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“Dreams Turned into Nightmares”

Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan



“Dreams Turned into Nightmares”

Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan

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“Dreams Turned into Nightmares”

Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan

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Glossary

ANP	Awami National Party
BLA	Baloch Liberation Army
BLUF	Baloch Liberation United Front
BRP	Baloch Republican Party
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICECSR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ISSB	Inter Service Selection Board
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LeJ	Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
SAFRON	Ministry for States and Frontier Regions
TTP	Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan
VDC	Village Defense Councils

Summary

I was just 10 when more than 400 schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams turned into nightmares. Education went from being a right to being a crime. Girls were stopped from going to school.

—Malala Yousafzai accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Oslo, December 10, 2014

On December 16, 2014, six days after Malala Yousafzai received the Nobel Peace Prize, armed militants attacked the Army Public School in Pakistan’s Peshawar city, killing 145 people, almost all of them children. Gunmen systematically went from classroom to classroom, shooting children and teachers at the military-run school. Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the so-called Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack as revenge for a Pakistan Army offensive in the tribal areas of North Waziristan that began in June 2014. It remains among the deadliest attacks ever on a school in any country.

Pakistan already faces major challenges to education because of factors such as poor access, low enrollment rates, gender bias, lack of trained teachers, and poor physical infrastructure. Islamist militant violence has further exacerbated those challenges, however, and disrupted the education of hundreds of thousands of children.

Human Rights Watch defines “attacks on education” as encompassing the full range of violations that place children at risk and deny them access to education. This includes attacks on school infrastructure and on students, teachers, and school administrators; the occupation of schools by the police and military; and harassment and threats against teachers, parents, and education professionals.

Militant groups have damaged and destroyed school buildings, attacked teachers and students, and terrorized parents into keeping their children out of school. They have also targeted colleges and other higher-education institutions. Such attacks and threats of attack on education not only harm the students and families directly affected, they have an incalculable long-term effect on Pakistani society.

In addition, in some areas, government security forces have used educational institutions, including schools and college hostels or dormitories, as temporary or permanent barracks or military bases. When an educational facility is used for military purposes, it disrupts the school's functioning, places it at increased risk of attack, and often frightens parents into keeping their children—especially girls—at home. Criminal gangs, often operating with political patronage, have also occupied schools.

Pakistan's militant Islamist groups use attacks on schools and universities to foster intolerance and exclusion, to target symbols of the government, and particularly to enforce gender discrimination, notably by preventing the education of girls. The challenge to educating girls in Pakistan drew international attention in 2012, when the Taliban shot a young student, Malala Yousafzai, for publicly defending her right to education. She survived the attack and continued her campaign, becoming the youngest individual—and the first and only child—to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

This report, based on interviews with 48 people—including students, teachers, parents, and school administrators in the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)—documents attacks on schools, students, and teachers between 2007 and late 2016. In a 2010 report, Human Rights Watch documented the killing of at least 22 teachers and education professionals by nationalist militants in Balochistan province between 2008 and 2010.

Attacks on Students, Teachers, Schools, and Universities

The Pakistani government does not collect specific data on the number of attacks on schools and universities, or the number of deaths and injuries from such attacks. However, according to the Global Terrorism Database maintained by researchers at the University of Maryland, there were 867 attacks on educational institutions in Pakistan from 2007 to 2015, resulting in 392 deaths and 724 injuries. According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, at least 838 schools in Pakistan were attacked between 2009 and 2012, killing at least 30 students and injuring 97 others. The data available indicate that attacks since 2012 have claimed hundreds of lives.

On January 20, 2016, alleged TPP militants attacked Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, KP, killing at least 21 people, most of them students. A 23-year-old student at the university told Human Rights Watch:

I was in my room in the hostel when I heard the sound of heavy firing. At this time, there were six other students with me in my room. We did not try to escape and tried to lock ourselves in the room. We continued to hear firing and footsteps. The militants knocked at our door, asking us to open it. I hid under the bed in my room. They eventually broke the door and came in. They killed five of my friends in front of me. Then they left the room. After a few minutes the militants came in again to check if anyone was alive. They did not look under the bed, but they lobbed a grenade in the room and left. I was very seriously injured by the shrapnel. I was in the hospital for 20 days and then I left for home. I have not been back at the university. I suffer from nightmares and panic attacks.

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and several other Islamist militant groups across the country attack schools, teachers, and students for various reasons. Some target schools for supposedly having “too secular” or Western curricula. Other schools have been threatened and targeted simply for educating girls. Militants also view schools as symbols of the Pakistani state. Some groups say they attack schools because they are used as bases by the security forces.

Militants often target unoccupied school buildings. The primary goal of these attacks is not to physically harm students or teachers, but to disrupt the educational process, particularly at girls schools.

While education remains under threat across Pakistan, teachers, professors, and school administrators are particularly at risk in KP, Balochistan, and FATA. For instance, in December 2015, the Ministry for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) reported that 360 schools were destroyed in three of the seven regions of FATA in 2015—situated along the Afghan border and under the direct control of Pakistan’s federal government. No

information was provided about the other four regions, but local activists say that scores of schools were targeted in their respective regions.

General insecurity and violence aimed at education compounds other barriers that keep children, especially girls, from going to school. Attacks on education disproportionately affect women and girls. When the TTP gained complete control over the Swat Valley in KP in 2009, they began a violent campaign against education for girls, forcing over 900 schools to close. As a result, over 120,000 students and 8,000 female teachers stopped attending school. The TTP also issued edicts banning girls education in Swat. In January 2009, Muslim Khan, a Taliban spokesperson, told the Associated Press that the Taliban would not allow girls schools to operate in the Swat Valley because they “promote obscenity and vulgarity in society.”

Even after the military pushed back the Taliban, activists said that thousands of children remained out of school because of this disruption. Babar Khan (a pseudonym), who works with children affected by conflict in Swat, told Human Rights Watch: “There is no psychological counseling available, at least from the government. Children are afraid of the Taliban and the army; both are a constant reminder of the ongoing conflict and violence. They have seen both the Taliban and the army kill family members and destroy their houses.”

Internal Displacement and Impact on Education

The conflict between the TTP and the Pakistani government has resulted in an estimated 5 million internally displaced persons from KP and FATA between 2004 and 2014. Some have relocated to Afghanistan. Others have settled inside or around camps in KP and FATA. Educational opportunities for displaced children are extremely limited, both within the camps and out. Educational services in the camps are mostly temporary schools set up in tents, often known as Temporary Learning Centers.

A large number of those displaced choose not to stay in the camps and are instead housed in school buildings in the host communities. According to an official report by the KP provincial government, 222 schools were partially occupied and 63 schools were entirely

occupied by displaced families or security forces. This also prevents or limits schools' ability to teach students.

Military Use of Schools

Educational institutions in several conflict zones in Swat and FATA, and even in urban centers such as Karachi, have been taken over by the armed forces for use as barracks or bases.

In Swat, the Pakistan Army's offensive forced out the Taliban, vacating the schools, but the army then occupied them instead. Although most schools have now been vacated, the military was still using about 20 schools in Swat as of December 2016. Qaiser Khan, a member of a private school association in Swat who asked us to use a pseudonym, said that the military had occupied his school since 2009. He told Human Rights Watch:

When the army came to Swat they claimed to have no place to live and so they stationed themselves in government schools and colleges. They also occupied a few private schools. The private school that I ran was also taken over. I left Swat as an internally displaced person when the military offensive started in May 2009, and when I returned in July, I found that a unit of the Baloch regiment of the Pakistan Army had taken over my school. They paid no compensation.

Bilal, a teacher at a school in Swat, described how security operations can traumatize children:

A few weeks ago, the army came and evicted a family and demolished the house of a Taliban commander adjacent to my school. All of this happened in full view of the students, and they remained afraid for many, many days. Even now, the rubble of the house has not been removed and it is a constant reminder of the violence. The children are more worried about security than education. Their questions are more about curfews and target killings and not about the curriculum.

The Pakistan Rangers, a federal paramilitary force, have occupied at least five historic educational sites in Karachi since they were called in to assist the civil authorities to curb violence in the city in the late 1980s. The Sindh education minister told the Sindh Assembly in 2009 that at least 27 schools, colleges, and hostels across the province were occupied by the army, Rangers, or police. No updated numbers are available.

The negative consequences of the Pakistani security forces using schools for military purposes are not limited to incidents within Pakistan. Human Rights Watch has found a local school in the Central African Republic being occupied and used as base by Pakistani peacekeepers.

Inadequate Protections and Response

The Pakistani government paid little attention to the protection of schools, students, and teachers until the attack on the Army Public School in 2014. Since then, the state has adopted new security measures, including training teachers in use of arms, mock security drills, and raising boundary walls. Reportedly, before the Peshawar attack, about 5,000 public schools in KP, 2,600 public schools in Punjab, 3,600 public schools in Balochistan, and 49,000 public schools in Sindh had no boundary walls.

However, securing the rights of children to safe access to education remains a low priority. After the attack on the Army Public School, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced a 20-point National Action Plan to comprehensively deal with terrorism, but none of the 20 points pertained to students or education.

Securing schools has largely been left to the provincial governments, which have been sporadic and vary widely across provinces, paying little attention to the specific need to protect girls education. In January 2016, after the Bacha Khan University attack, police conducted a mock security drill in Lahore's Punjab University, causing fear and panic as most students were not informed in advance of the drill, and many scrambled to escape, believing it to be a real attack. In February 2016, students panicked after hearing gunshots inside Islamia College in Peshawar, during a drill in which the security forces were giving firearm training to students and teachers.

School and university administrations are also responsible for security measures and paying for the cost of these measures. Some have adopted a policy of arming teachers or deploying students for guard duties. In June 2015, a teacher in Mingora, Swat, accidentally shot and killed a student while cleaning his gun. Shamim Ara, the principal at a government boys' middle school in Lahore told Human Rights Watch:

Before the Army Public School attack our school had no security guard. After the attack, the government has provided us with one guard. It is a big school with more than 400 students and two gates. One security guard is not sufficient. When he goes for lunch or a prayer break, one of the older students, aged 15-16, takes over the responsibility of guarding the gate. Three of our students have been given a basic tutorial on handling a firearm by the security guard and they can stand as his substitute when he is temporarily away. I understand that this is not desirable or safe. However, I don't see any other option for ensuring a minimum level of security.

Despite hundreds of attacks on teachers, students and educational institutions, the Pakistani government has not successfully prosecuted the perpetrators in most cases. This failure was highlighted in June 2015, when it was reported that eight out of the ten individuals arrested and charged for the attack on Malala Yousafzai were acquitted, even after they all confessed to their role in court.

Instead of conducting proper investigations and prosecuting those implicated, the Pakistani government constituted secret military courts after the Army Public School attack. Although there have been a number of convictions and even executions since, the families of victims do not know if the actual perpetrators were punished since the trials were conducted in secret.

In December 2015, four people found guilty by a military court of providing funds, transportation and other assistance to the Army Public School attackers were executed at a prison in Kohat, KP. In December 2016, the army chief ratified the death sentences of four individuals found guilty of planning the attack on Bacha Khan University by a military court. The military also ratified the death sentence of another individual found guilty by a

military court of being involved in attacks on security officials and “the destruction of an education institution” in December 2016, but the government did not provide more details about the educational institution that was allegedly destroyed.

Pakistan’s national and provincial governments need to recognize that they have a responsibility to protect children and their right to an education. To be effective, the approach must be systematic and should include specific steps to prioritize the protection of girls and their schools and teachers.

As a first step, Pakistan should endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, a non-binding political agreement opened for state support at an international conference in Oslo, Norway in May 2015. Countries that endorse the Safe Schools Declaration pledge to restore access to education when schools are attacked, and make it less likely that students, teachers, and schools will be attacked in the first place. They agree to deter such attacks by promising to investigate and prosecute crimes involving schools, and to minimize the use of schools for military purposes so they do not become targets for attack.

Key Recommendations

- Pakistan should endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, committing to take concrete measures to deter the military use of schools by armed forces and armed groups, and to use as a minimum standard the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (“the Guidelines”).
- Pakistani authorities should develop a comprehensive policy for protecting students, teachers, schools, and universities from attack and military use.
- Pakistan should address and remedy the disproportionate harm to girls access to education as a result of hostilities and military use of schools.
- The authorities should issue clear and public orders to the security forces, including the military, police, and paramilitary forces, to curtail the military use of schools in line with the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines.
- Militant groups, including the TTP, should immediately cease all attacks and threats against schools, students, teachers, professors, education personnel, and other civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Methodology

Human Rights Watch conducted 48 interviews with teachers, students, parents, and school administrators in the Pakistani provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) between February and November 2016. Due to ongoing insecurity in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), a number of locations that would have been part of this research were inaccessible. The report documents attacks on schools, students, and teachers between January 2007 and October 2016. The report also documents past and ongoing military use of educational institutions.

All interviews were conducted with full and informed consent, and without compensation. The interviews were conducted in Urdu and when necessary (for example, in KP) through an interpreter. In all cases, Human Rights Watch took steps to minimize re-traumatization of survivors of abuses, immediately stopping interviews if they appeared to cause distress. The names of several interviewees have been replaced with pseudonyms, or left anonymous, due to safety concerns.

FATA and the areas constituting the Pakistan-Afghanistan border are in a state of armed conflict between the Pakistani government and the Taliban, with large numbers of the population displaced and inaccessible. Human Rights Watch documented attacks in these areas through interviews with local activists, media reports, and government documents.

Human Rights Watch also monitored and analyzed media reports, and reviewed government documents and academic publications regarding attacks on schools and military use of schools.

Armed Conflict and Impact on Education in Pakistan

In April 2010, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan elevated the right to education to the status of a “fundamental right.” As a result, the government became constitutionally responsible for providing free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5 and 16. Nonetheless, an estimated 25 million children in Pakistan are out of school, the highest number in South Asia and second highest in the world.¹

Education in Pakistan

Pakistan faces significant educational challenges. Poor access, low enrollment rates, wide disparities between provinces, gaps in access to education between rural and urban areas, gender bias, lack of trained teachers, and poor physical infrastructure of schools are just a few of the factors behind the dismal state of education in the country.

Exacerbating the challenge, militant violence has disrupted the education of hundreds of thousands of children, particularly girls. Islamist militants have destroyed school buildings, targeted teachers and students, and terrorized parents into keeping their children out of school.

Under the 18th Amendment, provincial governments are responsible for education, including policy making and budgetary allocations.² In some instances, the provincial governments have requested the assistance of the federal government in rebuilding educational institutions damaged due to armed conflict or natural disaster.³

Provincial governments are also responsible for maintaining law and order in their respective provinces. After the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in December

¹ UNICEF Pakistan, “Progress Report 2013-2015: Educate All Children,” July 2015, http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/Education_All_Children_LR.pdf (accessed June 15, 2016).

² “18th amendment and education,” Dawn, October 11, 2010, <http://www.dawn.com/news/570524>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

³ Muhammad Ashfaq, “KP demands Rs 15 bn from center for rebuilding quake-hit schools,” Dawn, March 31, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1249028/kp-demands-rs15bn-from-centre-for-rebuilding-quake-hit-schools> (accessed November 30, 2016).

2014, the provincial governments were required to make security arrangements for schools in their provinces. For example, in January 2015, the KP government allocated PKR 7.5 billion (US\$7.5 million) for the security of government schools.⁴

Security Challenges in the Provinces

While education continues to be under threat across Pakistan, it is particularly vulnerable to attacks in the country's northwest regions, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).⁵

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The Taliban took over large parts of the Swat Valley in KP province in 2007. By 2009, the TTP had gained complete control over the Swat Valley, where they enforced their fundamentalist interpretation of Sharia (Islamic law).

The Taliban imposed their authority in Swat and adjoining areas through summary executions, including beheadings, of state officials and political opponents. They also engaged in public whippings and large-scale intimidation of the population. Women were not allowed to leave their homes unless escorted by male family members. The Taliban halted Polio immunization programs, and expelled nongovernmental organizations.⁶ Music and film were banned and stores trading in CDs and DVDs were destroyed. All men were required to grow beards.

