Armed conflicts and their impact on Education in Sahel countries

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Introduction

Armed conflicts which result in the killing and displacement inflicted on the population as well as the destruction is the undisputed enemy of development, and quite often results in reducing development not just stopping it. When conflicts force children out of school, achieving the goals of education for all and the Millennium Development Goals becomes almost impossible and creates an environment that embraces extremism and violence in an unprecedented manner. In light of the turmoil and brutality resulting from armed conflict and insecurity, which will affect the coming generations, education, its systems, facilities, staff, researchers and students are at its weakest, from the destruction of educational facilities to the assassination of teachers, the threatening of scholars and the denial of school to students, and depriving students and researchers of education and depriving them of a better future. Without colleges operating there are no teachers, without teachers there are no schools, no literature and without universities there are no university doctors or scientists and in the absence of education, there is no nation pulsating with life or enjoying stability and prosperity.

Insecurity and armed conflicts affect education in many ways, and one of its damages is the threat to the of students and staff, range from threats or psychological and physical harm, not to mention the displacement of the population from within or outside the borders of the state and also the recruitment of children into the armies of countries or even in armed groups from non-state actors, especially the destruction of educational facilities or their use as training fields. In fact, education itself is harmed by its use as a tool for war propaganda or as a means of discriminating or inciting hatred.

Military spending is a reason for the dramatic decline in education, according to a 2011 UNESCO report that armed conflict poses a major threat to education in the Sahel countries, while the number of drop-outs from all over the continent is increasing significantly, and armed conflicts on education result in the transfer of public funds from education and main services to military spending, Armed conflicts also displace children who flee their countries or remain in camps, making education impossible.

International humanitarian law has defined violations related to education as follows:

Acts that attack and undermine the conditions necessary for education, for example: participation in the torture of students or education staff, participation in systematic attacks against them, recruitment of children into armed groups, or bombing of educational institutions are considered violations related to education, and laws prohibiting such violations associated with education are essential to the protection of education.

International human rights law, as well as international humanitarian law, also provides for the protection of education and guarantees the right to education at any time, whether in conditions of insecurity or armed conflict, and as a legally binding right enshrined in both regional and international treaties, states must take the necessary measures to protect education.

In accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to ensure the functioning of the educational process, it is not only about protecting the right to education, but also extending to the rights of other persons who provide and benefit directly from education, namely students and education staff, as well as other human rights that guarantee the work of the right to education in full and effectively, including rights (right to life -

right to freedom - right to security - prohibition of torture and inhuman and cruel treatment), In addition to other rights that protect the safety of students and education staff.

According to the text of articles 48 and 51 of the first additional protocol, article 13 of the second additional protocol prohibits attacks on civilians, including (students and education staff).

The United Nations and the protection of the right to education in circumstances of armed conflict and insecurity:

The United Nations Centre for Training and Documentation in the Field of Human Rights in collaboration with the Foundation for the Protection of Education in Conflict and Insecurity - a programme of the Education Above All Foundation - organized a forum entitled "Protecting the right to education in conditions of armed conflict and insecurity in Africa" and nearly 105 people from more than 20 countries participated, including decision makers and legal advisers from the Ministries of Education, the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs and Human Rights, as well as non-governmental organizations.

The Main Goal of the Program is the Protection of the Right to Education in Conditions of Insecurity:

- The Legal Guide to the Foundation for the Protection of Education in Conflict and Insecurity entitled "Protecting Education in Conditions of Armed Conflict and Insecurity: An International Law Guide" issued in 2012, which provides a detailed analysis of the scope of international law (international human rights law, international criminal law and international humanitarian law) related to the protection of education in the circumstances of armed conflict and insecurity.

- Highlighting education-related violations in countries affected by armed conflict and insecurity in the Middle East and Africa and raising awareness among participants about the need to protect the right to education in these circumstances.

- Evaluating policies, laws and procedures that protect education in conflict and insecurity situations and their application in the Middle East and North Africa region.

