and facilitate international cooperation and assistance to programmes working to prevent or respond to attacks on education, including for the implementation of this declaration;

• Support the efforts of the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict, and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other relevant UN organs, entities and agencies; and

• Meet on a regular basis, inviting relevant international organisation and civil society, so as to review the implementation of this declaration and the use of the guidelines.

Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict

Parties to armed conflict are urged not to use schools and universities for any purpose in support of their military effort. While it is acknowledged that certain uses would not be contrary to the law of armed conflict, all parties should endeavour to avoid impinging on students’ safety and education, using the following as a guide to responsible practice:
Guideline 1:

Functioning schools and universities should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in any way in support of the military effort.

a) This principle extends to schools and universities that are temporarily closed outside normal class hours, during weekends and holidays, and during vacation periods.

b) Parties to armed conflict should neither use force nor offer incentives to education administrators to evacuate schools and universities in order that they can be made available for use in support of the military effort.

Guideline 2:

Schools and universities that have been abandoned or evacuated because of the dangers presented by armed conflict should not be used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict for any purpose in support of their military effort, except in extenuating circumstances when they are presented with no viable alternative, and only for as long as no choice is possible between such use of the school or university and another feasible method for obtaining a similar military advantage. Other buildings should be regarded as better options and used in preference to school and university buildings, even if they are not so conveniently placed or configured, except when such buildings are specially protected under International Humanitarian Law (e.g. hospitals), and keeping in mind that parties to armed conflict must always take all feasible precautions to protect all civilian objects from attack.

a) Any such use of abandoned or evacuated schools and universities should be for the minimum time necessary.

b) Abandoned or evacuated schools and universities that are used by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in support of the military effort should remain available to allow educational authorities to re-open them as soon as practicable after fighting forces have withdrawn from them, provided this would not risk endangering the security of students and staff.

c) Any traces or indication of militarisation or fortification should be completely removed following the withdrawal of fighting forces, with every effort made to put right as soon as possible any damage caused to the infrastructure of the institution. In particular, all weapons, munitions and unexploded ordnance or remnants of war should be cleared from the site.

Guideline 3:

Schools and universities must never be destroyed as a measure intended to deprive the opposing parties to the armed conflict of the ability to use them in the future. Schools and universities – be they in session, closed for the day or for holidays, evacuated or abandoned – are ordinarily civilian objects.

Guideline 4:

While the use of a school or university by the fighting forces of parties to armed conflict in support of their military effort may, depending on the circumstances, have the effect of turning it
into a military objective subject to attack, parties to armed conflict should consider all feasible alternative measures before attacking them, including, unless circumstances do not permit, warning the enemy in advance that an attack will be forthcoming unless it ceases its use.

d) Prior to any attack on a school that has become a military objective, the parties to armed conflict should take into consideration the fact that children are entitled to special respect and protection. An additional important consideration is the potential long-term negative effect on a community’s access to education posed by damage to or the destruction of a school.

e) The use of a school or university by the fighting forces of one party to a conflict in support of the military effort should not serve as justification for an opposing party that captures it to continue to use it in support of the military effort. As soon as feasible, any evidence or indication of militarisation or fortification should be removed and the facility returned to civilian authorities for the purpose of its educational function.

**Guideline 5:**

The fighting forces of parties to armed conflict should not be employed to provide security for schools and universities, except when alternative means of providing essential security are not available. If possible, appropriately trained civilian personnel should be used to provide security for schools and universities. If necessary, consideration should also be given to evacuating children, students and staff to a safer location.

a) If fighting forces are engaged in security tasks related to schools and universities, their presence within the grounds or buildings should be avoided if at all possible in order to avoid compromising the establishment’s civilian status and disrupting the learning environment.