⁴ Asad Zia, "Rs 7.5 bn allocated for govt schools' security," Express Tribune, January 23, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/826056/rs-7-5b-allocated-for-govt-schools-security/>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

⁵ The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is a region located along the Indus River and the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. FATA consists of seven semi-autonomous agencies—Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur, Kurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan. FATA is governed by the Frontier Crimes Regulation, a colonial-era law that does not extend all protection of fundamental rights and guarantees to the region.

⁶ Azizuddin Ahmad, "A requiem for Swat agreement," The Nation, April 23, 2009, <http://nation.com.pk/columns/23-Apr-2009/A-requiem-for-Swat-agreement>, (accessed October 29, 2016).

The Taliban also began a violent campaign against education for girls, forcing over 900 girls schools to close.⁷ As a result, over 120,000 female students and 8,000 women teachers stopped attending school.⁸

On April 13, 2009, President Asif Ali Zardari signed an ordinance imposing Sharia in the Swat Valley and adjoining areas as part of a deal with the Pakistani Taliban.⁹ This effectively empowered the Taliban to impose its authority in the areas, which it did through serious human rights abuses. Responding to domestic and international outrage, on May 7, 2009, the government reversed course and declared an end to the deal, vowing to “eliminate” the Taliban.¹⁰ The ensuing military operation triggered a massive displacement crisis as some 2 million civilians fled the fighting to adjoining districts.¹¹

Punjab

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan has carried out deadly attacks in the country’s largest province, Punjab, killing hundreds of civilians and members of security forces. On March 27, 2016, a suicide attack which targeted Christian families celebrating Easter in a public park in Lahore killed at least 74 people and injured more than 300.¹² On August 16, 2016, two suicide attackers killed Punjab’s home minister, Shuja Khanzada, and at least 20 other people at a public meeting in Attock district.¹³ At least 8 people were injured on December 10, 2007, when a Pakistan Airforce employee bus carrying at least 50 school children was attacked by a suicide bomber outside the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex at Kamra, Attock.¹⁴

⁷ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, “State of Human Rights in 2010,” April 2011, <http://hrqp-web.org/hrqpweb/wp-content/pdf/ar/ar10e.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2016).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Swat peace deal,” Dawn, April 16, 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/news/862135/swat-peace-deal>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

¹⁰ Hamid Hussain, “Restoring Swat’s lights”, The Friday Times, July 29, 2016, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/restoring-swats-lights/>, (accessed October 29, 2016).

¹¹ “IDPs return start today,” The News, July 13, 2009, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/665556-idps-return-starts-today> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹² Salman Masood, “Blast at a Crowded Park in Lahore, Pakistan, Kills Dozens,” New York Times, March 27, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/28/world/asia/explosion-lahore-pakistan-park.html?_r=0 (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹³ “Punjab Minister Shuja Khanzada killed in Pakistan blast,” BBC, August 16, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-33952413> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴ “Nine hurt as a bomber hits school bus in Kamra,” The News, December 11, 2007, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/654034-nine-hurt-as-bomber-hits-school-bus-in-kamra> (accessed November 16, 2016).

After the Army Public School attack on December 16, 2014, the Punjab government ordered all schools in the province to be closed, leading to the loss of several school days. The Punjab government announced winter holidays ordering all schools, colleges, and universities to remain closed from December 19, 2014, till January 12, 2015.¹⁵

In January 2016, the Punjab government ordered the closure of all public and private schools from January 26 until January 31. Although the government cited cold weather as the reason, officials from the education department and education professionals told media that the decision was motivated by security considerations.¹⁶

In August 2016, the Punjab government extended the summer holidays of educational institutions by two weeks, directing them to remain closed.¹⁷ The government did not publicly give reasons for the decision, but a public school teacher told the *Express Tribune*, “Security was cited as the reason for the extension. Apparently, the government is not satisfied with security arrangements. The School Education Department had advertised vacancies for guards but apparently not all posts were filled.”¹⁸

Sindh

Karachi, the capital of Sindh province and the largest city in Pakistan, has witnessed constant violence and turbulence for the past three decades. Political parties, ethnic groups, and sectarian and Islamist militant organizations have engaged in violence, resulting in thousands of deaths. The Pakistan Rangers and Sindh police, the two primary law enforcement agencies, are deployed in the city to maintain order. However, they have been accused of numerous serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture.¹⁹

¹⁵ “Schools in Punjab to remain shut until Jan 12,” *Express Tribune*, December 27, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/813051/vacations-extended-until-jan-12-in-institutions-of-punjab/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁶ Shamsul Islam, “Owing to cold weather, schools across Punjab to remain closed till Jan 31,” *Express Tribune*, January 26, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1034632/owing-to-cold-weather-schools-across-punjab-to-remain-closed-till-jan-31/> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁷ Ammar Sheikh, “Summer holidays extended in Punjab?” *Express Tribune*, August 11, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1159760/rumour-summer-holidays-extended/> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “Pakistan: Independently Investigate Aftab Ahmad’s Death,” Human Rights Watch News Release, May 6, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/05/06/pakistan-independently-investigate-aftab-ahmads-death>.

Multiple actors threaten educational institutions in the city. Islamist extremist groups and factions of political parties have attacked schools for not paying extortion money.²⁰ Sectarian militant organizations such as the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LeJ) have also killed teachers who were Shia.²¹

Balochistan

Balochistan, Pakistan's western-most province, borders eastern Iran and southern Afghanistan. It is the largest of the country's four provinces in terms of area (44 percent of the country's land area), but the smallest in terms of population at 8 million people (5 percent of the country's total). According to the last national census in 1998, over two-thirds of the Baloch population lives in rural areas.

Teachers, professors, and school administrators have found their lives increasingly under threat in Balochistan. Human Rights Watch has previously documented the killings of at least 22 teachers and other educational personnel in the province who were targeted by suspected militant groups between 2008 and late 2010.²² Militants have also threatened, bombed, or otherwise attacked schools, resulting in injuries, deaths, property damage, and curtailed access to education for Balochistan's children and youth.

Education falls in the crosshairs of three distinct violent conflicts in Balochistan. The first is a nationalist conflict, in which militant Baloch groups seeking separation or autonomy for Balochistan, such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF), have targeted Punjabis and other minorities, particularly in the districts of Mastung, Kalat, Nushki, Gwadar, Khuzdar, and Quetta. While individuals from all professions have been the victims of such "targeted killings," teachers and students constitute a significant proportion of victims because militant groups view schools and

²⁰ "School in Karachi targeted on result day, principal killed," *Express Tribune*, March 30, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/528660/explosion-heard-in-baldia-town-karachi-express-news/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

²¹ Faraz Khan, "Targeted attack: KU loses second professor in seven months," *Express Tribune*, April 29, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/878132/targeted-attack-ku-loses-second-professor-in-seven-months/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

²² Human Rights Watch, *Pakistan – Their Future is at Stake: Attacks on Teachers and Schools in Pakistan's Balochistan Province*, December 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/12/13/their-future-stake/attacks-teachers-and-schoolspakistans-balochistan-province>.

educational personnel, particularly ethnic Punjabis, as representatives of the Pakistani state and symbols of perceived Punjabi military oppression of the province.²³

Bramdagh Bugti, chief of the Baloch Republican Party (BRP) and guerrilla commander, justified the targeted killings of Punjabi teachers as a reaction to Pakistan Army abuses:

As far as the target killing of teachers is concerned, I do not understand why the Pakistani authorities and the media shout only when one Punjabi teacher or barber is killed... I said before that target killings are the reaction to an action. If one Punjabi teacher is killed, one hundred more Balochs are also killed in response by the security forces. The government functionaries destroy all the livelihood of the poor Baloch tribesmen by bombarding their homes, goats, and sheep with helicopters and jet airplanes. What are the other ways left for us? Why should we not react?²⁴

The second distinct conflict is a sectarian one, in which militant Sunni Muslim groups have attacked members of the Shia community, especially members of the Persian-speaking Hazara community. Such sectarian attacks appeared to increase in 2009, and occur mainly in Quetta and its neighboring districts.²⁵

The third conflict involves armed Islamist groups attacking those who are deemed to act contrary to their interpretation of Islam. Islamist militants have increasingly committed violence in opposition to the content and manner of local education, particularly that of girls and young women. There have also been several reported instances of demands that schools stop teaching girls and boys together, and that students and teachers adopt more local and conservative dress.²⁶

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Pakistan – We are the Walking dead: Killings of Shia Hazara in Balochistan, Pakistan*, June 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/06/29/we-are-walking-dead/killings-shia-hazara-balochistan-pakistan>.

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Their Future is at Stake*.

Militant Groups that Attack Education

Islamist militants attack schools, teachers, and students for a variety of reasons. Some target schools because the curriculum is perceived to be too “secular” or Western.²⁷ Other schools were threatened and targeted simply for educating girls. Militants also view schools as symbols of the Pakistani state. They have also claimed to attack schools because they are used as bases by the security forces.

Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is an alliance of Sunni militant networks formed in 2007 to unify opposition against the Pakistani state.²⁸ The TTP is inspired by the Taliban, a Sunni militant group in Afghanistan that was formed in the early 1990s and ruled Afghanistan from 1996 until October 2001.

However, the Afghan Taliban and the TTP have different targets and objectives. The Afghan Taliban have declared war against the Afghan government and attack the Afghan government, civilians, security personnel and international security forces.²⁹

The TTP’s stated objectives are to overthrow the Pakistani government, dismantle the state, establish a caliphate, and enforce a strict implementation of a particular interpretation of Islam.³⁰ TTP attacks on civilians and security forces in Pakistan have resulted in thousands of deaths. Hakeemullah Mehsud, in an October 2013 interview with the BBC, explained the objectives and motivations of the TTP:

[F]riendship with America is only one of the two reasons we have to conduct jihad against Pakistan. The other reason is that Pakistan's system is un-Islamic, and we want that it should be replaced with the Islamic system. This demand and this desire will continue even after the American withdrawal.³¹

²⁷ Naveed Hussain, “Why Terrorists Attack Education,” Express Tribune, undated <http://labs.tribune.com.pk/attack-on-education/> (accessed June 26, 2016).

²⁸ Hassan Abbass. “A Profile of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.” CTC Sentinel 1, January 2008) http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/17868/profile_of_tehrikitaliban_pakistan.html (accessed on June 12, 2016).

²⁹ D. Suba Chandran, “A tale of two Taliban,” The Hindu, February 5, 2014, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-tale-of-two-taliban/article5653550.ece>, (accessed January 18, 2017).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “Full Text: BBC’s interview with Taliban’s Mehsud,” BBC, October 9, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24466791>, (accessed January 18, 2017).

On December 16, 2014, after attacking the Army Public School in Peshawar, the TTP justified the attack against the military-run school as revenge for an ongoing army offensive in the tribal areas of North Waziristan that began in June 2014.³² Taliban spokesman Muhammad Umar Khorasani said the attack was intended to make the army “feel the pain” for allegedly “targeting our families and females.”³³

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) is a militant extremist Sunni Deobandi group formed in 1996 as a breakaway faction of the sectarian militant Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The LeJ views Shia Muslims as heretics and their deaths as religiously justified.³⁴ The Pakistani government imposed a ban on LeJ and designated it as a terrorist organization in 2001.³⁵ Following the ban, some LeJ members fled to Afghanistan, seeking protection from the Afghan Taliban, and used that as a base to plan attacks in Pakistan. In addition to attacks on the Shia community, the LeJ has also been involved in attacks on Pakistan security forces, civilians, and foreign visitors in Pakistan.³⁶ The LeJ has attacked teachers, school administrators, and other education personnel on the basis of their sectarian affiliations.³⁷

The extremist armed group **Islamic State** (also known as ISIS) has claimed responsibility for attacks on Pakistani civilians, including attacks on teachers and education personnel. ISIS controls large if decreasing swaths of Iraq and Syria and has offshoots in countries including Libya, Nigeria, Yemen, and Afghanistan. There is very little information on the scale of ISIS operations in Pakistan.³⁸ In December 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for killing Zahid Askani, an educator in Gwadar, Balochistan, for “promoting an education system which contradicts Islam and Sharia law.”³⁹

³² Declan Walsh, “Taliban Besiege Pakistan School, Leaving 145 dead,” *New York Times*, December 16, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/world/asia/taliban-attack-pakistani-school.html?_r=0 (accessed June 21, 2016).

³³ “Uniting Against the Pakistan School Massacre,” Human Rights Watch dispatch, December 16, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/16/dispatches-uniting-against-pakistan-school-massacre> (accessed June 22, 2016).

³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *We Are The Walking Dead*.

³⁵ “List of banned organizations in Pakistan,” *Express Tribune*, October 24, 2012, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/456294/list-of-banned-organisations-in-pakistan/> (accessed November 6, 2016).

³⁶ Imran Gabol, “Three Sri Lankan cricket team attackers killed in Lahore: CTD,” *Dawn*, August 8, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1280535>, (accessed November 6, 2016).

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *We Are The Walking Dead*.

³⁸ Marium Kamal, “ISIS in Pakistan,” *The Nation*, June 14, 2015, <http://nation.com.pk/columns/14-Jun-2015/isis-in-pakistan>, (accessed November 6, 2016).

³⁹ Hanif Dilmurad, “Fear grows in Balochistan,” *The Friday Times*, January 2, 2015, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/fears-grow-in-balochistan/>, (accessed November 6, 2016).

The **Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)** is a Baloch nationalist armed separatist group based in the province of Balochistan. It has been in armed conflict with the Pakistani government since 2006. BLA has attacked teachers and other educational professionals on the basis of ethnicity.⁴⁰

Security Forces' Response

Following a June 2014 attack by militants at Jinnah International Airport in Karachi that killed more than 18 people, the military launched an offensive against the TTP.⁴¹ This offensive took place in North Waziristan, FATA, and involved more than 30,000 troops.⁴²

The fighting between the TTP and the Pakistan Army has resulted in an estimated 5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) from KP and FATA from 2004-2014.⁴³ By August 2014, there were 1 million registered IDPs from FATA and possibly more that remained unregistered. According to estimates, over half of those displaced were children.⁴⁴

Many of those fleeing the conflict either relocated to Afghanistan or settled inside or around the Bakakel camp in Bannu district, KP. The other three main camps in KP and FATA are the Jalozai camp, Togh Sarai camp in Hangu district, KP, and New Durrani camp in Kurram agency, FATA.⁴⁵ Educational opportunities for internally displaced children are extremely limited, both within the camps and out. In 2013, the Jalozai camp had 17 schools for over 55,000 people. Education services in the camps are usually temporary schools set up in tents, often known as Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs).⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, Pakistan-We are the Walking dead: Killings of Shia Hazara in Balochistan, Pakistan, June 2014.

⁴¹ "TTP claims attack on Karachi airport," Dawn, June 09, 2014 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1111397> (accessed June 18, 2016).

⁴² "Zarb-e-Azb: Victory for Peace," The Nation, June 14, 2015, <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/14-Jun-2015/zarb-e-azb-victory-for-peace> (accessed June 18, 2016).

⁴³ "Massive new displacement and falling returns require rights based response," IDMC, September 12, 2013, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Asia/Pakistan/pdf/201306-ap-pakistan-overview-en.pdf>, (accessed November 6, 2016).

⁴⁴ Madeeha Ansari, "Prioritizing Education Response for Internally Displaced Children in Pakistan," Jinnah Institute, September 3, 2014, http://jinnah-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Madeehas_PB.pdf, (accessed November 6, 2016).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

A large number of the displaced persons choose not to stay in the camps and are housed in school buildings in host communities. According to a report by the KP Elementary and Secondary Education Department's Independent Monitoring Unit, 222 schools were partially occupied and 63 schools were entirely occupied by displaced families or security forces as of December 2014, disrupting the schools' normal functions.⁴⁷

In December 2015, the minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), in a report submitted to the National Assembly, stated that 360 schools were destroyed in three of the seven agencies of FATA in 2015. According to the government, at least 166 schools were destroyed in North Waziristan Agency, 139 in Khyber Agency, and 55 in South Waziristan Agency.⁴⁸ The statistics for the other four agencies were not available. The minister told the National Assembly, "The areas of the [FATA] agencies which are not accessible are being assessed/surveyed."⁴⁹

Muhammad Rasool, a journalist who worked closely with displaced persons, described the humanitarian and educational crisis:

Most children are not getting any access to education, and the ones that do have access are learning nothing. Youngsters attend a college that has no teachers and study on their own. The only time they see an educator is when time comes for them to be given their exams, after that they either pass or fail.⁵⁰

In June 2016, Iqbal Jhagra, governor of K-P, announced an "education emergency" in FATA.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Asad Zia, "Right to education: Nearly 300 govt schools illegally occupied in the province," Express Tribune, December 20, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/809843/right-to-education-nearly-300-govt-schools-illegally-occupied-in-the-province/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁴⁸ Azam Khan, "360 schools were destroyed in FATA in 2015," Express Tribune, December 17, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1011433/law-and-order-360-fata-schools-were-destroyed-in-2015/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ "The 'other side' of the existential war," Pakistan Today, June 13, 2015, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/06/13/features/the-other-side-of-the-existential-war/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁵¹ "KP Governor declares 'education emergency in FATA,'" Business Recorder, June 5, 2016, <http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/53542:kp-governor-declares-education-emergency-in-fata?date=2016-06-05>, (accessed January 14, 2016).