- Share strategies, learn about experiences and efforts to protect the right to education in circumstances of armed conflict and insecurity and benefit from the experiences of others.

- Encourage participants to provide strategies that can be followed and recommendations to contribute to reducing education-related violations in the context of armed conflict and insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa region.

- Establish a network of stakeholders that protects education in circumstances of armed conflict and insecurity.

The UN Commission on the Rights of the Child also called upon states to "fulfill their obligations... Ensuring that schools are considered areas of peace and places of intellectual curiosity, respect for the human rights for all, and ensuring that schools are protected from military attacks or confiscated by militants."

Protecting Education within the African framework of human rights:

The African Charter of Human Rights was adopted in 1981 and came into force five years later, ratified by all 54 Member States of the African Union and unique in including all civil and political

rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights contained in the main international human rights instruments, and the status of these rights Commitments are in a conceptual framework of a regional nature.

Article 17 of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights with regard to the right to education stipulates that:

- The right of education is guaranteed for all, and the state should protect educational facilities
- Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of society.
- Promoting public ethics and traditional values recognized and protected by society is the duty of the state to preserve human rights.

Attacks on students, teachers, schools and universities and their military use:

School and university students may be attacked by non-state armed groups and government armed forces due to several reasons, including:

- Destroying symbols of government control or reviewing an anti-government group in an area.
- Preventing the education of girls or any kind of education that is visible as an imposition of religious teachings or foreign cultural values, or providing a false and biased history or using language unfamiliar in education.
- Use of school or university for military purposes by opposition forces.
- Restricting union activities for teachers or restricting academic freedoms.

- Abducting and recruiting children, taking them as sex slaves, mobilizing logistical support in military operations, or abducting students and teachers for ransom.
- Indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks.

> In November 2015, the UN General Assembly called upon all countries to "take all necessary measures to protect schools and protected persons in connection with armed conflict situations while refraining from child education-related actions."

Schools and universities are usually used during armed conflicts, by the armed forces and non-state armed groups, as temporary barracks and shelters, as defensive and offensive sites, as observation and reconnaissance sites, as weapons depots, as detention and interrogation centres, as well as in military exercises and in forcibly recruiting children in the ranks of armed groups. Sometimes schools and universities are completely occupied, with students completely removed from them**.** At other times, educational facilities are used partly for military purposes.

> The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations calls upon infantry battalions to adhere to the principles of "not endangering children" and "not to use schools militarily in their operations.

Displaced populations are unseen victims:

Mass displacement is the essential and strategic goal of armed groups seeking to separate the population and undermine the livelihoods of certain groups, according to UN data, the number of displaced people globally has reached about 80 million, and the population is exposed to the maximum level of deprivation in the field of education. In refugee camps, education levels have

declined significantly, with enrolment in primary and secondary education being about 70% for primary education, and 30% for secondary education and the proportion of pupils to teachers is very high, reaching about 50 pupils or more per teacher.

Accordingly, Somali refugees in southern Kenya have low attendances for displaced populations in Chad, Central Africa and the Republic of Congo.

Practical Recommendations in some Sahel countries where the education system has been affected by armed conflicts:

Recommendations to reach a good level of education in the midst of armed conflicts	Humanitarian situation and education situation in the presence of armed conflict	Education system	Country	
➢ Provide safe places of education or provide temporary learning places. ➢ Contributing to the return to normal life and the rehabilitation of schools.	Since 2002, the country has experienced sectarian violence from Boko Haram,a movement that seeks to abolish the secular governement and establish sharia rule in the country.	The education system is divided into kindergarten, primary education, secondary education and higher education, with 68% of Nigerians literate, with a	**Nigeria**	

