



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

#HRC59 • 18 June 2025



PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

Ms. Farida SHAHEED, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education

The SR introduces her new thematic report on the **right to be safe outside of emergencies** as a key element to the right to education. Her report to the UNGA will address education in armed conflict. Reports of **attacks on educational institutions**, teachers and learners are alarming. The SR has led or joined communications and press releases addressing many aspects of safety in education, such as schools being bombed, gang violence in and around schools, attacks by armed groups, school closures due to sex trafficking, forced recruitment by armed groups or security forces, and arrests, detentions and reprisals against students and education staff for exercising academic freedom. This includes many aspects of safety revealed by statistics on violent incidents, bullying, gender-based violence, youth suicides and mental health issues, corporal punishments.

All inputs submitted through the call for contributions that showed that **safety in education is a worldwide challenge** and showcased many diverse efforts to address this. The right to be safe in education is essential. As the Indian Supreme Court has stressed, the right to education requires that a child study in a quality school, and a quality school should certainly pose no threat to a child's safety.



The SR proposes to **define the right to be safe in education** as the right of learners, educators and non-teaching staff to be protected from any violation of their physical, sexual or psycho-emotional integrity and from practises that endanger healthy relationships and free expression of identity in all educational spaces and processes, including digital ones.

Safety means that everyone enjoys and exercises their human rights in all aspects of education without discrimination, fear or reprisal. Safety's social dimension does not always receive the attention it deserves. This means protection against all hazards that endanger healthy relationships in and outside the educational environment, off or online, including segregation and discrimination, assigning people to certain groups that predetermine futures, forced assimilation, attacks against cultural identities and heritage.

Social safety includes feeling and being safe in all identities. Abusively restricting or banning expressions of **collective identity**, history and language creates an atmosphere of fear and censorship. A well-managed, rights-orientated education can, at the very least, mitigate such hazards. The Special Rapporteur further highlights some key points drawn from her report.

First, everyone must **be and feel safe in education**. Objective and subjective safety are vital and interrelated. States and other stakeholders have responsibilities for both, meaning they must always take express fears about safety in education seriously. The right to education entails states' obligations to take steps to the maximum of their available resources to progressively achieve its full realisation. However, a progressive approach cannot apply to all aspects. In particular, the right to be safe in education entails immediate obligations, such as prohibiting corporal punishment in schools. School safety means **protection against unpredictable hazards**, such as natural disasters, so states must refrain from actions or inaction that create such hazards.

The report details **institutionalised violence and discrimination** in education, significantly endangering safety that should be ended immediately. The SR totally understands calls for **security measures** to ensure children's safety, but these must not undermine students' rights or create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere. Measures should be temporary and always be accompanied by programmes to address the root causes of not being or feeling safe. Some safety measures may jeopardise rather than increase safety.

Opinions differ on how best to ensure **safety and discipline** and the balance needed between **prevention and repression**. But all safety measures must respect human rights and the strict framework for any limitations which the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights specifies must be compatible with the nature of rights and solely for the purpose of promoting general welfare. **Surveillance**, for instance, has a deeply chilling effect. It shapes behaviours, interactions and the educational process itself. It undermines people's comfort to raise questions, seek and share information. It hinders independent thinking and identity development. Promoting control rather than empowerment, surveillance is contrary to the very essence of education that must be built on trust, personal agency, a thirst for enquiry, academic freedom and a critical spirit. This is why the SR urges **all facial recognition technologies be banned** in education.



Education becomes unsafe when **academic freedom is curtailed**. The SR has previously detailed violations of academic freedom of teachers, researchers and learners at all levels of education. Since the massacre in Israel in October 2023, Special Rapporteurs have raised concerns about the disproportionate and excessive use of force against students expressing solidarity with the suffering civilians in Gaza and denouncing the Israeli military response.