After the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, the Pakistani government responded with a national action plan to fight terrorism, including tactics that violated basic rights. The government established the use of military courts instead of civilian courts in terrorism cases and also ended an unofficial moratorium on capital punishment.⁵²

The Pakistan Rangers, a federal paramilitary force, have been deployed in Karachi, the provincial capital of Sindh, since the 1980s, but the deployment has been scaled up in recent years. The Pakistan Rangers have been given special policing powers and have occupied several educational institutions. The Sindh government has objected to the deployment of the Pakistan Rangers.⁵³ The federal government maintains that while the provincial government has the power to call the paramilitary force for assistance, the authority of how and where the troops are deployed lies with the federal government and the Pakistan Rangers.⁵⁴

Impact on Children

The impact of attacks has been devastating on education in Pakistan. Many teachers and students have been killed, injured, or traumatized. Attacks often lead to dramatic decreases in school attendance rates.

Human Rights Watch observed that the streets of Swat district in KP have a high number of unattended children, some as young as five years old. Many are the children of those killed by the Taliban, those killed by the Pakistan Army as suspected militants, and of mountain dwellers displaced by the military offensive.⁵⁵

Children of suspected Taliban members killed in battle are in the worst condition since it is practically prohibited for local residents to help them.⁵⁶ Any local educational institution,

⁵² "Pakistan's Misguided Approach to Extremism," Human Rights Watch dispatch, February 4, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/04/dispatches-pakistans-misguided-approach-extremism> (accessed June 23, 2016).

⁵³ Naeem Sahoutara, "Sindh government opposes Rangers stations in Karachi," Express Tribune, March 9, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1062057/sindh-government-opposes-rangers-stations-in-karachi/>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

⁵⁴ Mazhar Abbas, "Why the operation became controversial?" The News, August 4, 2016, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/140025-Why-the-operation-became-controversial>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Qaiser Khan (pseudonym), Swat, July 22, 2016.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

shelter, orphanage, or nongovernmental organization that attempts to help them is put under investigation for being Taliban “sympathizers.”⁵⁷ Babar Khan, who works with children affected by conflict in Swat, told Human Rights Watch:

If we try and help orphan children whose fathers were killed as suspected militants, the army begins questioning and threatening us, calling us “facilitators” and “sympathizers” of the Taliban. There is so much fear of the army’s reaction that the families of the missing militants are shunned from schools and shelters and they are reduced to begging and child labor. There is a major crisis brewing in Swat. It has too many children on the streets and out of school. At this rate, the government will never be able to stop Taliban recruitment.⁵⁸

Many children require psychological counselling because of being exposed to and affected by violence, but according to Babar Khan:

There is no psychological counseling available, at least from the government. Children are afraid of the Taliban and the army; both are a constant reminder of the ongoing conflict and violence. They have seen both the Taliban and the army kill their family members and destroy their houses.⁵⁹

As a response to the Peshawar school attack, the government and the administration required security barricades for many schools in Lahore, and carried out drills simulating attacks, furthering trauma for students. Sadia Mukhtar, a doctor in Lahore and mother of an 8-year-old, described her daughter’s elite private school in Lahore after the Peshawar attack: “It was surreal. The school was fortified with barbed wires, and there were snipers on the roof.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Babar Khan (pseudonym), Swat, July 21, 2016.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Saadia Mukhtar, Lahore, November 16, 2016.

Imran Ali, a lawyer, described the security drill at his son's private school in Lahore:

My son came home from school absolutely shaken one day. The school had carried out a drill. The trainers taught the children how to play dead when the attackers were shooting. They told my son that the attackers might check to see if he is really dead or merely pretending by poking him with the rifle's muzzle, that the muzzle might be hot from all the shooting, and that he should not make a sound or movement if that happens. My son did not want to go to school for weeks and frankly, we did not want to send him either.⁶¹

⁶¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Imran Ali, Lahore, November 16, 2016.



A Pakistani soldier assists a child aim a military assault rifle during a security training in Karachi, Pakistan, February 2016. © 2016 Sabir Mazhar/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Some schools are now deploying children on guard duty. Shamim Ara, the principal at a government boys' middle school in Lahore, said:

Before the Army Public School attack our school had no security guard. After the attack, the government has provided us with one guard. It is a big school with more than 400 students and two gates. One security guard is not sufficient. So when he goes for lunch or a prayer break one of the older students, aged 15-16, takes over the responsibility of guarding the gate. Three of our students have been given a basic tutorial on handling a firearm by the security guard and can stand as his substitute when he is

temporarily away. I understand that this is not desirable or safe. However, I don't see any other option of ensuring a minimum level of security.⁶²

Disproportionate Impact on Girls

Pakistan has a huge gender disparity problem. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2016, Pakistan ranks 143 out of 144 countries in the gender inequality index.⁶³ Government figures showed that in 2014 only 47 percent of the women in Pakistan were literate, compared to 70 percent of men.⁶⁴ At least 53 percent of girls are out of school as compared to 43 percent of boys.⁶⁵

Discriminatory policies and conservative cultural and social practices contribute to impeding equal access to education for women and girls. Parents often have a lower threshold for pulling their daughters out of school than boys, given greater social restrictions on girls' movements and concerns about sexual harassment and violence. This exacerbates an already dire situation where only 35 percent of schools accept girls.⁶⁶

In addition, women and girls in Pakistan bear the brunt of the attacks on education, exacerbating other barriers that keep girls from going to school. In January 2009, the TTP announced a deadline of January 15, after which no female student was allowed to go to school.⁶⁷ The Taliban also destroyed 400 of the approximately 1,600 schools—around 70

⁶² Human Rights Watch interview with Shamim Ara, Lahore, November 16, 2016.

⁶³ Mubarak Zeb Khan, "Gender Gap index puts Pakistan in second last place," Dawn, October 26, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1292347>, (accessed January 30, 2017).

⁶⁴ Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15, June 4, 2015, http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_15/10_Education.pdf, (accessed January 30, 2017).

⁶⁵ Alif Ailaan, "Distribution of out of school children (5 to 16 years of age) by gender at national level," undated, <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/alifailaan/pages/545/attachments/original/1448612337/fep-6.jpg?1448612337>, (accessed January 30, 2017).

⁶⁶ Alif Ailaan, "Female education in Pakistan," undated, <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/alifailaan/pages/545/attachments/original/1448612367/fep-18.jpg?1448612367>, (accessed January 30, 2017).

⁶⁷ Omar Waraich, "Taliban restrict women's education in Pakistan," The Independent, January 18, 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/taliban-restrict-womens-education-in-pakistan-1419199.html>, (accessed January 30, 2017).

percent of them girls schools—in areas under their control.⁶⁸ Muslim Khan, a Taliban spokesperson, justified prohibiting and attacking girls' education:

If our women are not educated in the Deen [religion] but rather in Western education, they will impart false information to their children, or they may raise their children to hate jihad, to pursue an education for the sake of an education, to get a high paying job and not have any interest with spreading the Deen of Allah.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, Education Reform in Pakistan, June 23, 2014 <https://d2071andvipowj.cloudfront.net/education-reform-in-pakistan.pdf>, (accessed January 30, 2017).

⁶⁹ Not many can access the Taliban to seek their views. Please see Shakil Ahmad, "The Taliban and girls' education in Pakistan and Afghanistan-with a case study of the situation in Swat district," 2012 (Masters diss. University of Lund, 2012).

Militant Attacks on Education

Human Rights Watch defines “attacks on education” as encompassing the full range of violations that place children at risk and deny them access to education. This includes attacks on school infrastructure and on students, teachers, and school administrators, the occupation of schools by the police and military, as well as harassment and threats against teachers, parents, and education professionals.

Pakistan is one of the most badly affected countries in the world in terms of attacks on schools. Reliable and transparent official government data on the number of attacks on schools and universities, or the number of injuries and casualties from such attacks, are non-existent. However, according to the Global Terrorism Database, there were 867 attacks on educational institutions in Pakistan from 2007 to 2015, resulting in 392 fatalities and 724 injured.⁷⁰

According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack:

There were at least 838 attacks on schools in Pakistan between 2009 and 2012, leaving hundreds of schools damaged. At least 30 students were killed and more than 97 injured in the same period. Furthermore, at least 138 school students and staff were reported to have been kidnapped.⁷¹

Attacks on Schools

Attacks on educational institutions between 1990 and 2013 appear to have occurred on a much greater scale in Pakistan than anywhere else in the world.⁷² The vast majority of the

⁷⁰ Global Terrorism Database, search results for attacks on educational institutions in Pakistan between 2007 and 2015, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?start_yearonly=2007&end_yearonly=2015&start_year=&start_month=&start_day=&end_year=&end_month=&end_day=&asmSelecto=&country=153&asmSelect1=&target=8&ctp2=all&success=yes&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=, (accessed on October 28, 2016).

⁷¹ Human Rights Watch, Letter to the Committee on the Rights of Child, March 1, 2016, p.2, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/PAK/INT_CRC_NGO_PAK_23419_E.pdf (accessed on October 28 2016).

⁷² The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, Terrorist Attacks on Educational Institutions, December 2014,

school attacks, around 94 percent, typically involved the use of explosives, arson, or incendiary devices on buildings that were unoccupied at the time of the attack. The primary goal of these attacks was not to physically harm students or teachers, but to disrupt the educational process, particularly at girls schools.⁷³ The TTP was allegedly responsible for three-fourths of the attacks.⁷⁴

However, even when students are not harmed, these attacks adversely impact the right to education because they can lead to a drop in attendance among students, teachers, and staff; demotivation, distraction, and traumatization of students and teachers; a drop in staff recruitment; and declining enrollment of students.

In February 2016, militants targeted a newly constructed girls school in South Waziristan, FATA in a bomb attack. Sajna group, a faction of the TTP, claimed responsibility, saying, “We have blown up the school because it was a government installation.”⁷⁵

In October 2014, a government-run girls primary school in Khyber agency, FATA, was targeted in a bomb attack.⁷⁶ Because the attack took place on a Sunday evening, there were no deaths or injuries. However, it completely demolished the school, including all rooms and the boundary wall. Explosives planted in various parts of the school were detonated with a remote device.⁷⁷

In September 2014, militants bombed a newly reconstructed school in Bajaur agency, FATA, on International Literacy Day. The school had been previously attacked and completely destroyed in 2009 and rebuilt in 2014.⁷⁸

<https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/Peshawar%20School%20Background%20Report%20Decemberna%202014.pdf> (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “New government school blown up in South Waziristan,” Express Tribune, February 20, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1050956/new-government-school-blown-up-in-waziristan/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁷⁶ Shamim Shahid, “Militants blow up girls primary school in Khyber agency,” Express Tribune, October 27, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/781756/militants-blow-up-primary-school-in-khyber-agency/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Anti-Literacy: Reconstructed girls school blown up,” Express Tribune, September 9, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/759744/anti-literacy-reconstructed-girls-school-blown-up/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

In September 2014, armed assailants entered, ransacked, and set fire to a private school in Turbat, Balochistan, destroying textbooks, furniture, and computers, as well as the entire principal's office.⁷⁹ The attack occurred at night and there were no fatalities or injuries. The school was co-educational and offered classes in English to over 400 students. Al Jihad, a lesser known religious extremist group, claimed responsibility for the attack. The attackers also left pamphlets in the school demanding that other private schools "stop imparting Western education."⁸⁰

In June 2014, militants bombed a government girls school at night in South Waziristan, FATA, destroying the school entrance and three adjacent classrooms. Reportedly, the militants threatened the school watchman and asked him to leave before the attack.⁸¹

In July 2013, militants detonated heavy explosives alongside the wall of a government-run primary girls school in Bannu district, KP. While no one was injured, the blast destroyed a portion of the school boundary wall, the gate, and some classrooms.⁸²

Schools in Pakistan are often designated as polling stations in general and local elections and in some instances have been attacked to enforce election boycotts. In May 2013, bomb attacks targeted two schools in the Naseerabad district of Balochistan which had been designated as polling stations for the general election.⁸³ Human Rights Watch also documented attacks on schools in Balochistan designated as polling stations before the February 2008 general election.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Shezad Baloch, "Education emergency: In a first, private school comes under attack in Turbat," Express Tribune, September 3, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/757181/education-emergency-in-a-first-private-school-comes-under-attack-in-turbat/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ "Government School Blown up in Wana," FATA Research Center, June 11, 2014, <http://frc.org.pk/news/government-school-blown-up-in-wana/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁸² "Attacked: Girls school blown up in Bannu," Express Tribune, July 7, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/573367/attacked-girls-school-blown-up-in-bannu/>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁸³ Syed Ali Shah, "Polling stations attacked in Balochistan, The National party Chief attacked," Dawn, May 6, 2013, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1026522/polling-stations-attacked-in-balochistan-national-party-chief-attacked>, (accessed November 7, 2016).

⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Their Future is at Stake*.

Attack on Government Primary School for Boys, Alam Abad, Kohat, KP

In March 2012, a bomb targeted the government primary school for boys in Koteri village of Kohat district.⁸⁵ According to bomb disposal officials, 20 kilograms of explosives were used in the attack. Syed Kamal, the caretaker of the school, told Human Rights Watch:

Suddenly there was an explosion in the very early hours of the morning. It demolished the western wall of the school and damaged the doors and windows of the rooms. It was the Taliban. They attack schools because they do not want our children to be educated. There was a lot of fear in teachers, parents and students for a few days. Later, however, it was normal again. People know that there is nothing that can be done about this. Children have to go to school. And Taliban attacks are just a part of our lives.⁸⁶

Attack on Government Girls Primary School, Ghulam Banda, Kohat, KP

In June 2012, a government-run girls primary school was targeted in a bomb attack.⁸⁷ The school watchman reportedly confessed to blowing it up on the orders of the Taliban. An official investigator told media, “It is a unique case. In all other cases of terrorism, the government servants haven’t cooperated with militants to such extent to blow up the building that is guarded by them.”⁸⁸

Teacher Ahmad Ali said they had feared such an attack because girls attended the school:

I was asleep at home, which is close to the school. I woke up hearing an explosion around midnight, but was too frightened to come out. In the morning, I came to the school and saw that some unknown terrorists had bombed the school and completely destroyed two rooms. Another room in the middle was also badly damaged. The Taliban have attacked schools for

⁸⁵ “Investigations begin in Pishtakhara suicide blast,” *Express Tribune*, March 17, 2012, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/351204/investigation-begins-in-pishtakhara-suicide-blast/>, (accessed November 25, 2016).

⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Syed Kamal (pseudonym), Kohat, February 7, 2016.

⁸⁷ Abdul Sami Paracha, “Watchman confesses to blowing up school in Kohat,” *Dawn*, June 25, 2012, <http://www.dawn.com/news/729501/watchman-confesses-to-blowing-up-school-in-kohat>, (accessed November 26, 2016).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

girls all over KP and the police had, in the past, warned that our school might be a target. However, no police security was provided to the school.⁸⁹

The school had been rebuilt and was functioning when Human Rights Watch visited.