➢ Rebuilding halls and school buildings affected by armed conflicts and establishing schools and universities. ➢ Trying to provide safe school environment and media contribution to citizen awareness as there are about 9 million people who did not attend school, making them easy targets for Boko Haram ➢ Qualification of the largest number of teachers as classes are crowded with students while the number of teachers is very small and teaches more than one subject. ➢ Establishing deterrent laws for all countries that support	According to the Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram has been responsible for more than 37,000 deaths and more than 19,000 deaths from terrorist acts since 2011 mainly in Nigeria and neighboring countries. More than 7,660 Nigerian refugees have arrived in Maradi, Niger, bringing the total number to nearly 100,000 displaced, as well as displaced Nigerians inside their country. Nearly 85% of adults cannot read or write. Targeting of schools: Boko Haram is constantly targeting schools, affecting the educational movement in the country, where more than 40%	higher rate of men (75.7%) than women (60.6%) Nigeria provides free education with government support, but attendance is not compulsory at any stage, and some groups, such as Bedouins and people with special needs, do not have all the necessary support for education. The education system consists of six years of primary education, three years of preparatory education, three years of secondary education and four, five or six		

Boko Haram and ISIL in Nigeria.	of students are currently absent, and this may increase, and the continuation of armed operations in western Nigeria will cause a severe crisis as happened in the northeast of the country, where more than 1.5 million people have been displaced, 8 million people remain in dire need of assistance and protection, and the militant group Boko Haram has killed nearly 30,000 people since the start of its military operations, which is which poses a danger to the state. Boko Haram has also kidnapped students in the northeastern country, abducting more than 200 students and 300 others from a school in nigeria's	years of university education to obtain a pass grade. Higher education in Nigeria includes universities (government and private), technical institutes, single-specialty institutes and faculties of education. Nigeria has 129 universities registered with the National University Commission, 40 are federal and 39 are state universities, while 50 are private universities. In order to increase the number of universities from 129 to 138, the federal		

	northwestern state of Zamfara, but also abducting 27 students from a school in north-central Niger. Especially because of the failure of the security forces to protect schools due to poor armament and reliance on reinforcements of nearby military checkpoints, and because of this failure, the Nigerian government, in cooperation with the United Nations, initiated the (safe schools) initiative to move students from schools in dangerous areas, to safer areas, in addition to securing schools with fences and security guards, according to these protocols, more than 2000 students have already	government granted nine new private universities work permits in May 2015. The list of universitys with work permits in the capital Abuja included: Augustine University, Elara, Lagos; Crisland University, in Aud State; Christopher University, Moy, Ogon State; Hallmark University, Egibo-Itel, Ogon State; and Kings University, in Audi-Omo, Osun State; Michael and Cecilia Ebro University, Orud, Delta State; Mountain Top University, McCogee/Oba Ogon; Reitman University,		

	been transferred from existing schools in northern Nigeria, where the danger zone is to safer areas.	Ekot Eben, Aqua-Ibom State; and Samit University, Ufa, Cuara State.		
➢ Creating an education development society in Niger. ➢ Adhering to the UN charters not to expose schools, students and teachers to armed conflicts. ➢ Provide quality education to all students internally displaced by armed conflict. ➢ Providing aid and assistance to implement a program to expand education in Niger. ➢ Distribution of educational assistance to students in villages and schools to	In Niger, in particular, Niamey, the epicenter of the epidemic, 7,015 children need support. More than 867,000 children in Niger need protection in 2020, an increase of 200,000 over 2019. The availability of health services is limited due to armed conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic, the difficulty of moving between countries and the dispatch of basic health services. Groups kidnap girls in order to employ them in terrorist operations by deceiving them	The state adopts a free education policy, but many areas lack schools. The Government oversees state-funded schools. Al-Khalawi (the booklets) for teaching the Holy Quran are also common. In the northern areas where nomadic groups reside, schools are set up in tents and move with the Bedouins. However, only 10% of the country's total population is educated,	**Niger**	

encourage them to continue their studies. ➢ Ban on the construction of huts as schools as they are built from combustible materials and thus pose a danger to the pupils.	into military training, and forcing them into marriage similar to what usually happens in Nigeria. Some 4.2 million people are displaced in the Sahel region, including Niger, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Due to the recent rise in violence in the border area between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, 1,478 schools have been closed. Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the authorities are building huts to be used as schools where students sometimes sit on the ground, but these huts are	french is the official language of the state and the basic language of teaching. However, most Nigeriens speak in their different ethnic dialects. More than 85% of the population speak Hausa, the main business language. The djerma sangi language is the second most widespread. In addition, some Nigeriens speak Arabic.		