The **suspension and expulsion of university students**, dismissal of academics, calls for deportation, threats to dissolve student unions and associations and restrictions on campus meetings. The SR has also expressed concern at the reported **increase in anti-Semitism** in universities. Jewish students have an equal right to be and feel safe in education. Rather than abusively restricting freedom of expression and academic freedom, all actors must promote an inclusive, safe and enabling environment for enquiry, debate and discussion that promotes understanding and tolerance. As one contributor stressed, we must dare to educate, but also we must firmly combat hate speech and negative stereotypes including those of Jews, Muslims, Palestinians and Arabs. **Safety is a multidimensional issue** and needs an all-hazards approach.

The SR urges all states to endorse the **Safe Schools Declaration** and Comprehensive School Safety Framework and use these for making their policies. Safety demands a whole school approach and participation of all members of the school community, school leadership, teachers, learners, parents, caregivers and community members rather than top-down approaches.

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

Presenting the report on her country visit to the **United States of America** carried out in May 2024, the SR is grateful to the federal government and the states of Indiana and Colorado for facilitating the visit. The SR congratulates the United States on its **robust legal framework** which includes comprehensive civil rights protections and a strong role of courts in protecting equitable access to education despite the absence of an expressly recognised constitutional right to education. A key strength of the system is its remarkable diversity and flexibility, a vast range of programmes and learning pathways catered to a wide spectrum of interests, learning styles and career goals.

Yet, **systemic inequalities** of access and control persist, especially for low-income and marginalised communities as manifested in inequitable public funding, largely dependent on local property taxes, punitive discipline that disproportionately affects non-white students, over-reliance on limited standardised testing. **Growing privatisation** threatens the integrity of public schooling as a public good. Teacher shortages and poor working conditions combined with inadequate mental health support for students undermine well-being and learning outcomes. Interlocutors described a pervasive chilling effect on education and institutions due to **bans on subjects and books** and punitive measures that undermine enquiry, free expression and civic engagement.

The SR urges the United States to **explicitly recognise education** as a fundamental human right and ratify the remaining core treaties. The SR recommends the Department of Education not be dismantled given its role in safeguarding equity and coherence. Education should be treated as a public good, not a commodity. **Public funding** should prioritise equitable access to quality



education for all while respecting parents' liberty to choose things other than traditional public schools. **More equitable funding**, increased federal contributions, targeted support for underserved communities and students with disabilities would help address disparities. Law enforcement personnel should be curtailed and replaced with mental health services and child-centred safety strategies. Teachers should be supported through fair pay, professional development and better working conditions. The assessment systems need to be revised.

Since her visit, **political interference in education** has intensified. The SR urges the United States to uphold academic freedom as a cornerstone of scientific advancement and democratic life, respect institutional autonomy, ensure pluralism in educational context. As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the United States must guarantee academic freedom, freedom of expression, and ensure universities protect, not punish, peaceful protests in full alignment with international human rights standards.

REPLIES AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The SR appreciates those states that have prohibited **corporal punishment**. Nevertheless, even when corporal punishment is prohibited, it may not be implemented as such. People may continue with corporal punishment for various reasons, because they want to preserve the status of their schools, because they do not know about it. The SR seizes this opportunity to read some **children's testimonies**.

Children said they were hit, slapped, whipped on the hands, feet, buttocks, breasts, with electric cables, rubber hoses, and wooden or bamboo sticks. They were slammed into desks or forced to clean latrines with bare hands. They were prolonged beatings, having their head banged against walls, punched in the face, exposed to extreme cold weather, made to do prolonged exercise without rest or water, carry or hold heavy objects, run long distance, dig holes, kneel on small objects, walk on their knees with their hands behind their back, swallow unpleasant or noxious substances, and then there's the psychological abuse.

For these reasons, the SR urgently calls upon all states to completely prohibit and to ensure that there is **no corporal punishment** in the school system.