Attack on Government Girls Primary School No. 3, Kohat

In November 2012, militants targeted a government-run girls primary school in Kama Khel area of Kohat district.⁹⁰ No one was killed in the nighttime attack, although the building was damaged. Muhammad Razzaq, the head teacher, told Human Rights Watch:

I was at home late at night when another teacher phoned to tell me that some unknown persons had caused explosions in the school. I arrived at the school at 7:30 a.m. the next morning. The police and the bomb disposal squad were already there. After a detailed inspection, they found that three rooms had been completely demolished, while two rooms had become unfit for use. There was no watchman or other persons present in the school at the time of explosion. For the next few days, we conducted classes in the grounds. The militants oppose education for girls and an incident like this makes it difficult for us to convince parents to send their girls to school.⁹¹

In many of the damaged schools that Human Rights Watch visited, classes are held on the grounds outside while the school, or parts of it, is rebuilt. Many interviewees expressed concern about the quality of reconstruction, which they felt authorities compromise in a rush to rebuild.

⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Ahmad Ali (pseudonym), Kohat, February 7, 2016.

⁹⁰ “Bomb blast damages school in Kohat,” *The News*, November 24, 2012, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/626751-bomb-blast-damages-school-in-kohat>, (accessed November 26, 2016).

⁹¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Muhammad Razzaq (pseudonym), Kohat, February 6, 2016.

Attack on Federal Government Public School, Kohat, KP

The Federal Government Public School in Kohat is close to the Inter Service Selection Board (ISSB) building, which is the main recruitment center for the Pakistan Army.⁹² The area has been repeatedly targeted because of this proximity.⁹³ The first attack on the school occurred in 2006; it was attacked again in 2009.

Atif Haider, school caretaker since 2005, said that although the school was now fully functional, parents were concerned about safety after the 2009 bombing:

I was on duty in the schoolyard when in the evening there was a large explosion next to the southern boundary wall of the school. The explosion caused massive damage to the boundary wall and the gate. Fortunately, since it was in the evening, no one was hurt. If an explosion like this had happened during the day, it could have resulted in significant casualties. I remember that for days after that the school remained closed, and even after it opened, parents were reluctant to send their children to school.⁹⁴

Attacks on Schools in Swat

There is an acute shortage of schools and colleges in Swat. According to education department officials, Swat has 848 primary schools for boys and exactly half that number, 424, for girls. Many girls end up without access to education.⁹⁵ The few schools that do exist for girls are also under threat.

Schools were first destroyed in Swat when the Taliban took over in December 2008. According to Raza Shah, a member of a teachers' association in Swat, the Taliban

⁹² "Sabotage bid foiled in Kohat, weapons recovered," PakTribune, April 18, 2006, <http://paktribune.com/news/Sabotage-bid-foiled-in-Kohat;-weapons-recovered-141019.html>, (accessed November 25, 2016).

⁹³ "Kohat: Bomb goes off near rail tracks, rockets fired in Kohat," Dawn, November 28, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/news/332037/kohat-bomb-goes-off-near-rail-track-rockets-fired-in-kohat> (accessed November 25, 2016).

⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Atif Haider (pseudonym), Kohat, February 6, 2016.

⁹⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Bashir Ali (pseudonym), Swat, July 20, 2016.

destroyed 265 schools from January to May 2009. Of these, only 68, or 25 percent, were boys' schools and the rest were for girls.⁹⁶

By the time military operations pushed the Taliban back, they had destroyed at least 393 schools in Swat.⁹⁷ Raza Shah said that many of those schools have been completely or partially rebuilt by aid from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Arab Emirates. In August 2016, the spokesperson for the KP government's Provincial Reconstruction Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority said in a statement that more than 100 schools had been constructed in collaboration with USAID and 47 schools had been constructed with the assistance of United Arab Emirates.⁹⁸ Only 23 of the schools damaged or destroyed by militants have not been rebuilt.⁹⁹

However, one major consequence of the violence in Swat has been a disturbingly high dropout rate for children who were enrolled before the conflict started. At least 40 percent of male students and 80 percent of female students did not return to school even 11 months after the Pakistan Army had displaced the Taliban control of the area.¹⁰⁰

In June 2016, the Taliban allegedly burned a school in Toha, Charbagh. Although the local Taliban leadership claimed responsibility for the attack, the government maintains that the school caught fire due to a wire short circuit, in an effort to deny responsibility for security failures.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah (pseudonym), Swat, July 19, 2016.

⁹⁷ Brenda O' Malley, "The longer-term impact of attacks on education systems, development and fragility and the implications for policy response," Paper Commissioned for Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education, 2010,

⁹⁸ Shehzad Khan, "Sigh of relief: Students ecstatic as girls school reconstructed in Matta," Express Tribune, August 29, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1171597/sigh-relief-students-ecstatic-girls-schools-reconstructed-matta/>, (accessed January 13, 2017).

⁹⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah, Swat, July 19, 2016. Education in Swat suffered also suffered setbacks in recent years from natural causes. A large number of schools were destroyed in the 2010 floods and an earthquake in 2015.

¹⁰⁰ Brenda O' Malley, "The longer-term impact of attacks on education systems, development and fragility and the implications for policy response," Paper Commissioned for Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education, 2010, http://www.protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/efa_unesco_-_the_longer_term_impact_of_attacks.pdf (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹⁰¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Qaiser Khan, Swat, July 19, 2016.

Attacks on Schools in Karachi

Karachi has witnessed violent attacks for decades in a stand-off between the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a dominant political party claiming to represent Muslims who moved to Pakistan after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, criminal gangs that operate under political patronage, and state security forces. Education is a hidden casualty.

In March 2016, assailants threw a grenade into a school in North Nazimabad and left a threatening letter.¹⁰² Although children were inside at the time, no one was injured.

In 2015, the Government Primary School for Girls at Gul Muhammad Kalamthi Goth was targeted with an improvised explosive device placed near the boundary wall of the school. It was a weekly holiday and no one was injured, although the wall was damaged.¹⁰³

The District West area in Karachi has been particularly affected by attacks on schools. Nine schools in the District West area were attacked from March 2013 to August 2013, mostly by unidentified gunmen firing on the school gate or building.¹⁰⁴ The schools that were attacked are:

- The Nation Secondary School, Rahamania Muhalla, Baldia Town, attacked on March 30, 2013.¹⁰⁵
- Marie Adelaide Leprosy Center's School, Sultanabad, Manghopir, attacked on May 1, 2013.
- Naunehal Public School, Islamia Colony, Manghopir, attacked on May 13, 2013.
- Government Boys Primary School Baitul Firdous, Baloch Goth, Orangi Town, attacked on May 24, 2013.
- Rakhsanda Public School, Gulshan-e-Behar, Orangi Town, attacked on September 25, 2013.
- Prince Grammar School, Gulshan-e-Behar, Orangi Town, attacked on October 22, 2013.

¹⁰² Asim Khan, "Grenade attack on school in Karachi's North Nazimabad," *Dawn*, March 19, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1170350> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁰³ "Girls school damaged in Karachi bomb blast," *Dawn*, March 2, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1166784>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ The Nation Secondary School attack was not by unidentified gunmen, but by militants who had lobbed a tennis ball packed with explosives into the schoolgrounds.

- Al Mehran School, Ghaziabad, Orangi Town, attacked on October 28, 2013.
- Islamia Public School, Metroville, SITE, attacked on May 3, 2014.
- Crescent Public School, Saeedabad, attacked on August 4, 2014.

Attacks on Students

In addition to attacks on school buildings, the TTP and other groups have also attacked students and staff, often specifically targeting girls.

In September 2011, militants attacked a school van in Peshawar, KP. Four students and the van driver were killed in the attack.¹⁰⁶ A TTP spokesperson claimed responsibility, telling the Associated Press: “This was to teach them a lesson and we will continue to carry out attacks wherever and whenever possible, no matter if it is a school or a school bus.”¹⁰⁷

In October 2012, militants intercepted a school van carrying students from the Parachinar area of Kurram agency, FATA, to the Kohat University of Science and Technology for an exam, and threw acid on the faces of the female students. At least two girls sustained severe burns to their faces.¹⁰⁸ The local TTP commander told CNN:

We will never allow the girls of this area to go and get a Western education. If and when we find any girl from Parachinar going to university for an education we will target her [in] the same way, so that she might not be able to unveil her face before others.¹⁰⁹

After the attack, many parents no longer wanted to send their daughters to university. Zahid Hussain, a school teacher, explained that he was going to keep his daughter and

¹⁰⁶ Manzoor Ali, “Mattani attack: Taliban target Children,” Express Tribune, September 13, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/251406/school-bus-attack-in-peshawar-kills-four-children-police/> (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Shaan Khan, “Pakistani Taliban target female students with acid attacks,” CNN, November 3, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/03/world/asia/pakistan-acid-attack/> (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

niece at home: “There is no other option. Being poor, we cannot afford for such incidents to happen to our daughters too.”¹¹⁰

Attack on Nation Secondary School, Karachi

On March 30, 2013, armed gunmen attacked the Nation Secondary School in Ittehad Town, Karachi, a school with both female and male students.¹¹¹ A large number of students were present in the school at the time. The attackers entered the school building, hurled grenades into classrooms, and opened fire. The school principal, Abdul Rasheed, and a grade four student, Tahira Noor, were killed. Six girls and two visitors were injured. According to a friend of the principal, Rashid had received a threatening call from a TTP representative in Karachi demanding that he quit his affiliation with the Awami National Party (ANP), a Pashtun nationalist political party. Malala Yousafzai had visited the school in March 2012.¹¹²

One of those injured, Attaur Rahman, the principal of the nearby Iqbal academy, was visiting the school at the time of the attack. Rahman said that the attack seemed to specifically target the female students: “The attacker was standing on the boys’ side and was firing towards the girls. Luckily, we managed to send them inside the classrooms when they opened fire, otherwise around a hundred female students would have died.”¹¹³

Attack on Army Public School, Peshawar

On December 16, 2014, the TTP attacked the Army Public School, a school for girls and boys in Peshawar, KP, killing 145 people, almost all of them children.¹¹⁴ Witnesses said that nine gunmen disguised in the uniforms of the Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force, entered the school by scaling the walls. According to the Pakistan military, the gunmen wanted to

¹¹⁰ Sher Alam Shinwari, “Female education in tribal agencies faces new threats,” Dawn, November 18, 2012, <http://www.dawn.com/news/765002/female-education-in-tribal-agencies-faces-new-threat>, (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹¹¹ Sohail Khattak, “Ittehad Town school reopens Monday, a week after attack,” Express Tribune, April 7, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/532153/ittehad-town-school-reopens-monday-a-week-after-attack/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Declan Walsh, “Taliban Besiege Pakistan School, Leaving 145 dead,” New York Times, December 16, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/world/asia/taliban-attack-pakistani-school.html?_r=0 (accessed June 21, 2016).

kill as many students and teachers as they could. There were more than 1,000 students and staff present at the time of the attack. The students ranged from age 5 to 17.¹¹⁵

Zeeshan, a student, described the attack. “Our instructor asked us to duck and lie down. Then I saw militants walking past rows of students, shooting them in the head.”¹¹⁶

The Army Public School attack was the deadliest ever on a school in Pakistan.¹¹⁷ The TTP said the attack was revenge for the army’s ongoing offensive in the tribal areas of North Waziristan that began in June 2014. Taliban spokesman Muhammad Umar Khorasani said the attack was intended to make the army “feel the pain” for allegedly “targeting our families and females.”¹¹⁸ All seven attackers were killed during the government rescue operation. In December 2015, four men convicted by a closed military court for being involved in the planning of the attack were executed.¹¹⁹

Bacha Khan University, Charsdda, KP

On January 20, 2016, gunmen opened fire at Bacha Khan University in Charsadda district of KP. The Pakistan Army reported that four assailants had scaled the university walls and opened fire indiscriminately. The gunmen killed 21 students and wounded dozens of others. They were wearing suicide vests, but soldiers shot and killed all four of them before they could detonate.¹²⁰ Asim, a 23-year-old geology student, said:

I was in my room in the hostel with some other students when I heard the sound of heavy gunfire. We locked ourselves in the room. We could hear firing and footsteps. The militants knocked at our door, asking us to open. I hid under the bed in my room. They eventually broke the door and came in.

¹¹⁵ Ismail Khan, “Taliban Massacre 131 school children, principal among 141 dead in attack on Army Public School, Peshawar,” Dawn, December 17, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1151361> (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Declan Walsh, “Taliban Besiege Pakistan School, Leaving 145 dead,” New York Times, December 16, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/world/asia/taliban-attack-pakistani-school.html?_r=0 (accessed November 8, 2016).

¹¹⁸ “Uniting Against the Pakistan School Massacre,” Human Rights Watch dispatch, December 16, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/16/dispatches-uniting-against-pakistan-school-massacre> (accessed June 22, 2016).

¹¹⁹ “Four APS terrorists executed in Kohat Jail,” Ary News, December 2, 2015, <http://arynews.tv/en/four-aps-attac-in-kohat-jail/> (accessed January 10, 2017).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

They killed five of my friends in front of me. Then they left the room. After a few minutes the militants came in again to check if anyone was alive. They did not look under the bed. But they lobbed a grenade in the room and left. I was very seriously injured by the grenade shrapnel. I was in the hospital for 20 days. I suffer from nightmares and panic attacks. I have not been able to focus on studying for the past many months. In our university, there are five students in each hostel dorm room — all four of my roommates are dead, and they were killed in front of my eyes. How can I ever forget that? I cannot live in a hostel or dorm room again.¹²¹

Adnan, a 22-year-old student, told Human Rights Watch:

When the firing started, I ran to a friend's room. We locked the room and tried hiding in the cupboard. The militants came to our door and knocked saying, 'We are the police and we are here to rescue you.' My friend and I were very scared and we almost opened the door. However, they spoke in Urdu and we thought that the Charsadda police would have talked to us in Pashto. When we did not open the door, they fired gunshots through the door and tried kicking it. But before they could break down the door, soldiers entered the hostel.

Seven of my closest friends were killed that evening. When I got out, I saw dead bodies of my friends lying in the corridors and in rooms with open doors. I also saw the bodies of two of the militants. I can never forget those scenes. The university closed for some time after the attack. Once it opened, I did not want to go back. My parents insisted that I go back. I remained up all night for weeks after the attack, checking repeatedly to see if the door of my room was locked. For weeks, almost everyone in the hostel remained up all night. I could hear people crying in their rooms and in the corridors.¹²²

¹²¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Asim (pseudonym), Charsadda, June 3, 2016.

¹²² Human Rights Watch interview with Adnan (pseudonym), Charsadda, June 3, 2016.

According to Fazal-e-Haq, a 23-year-old student, even six months after the attack, the attendance at the university remained significantly lower:

Those were the worst three hours of my life. I saw the body of one of my close friends. I saw the bodies of the militants. I was trembling with fear and shock. I did not leave the house for many days. I am still very afraid. I have never returned to the hostel. Now, I come daily from Peshawar. It is a long distance for daily commute however I have no choice. More than half of the students have left the hostel and now travel daily from distant places. Many students have left the university altogether. The attendance in classes now is not more than one-third compared to before the attack.¹²³

The main spokesman for TTP later denied and condemned the assault.¹²⁴ However, Khalifa Umar Mansoor, a TTP commander claiming responsibility for the attack on Bacha Khan University, Charsadda, KP, said in a video message:

We will continue to attack schools, colleges, and universities across Pakistan as these are the foundations that produce apostates. This is the place where lawyers are made, this is the place that produces military officers, this is the place that produces members of parliament, all of whom challenge Allah's sovereignty.¹²⁵

Attack on Government High School Ibrhamizai School, Hangu, KP

Aitzaz Hasan, a 15-year-old student, was killed on January 7, 2014, while preventing a suicide bomber from entering a school in KP's Hangu district.¹²⁶ The school is the only one in Ibrahimzai, a Shia-dominated area in Hangu. There were nearly 2,000 students in the school at the time the attack occurred. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) later claimed

¹²³ Human Rights Watch interview with Fazal-e-Haq (pseudonym), Charsadda, June 3, 2016.

¹²⁴ Reuters, "APS mastermind claims Bacha Khan University attack, 21 killed," Dawn, January 21, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1234200> (accessed November 4, 2016).

¹²⁵ Naveed Hussain, "Why Terrorists Attack Education," Express Tribune, undated <http://labs.tribune.com.pk/attack-on-education/> (accessed June 26, 2016).