	prone to fires as they are built of flammable materials always and there has been more than one fire with the last was April 11, 2021 Twenty children were killed after a fire broke out at their school near Niamey, capital of Niger.			
➢ Adhering to the UN charters not to expose schools, students and teachers to armed conflicts. ➢ Support the government's efforts to provide alternatives to school closures, and to develop a home education methodology or through government supervised assemblies.	Mali has armed groups, Boko Haram and Tuaregs in the Azawad region, and the UN mission has found 252 cases of human rights violations every year in the north and centre of the country. It has been ranked at the center of the armed conflict in Africa, and one of its most important conflicts that have led to many violations is the	Public education in Mali, in principle, remains free and compulsory for nine years for children between the ages of 7 and 16 This education system includes six years of primary education starting at the age of seven, followed by six years of secondary	**Mali**	

➢ Reopening schools closed due to armed conflict in the country and deploying troops to secure schools for a temporary period until security is reestablished in the country. ➢ Implementation of the 2015 Peace Agreement in Mali to stabilize the country. The text of the peace agreement (is to put in place mechanisms to address the grievances of those Malians who feel excluded from the country's political life and economic development and who see little hope on the horizon) ➢ The deployment of an African-led international	conflict in its north in Azawad, where the total number of deaths there is 10,000 deaths from the beginning of the conflict to date, according to a UN report. In 2020, according to minusma, 632 human rights violations were documented from April to June, killing 323 people, including 23 children and 11 women. This represents an increase of approximately 6% compared to the first three months of the year. In 2020, 1,260 schools were closed in central Mali, where schools were used for military purposes and children were	education divided into two three-year phases. Primary school enrolment in Mali is low, for a wide segment because families are unable to cover the costs of school uniforms, books, supplies, and other fees required to attend public schools.		

support mission in Mali for an initial period to take all necessary measures, in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian and human rights law and with full respect for Mali's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. ➢ Support the Malian authorities in restoring the northern areas of their territory under the control of terrorists and extremist armed groups, and in reducing the threat posed by terrorist organizations. ➢ Support the Malian authorities in creating a safe environment for a civilian-led humanitarian	forcibly recruited into armed terrorist groups. In Mali in 2019, the United Nations said there were 745 serious violations against children, and more than a million children faced protection problems twice as many as last year, and by 2020 there had been a sharp increase in forced displacement, with more than 137,000 children currently displaced in Mali. UNICEF and child protection partners have warned of increased physical violence against children and their psychological deterioration, with data recorded by the United Nations indicating that			

delivery process and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees, on request, within their capacity and in close cooperation with humanitarian actors.	more than 150 children were killed in the first half of 2019, 75 children were injured in violent attacks and violence in Mali, with child recruitment into armed groups doubling compared to the same period the previous year, and more than 900 schools still closed due to insecurity in the country. In 2018, a terrorist group set fire to the Mupti school, vowing to launch more attacks against schools that do not adhere to the Teaching of the Qur'an. United Nations statistics show that twice as many girls as boys in countries experiencing internal conflicts lose access to education.			

	Only 38 percent of girls complete their primary education.			