The SR further highlights the **interdependency between discrimination and exclusion** in society, which are reflected in schools. We need to simultaneously work on making school processes safe, but also looking at what happens outside school. As the Young Delegate from Finland said, the most difficult thing for them is not being seen, not being accepted, not being recognised for who you are. This deserves our attention, and though we think of this in terms of **social identities**, there are also issues of people who are **neurodiverse** and persons who are living with disabilities that also have to be looked at.

Turning to the digital era, the SR draws the Council's attention to the recommendations outlined in her latest report on AI and two reports on **digitisation and education**. States need to check the conditions with which they look at digital tools in education and ensure what the purpose is, who is making them, who is profiting from them, make sure that their privacy is protected, and these tools they align with human rights, which the WG on Business and Human Rights has just also flagged. Software and digital tools are usually available in English over and above every other



language. Psychological and mental issues and bullying are interconnected and difficult to address. More psychologists in the school system are needed who proactively work. Students repeatedly tell the SR they do not go to those who are called ‘psychologists’ for fear that they will be stigmatised. The manner in which we provide the **psychosocial training** and the support to students has to be done in a way that it makes them confident to be able to share, and their privacy is maintained. Mechanisms are also needed to ensure that they are safe from others finding out and making fun of them.

Turning to the **Safe Schools Declaration**, many have asked what can be done to make it more universal. On this point, the SR believes it has to do with a **lack of political will**. There is nothing a SR can do, except to urge all states to take this seriously, to ensure that people are safe in education, because without safety, there will be no learning, there will be no education.

In terms of **international efforts and cooperation**, states really need to redouble the efforts to end all armed conflicts everywhere. **Children’s voices** must be heard, they will tell when policies are not working on the ground for them. Children are very articulate and they know what they need. So we need to start listening to them, and we need to create spaces where their voices can be heard without being stigmatised. The SR loves the depiction of ‘**schools as sanctuaries to learn**, to grow, to dream, and to achieve.’

In terms of **religious freedom**, we are all in favour and believe this is something that’s essential. The question is how it is to be achieved. In terms of the **comprehensive sexual education**, the SR recalls the focus of her report on safety at school. When children do not know about the dangers of sexual harassment, they are unable to identify when something is happening to them. They will be unable to prevent that, speak to somebody, and make sure that they are safe.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS CONCERNED COUNTRY

The delegation of the **United States of America** was not present in the room.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Afghanistan expresses its deep concern over the deteriorating situation of education in the country, especially for women and girls. Since military takeover, the Taliban has banned all forms of education for women and girls beyond the secondary schools. The extreme gender-based violence imposed by the Taliban has entrenched systematic inequalities in both access to and the quality of education. Furthermore, the shortage of female educators substituted by unqualified Taliban ideologues and preachers, along with the lack of educational facilities and resources, exacerbates these challenges. The ongoing and rapid establishment of so-called jihadi madrasas and the development of curricula centred on the Taliban’s particular and extremist interpretation of Sharia and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and hatred are pushing the radicalisation of young boys and girls. The consequences of these policies won’t stop only in Afghanistan, but will extend beyond its borders as they slowly become evident outside the country. The Afghan delegation in Geneva calls for concrete actions by the international community to look at a comprehensive and innovative approach toward alternative education in Afghanistan, while keeping the pressure on the Taliban authorities to eliminate all forms of

restriction and regulation on women and girls' education, ensuring that right to free, quality, and inclusive education for women and girls of Afghanistan.

Albania shares the view that the safety is a precondition for full realisation of the right to education and must be guaranteed in all educational settings, including digital space. At the national level, Albania has taken several steps to ensure the right to safe education, including the alignment of its legislation with international human rights standards, particularly conventional for adult children, implementing policies to combat violence and bullying in schools, including awareness campaign, promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities and those from marginalised communities, concrete steps to address digital safety, including cyber bullying and data protection efforts are made to improve school infrastructure to ensure physical safety. Despite progress, Albania faced several challenges in fully realising the right of education, such as better enforcement of existing framework, legal framework, improvement of complaint mechanism, better data collection or school school-related violence and discrimination, creating a robust protection against online abuse.