**Guideline 6:**

All parties to armed conflict should, as far as possible and as appropriate, incorporate these Guidelines into, for example, their doctrine, military manuals, rules of engagement, operational orders, and other means of dissemination, to encourage appropriate practice throughout the chain of command. Parties to armed conflict should determine the most appropriate method of doing this.
Conference Programme

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SAFE SCHOOLS
Palau de Congressos Convention Centre
Palma de Mallorca, Spain
27th to 29th of May

27th MAY

WELCOME RECEPTION (CAN BALAGUER)

7.00pm-8.30pm
The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation and the local authorities of Palma de Mallorca will host a welcome reception on the eve of the conference. States that have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration since the Buenos Aires Conference on Safe Schools will be formally welcomed by Minister Josep Borrell Fontelles, and invited to participate in a group photograph.

Speakers:

• **Mr. Antoni Noguera**, Mayor of the City of Palma de Mallorca

• **Sir Mark Lowcock**, Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, UN OCHA

• **Ms. Diya Nijhowne**, Executive Director, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)

• **Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation, Spain

• **Ms. Francina Armengol**, President of the Government of the Balearic Islands

Recognition to New Endorsing States

• **Ms. Aína Calvo Sastre**, Director of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
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28th MAY

III INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SAFE SCHOOLS
(CONVENTION CENTRE)

8.30am-9.00am
REGISTRATION (MAIN HALL)

9.15am-10.45am
OPENING SESSION (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Conference Chair: Mr. Marcos Gómez Martínez, Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights, (MAEUEC), Spain

Moderator: Mr. Carlos Foradori, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Speakers:
- Josep Borrell Fontelles, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation, Spain
- Ms. Marianne Hagen, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Norway

Video: Let’s Hear from the Children
- Ms. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF
- Ms. Virginia Gamba, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict
- Ms. Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
- Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt, CEO, Save the Children International

10.45am-11.15am
COFFEE BREAK (SALA PALMA)

11.15am-1.15pm
GENDERED IMPACT OF ATTACKS ON EDUCATION AND MILITARY USE OF EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Moderator: Ms. Marianne Hagen, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Speakers:
- Ms. Muzoon Almellan, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador
- Ms. Marta Ruedas, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)
- Ms. Concha López, CEO, Plan International, Spain
• Ms. Holly Cartner, GCPEA Gender Consultant
• Ms. Cynthia Petrigh, Founder and Director of the Initiative Beyond Peace
• Ms. Nkiru Cynthia Osisioma, Deputy Director, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria

1.15pm-3.15pm
LUNCH (SALA PALMA)

3.15pm-5.15pm
MONITORING, REPORTING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ATTACKS ON STUDENTS, TEACHERS, SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Moderator: Ms. Cristina Gutiérrez, Director of the Office of Humanitarian Assistance (AECID), Spain

Speakers:

• Ms. Yasmine Sherif, Executive Director, Education Cannot Wait
• Mr. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Deputy Executive Director, Human Rights Watch
• Mr. James Stewart, Deputy Prosecutor, International Criminal Court
• Ms. Amy Kapit, Research Director, GCPEA
• Mr. Roman Greba, Viceminister of Education, Ukraine

5.15pm-5.30pm
FIRST DAY CONCLUSIONS (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Mr. Marcos Gómez Martínez, Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights, (MAEUEC), Spain
29th MAY

8.30am-10.15 am
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION AND THE GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTING SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FROM MILITARY USE DURING ARMED CONFLICT (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Opening Address: Admiral Juan Francisco Martínez Núñez, Secretary General of Defence Policy, Ministry of Defence, Spain

Moderator: Baron Tariq Ahmad, Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom (tbc)

USING THE GUIDELINES: THE OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Speakers:

- Mr. Alain Délétroz, Executive Director, Geneva Call
- Ms. Mary Werntz, Deputy Director of Operations, International Committee of the Red Cross
- Ms. Christine Muhigana, UNICEF-Central African Republic Representative

IMPLEMENTING THE DECLARATION: THE STATE PERSPECTIVE

- Dr. Óscar Hugo López Rivas, Minister of Education, Guatemala
- Mr. Ag Gadeda, Secretary General, Ministry of National Education, Mali
- Mr. Sonkor Geyre, Director General; Ministry of Defence, Somalia
- Mr. Hamidullah Abawi, Education in Emergencies Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan

TABLE-TOP EXERCISE ON USING THE GUIDELINES

Introduction to the Table-Top Exercise: Ms. Luciana Micha, International Humanitarian Law Coordinator, National Directorate of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, Ministry of Defence of the Argentine Republic

10.15 am-10.045am
COFFEE BREAK (SALA PALMA)

10.45am-12.15pm
TABLE-TOP EXERCISE (SALAS MENORCA, IBIZA Y FORMENTERA)

Conference participants will be divided into breakout groups and invited to respond to one or more scenarios involving threats, attacks, and military use of schools. The discussion will centre on how the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed
Conflict can provide guidance on how best to respond to the scenarios. The sessions will be led by trainers from international organisations and member states in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.

Coordinator:

- **Mr. Richard Moyes**, Managing Director, Article 36
- **Mr. Bede Seppard**, Deputy Director, Children’s Rights Division, Human Rights Watch.
- **Ms. Gisela Schmidt-Martin**, Coordinator, GCPEA

Facilitators:

- **Ms. Luciana Micha**, Ministry of Defence, Argentina
- **Ms. Cathrine Andersen**, Minister Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- **Mr. Georges Baize**, Adviser, Unit for Relations with Arms Carriers, ICRC
- **Mr. Ezequiel Heffes**, Legal Advisor, Geneva Call
- **Berthé Nanourou**, UNDP Côte D’Ivoire
- **Major. Musa Gbow**, Director of Training for Africa, Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative
- **Lt. Col. William Watkins**, Training Consultant, GCPEA
- **Mr. Francisco Rey**, International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC), Spain
- **Mr. John Reinstein**, Director, Civil-Military Relations, Save the Children
- **Ms. Sara Kayyali**, Syria Researcher, Human Rights Watch

12.25-13.15 h

Feedback Session (Auditorio Mallorca)

*Moderator: Ms. Elena Gómez Castro*, Director General, Defence Policy, Ministry of Defence, Spain

Speakers:

- **Major. Musa Gbow**, Director of Training for Africa, Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative
- **Mr. Georges Baize**, Adviser, Unit for Relations with Arms Carriers, ICRC
- **Mr. Ezequiel Heffes**, Legal Advisor, Geneva Call
1.15pm-1.30pm
CONCLUSIONS OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SAFE SCHOOLS. (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Mr. Marcos Gómez Martínez, Director General for the United Nations and Human Rights, (MAEUEC), Spain

1.30pm-2.00pm
CLOSING SESSION (AUDITORIO MALLORCA)

Speakers:

• Ms. Cristina Gallach Figueres, High Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda, Spain
• Ms. Margarita Robles Fernández, Minister of Defence, Spain
• Mrs. Francina Armengol Socías, President of the Government of the Balearic Islands
• H. M. Queen Letizia

2pm-2.30pm
COCKTAIL

List of Participants

79 states attended: Afghanistan, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tomé e Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, and Zambia.

The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) was established in 2010 by organizations working in the fields of education in emergencies and conflict-affected contexts, higher education, protection, international human rights and humanitarian law who were concerned about ongoing attacks on educational institutions, their students and staff in countries affected by conflict and insecurity. GCPEA is an international coalition of organizations that includes: CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics), Human Rights Watch, Institute of International Education/IIE Scholar Rescue Fund, Education Above All Foundation through its program Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, Plan International, Save the Children, Scholars at Risk Network, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNHCR.

GCPEA, “Education suffered over 14,000 armed attacks in last 5 years,” May 26, 2019, http://www.protectingeducation.org/news/education-suffered-over-14000-armed-attacks-last-5-years


Swiss Armed Forces manual on the law of armed conflict, addition of May 1, 2019.


Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, Department of Political Affairs Policy on Child Protection in United Nations Peace Operations, June 1, 2017, paras. 9, 16, & 34-37.


GCPEA, 2018"I Will Never Go Back to School": The Impact of Attacks on Education for Nigerian Women and Girls, p.2

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

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use, from Special Representative to the Secretary General Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, MINUSCA/OSRSG/046/2015, December 24, 2015.