The Role of Education in Armed Conflicts:

Everyone is wondering, in the presence of armed conflicts, what is the role of education regarding the presence of marginalized states and the existence of wars within countries, but we find its role in:

Schools provide life-saving information, mitigate the psychological damage of war, and also protect children from trafficking and sexual violence, recruitment by armed groups. Irregular education may reduce the possibility of children returning to school, even if schools were open, the impact may extend over the long term to affect what the material gain individuals achieve and the ability of the state to rebuild. The greatest benefit to the child is to provide a safe space for learning, which gives him a sense of normality and tranquility in the midst of the chaos of war.

United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown mentioned that this unfortunate increase in attacks on schools must end. It is important to send a message now that attacks on schools, higher institutes and universities are crimes against humanity, and that educational institutions should be a safe haven. Adding that all countries of the world should support (Safe Schools Declaration)

The Effect of Education on Armed Conflicts:

Education is rarely the main cause of armed conflict, but it is often an essential element at the heart of political movements that push countries towards violence. Armed conflicts that take place within countries are often accompanied by grievances and allegations of injustice and demands for justice linked to identities, beliefs and belonging, and this is where education comes in with its ability to impact all these areas, weighting the balance in favour of peace or war. Education can make societies lose their immunity and make them more vulnerable to fall into the trap of armed conflict and determine how this becomes possible through (low level of education and not providing it adequately and exploiting it to spread a culture of hatred, prejudice and intolerance).

Providing education in a limited and low form leads to unemployment and poverty, as it deprives a large number of youths of suitable basic education, resulting in poverty, unemployment, despair and loss, consequently making it an incentive to join armed militias. The belief that the underdevelopment of education in the communities is due to an unfair distribution of resources is one of the catalysts for armed conflicts. This particular factor was among the factors that led to the conflicts, as what happened in Nigeria in the Niger Delta region, the oil-rich region.

Recommendations

- Working on addressing the issues of poverty, unemployment, income inequality, wealth and religious persecution in these circumstances as they promote extremism and make joining armed groups an easy choice for many young people in that continent.

- Working to establish a higher policy that brings together countries with conflicts to bridge the gap between international and regional law.

- Building cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union to create peace and security by resorting to the United Nations for logistical, financial and military support if necessary.
- Providing more peacekeeping elements in the region to protect people who are attacked every day.
- Evaluating laws and policies that protect education in different countries in the Middle East.
- Investigating allegations of violations of domestic and international law and prosecuting perpetrators when appropriate.
- Seeking the continuation of education during armed conflicts.
- Supporting the United Nations' activities on the agenda of children and armed conflicts.
- Establishing a high-level special committee by the African Union Peace and Security Council to resolve armed conflicts in Africa in general and the Sahel countries in particular.
- Providing assistance to conflict-affected countries.
- Remedying failures in protecting human beings and their right to education, and making education a force for peace.

Conclusion

One of the benefits of education is to achieve the goals of national development and achieve the well-being of individuals and ensure their health and social stability, which is done by providing quality education. Schools are targeted by bombing and destruction as legitimate

military targets or in a way that threatens teachers and students and their education which affects the education of children and their level of educational achievement. This hinders the specific education plans within a time limit and the continuing element of impact, which is conflicts, will continue to destroy and increase violence against civilians, especially children who are increasingly suffering and are more distant from protection, this will reduce access to the quality level and the main goal under these circumstances remains to seek education for all, including displaced persons, as education is the priority set by conflict-affected communities to get out of the crisis.

When the danger of war comes to mind, usually accompanied by pictures of soldiers, damage and death were not the exclusive preserve of these people, and it is sad and sad that the children are among them and that they and their schools are in the fire, it is not surprising, then, that half of the children are not enrolled in school living in fragile countries or affected by conflicts.

Armed conflicts do not only rob people's present by spreading death and destruction and destroying their livelihoods, but also robbing their future by targeting children and depriving them of education, and even if children are handed over from war and returned to the study seats, their horrific experience will leave a mark on them and affect their ability to learn and interact positively with their surroundings and the world

Education is a life boat, and the most successful and the means of a better, shorter life and the safest way to ensure security and human development**.**