Andorra underlines that in today's world, education has a role to play in ensuring equal opportunities, respect, democracy and shared progress. However, offering education is not enough on its own. It must be provided safely and free from violence, harassment and discrimination, as stressed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education in her recent report. Andorra is fortunate to have a unique pluralistic and public education model based on three systems, Andorran, Spanish and French, which coexist in harmony and offer free education and freedom of choice. This richness has allowed us to build a multilingual society committed to human rights. Andorra is fully aligned with SDG 4. Andorra is committed to promoting gender equality, providing specific support to students with disabilities and making sustainability a central pedagogical focus. As the rapporteur highlights, it is essential that educational institutions are safe spaces in all dimensions, physical, emotional and psychological. This safety is an essential condition for fully guaranteeing the right to education. In support of the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Andorra recognises preschool and secondary education as universal, free and guaranteed rights. With this important step towards achieving justice and equity, schools will continue to play a vital role in imparting knowledge, while also fostering an environment of inclusivity, protection and personal growth for all students.

Armenia, as a signatory to Safe School Declaration, is concerned with the growing number of attacks against schools and educational institutions, not only in the areas of armed conflict but also in post-conflict situations and humanitarian settings. Together with international partners, Armenia is working toward enhancing security of schools in bordering areas. Safety of schools and trainings are also part of our disaster risk reduction and preparedness efforts. Armenia prioritizes comprehensive support to victims of violence. Starting from 2023, Armenia piloted child support centres, safe corners in Yerevan and Syunik region in line with the Barnhouse Model. The government of Armenia's Educational Development State Programmes 2030 serve as the main strategic document to ensure quality, accessible and inclusive education. Armenia continues to strengthen digital and psycho-emotional safety in schools, acknowledging the increasing challenges children face in both physical and online spaces. In response to the recent enrolment of refugee children in Armenian schools, the Ministry of Education has facilitated the integration of around 17,000 displaced children, providing them with access to psychological and



mental health services. Targeted support programmes for displaced teachers have also been developed. Armenia stands ready to collaborate with all partners to advance the right of everyone to be safe in education.

Bahrain on behalf of the Arab group notes that education is one of the priorities of Arab countries because it is a key right in order to enjoy all other human rights and a basic pillar to achieve sustainable development. The Arab countries under the Arab League have adopted strategies and programmes aiming at promoting the educational process by coordinating efforts, exchanging experiences and knowledge, and having a joint work plan. The Arab countries have also cooperated with other regional and international organisations in order to face the challenges related to education, namely in the context of conflict. The Arab group reiterates the importance to provide a safe educational environment and a sustainable one, allowing students to develop their capacities to achieve their aspirations for their own futures. It is important to have a safe education and to guarantee the safety of teachers and children and educational entities at all times, especially during conflicts. The group condemns the targeting of the educational process by the Israeli regime in Gaza, which targeted thousands of students and schools, also schools belonging to UNRWA. This deliberate targeting of schools should end and all measures should be taken accordingly.

Belgium jointly with La Francophonie reiterate their tireless support for the right to education, which is the cornerstone of achieving all other rights, sustainable development, peace and social cohesion. However, the current situation is alarming. Conflicts, displaced forced displacements, climate catastrophes are seriously undermining access to school for hundreds of millions of girls and boys. Girls are the first victims of this crisis. However, investing in education of girls is essential if we are to see a true transformation of our societies. The Francophone group calls for us all to pull together our efforts to support every child to ensure all young people have access to inclusive, high quality education. Digital technologies offer unheard of opportunities for access to knowledge, pedagogy and education and reducing inequalities. They also reduce the risk of exclusion. It is essential that education is adapted to include digital skills and guarantee access to technologies. La Francophonie reaffirms its commitment to education, becoming a true lever for achieving the rights as a driver of progress and the need to preserve programmes of multilateral cooperation on education, leaving no one behind.