¹²⁶ Malala Yousafzai, "Aitzaz Hasan, our hero of all times," Dawn, January 22, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1158034>, (accessed November 3, 2016).

responsibility for the attack.¹²⁷ Raza Ali, a 16-year-old student, witnessed the entire incident. He said:

Aitzaz and I along with another friend were late for school and were walking near the school gate. We saw another person walking towards the school. He looked around 20 years old. We did not recognize him, so we asked him who he was. He said that he was going to the school to get admission. We found that odd since it was not the time of year for school admissions. He did not want to talk to us and kept walking towards the school gate. It was then, that we spotted that he was wearing a “jacket” [a suicide vest with a detonator] and I began to run towards the school gate. Aitzaz tried to stop him. I kept running until I heard a loud blast.¹²⁸

Mujtaba Hasan said that he heard from witnesses that his younger brother Aitzaz grabbed the attacker to stop him from entering the school.

Aitzaz, instead of running away from him, ran towards him and wrestled him to the ground. The suicide vest detonated while Aitzaz attempted to restrain him. There were more than 2,000 children in the school at that moment.¹²⁹

Ali Hussain, an elder of Ibrahimzai village in District Hangu, KP, told Human Rights Watch about his reluctance to send his son to school after the attempted suicide bombing by LeJ:

We already feel threatened because we are Shia. However, nobody thought that the LeJ would attack a school. School is supposed to be a place of safety of our children. For many days after the attack, my son couldn't go to school. I also didn't want him to. There is police security at the school now, but on most days it is just one police constable. We have tried to put together a team of local volunteers to guard the school. But what can we do

¹²⁷ “Saving lives: a teenager’s sacrifice for hundreds of mothers,” Express Tribune, January 9, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/656766/saving-lives-a-teenagers-sacrifice-for-hundreds-of-mothers/>, (accessed November 4, 2016).

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Ali (pseudonym), Hangu, February 9, 2016.

¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Mujtaba Hasan, Hangu, February 9, 2016.

when faced with a suicide attacker? There is only one school in the village and all our children go to this school. An attack on this school is devastating for us. Many people in the village have made their children discontinue school after the martyrdom of Aitzaz Hasan.¹³⁰

Attacks on Teachers and Education Authorities

Teachers, professors, and school administrators have found their lives increasingly threatened in KP, Balochistan, and FATA. Human Rights Watch has previously documented the killings of at least 22 teachers and education professionals by Baloch nationalist militants.¹³¹

In March 2013, Shahnaz Ishtiaq, 41, headmistress of Community Girls School at Jamrud, FATA was killed while on her way to the school with her son.¹³²

Attacks in KP

In January 2014, five female teachers were shot dead in Swabi district, KP as they were exiting the school building.¹³³ Militants allegedly targeted them because they were deployed by the government as part of a polio eradication program. A female health worker and a male health technician were also killed.

There have been multiple attacks on teachers in the Hangu district of KP, because it borders FATA, which has been an arena of conflict between the Pakistani government and the TTP since 2002. In February 2014, militants shot and killed Faqir Hussain, Syed Khalil, and Muhammad Khan, all teachers at Government Primary School Kacha Banda, on their

¹³⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Ali Hussain (pseudonym), Hangu, February 9, 2016.

¹³¹ Human Rights Watch, *Their Future is at Stake*.

¹³² Umer Farooq, "Making history: FATA tribunal takes notice of teacher's killing," Express Tribune, March 30, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/528504/making-history-fata-tribunal-takes-notice-of-teachers-killing/> (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹³³ "Seven teachers shot dead in Swabi," Express Tribune, January 1, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/487434/seven-teachers-shot-dead-in-swabi/> (accessed November 9, 2016).

way home from classes.¹³⁴ The district police officer said that the militants were attempting to damage education in the area by targeting teachers.

Just three days after the Kacha Banda shooting, Munawwar Hussain, a teacher at Hangu's Government Primary School for Boys, sustained injuries when militants shot at him.¹³⁵ According to local police, Hussain had been receiving threats pressuring him to quit his job and leave the area.

In May 2014, two high school teachers were shot dead in the Khan Bari area of Hangu district.¹³⁶ In August 2014, three women teachers and two students were killed by a remote-controlled explosive device targeting a school van in Tangi, Salarzai tehsil, of Bajaur agency.¹³⁷ In October 2014, a grenade attack on the Askari Public School and College in Peshawar killed a teacher and injured two students.¹³⁸

Attacks in Swat

According to Raza Shah, teachers and education professionals have been under constant attack in Swat since 2008, but the situation has significantly worsened since the Taliban took charge.

In December 2008, the Taliban told all schools that no girls should go to school and anybody who defies this order will be attacked. In January 2009, the Taliban allowed girls to attend school up to class 4. Teachers and school administrations who attempted to keep schools, particularly girls

¹³⁴ "Drive-by shooting: Three teachers gunned down in Hangu," Express Tribune, February 11, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/670032/drive-by-shooting-three-teachers-gunned-down-in-hangu/>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹³⁵ "Repeated attacks: Another teacher shot, injured in Hangu," Express Tribune, February 15, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/671755/repeated-attacks-another-teacher-shot-injured-in-hangu/>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹³⁶ "Firing in Hangu leaves 2 teachers dead," Express Tribune, May 13, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/707796/firing-in-hangu-leaves-2-teachers-dead/>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹³⁷ Mureeb Mohmand, "Three teachers, two children killed in Bajaur agency blast," Express Tribune, August 19, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/750703/three-female-teachers-two-children-killed-in-bajaur-agency-blast/>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹³⁸ Zahir Shah Sherazi, "School teacher killed in Peshawar blast," Dawn, October 1, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1135517>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

schools, running in that period were identified, routinely threatened, and often attacked.¹³⁹

Qaiser Khan, a member of the private schools association in Swat, told Human Rights Watch that the attacks have continued even after the military forced the Taliban to retreat:

The Taliban are now targeting teachers and activists who opposed them in 2009-10. The government and the army are aware of the threats but they are not providing any protection. We have been abandoned to take care of ourselves. Many teachers have been included in the government constituted Village Defense Councils [VDCs] to counter radicalization and Talibanization. But VDC members are being killed. They are soft targets.¹⁴⁰

Some education professionals feel that the government is deliberately not protecting them, particularly those who speak out against the government and security policies in Swat. Aslam Khan, a local village councilor, said that his brother—a teacher and member of the local VDC—was murdered:

My brother Asad was a government teacher and a member of the VDC. On May 8, 2015, he was killed by unknown militants in the Charbagh Bazaar, Swat. Fazalullah [Pakistani Taliban Chief] has termed all teachers in Pakistan as heretics. There is also a feeling among the teachers that the government is deliberately not protecting them. Some teachers go so far as saying that activists who speak against the security policy are often ‘mysteriously’ targeted by ‘unknown militants.’ So far 200 people have been targeted in attacks perpetrated by ‘unknown militants.’¹⁴¹

Attacks in Karachi

As described above, a number of schools were targeted in attacks on infrastructure. In some cases, education authorities were deliberately killed or injured.

¹³⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah, Swat, July 19, 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Qaiser Khan (pseudonym), Swat, July 19, 2016

¹⁴¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Aslam Khan (pseudonym), Swat, July 20, 2016

In August 2014, an unknown assailant killed Malik Ishaq, a school principal in Saeedabad, Karachi, inside his office.¹⁴²

On May 14, 2013, unknown militants killed Abdul Waheed, a social activist running the Naunehal Public School in Orangi Town, Karachi; his brother and daughter were seriously injured in the attack.¹⁴³ Police suggested that the motive for the killing might be Waheed's refusal to pay extortion money. After Waheed's murder the private school shut down for a few months and reopened in August. Four days later, unknown attackers lobbed a grenade inside the school during the evening.¹⁴⁴ Rashid, a colleague of Abdul Waheed, said the attack occurred because militants do not like schools, and particularly oppose anyone, like Waheed, who supports polio vaccination programs:

The school was targeted because we were providing education. An additional reason for being targeted could have been the school and Waheed's involvement with government's polio eradication campaign and polio workers were being attacked all over the city. Parents were afraid to send the children to school.

Rashid said that since Waheed's assassination, enrollment has fallen from 800-900 students to just 80-100. He said:

The school has not even been able to pay salaries to the teachers. The government did try and cooperate and provide us with police and Rangers security. However, the government itself is helpless in the area and hence we cannot rely on their protection.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² "Targeted: School Principal shot dead inside his office in Saeedabad," Express Tribune, August 5, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/744343/targeted-school-principal-shot-dead-in-his-office-in-saeedabad/> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴³ "Another progressive voice silenced in Orangi," The News, May 14, 2013, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/430027-another-progressive-voice-silenced-in-orangi> (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴⁴ Sohail Khattak, "Walking a tightrope: For those trying to break the shackles, death is only a bullet away," Express Tribune, September 14, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/603885/walking-a-tightrope-for-those-trying-to-break-the-shackles-death-is-only-a-bullet-away/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch telephone interview with Rashid (pseudonym), January 14, 2016.

Threats of Attack

Militants seek to justify attacks on educational infrastructure, staff, and students to prevent the education of girls, to oppose military action, or simply because they disagree with “Western” curricula. Some schools received warnings before attacks, or threats of attacks that did not materialize but nonetheless had a negative impact on students and teachers. School authorities usually choose to ignore these threats, but sometimes request additional state protection.

For instance, in December 2015, many schools in the coastal Makran region of Balochistan received pamphlets warning parents not to send their daughters to school. Earlier, in August, an education department official in Panjgur district said a lesser known religious group called Tanzeemul Islam al Furqan sent threatening letters to more than 25 schools because it “wants English medium and coeducational schools to close down.”¹⁴⁶

In the case of the Naunehal Public School discussed above, Abdul Waheed received a letter from the Taliban stating, “You people are involved in immoral activities not permitted by Islam. Stop them or else be ready to face the consequences.”¹⁴⁷

In October 2013, the Federal Government Girls High School, in R.A. Bazaar, Rawalpindi, received a letter from the Taliban demanding that the school close. According to *Dawn*, the letter said, “It is a message from Ameer Sahib Abdul Wali of TTP Mohmand Agency that the girls school should be closed. Thank God, we have been successful in every bomb attack and will be successful in future too [sic]. And we can carry out bomb attacks anytime.”¹⁴⁸

In September 2014, the Askari Public School and College in Peshawar received a threatening letter demanding that the school administration ask students to wear the

¹⁴⁶ Hanif Dilmurad, “Fear grows in Balochistan,” *The Friday Times*, January 2, 2015, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/fears-grow-in-balochistan/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴⁷ Sohail Khattak, *Walking a tightrope: For those trying to break the shackles, death is only a bullet away*, *Express Tribune*, September 14, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/603885/walking-a-tightrope-for-those-trying-to-break-the-shackles-death-is-only-a-bullet-away/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁴⁸ Muhammad Asghar, “Girls school receives threatening letter from TTP,” *Dawn*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1050709>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

traditional *shalwar kameez* dress instead of pants and shirts as uniform.¹⁴⁹ In October 2014, a grenade attack on the school killed a teacher and injured two students. In January 2015, a threatening letter was pinned outside a school in Rajgarh area, Lahore. Many parents who were dropping off their children read the letter and refused to let them attend school that day.¹⁵⁰

In February 2015, the Benazir Bhutto High School in Badami Bagh, Lahore, received a threatening letter demanding that the school administration ensure that girl students wear headscarves.¹⁵¹ The same month, the Government Ghouzia Girls and Boys Elementary School in Paposh Nagar, Karachi, received a threatening letter allegedly from the TTP asking the school administration to close the school.¹⁵² The school administration did so for a day and local police provided security.¹⁵³ Meanwhile, the Government Girls Primary School in Multan received a threatening letter from an unknown source demanding that the school should be shut down because “Islam does not allow education of girls.”¹⁵⁴

In 2015, the Taliban sent letters to schools in Swat warning the school administration to close schools or face attack. The Charbagh Government Girls school was specifically told to shut down or else it would be attacked.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Zahir Shah Sherazi, “School teacher killed in Peshawar blast,” Dawn, October 1, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1135517>, (accessed November 9, 2016).

¹⁵⁰ “Threatening letter found outside Lahore school,” The News, January 15, 2015, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/467-threatening-letter-found-outside-lahore-school>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² “School receives threatening letter,” The Express Tribune, February 2, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1038423/security-risk-school-receives-threatening-letter/>, (accessed November 16, 2016).

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ “School in Multan receives threatening letter,” Business Recorder, February 24, 2015, <http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/1154912:corruption-misuse-of-powers-cm-inspection-team-initiates-inquiry-against-smiu-vc/>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

¹⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Shah Babar (pseudonym), education activist, Swat, July 21, 2016.

Occupation of Schools by Security Forces and Political Groups

Pakistan has permanent, large-scale military deployments across the country. Cantonments are military quarters with significant number of troops stationed alongside the civilian population and infrastructure. There are presently 42 cantonment areas in Pakistan spread across all four provinces.¹⁵⁶

Due to the presence of an elaborate network of military stations in the country, the Pakistan Army does not frequently need to set up ad hoc barracks or camps. However, in conflict areas, particularly in KP and FATA, the army has at times partially or completely occupied educational institutions. Many schools taken over by the army in Swat and FATA were previously occupied by Taliban forces.

Another dimension of the influence of military's presence in civilian areas is the unsupervised power to inspect and search schools on security grounds. Babar Khan, an education activist in Swat, told Human Rights Watch:

The army interferes in the functioning of schools and often enter unannounced for the purposes of conducting a search or reviewing security measures. This is a cause of constant stress for the students. This is also additionally problematic in a conservative society such as Swat, particularly barging into girls schools with guns, sometimes harassing female teachers. They [army] acts like they have conquered Swat. Some parents are reluctant to send girls to schools since they fear that the military officers can come and harass their daughters. There have been at least eight cases of girls who have either run away with, or were abducted by, army officers.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Irfan Ghauri, "The Battle begins: After 17 years, 42 cantonments holding local government elections," Express Tribune, April 25, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/875465/the-battle-begins-after-17-years-42-cantonments-holding-local-government-elections/>, (accessed November 30, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Babar Khan, Swat, July 21, 2016.

Occupation of Schools by Security Forces

When educational facilities are used for military purposes it can increase the risk of the recruitment and use of children by armed forces, or may leave children and youth vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation. It also increases the likelihood that education institutions are attacked, since the presence of military forces may make them legitimate military targets. Deploying military forces in and near schools exposes important education infrastructure to damage and destruction.

Additionally, school occupations can be extremely disruptive to education. When security forces arrive, a quick exodus of many students often follows, as children transfer elsewhere even at the cost of additional travel time or transportation expenses, or simply drop out. Some leave because they are afraid of insurgent attacks, while others, particularly girls, leave because they or their parents fear harassment. Those students who remain in occupied schools often feel the quality of their education deteriorates.

In her 2013 autobiography, *I Am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai describes discovering that a school in Swat run by her father had been occupied and used by Pakistani government forces while she and her family were displaced by fighting in and around her hometown:

There were cigarette stubs and empty food wrappers all over the floor. Chairs had been upended and the space was a mess... Anti-Taliban slogans were scrawled all over the walls. Someone had written ARMY ZINDABAD (long live the army) on a whiteboard in permanent marker... Bullet castings littered the floor. The soldiers had made a hole in the wall through which you could see the city below. Maybe they had even shot at people through that hole. I felt sorry that our precious school had become a battlefield.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ “Nobel Peace Prize a Victory for Education,” Human Rights Watch news release, October 10, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/10/nobel-peace-prize-victory-education>.

Military Use of Educational Institutions in Swat, KP

There has been a significant military presence in Swat since 2009. The Taliban occupied and used educational institutions as barracks when they controlled Swat. When the Pakistan Army forced the Taliban out of the Swat Valley, they often occupied the very schools that Taliban fighters had previously used.