Belgium shares the SR's view according to which safety in schools is a prerequisite for achieving the right to education. Belgium has deployed efforts to create educational environments free from violence, bullying and exclusion. Schools must be protected in times of crisis or conflict. In this connection, Belgium eagerly awaits the SR's report to UNGA on this issue. Education was one of the four major conferences in the International Conference on the Rights of the Child organised by Belgium in Brussels last November alongside partners. This conference allowed for discussions on accountability for attacks on schools and military use of schools as well as implementing the applicable rules during periods of conflicts pertaining to schools. The conference offered a place to develop the means for better implementing the protection of schools, also underlined in the SR's report.

Botswana stresses that education is a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development. In this regard, Botswana remains committed to ensuring an inclusive, equitable



and quality education for all, in line with SDG 4 and existing global human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Botswana is also committed to ensuring that vulnerable groups, including children with disability and remote dwellers, benefit from free education that government continues to provide. Botswana recognises that safety of learners and educators is a prerequisite for a conducive learning environment and therefore has taken concrete steps to strengthen school safety to prevent violence and bullying and provide facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Botswana remains concerned about the global impact of conflicts, climate change and health crises on education, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and girls, and calls for international cooperation to safeguard education in times of emergencies to ensure that no child is left behind.

Bulgaria shares the view that the right to be safe in education is an integral element of the human right to education. Bulgaria stands against any interference that unduly affects the human right of learners, educators and non-teaching staff to be protected and safe from harming or endangering practises or attention. Bulgarian delegation calls upon all member states to guarantee the safety in education by upholding the right to academic freedom and avoiding institutionalised violence in all educational spheres. It notes with appreciation the profound study of the educational space, including safety in education, and expresses concern about the current challenges thereto outlined in the report. Committed to the right to education as a fundamental human right, Bulgaria was a member of the cross-regional core group that supported UNHRC Resolution 56/5 in 2024, establishing an intergovernmental working group on a new Optional Protocol to the CRC regarding early childhood education and the free public pre-primary and secondary education. Bulgaria looks forward to the group's upcoming first meeting and encourage all member states to participate and support an efficient process that leads to a strong and focused Optional Protocol, guaranteeing the availability of free primary and secondary education as every child's right.

Burundi is committed to providing everyone with the right to education and pursues its efforts to make education an inalienable right for every Burundian child. In this regard, the government has set up policies and programmes to guarantee the right to high quality and inclusive education for all, including a policy to ensure that basic education is free of charge. This was set up in 2005 to promote access to education for all. Thanks to this system, Burundi has achieved parity between girls and boys. The country is also building school infrastructure in order to ensure that every neighbourhood has at least one school. Burundi has created schools of excellence for gifted children and strengthened support for vulnerable families by creating school canteens. It has further created specialised schools and centres for children with disabilities. Despite remaining challenges, namely school dropout during secondary education and low levels of university attendance due to financial requirements, Burundi is committed to ensuring the right to education for all.

Cambodia emphasizes the crucial importance of education and human capital development as top priority for the government. Cambodia has been steadfastly striving for the realization of the SDGs, working constantly towards the transformation of its education system through a series of ambitious policies, including education strategic plans and policy on child protection in school. They have improved quality and inclusiveness across all levels of learning, as well as the safety



of school environments, both in terms of physical safety and emotional well-being and ensuring nurturing environment free from violence, abuse and discrimination. During the pandemic, Cambodia prioritised school safety reopening with hygiene supplies and trained teachers and developed blended learning approaches combining in-person and distance education with improved teacher training and digital learning tools, all crucial for long-term progress.

Cote d'Ivoire fully supports the need for physical, psychosocial and other forms of integrity of all stakeholders at school, including in the digital realm. In particular, Cote d'Ivoire condemns killings and other violent acts at school. School shouldn't be a place for fear, but rather a place for knowledge, freedom and safety. Cote d'Ivoire is aware that education is the bedrock of transformative and lasting and sovereign change. Therefore, Cote d'Ivoire has taken measures to ensure this right through its constitution, which enshrines safety at school and prohibits corporal punishment. Moreover, a zero-tolerance policy is applied against violence and harassment. Awareness-raising campaigns and positive discipline measures and clear signage have also been established. Cote d'Ivoire believes that it is necessary to promote a genuine culture of respect and nonviolence and tolerance within and around schools.

Cote d'Ivoire on behalf of a group of countries reaffirms that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society entitled to protection by society and the state, as recognised in university agreed human rights instruments. It is within the family that children first experience care, values and guidance, which are indispensable for the full realisation of their right to education. In an era marked by rapid digital transformation, the role of the family has become ever more vital in supporting children's learning journeys. While technology has opened up new frontiers for educational access, it has also introduced major challenges, including disparities in digital connectivity, risks to online safety and growing concerns about overexposure and social isolation. In this evolving landscape, the family remains a cornerstone for cultivating digital literacy, critical thinking and values that uphold dignity, well-being and holistic development. The group therefore underscores the importance of family-centred education policies, particularly in the context of digital transformation and emerging technologies, and the group calls on all stakeholders to promote inclusive national strategies that recognise and empower the role of the family in supporting children's learning, both in traditional and digital formats, ensure equitable and appropriate access to digital infrastructure, especially for children, rural and under-resourced areas. In conclusion, the group believes that education systems that are family-centred are more resilient, inclusive and effective.

Cuba guarantees the enjoyment of the right to education for everyone without discrimination, through free education services which are high quality and is run from primary education to university education. High levels of education and high attendance rates of higher education are the results of our policies which are based on human values. Cuba agrees with the SR on the importance of creating safe environments which are inclusive, non-discriminatory. In national schools and other educational establishments, Cuba ensures an holistic development on gender equality, the eradication of discrimination and zero tolerance for drug consumption and trade. Cuba has also deployed efforts to create environments which are free of violence and bullying, continues to fine tune its education system which fosters community and family participation in the education system. Cuba welcomes the next UNHRC's session focus on the contribution of

education towards the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights as a valuable forum for appraising opportunities and challenges in implementing the right to education.

Cyprus stresses that ensuring the safety of learners, educators and staff within educational environments, including in the digital arena, is not only an integral part of the right to education but represents an essential component of international human rights law. Cyprus echoes the Special SR's violence, creates barriers to participation and gravely affects the provision of quality education. It exacerbates educational disparities, especially in the cases of vulnerable or marginalised groups. Cyprus is very concerned with the increasing conflicts around the world and their devastating impact on children's rights to education as we witness schools being targeted, destroyed or militarised. It is imperative that places of education remain safe havens. States have an obligation to ensure that schools provide a safe and supportive learning environment. This includes providing adequate infrastructure and ensuring protection from external threats, adopting and enforcing laws and protocols aimed at the protection of individuals from any violation of their physical, sexual or psycho-emotional integrity, including as a result of corporal punishment, as well as ensuring adequate psychological and emotional support.

Djibouti takes note of your assessment of the current international legal framework and the various approaches that exist, as well as the difficulty of jointly defining the right to safety in education. Djibouti believes that safety at school is a vital condition for the realisation of the right to education and access to all related rights. It is therefore essential to strike a balance and find proportionality regarding the means of reconciling legitimate measures aimed at preventing security breaches at school and the right to safety at school. It is in this vein that Djibouti recognises the importance of ensuring the security and safety of schools at all times, and has subscribed to the Declaration on the Safety of Schools, and calls on all states who have not yet done so to join that initiative.