Although the military has vacated most schools in Swat, some remain in military use. According to Raza Shah, a member of a teachers' association, about 20 schools were still under military use in Swat in 2016. The schools under occupation are mostly in rural areas or in the higher mountains, where there are Taliban hideouts and the army has fewer permanent bases, although there are examples of military use in the main valley too.¹⁵⁹

The Swat education department reported that as of September 2016, the army fully occupied at least two schools.¹⁶⁰ The army has occupied Government Primary School Achar No. 2 for boys since May 2014, and its students and staff have been sent to another school.¹⁶¹ The army occupied the Government Primary School Ozbaka for boys in September 2016, and according to the government, classes are now “shelterless” – meaning they are held outside, in an area where temperatures can drop below zero Celsius during term time.¹⁶²

At least five school buildings for boys were under partial occupation by the army and the paramilitary Frontier Corps during 2016. These include Government High School Sherpalam, Government Middle School Marghazar, Government Primary School Bar Sher Palam No. 1, and Government Primary School Kandaw Kass.¹⁶³ Raza Shah said that the military completely took over his private school in mid-2009 and used it as a military barracks for seven months.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah, Swat, July 19, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Swat Education Department, “Wholly Illegally Occupied Schools,” September 2016, <http://sed.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Wholly-Occupied-Sept-2016.pdf>, (accessed November 11, 2016).

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Swat Education Department, “Partially Illegally Occupied Schools,” April 2016, <http://sed.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Partially-Occupied-April-2016.pdf>, (accessed November 11, 2016).

¹⁶⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah, Swat, July 19, 2016.

Raza Khan, a teacher in Swat, told Human Rights Watch that army occupied the Government Primary School Singrkandu, where he teaches, in June 2009:

The school has three rooms, one room was given to the students and two were under the use of army officers. The students were reluctant to come to school and were often under stress. The army left the school in May-June 2016.¹⁶⁵

An undergraduate college for women in Khwazakhela, KP, has been under army occupation since 2009. This college is one of the four undergraduate degree colleges in Swat. The space is being used as offices for senior military officials and the college building is heavily fortified.¹⁶⁶ An alternate space has been allotted for the college and classes are continuing. However, according to Jawad Khan, a teacher, a very high number of girls have dropped out because the new space is not as accessible.¹⁶⁷

Qaiser Khan, a school administrator, said that his private school has been under military use since 2009, when the army took over government and some private schools, and colleges. He told Human Rights Watch:

I left Swat as an internally displaced person when the military offensive started in May 2009, and when I returned in July, I found that a unit of the Baloch regiment of the Pakistan Army had taken over my school. They paid no compensation. When I went to the school and asked when my school would be vacated, I was told to wait. I protested and finally wrote to the general headquarters [GHQ] of the Pakistan Army, registering my protest. Afterwards, the colonel in charge of our area asked me to stop complaining. The district administration has also expressed its inability to help me. I was left with no choice but to accept the army's decision. Now they pay us rent for the school building, but the rent is not based on any market value

¹⁶⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah (pseudonym), Swat, July 19, 2016

¹⁶⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Jawad Khan (pseudonym), Swat, July 21, 2016.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

assessment; they [the army] pay whatever they feel like. I have now set up another private school.¹⁶⁸

The Pakistan Austrian Institute for Hotel Management is a joint venture between Pakistan and the Austrian government. The institute was shut down due to security concerns after the Taliban took over and burned down the nearby Malam Jabba ski resort, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the area, in June 2008.¹⁶⁹ The army has occupied it since 2009. The government has apparently been planning on opening the institute again, but the military still occupies large parts of the building.¹⁷⁰

Bilal, a teacher at a school in Charbagh, Swat, said military operations can traumatize students:

A few weeks ago, the army came and evicted a family and demolished the house of a Taliban commander adjacent to my school. All of this happened in full view of the students, and they remained afraid for many, many days. Even now the rubble of the house has not been removed and it is a constant reminder of the violence. The children are more worried about security than education. Their questions are more about curfews and target killings and not about the curriculum.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Qaiser Khan, Swat, July 19, 2016.

¹⁶⁹ Susanne Koelbi, "Bowling down to the Taliban," SPEIGEL ONLINE, February 21, 2009. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamists-triumph-in-swat-valley-bowing-down-to-the-taliban-a-609575.html>, (accessed November 11, 2016).

¹⁷⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Qaiser Khan, Swat, July 19, 2016.

¹⁷¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Bilal (pseudonym), Swat, July 21, 2016.

Pakistani Forces Also Use Schools Abroad

The negative consequences of the Pakistan Army using schools for military purposes are not limited to incidents within Pakistan. As of February 2017, more than 7,000 forces were deployed in United Nations peacekeeping missions abroad,¹⁷² including 1105 soldiers as part of the UN mission in the Central African Republic, which is known by its French abbreviation, MINUSCA.¹⁷³



United Nations peacekeepers from Pakistan using a school building in Mourouba, Ouaka province, as their base in violation of UN guidelines and regulations. The forces left the school in January 2017 after Human Rights Watch informed UN authorities. © 2017 Edouard Dropsy for Human Rights Watch

On January 22, 2017, Human Rights Watch researchers in the town of Mourouba, Ouaka province, found that the local school was occupied and being used as a base by Pakistani peacekeepers. Residents told Human Rights Watch that they want the peacekeepers to stay, but they also want to send their children back to school. The town's residents had fled in December 2016, when a militia group took control of the town and killed at least three people: a father and his two sons, 16 and 10 years old, respectively.¹⁷⁴ One parent said:

We all fled... and when we came back the Pakistanis were in the school. They arrived sometime this month. We would like to restart the school, but now the Pakistanis are there and we would rather have MINUSCA in the town to protect us.¹⁷⁵

A 16-year-old boy told Human Rights Watch, “I hope that peace returns so the Pakistanis leave the school and we can re-open it. I would like to be an intellectual. Without school I will have no future, so it is important to me.”¹⁷⁶

The use of the school by the Pakistani peacekeepers is contrary to both a directive from the head of MINUSCA and the regulations of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping’s Infantry Battalion Manual.¹⁷⁷

Military Occupation of Educational Institutions in Karachi, Sindh

The Pakistan Rangers are deployed in Karachi under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997.¹⁷⁸ The Rangers are a border federal security force under the Ministry of Interior, but operate under the command of the Pakistan Army.

In April 2008, the Sindh Cabinet decided that Rangers personnel should be withdrawn from educational institutions. At the time, more than 1,200 Rangers troops were stationed in and around the city’s educational institutions, including 700 troops in Karachi

¹⁷² United Nations, “Troop and Police Contributions By Country,” <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

¹⁷³ United Nations, “UN Mission’s Summary detailed by Country,” http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2017/jan17_3.pdf

¹⁷⁴ See “Central African Republic: Executions by Rebel Group,” Human Rights Watch news release, February 16, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/16/central-african-republic-executions-rebel-group>.

¹⁷⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with resident of Mourouba, January 22, 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with resident of Mourouba, January 22, 2017.

¹⁷⁷ “MINUSCA directive on the protection of schools and universities against military use,” Inter-Office Memorandum, December 24, 2015, states that MINUSCA forces are requested “not to use schools for any purpose” and that abandoned schools which are occupied should be “liberated without delay in order to allow educational authorities to reopen them as soon as possible.” Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support, The United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual, 2012, sec. 2.13, states “The military has a special role to play in promoting the protection of children in their areas of operation and in preventing violations, exploitation and abuse... Therefore, special attention must be paid to the protection needs of girls and boys who are extremely vulnerable in conflict. Important issues that require compliance by infantry battalions are ... schools shall not be used by the military in their operations.”

¹⁷⁸ “Sindh Assembly adopts resolution seeking to curtail rangers’ powers,” Dawn, December 30, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226757>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

University.¹⁷⁹ However, their presence in educational institutions continued, and the Sindh minister for Education admitted in the Sindh Assembly in 2009 that the army, Rangers, or police occupied at least 27 buildings of schools, colleges, and hostels across Sindh.¹⁸⁰

In September 2013, the Rangers were given additional policing powers to act against criminal suspects implicated in targeted and sectarian killings, kidnappings for ransom, and extortion.¹⁸¹ Abdul Hayi, a senior member of the nongovernmental Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, told Human Rights Watch that the Rangers have since partially occupied many educational institutions across Sindh, but keeping a tally is difficult since the occupation is sometimes temporary and many schools do not report when they are taken over by the military.¹⁸²

The Pakistan Rangers have occupied at least five historic educational sites in Karachi since being deployed in the late 1980s:

The Jinnah Courts

The Jinnah Courts, a heritage building, was once used as a residential dorm by students.¹⁸³ The Rangers moved into Jinnah Courts in 1999 after they were asked to vacate another educational institution, the Shaikh Zayed Islamic Centre, which they had been using as their headquarters.¹⁸⁴ The hostel now serves as the official Rangers headquarters and is off limits for civilians.¹⁸⁵ Barbed wires surround the premises; three layers of sandboxes block the pavement; and red barricades separate an entire lane of the road.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ “Rangers at educational institutions to be replaced by an alternative force,” *The News*, April 14, 2008, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/105789-rangers-at-educational-institutions-to-be-replaced-by-alternative-force>, (accessed November 12, 2016).

¹⁸⁰ PPI, “Karachi: 27 educational buildings occupied by LEAs, assembly told,” *Dawn*, June 25, 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/news/977001/karachi-27-education-buildings-occupied-by-leas-assembly-told>, (accessed October 28 2016).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Human Rights Watch interview with Abdul Hayi, Karachi, September 22, 2016.

¹⁸³ Bhagwandas, “‘Illegal construction’ under way at Jinnah Courts,” *Dawn*, May 24, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1183798>, (accessed October 29, 2016).

¹⁸⁴ Bhagwandas, “Karachi: KBCA asks rangers to stop illegal construction: Jinnah Courts,” *Dawn*, 7 July 2003, <http://www.dawn.com/news/110009/karachi-kbca-asks-rangers-to-stop-illegal-construction-jinnah-courts>, (accessed October 28 2016).

¹⁸⁵ Pakistan Rangers (Sindh), “Contact Us”, <http://pakistanrangerssindh.org/contactus.php>, (accessed October 28 2016).

¹⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Sana Riaz (pseudonym), Karachi, September 22, 2016.

The Mitha Ram Hostel

The Mitha Ram Hostel is another heritage site that was built in 1901 to accommodate students of the then DJ Science College. The Rangers took it over in 1992.¹⁸⁷ The college remains functional, but this residential facility is no longer available to the students. In 2015, the Rangers asked the Sindh government to turn the hostel into a small jail, justifying their demand by saying that individuals arrested in the Rangers' law and order operations needed to be kept in an exclusive facility to ensure they had no communication with other inmates.¹⁸⁸ In April 2016, the Sindh government officially approved the Rangers using the building as a "sub-jail."¹⁸⁹ Iron barriers have been installed at the entrance and a security checkpoint and sandbags block the sidewalk to the hostel. "Instead of restoring such an important part of history, they have converted it into a jail," Hamid Akhud, chairperson of the Endowment Fund Trust for the hostel, told the *Express Tribune*. "In which civilized society is an educational institution used as a sub-jail?"¹⁹⁰

Government College of Technology Hostel

Rangers currently occupy the hostel building for the Government College of Technology.¹⁹¹ A local resident said:

I grew up in the area. In the mid-90s we saw the hostel gradually being captured by the paramilitary. It began with a single police car which stood at the gate, then a room inside the hostel was used, and gradually the whole building became their property.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Saher Baloch, "Laying waste to a heritage site – Mitha Ram Hostel", Dawn, 9 July 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1269532>, (accessed on October 28 2016).

¹⁸⁸ Hasan Mansoor, "Meetha Ram Hostel to house 'dangerous' prisoners", Dawn, April 16, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1176153/meetha-ram-hostel-to-house-dangerous-prisoners>, (accessed November 11, 2016).

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Shahzeb Ahmed, "They came, they saw, they never left: Mitha Ram's gift to the students will now house the country's worst," *Express Tribune*, April 18, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/871705/they-came-they-saw-they-never-left-mitha-rams-gift-to-students-will-now-house-the-countrys-worst/>, (accessed November 11, 2015).

¹⁹¹ "Karachi: Hostel culture turning into history", Dawn, January 15, 2007, <http://www.dawn.com/news/227951/karachi-hostel-culture-turning-into-history>, (accessed 28 October 2016). Also see Aamir Majeed, "Rangers take over Clifton sports ground, people wonder why," *Pakistan Today*, April 27, 2016, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/04/27/rangers-take-over-clifton-sports-ground-people-wonder-why/> (accessed January 12, 2017).

¹⁹² Human Rights Watch interview with a local resident, Karachi, September 22, 2016.

Karachi University Boys Hostel

The building of the Karachi University Boys Hostel was designed to accommodate at least 1,000 students. However, since 1989, it has served as the regional wing of the Rangers, who were first deployed in the university for security and to prevent violent clashes between student factions.¹⁹³ According to a local journalist:

Karachi University's Boys Hostel was taken over by the Rangers after coming to Karachi in 1989, when student politics had taken a bloody toll and Operation Cleanup had just begun against the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). However, instead of purging the criminals [MQM activists] from these hostel buildings and handing over the buildings to the Sindh government for reuse, the Rangers took them over illegally.¹⁹⁴

In March 2008, Rangers assaulted Riyaz Ahmad, an associate professor, after an altercation on the campus.¹⁹⁵ He had visible bruises on his back and his right hand was in a sling when he told journalists that he had previously admonished the Rangers official for an “indecent” act at the Department of Applied Chemistry.

The Havildar [Rangers official] recognized me at the gate, refused to allow me to go outside the university and used abusive language against me. He attacked me with sticks along with four others.¹⁹⁶

Following the incident, the Karachi University Teachers' Association held protests demanding an inquiry into the matter. The Rangers withdrew from campus.

¹⁹³ Aamir Majeed, “Rangers take over Clifton sports ground, people wonder why,” Pakistan Today, 27 April 2016, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/04/27/national/rangers-take-over-clifton-sports-ground-people-wonder-why/>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

¹⁹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Sana Riaz, September 22, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ “Karachi: Rangers keep low profile in KU,” Dawn, April 6, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/news/296880/karachi-rangers-keep-low-profile-in-ku>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

¹⁹⁶ “Withdrawal of Rangers from KU, other varsities demanded,” The News, April 2, 2008, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/103521-withdrawal-of-rangers-from-ku-other-varsities-demanded>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai Library

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai Library housed a wide array of books on history, politics, and literature. During protests in 2006, the library was burned to rubble. In 2011, the government ordered the library to be rebuilt, and the Rangers occupied it in 2012.¹⁹⁷

Ghulam Rasool Raikani, a local leader of the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), described how the Rangers initially assumed control of the building:

It was around when the renovation work was under way that they [Rangers] would park their vehicle right outside saying that it was a designated spot for ensuring security. As time passed, they started sitting inside as the gates would be ajar while the work was going on. Then one day their DSR [Deputy Superintendent] held a meeting with us seeking the premises for their use. We explained to them that the place was reserved for a library. But around three months back, they just barged in and even broke all the padlocks inside to take over the rooms as well. They are men in uniform, what they say now is that their presence is needed in the area.¹⁹⁸

Occupation of Educational Institutions by Political Parties and Criminal Gangs

Lyari is a low-income residential settlement in Karachi, Sindh. It is one of the city's most densely populated areas. Since 2004, there has been incessant, violent fighting in Lyari between criminal gangs, many of which enjoy the protection and patronage of various political parties.¹⁹⁹ The violence has disrupted everyday life and significantly damaged municipal infrastructure, schools, and hospitals.

Schools have also been used as offices of political parties and gang hideouts. Crossfire between law enforcement officials and gang members in 2010 has left bullet marks on the

¹⁹⁷ Shazia Hasan, "Old Golimar library taken over by Rangers," Dawn, December 25, 2012, <http://www.dawn.com/news/773974/old-golimar-library-taken-over-by-rangers>, (accessed October 28 2016).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Matthieu Akins, "Gangs of Karachi, Harpers' Magazine, September 2015, <http://harpers.org/archive/2015/09/gangs-of-karachi/>, (accessed on November 5, 2016).

walls of many schools in Lyari, including Ghairiabad Girls Secondary School and M. Alvi Government Girls Primary School.

MQM is the most powerful party in the city and remained a principal ally to the government of President Pervez Musharraf from 2002-2008.