The **Dominican Republic** commends the comprehensive approach on safety in education, which is a key component of the right to education, which encompasses physical, psycho-emotional, social and digital elements. The Dominican Republic believes that safety is essential for ensuring the full right to education in environments that are free from violence, exclusion and discrimination. In this context, the country has adopted specific measures in order to strengthen educational environments and protect teaching staff, administrative staff and pupils, and ensure the provision of safe and qualitative education at all levels. Amongst other measures, the country made it a priority to build and modernise schools in the context of our relevant decree, which grants better autonomy for school infrastructure, thereby facilitating effective control for safety measures. The Dominican Republic, like other countries, is spearheading an initiative for an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with a view to strengthening the international legal framework about the right to free education at all levels, including preschool and secondary education. This reflects our firm commitment to universal and equitable and qualitative education.

Ecuador agrees on the importance that all states should consider signing the declaration on safe schools and that they ensure respect for all human rights in schools as a key part of safety. Therefore, Ecuador considers it necessary to address safety at school from various perspectives, including the use of resilient infrastructure, crime prevention and violence prevention, as well as



psychosocial risks and citizen participation. In this respect, since 2024, Ecuador has been implementing the Safe and Nurturing Educational Communities Programme, which services half a million pupils in educational establishments with different levels of risk across the country. Ecuador has achieved a 30% reduction in psychosocial risks and critical warnings. Furthermore, Ecuador has a national plan for the prevention of psychosocial risks in the educational system, the purpose of which is to generate protective school environments, bearing in mind the best interests of girls, boys and adolescents, equity, co-responsibility and intersectionality, amongst other things. Finally, Ecuador reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promotion of safe and nurturing educational environments for all members of the educational community, ensuring their well-being and development and strengthening learning and tuition on the basis of a human rights-based approach.

El Salvador agrees with the SR that one of the most urgent challenges is ensuring universal access to quality education, especially for groups in situations of vulnerability. It is urgent to address the persistent barriers that hamper equity of access, especially in the context of the growing digital divide. El Salvador has made national strategies priorities, such as the Links with Education Programme, which promotes the use of digital technologies in education from very early ages and critical digital technologies. The country hopes to transform education by integrating digital technologies into the curriculum, ensuring access not only to connectivity and devices, but also high-quality educational content. The strengthening of international cooperation also remains fundamental for addressing the digital divide, ensuring that technological progress transform into effective educational opportunities and contribute to fostering sustainable development.

Ethiopia fully agrees that safety is a fundamental precondition for realising the right to education and must be guaranteed for all learners, educators, education and personnel across all settings. Ethiopia affirms this commitment to creating safe, inclusive and resilient learning environments. The constitution guarantees the right to education without discrimination and our national education and training policy promotes equity, inclusion and safety. Ethiopia is implementing the Safe School Declaration and continue to integrate the comprehensive school safety framework into our national strategies. Ethiopia's ongoing efforts include measures to prevent gender-based violence in schools, promote psychosocial support for students and improve school infrastructure, especially in rural areas. The Best Education Sector Development Programme also prioritises inclusive education for children with disabilities. In closing, Ethiopia echoes the California Whole of Society approach that ensures learner participation, safeguards academic freedom and eliminates all forms of violence, discrimination and harassment in education. The parliament is committed to ensuring that every child can learn in an environment that is safe, dignified and conducive to their full development.

Finland gives the floor to a Finnish **Youth Delegate** who stresses that without physical safety, the right to education cannot be realised. At the same time, safety is more than physical. Feeling safe also means feeling secure emotionally and socially. Young people know that feeling unsafe also comes from being silenced, judged for who we are or crushing our self-worth. For some of us, the hardest part of school was not learning. It was walking into a building where they did not feel seen or accepted. Those young people facing discrimination, poverty, disability or displacement encounter compounded barriers in education which have lifelong effects. In



Finland, the lack of school psychologists undermines students' mental wellbeing. However, it is not only a national but a global crisis. Mental health support should be made a core obligation under the right to education. Finland urges all states to adopt a holistic, human rights-based approach to educational safety that reflects the lived realities of young people. Youth should be included in shaping these policies, grounded in dignity, care, inclusion and equality.