A member of the Sindh provincial assembly, Javaid Nagori, told Human Rights Watch that several schools, including the Government Boys Secondary School, Hakim Fateh Muhammad Saleem Government Boys Primary School, and Hakim Fateh Muhammad Lower Secondary School, were occupied by MQM members. He said:

Almost all schools in Lyari were adversely affected by the gang wars post-2003. Even before that, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) started occupying schools in 2002 during General Musharraf's tenure. In 2002 and 2003, MQM started making party offices in schools. Government schools in Agra Taj and the Karachi Municipal Corporation schools and Kehkshan School were turned into MQM party offices. Once this trend was started by the MQM, the Lyari criminal gangs also began to occupy schools as well. MQM started to vacate these schools after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December 2007. The government announced compensation for schools damaged or destroyed as a result of the violence. The MQM party people pocketed that money and none of it was spent on reconstruction of schools.²⁰⁰

Zahoor Uddin, headmaster of K.I. Kharadar Government Boys Primary Schools in Lyari, said the situation was very difficult before the MQM was finally evicted from the school in 2010:

There are 650 students in this school. MQM forcibly occupied this school in 2002. Classes continued in the school. The MQM people would come in at 4 p.m. and stay till the morning. They used the class rooms as torture

²⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with Javaid Nagori, Karachi, September 23, 2016.

chambers. Sometimes they would come and use spare rooms during the day, roaming around the school with automatic assault rifles.²⁰¹

Shahnawaz, an elected member of Lyari’s local government, said:

In 2012, almost all schools in Lyari, Karachi, were damaged by the fighting between criminal gangs. The worst affected were schools in the areas which were at the boundaries of different gang territories. Almost 80 percent schools were either damaged or directly occupied by the gangsters.²⁰²

According to Shahnawaz, attendance in schools in Lyari fell to less than 50 percent. Schools on the “border” area of gang turfs—that is, in the area which demarcated gang territories—closed completely.²⁰³

Sher Muhammad, a teacher at Montessori Karachi Municipal Corporation School No. 19 in Lyari, told Human Rights Watch:

This school was in the border area between the territories of two fighting gangs. From 2003-2008, there was heavy firing from both sides and nobody showed up to school—not the teachers nor the students. The school is full now with almost 50-55 students per class. But there is still some fear. No outside people want to come and teach in Lyari due to the fear of violence.²⁰⁴

Bashir, a teacher at Wali Muhammad Haji Yaqoob Girls Section, said:

This school was occupied by a notorious Lyari gangster known as Mama Jango. He used it as his base and a den of criminal activity. He along with his armed men, occupied the school from 2009 to 2014. He was killed in 2015. There were 850 students enrolled in the school in 2015. However, at that time, the school remained largely closed. The building of the school is

²⁰¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Zahoor Uddin (pseudonym), Karachi, September 23, 2016.

²⁰² Human Rights Watch interview with Shahnawaz (pseudonym), Karachi, September 23, 2016.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Sher Muhammad (pseudonym), Karachi, September 23, 2016.

still damaged due to crossfire between him and opponents. This history has led to a severe shortage of teachers in the area.²⁰⁵

The school was completely functional and back at full strength when Human Rights Watch visited. However, the school administration and teachers were concerned about the damaged school building and were trying to convince the government to renovate it.

Mehmood Raza, a teacher at Government Boys School in Karim Bhai, Lyari, said the MQM occupied the building for four years. Its violent political slogans are still on classroom walls.

In 2003, one evening, the MQM workers forcibly entered the school and stayed overnight. Then they began to do that regularly, up to a point where they had permanently occupied the school. Classrooms were used as party offices... They would come in every evening and leave in the morning, sometimes after the classes had begun.²⁰⁶

Aftab Ahmad, a teacher at Government Boys School, Karim Bhai, Lyari, said:

Armed MQM workers would break into the school whenever they pleased. They took away furniture, fans, and other electrical appliances. Occasionally they would intimidate and beat up the school caretaker for attempting to restrain them. The school administration wrote to the MQM government and party, which was in power from 2002-2008, but they refused to take any action.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Bashir (pseudonym), Karachi, September 23, 2016.

²⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch interview with Mehmood Raza (pseudonym), September 23, 2016.

²⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch interview with Aftab Ahmad (pseudonym), September 23, 2016.

Government Measures

The Pakistani government had paid little attention to the protection of schools, students, and teachers until the attack on the Army Public School in December 2014. Soon after, however, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced a 20-point National Action Plan to comprehensively deal with the threat from terrorism.²⁰⁸

Despite the nature of the attack, none of the 20 points pertained to protection of educational institutions.²⁰⁹ Instead, in most cases, the responsibility for enhancing and maintaining security has been passed to school authorities. This has led to increased hardship and chaos. Some schools are organizing traumatic security drills, while others are arming teachers and students.

Before the Peshawar school attack, about 5,000 public schools in KP, 2,600 public schools in Punjab, 3,600 public schools in Balochistan, and 49,000 public schools in Sindh were without boundary walls. Such walls are important, particularly in high-risk areas, as they act as a deterrent to potential assailants, protect teachers and children from attack from the outside, and act as shock absorbers in the case of bomb attacks. In many places, those walls are now being constructed.²¹⁰ As of October 2016, walls for 81 educational institutions in Karachi declared to be sensitive had yet to be constructed.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ “Days of terrorists are numbered, says PM,” Dawn, December 25, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1152966>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

²⁰⁹ The National Counter Terrorism Authority Pakistan, “20 Points of The National Actions Plan”, n.d., <http://nacta.gov.pk/NAPPoints20.htm>, (accessed October 28, 2016)

²¹⁰ Khalid Khattack, “Safe Schools, The News on Sunday, January 11, 2015, <http://tns.thenews.com.pk/safe-schools-in-pakistan/#.WBDuKuV97IU>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

²¹¹ “Boundary walls of 81 sensitive schools to be constructed,” Daily Times, October 22, 2016, <http://dailytimes.com.pk/sindh/22-Oct-16/boundary-walls-of-81-sensitive-schools-to-be-constructed>, (accessed January 14, 2017).

In February 2015, Theirworld, a UK charity, launched a 15-point plan for a Pakistan Safe Schools Initiative in collaboration with the Global Business Coalition for Education, and with the backing of Prime Minister Sharif and UN Special Envoy for Education Gordon Brown. Salient features of the plan include:

- Community engagement to establish peace zones in and around schools;
- Negotiations with religious leaders to promote education;
- Establishing a community watch system;
- Individual security plans for every school;
- Setting up of rapid response units;
- Installing state-of-the-art communication systems; and
- Creating special plans for schools in high-risk areas.²¹²

As of December 2015, the initiative included measures such as setting up plans for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration in 137 schools in five districts of KP; training 120 teachers in emergency preparedness; and school safety in the Jalozai camps for internally displaced persons.²¹³

However, other efforts have been sporadic and vary across provinces. In January 2016, after the Bacha Khan University attack, police conducted a mock security drill in Lahore's Punjab University, causing fear and panic among students.²¹⁴ Most students were not informed in advance of the drill, and believing it to be a real attack scrambled to escape.

²¹² A World At School, "Prime Minister Sharif backs Pakistan Safe Schools Initiative and pledges to make it a success", February 17, 2015, <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/pakistan-prime-minister-sharif-backs-safe-schools-initiative-1589> (accessed October 28, 2016).

²¹³ Jo Griffin, "A year after Peshawar attack, are Pakistan's schools safer?," A World At School, December 16, 2015, <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/A-year-after-Peshawar-attack-are-Pakistans-schools-safer-2455>, (accessed October 29, 2016).

²¹⁴ "PU security drill startles students," Dawn, January 22, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1234598>, (accessed November 17, 2016).



School children flee as soldiers conducting an exercise to repel militant attacks detain a mock-militant (R) at the Islamia Collegiate School in Peshawar, Pakistan, February 2016. © 2016 Khuram Parvez/Reuters

In February 2016, students panicked after hearing gunshots inside the Islamia College, Peshawar, during a drill in which the security forces were giving firearm training to students and teachers.²¹⁵

In June 2015, a teacher in Mingora, Swat, accidentally shot and killed a student while cleaning his gun. KP Information Minister Mushtaq Ghani, however, still justified the policy

²¹⁵ Asad Zia, "Security drill at Islamia College Peshawar spreads panic," Express Tribune, February 2, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1038862/security-drill-at-islamia-college-peshawar-spreads-panic/>, (accessed November 17, 2016).

of arming teachers by arguing that firearms allow teachers to “engage any possible attackers for the initial 5 to 10 minutes before law-enforcement personnel reached the spot.”²¹⁶

Securing Schools

In Pakistan, education is under the authority of provincial governments. Various provinces have decreed new security measures, including boundary walls of varying heights.

In Punjab, for instance, the day after the Peshawar attack, the government of Punjab issued a notice to ensure security for all public and private educational institutions in the province, including:

- Constructing boundary walls up to 8 feet;
- Fencing the boundary wall with razor wire up to another 2 feet;
- Generally using a single entry/exit gate, and a second gate only in exceptional circumstances/emergency exit;
- Erecting concrete barriers at entry/exit gate;
- Installing walk-through gates, using metal detectors for physical search of the entrants, and using bottom view mirrors for checking vehicles;
- Ensuring zig-zag entry into premises via concrete barriers.²¹⁷

In January 2016, the Sindh government ordered a “security audit survey” of educational institutions in the province to devise a contingency security plan. The government also directed police to set up quick response forces in their jurisdictions.²¹⁸ In March 2016, the Pakistan Red Crescent, supported by the Norwegian Red Cross and Sindh government,

²¹⁶ Zulfiqar Ali, “KP makes a U-turn on allowing arms on campus,” Dawn, January 22, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1158673>, (accessed November 4, 2016)

²¹⁷ Government of the Punjab, Home Department NO.SO (IS-II) 3-3/09/2014, Lahore, December 16, 2014, reproduced as Appendix I in “A World at School, Safe Schools Initiative: Protecting the Right to Learn in Pakistan” (A World at School and The Global Business Coalition for Education, 2015), p.9-10, http://b3cdn.net/awas/17foa8foc750d6704c_mlbrgn5qs.pdf, (accessed October 28, 2016).

²¹⁸ Saher Baloch, “‘Security audit survey’ of Sindh educational institutions ordered,” Dawn, January 29, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1236003>, (accessed November 17, 2016).



A guard with a gun and a metal detector stands outside a school after it reopened in Peshawar, January 2015.
© 2016 Khuram Parvez/Reuters

launched a school safety program in Sindh province to enhance the physical security of schools and train students and teachers to deal with natural or man-made disasters.²¹⁹

In January 2016, the Balochistan government decided to establish a special force to be deployed at university campuses across the province.²²⁰ According to Akbar Durrani, the Balochistan home secretary, 60 security personnel were to be deployed at each university.

²¹⁹ “Programme for school safety launched in Karachi,” Dawn, March 26, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1247932>, (accessed October 28, 2016).

²²⁰ Syed Ali Shah, “After Charsadda attack, special forces to secure Balochistan universities,” Dawn, January 24, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1235100>, (accessed November 17, 2016).

In November 2016, many educational institutions in Quetta were shut down based on a high security alert issued by the Balochistan home department due to threats of suicide attacks on educational institutions, particularly those for women.²²¹

The KP government has demanded that schools implement strict security measures. Shah Babar, an education activist working in Saidu Sharif, told Human Rights Watch the KP government has placed schools in three categories, ranging from “Most Sensitive,” “Sensitive,” and “Less Sensitive.” The Taliban in the past has attacked the less sensitive schools, since they are the most vulnerable. But the government is doing little to protect schools, and instead threatens to discipline or even prosecute teachers and principals for not taking security measures.

Criminal cases have been filed against teachers and principals for not taking security measures. The government has empowered the district administrative officials to raid schools whenever they want on the pretext of security checks. However, in terms of real security measures, almost nothing is done by the government and the cost of taking these measures is borne out by the schools themselves. In 2015, the Taliban sent schools a letter telling the administration to close schools or face attack. The Charbagh Government Girls schools were specifically threatened. But even after specific threats, the government did not provide security, and asked schools to take measures themselves.²²²

Raza Shah, a teacher in Swat, told Human Rights Watch:

Post the Army Public School attack, the government ordered that all schools should have 9-foot-high boundary walls, CCTV cameras, bunkers, at least two to three armed security guards, and even that teachers should be armed. Although the notification demanding teachers to be armed was withdrawn officially, unofficially all teachers in government schools were given weapons. The responsibility for these measures and the expenses were incurred by the schools. Any school which did not comply was raided

²²¹ “Educational Institutions in Balochistan shut in Quetta after high security alert,” Dawn, November 9, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1295210>, (accessed January 14, 2016).

²²² Human Rights Watch interview with Shah Babar, Swat, July 21, 2016.

and the principal and teachers arrested. In 2015, many principals and teachers were arrested and produced before the magistrate in handcuffs for not complying with the government regulations.²²³

Haider Ali, a private school principal in Mingora, Swat, described hardships created by the three private security guards that the school has been forced to fund:

It is very difficult for me to pay for these guards without increasing the tuition fee. The government has enacted a policy which stipulates that if a school is attacked, the principal of the school will be held responsible. This is terrible. The government should focus on arresting the militants and not teachers and principals.²²⁴

²²³ Human Rights Watch interview with Raza Shah, Swat, July 19, 2016.

²²⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Haider Ali (pseudonym), Swat, July 20, 2016.

Relevant Domestic and International Law

Pakistani law and international humanitarian and human rights law protect schools, students, and teachers from attack and provide for the right to education.

Domestic Law

The Constitution of Pakistan, when adopted in 1973, contained a provision under the non-enforceable “principles of state policy” that, “The State shall... remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within [the] minimum possible period.”²²⁵

In 2010, however, the 18th Amendment introduced article 25-A in the section containing judicially enforceable “fundamental rights,” which states that “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.”²²⁶

Article 25-A has been enforced in the different federal units of Pakistan via the Right to Free and 2012 Compulsory Education Act (for Islamabad), the 2013 Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, the 2014 Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, and the 2014 Balochistan Compulsory Education Act. However, requisite legislation for KP, Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir has yet to be drafted.

Pakistani law tries those responsible for attacks on schools even during armed conflict under ordinary criminal and anti-terrorism laws. The Manoeuvres, Field Firing and Artillery Practice Act of 1938 prohibits the use of any land attached to an educational institution for the purposes of military training and maneuvers.²²⁷

²²⁵ Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, http://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1431341153_169.pdf (accessed October 28, 2016), art. 37(b).

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, art. 25-A.

²²⁷ Military Manoeuvres, Field Firing and Artillery Practice Act of 1938, <http://pakistancode.gov.pk/english/UY2FqJw2-apaUY2Fqa-b5%2Ba-sg-jjjjjjjjjjjj-con-1540>, (accessed January 17, 2017), section 3(2).

International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law, also known as the law of armed conflict, regulates the conduct of state armed forces and non-state armed groups in international and non-international armed conflicts. Fighting between certain armed groups and Pakistani military forces has risen to the level of an armed conflict in much of Pakistan.

The law of armed conflict prohibits attacks on civilians and civilian objects. Schools are normally civilian objects and, as such, may not be the object of attack unless they become legitimate military objectives.²²⁸ Anyone who willfully attacks a school that is a civilian object is committing a war crime. In case of doubt whether a school is being used to make an effective contribution to military action, and thus a lawful military target, it shall be presumed to be a civilian object.²²⁹

The laws of war require that the parties to a conflict take precautions against the effects of attack. Parties to an armed conflict shall, to the maximum extent feasible, a) avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas where schools are likely to be located; b) endeavor to remove civilians, including students and teachers, under their control from the vicinity of military objectives; and c) take the other necessary precautions to protect those schools under their control against the dangers resulting from military operations.²³⁰

Turning a school into a military objective (for example, by using it as a military barracks or to store ammunition) subjects it to possible attack. Placing military objectives, such as armored vehicles, in a school courtyard also increases the risk that the school will suffer incidental damage from an attack against those military targets.

²²⁸ See Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Additional Protocol I), adopted June 8, 1977, 1125 U.N.T.S. 3, entered into force December 7, 1978, art. 52(1). This rule is also part of customary law for international and non-international armed conflicts. See International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), rules 9 and 10.

²²⁹ See Additional Protocol I, art. 52(3). The principle of presumption of civilian character in case of doubt is also contained in Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

²³⁰ See Additional Protocol I, art. 58(a), (b), and (c). These rules are also part of customary law. See ICRC, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rules 22-24. See also ICTY, Kupreškić et al. case, Judgment, Trial Chamber, January 14, 2000, secs. 524-525.

Schools also benefit from special protection as cultural property under customary law, and each party to a conflict must respect and protect buildings dedicated to education that are included in the scope of cultural property.²³¹ This implies a duty of special care to avoid damage to buildings dedicated to education (unless they are military objectives), as well as the prohibition of all seizure of, or destruction or willful damage done to, institutions dedicated to education.²³²

National armed forces and non-state armed groups also need to take into account other relevant rules and principles of the law of armed conflict. Among these are special protections to children.²³³ If educational institutions are fully or partially used for military purposes, the life and physical safety of children might be at risk and access to education is restricted or even impeded, either because children may not go to school for fear of being killed or injured in an attack by the opposing forces, or because they have been deprived of their usual educational building.

International Human Rights Law

International human rights law is applicable at all times, subject to lawful derogations. A number of international human rights law provisions are relevant to the issue of the military use of schools.

International human rights law guarantees students, teachers, academics, and all educational staff the right to life, personal liberty, and security.²³⁴ States shall also ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the survival and the development of children.²³⁵

²³¹ ICRC, *Customary International Humanitarian Law*, rules 38-40. There are a number of national laws and military manuals that include educational institutions as objects enjoying a special protection alongside other cultural objects.

²³² *Ibid.* See also the Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention of 18 October 1907 (the 1907 Hague Regulations), art. 56.

²³³ On the special protection afforded to children in armed conflicts, see Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), adopted August 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 287, entered into force October 21, 1950, arts. 14, 17, 23, 24, 38, 50, 82, 89, 94, 132; Additional Protocol I, arts. 70, 77, 78; Additional Protocol II, arts. 4 and 6.

²³⁴ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted December 10, 1948, G.A. Res. 217A (III), U.N. Doc. A.810 at 71 (1948), arts. 6, 9 & 10. Pakistan ratified the ICCPR in June 2010.

²³⁵ Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted November 20, 1989, G.A. Res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp.(No. 49) at 5, U.N. Doc A/54/49 (Vol. 1) (2000), entered into force December 22, 2000, art. 6. Pakistan ratified the CRC in November 1990.

As children, students under the age of 18 receive special protections under international human rights law. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the “best interests of the child” shall be a primary consideration.²³⁶

Everyone has the right to education.²³⁷ With a view to achieving the full realization of this right, states shall make primary education compulsory and available free to all; secondary education generally available and accessible to all; and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of capacity.²³⁸ The material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.²³⁹ States shall also take measures to encourage regular attendance by children at schools and the reduction of child dropout rates.²⁴⁰ With respect to children, states shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.²⁴¹

Pakistan also has obligations under international law to ensure girls and women’s rights to equality and non-discrimination, including in access to education. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) calls for “the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights.”²⁴² The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) includes similar provisions.²⁴³ The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of children to be free from discrimination, including based on gender.²⁴⁴

²³⁶ CRC, art. 3(1).

²³⁷ International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted December 16, 1966, G.A. Res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 49, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 993 U.N.T.S. 3, entered into force January 3, 1976, art. 13; and CRC, art. 28. Pakistan ratified the ICESCR in April 2008.

²³⁸ ICESCR, art. 13(2)(a)-(d); and CRC, art. 28(a)-(d).

²³⁹ ICESCR, art. 13(e).

²⁴⁰ CRC, art. 28(e).

²⁴¹ CRC, art. 4.

²⁴² ICCPR, arts. 3, 6, 9, 19, 23, and 24.

²⁴³ ICESCR, art. 3.

²⁴⁴ CRC, art. 2.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has explained that “inherent to the principle of equality between men and women, or gender equality, is the concept that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, and prejudices.”²⁴⁵ Attacks on education and military use of schools disproportionately affect girls and young women, and negatively impacts the realization of many of girls and women’s other human rights. The impact of these violations is felt by women throughout their lives, extending to their families and societies.

International Guidance

In June 2015, the United Nations Security Council expressed “deep concern that the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international law may render schools legitimate targets of attack, thus endangering the safety of children and in this regard encourages Member States to take concrete measures to deter such use of schools by armed forces and armed groups.”²⁴⁶

Earlier, in 2011, the Security Council voted unanimously to urge all parties to armed conflict to refrain from actions that impede children’s access to education and requested that the UN secretary-general monitor and report to the council on the issue of military use of schools.²⁴⁷

A number of government armed forces and some non-state armed groups have developed military orders or doctrines that clearly spell out protections for schools from military use, including explicit prohibitions on the use of schools for military purposes.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 28: the core obligations of states parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 47th Sess., U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/ GC/28, 2010, <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/convention/details28.htm> (accessed September 21, 2014), paras. 9 and 22.

²⁴⁶ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2143 (2015), S/Res/2143 (2015), para. 18.

²⁴⁷ United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1998 (2011), S/Res/1998 (2011), para. 4.

²⁴⁸ See e.g. Colombia: General Commander of the Military Forces, order of July 6, 2010, official document Number 2010124005981 / CGFM-CGING-25.11 (“Considering International Humanitarian Law norms, it is considered a clear violation of the Principle of Distinction and the Principle of Precaution in attacks and, therefore a serious fault, the fact that a commander occupies or allows the occupation by his troops, of ... public institutions such as education establishments.”); Democratic Republic of Congo: Ministerial Directive on the implementation of the Action Plan, Ministry of Defense, Disarmament and Veterans, N°VPM/MDNAC/CAB/0909/2013, May 3, 2013 (“all those found guilty of one of the following shortcomings will face severe criminal and disciplinary sanctions: ... Attacks against schools ... requisition of schools ... for

Safe Schools Declaration

In May 2015, at an international conference held in Oslo, Norway, the Safe Schools Declaration was opened for state endorsement. A non-binding political commitment, the declaration describes the immediate and long-term consequences of attacks on students, teachers, schools, and universities, and the military use of schools and universities, during times of armed conflict. It contrasts those consequences with the positive and protective role that education can have during armed conflict.

Countries that endorse the declaration commit to a number of measures aimed at strengthening the prevention of, and response to, attacks on students, teachers, and schools, including: collecting reliable data on attacks and military use of schools and universities; providing assistance to victims of attacks; investigating allegations of violations of national and international law and prosecuting perpetrators where appropriate; developing and promoting “conflict sensitive” approaches to education; and seeking to continue education during armed conflict.

Through joining the Safe Schools Declaration, countries also endorse the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict and commit to “bring them into domestic policy and operational frameworks as far as possible and appropriate.”

These guidelines were the product of consultation among expert representatives from the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, education, and the armed forces from countries around the world, along with representatives of human rights and humanitarian organizations.

The guidelines are not legally binding, but draw upon existing obligations under both international humanitarian law and international human rights law. By also drawing upon examples of good practice already applied by some parties to armed conflict, the

military purposes, destruction of school facilities”); Philippines: Armed Forces of the Philippines Letter Directive No. 34, GHQ AFP, November 24, 2009 (“All [Armed Forces of the Philippines] personnel shall strictly abide and respect the following: ... Basic infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and health units shall not be utilized for military purposes such as command posts, barracks, detachments, and supply depots.”); Poland: Armed Forces of Poland Accommodation Act, No. 86, item 433, June 22, 1995, as amended, chapter 7, art. 64(1) (“The following types of real property are not subject to temporary quartering: ... real property of institutions of higher education.”).

guidelines reflect what is practically achievable and acknowledge that parties to armed conflict are invariably faced with difficult dilemmas requiring pragmatic solutions.

The guidelines begin with the overarching admonition that, “Parties to armed conflict are urged not to use schools and universities for any purpose in support of the military effort. While it is acknowledged that certain uses would not be contrary to the law of armed conflict, all parties should endeavor to avoid impinging on students’ safety and education.” The guidelines then provide six guidelines for responsible practice.

As of December 2016, 56 countries had joined the declaration and thereby endorsed the guidelines. Pakistan is not among the signatories.

Recommendations

To the Federal Government of Pakistan

- Endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, committing to take concrete measures to deter the military use of schools by armed forces and armed groups, and to use as a minimum standard the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict (“the Guidelines”).
- Develop a comprehensive policy for protecting students, teachers, schools, and universities from attack and military use, and engage all concerned ministry staff at the central and local levels in implementing this strategy. Include short-term measures for prevention and response, as well as adopting conflict-sensitive education policies and programs that help reduce the risk of future conflict.
- Address and remedy the disproportionate harm to girls’ access to education as a result of hostilities and military use of schools. The government should adopt measures to assist girls who have been denied or risk losing access to education.
- Incorporate prompt infrastructure rehabilitation and ensure dependable security for students, teachers and educational institutions affected by terrorism as a fundamental principle of its National Action Plan.
- Issue clear and public orders to the Pakistani security forces, including the military, police, and paramilitary forces, to curtail the military use of schools in line with the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines.
- Consider creating a special emergency fund to assist provinces affected by militant attacks, so that when attacks occur, schools are quickly repaired or rebuilt, and destroyed educational material replaced, so that students can return to school as soon as possible.
- Collect and make public reliable data on attacks on schools. Basic information to collect should include the names and locations of the educational institutions attacked, suspected perpetrators, number of days of education lost, number of students affected, alternative education being provided, and time until repairs or reconstruction was completed. All data should be disaggregated by gender to capture any disproportionate impact on girls.
- Collect and make public reliable data on military use of schools. Basic information to collect should include the names and locations of the educational institutions

being used, the purposes for which they are being used, the duration of the use, the armed forces or armed group making use of the school, the enrollment prior to use, student attendance during the period of use, and the availability of alternative educational options. All data should be disaggregated by gender to capture any disproportionate impact on girls.

- Support schools and universities in developing and implementing safety and security plans, preferably with a multi-year commitment.
- Assist provincial government with repairing or rebuilding schools damaged by attacks or military use.
- During the annual budget review process with provincial governments, obtain updates from each province affected by attacks on schools related to: completion times for repairs and reconstruction of attacked schools; the number of schools that security forces used the previous year; the duration of each occupation; and whether adequate funds have been received from the federal government to provide basic security facilities for at-risk schools. The information should be disaggregated by gender to capture any disproportionate impact on girls.
- Sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which prohibits intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to education as a war crime, provided they are not military objectives, during international and internal armed conflicts. Enact legislation implementing the Rome Statute to render war crimes, including willful attacks against schools, violations of Pakistani criminal law.
- Provide standard educational facilities for girls and boys inside camps for internally displaced persons, and where that is not possible, arrange for students to be educated at any convenient, accessible and appropriate educational institution elsewhere.

To Provincial Governments

- Impartially investigate and appropriately prosecute leaders and commanders of non-state armed groups responsible for attacks on schools, students, and teachers.
- Suitably amend the right to education laws to prepare rapid response systems, perhaps through a special emergency fund, so that when attacks occur, schools are quickly repaired or rebuilt, and destroyed educational material replaced, so that

students can return to school as soon as possible. During reconstruction, students should receive an alternative delivery of education and, where appropriate, psychosocial support. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that alternative delivery of education is accessible to and safe for female students and teachers.

- Seek to provide psychiatric and psychological treatment to students affected by attacks on schools to facilitate their rehabilitation, including gender-sensitive services for female students and teachers.
- Create an inter-governmental working group including appropriately delegated male and female representatives of the federal, provincial and local governments. The group should:
 - Visit each village or town within the respective province where a school is currently or was recently used or occupied by security forces to meet, separately, with school principals, teachers, local education committees, current and former students, parents and guardians, village council leaders, and local police to determine what additional services the school and students may require to address the disruption to their education and take appropriate action. Ensure that this outreach includes female students and their parents and teachers.
 - Visit each village or town within the respective province where a school has recently been attacked to meet with the same groups of stakeholders in order to assess what additional services the school and students may require to address the disruption to their education and to ensure that appropriate infrastructure repairs have been completed.
 - Based on these consultations, publish a list of "lessons learned" with recommendations on the appropriate provincial government response to attacks on schools and military use of schools in the future, including measures specifically focused on protecting access to education for girls and young women.

To Pakistani Military and Paramilitary Forces

- Immediately vacate all education institutions and hostels being partially used for military purposes whether in or outside conflict zones and restore such buildings to their intended users.

- Immediately vacate all education institutions and hostels being completely occupied where feasible alternatives exist, and where they do not, urgently take steps to identify or create feasible alternatives.
- Ensure that troops deployed on UN peacekeeping missions are trained on the requirement under the United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual that “schools shall not be used by the military in their operations,” and ensure that such troops are provided the necessary logistical support to accomplish their mission without using schools.
- Avoid using schools, colleges, and universities for military purposes, using the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use* as a minimum standard.
- Fully endorse and support the measures taken by the federal and provincial governments to enhance security of students, teachers, and schools.

To Non-State Armed Groups in Pakistan

- Immediately cease all attacks and threats against schools, students, teachers, professors, education personnel, and other civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Issue public statements directing fighters and other group members to respect the lives of students, teachers, including female students and teachers, and to end unlawful attacks on schools and universities.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action against group members who order or participate in such attacks.

To the International Community and Aid Agencies, including DIFD, USAID and World Bank

- Privately and publicly urge the Pakistani government and military to adopt the above recommendations.
- Call for and support transparent and impartial investigations and appropriate prosecutions of members of non-state armed groups and government security forces responsible for war crimes and serious human rights abuses.

- Support appropriate efforts by Pakistan’s federal and provincial governments to make schools and students safe from attack, especially for female students.
- Support programs to repair or reconstruct schools damaged by attack, and consider conditioning support on the government adopting strong protections for schools from military use.
- Work with the Pakistani government to identify and implement measures that make education safer for students and teachers. These could include providing school transport, enhancing security in school routes, constructing secure buildings and school walls, and providing appropriately trained school guards.
- Work with local communities to mobilize and support community protection efforts including building on measures already taken by some communities, such as rotating volunteer night watchmen, monitoring roads at times children go to and from schools, and seeking commitments from community leaders to support and protect education.
- Work with the Pakistani government to discourage the military use of schools, and promote security force policies and practices that better protect schools.
- Make funding for schools contingent on Pakistani government commitments that donor-supported schools will not be used by security forces. Monitor schools built or reconstructed by donor funds through regular check-ins with school officials and report military use of schools to the relevant authorities for their prompt action.

To the United Nations Secretary-General

- Continue to include the conflicts in Pakistan in the annual report on children and armed conflict; monitor and report on the and the military use of schools; and list in the annexes of the report, as appropriate, parties that are responsible for killing and maiming of children, and attacks on schools. Disaggregate findings by gender to capture any disproportionate impact on girls.

To the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

- Privately and publicly press the government to adopt the above recommendations.

- Provide the special representative to the secretary-general for children and armed conflict with accurate and verified information on killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools, and military use of schools in Pakistan, disaggregated by gender, for inclusion in the secretary-general's annual report on children and armed conflict.

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“Dreams Turned into Nightmares”

Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan

Pakistan faces major challenges to education because of factors such as poor access, low enrolment rates, gender bias, lack of trained teachers, and poor physical infrastructure. Exacerbating those challenges, however, is Islamist militant violence that has disrupted the education of hundreds of thousands of children, particularly girls.

“*Dreams Turned Into Nightmares*” documents attacks by armed militants from January 2007 to October 2016 that have destroyed school buildings, targeted teachers and students, and terrorized parents into keeping their children out of school. The report also finds instances of educational institutions occupied by state security forces, political groups, and criminal gangs. The report is based on interviews with teachers, students, parents, and school administrators in Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Pakistan’s national and provincial governments need to recognize that they have a responsibility to protect children and their right to an education. The report examines and highlights the inadequate response by Pakistani authorities in protecting children and educational professionals and failing to prosecute those responsible for attacks. Human Rights Watch urges Pakistan to endorse the international Safe Schools Declaration and recommends specific measures that the government should take to protect children and their right to education.



Pakistani students in Lahore return to school under high alert security after the December 16, 2014 attack by the Pakistani Taliban on the Army Public School in Peshawar, January 1, 2015.

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