The **Gambia** fully supports the all-hazards approach to safety and the call to place physical, emotional, social, and digital safety at the heart of education policy and practise. However, in its quest to ensure physical safety of students, the Gambia agrees with the recommendation to avoid hardened security strategies for educational institutions, which create a culture of criminalisation, especially for students facing stereotyped profiling. The Gambia is actively advancing reforms aligned with the report's recommendation. As part of its commitment to tackle violence against children, in 2023 the Gambia pledged to ban corporal punishment in all schools, with accompanying legal reforms and national training on positive discipline already underway. In the digital space, the Gambia became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to roll out a pilot programme, a national digital literacy programme for schools. It is expanding safe, inclusive online learning environments and investing in school infrastructure to better support both learners and teachers. The Gambia has also encouraged by recognition by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for our steps towards inclusive education and the protection of children in learning spaces. In closing, the Gambia reaffirms the right to everyone to be safe in education as an integral element of the right to education.

Ghana on behalf of the African group acknowledges everyone's right to be safe in education, being an integral element of the right to education. The African group agrees that learners, educators and non-teaching staff should be protected from any violation of their physical, sexual or psycho-emotional integrity and be allowed their free expression of identities in all educational spaces and processes, including digital ones. The group reaffirms its shared commitment to building resilient, inclusive and transformative education systems for continents' sustainable future. The AU Declaration of 2024 as the Year of Education reaffirms our collective resolve to achieve inclusive, equitable and lifelong learning with a focus on gender parity and protection of marginalised groups. These efforts demonstrate the African Union's belief in education as the engine of progress and a catalyst for sustainable development and empowerment. The African group echoes the SR's grave concerns regarding the scholastic side in Gaza, where the deliberate destruction of schools and universities have deprived countless students of their fundamental right to learn, violating international law and threatening the future of generations. At this time, when global solidarity is being threatened and uncertainty brews, we must commit to upholding international norms, especially for promoting inclusivity, equity and quality education for all.

Honduras stresses the utmost importance to ensure safe schools that are free from violence and violence both in physical classrooms and online. These are vital components of exercising the right to education. In this regard, Honduras has improved the infrastructure of over 1,500 schools in the and has upskilled teaching staff and strengthened the institutional structure in education. Taking note of the recommendations proposed by the SR, Honduras reiterates its commitment to building safe school environments for everyone, in particular children and adolescents, and will its work alongside partners to improve the realization of this right through solidarity and cooperation.



Iran on behalf of the Like-Minded Group (LMG) reaffirms that the right to education is a cornerstone of human dignity and sustainable development, ensuring this right requires not only access but also content that is culturally appropriate and socially relevant. Education systems must reflect local values and traditions and respect the moral and social fabrics of each society. This vision of education cannot be fulfilled without the active role of the states in close cooperation with parents and family members who are the primary educators of their children. This role must be recognised and supported. In digital age, education also depends on equitable access to technology. Therefore, the LMG calls for the strengthening of international cooperation and effective technology transfer to bridge digital divides and ensure inclusive learning opportunities. The LMG further stresses that education must be age-appropriate, meeting the evolving needs of learners and equipping them with ethical values, critical thinking and life skills. In conclusion, the LMG expresses deep concern over the ongoing and deliberate targeting of schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such acts represent a blatant violation of right to education and international law and must firmly be condemned.

Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stresses that the right to be safe in education is urgently needed to protect schools and educational entities from attacks during armed conflicts. In this context, the GCC strongly condemns the attacks on UNRWA schools and other educational entities in Gaza within a widespread and deliberate destruction. It is important to respect the international humanitarian law and to guarantee the impartiality of educational centres and not using them for military purposes. It is also important to secure the safety of learners and teachers in the digital space, namely protecting people from bullying, exploitation and privacy violations. The GCC mentioned regional initiatives, namely the Global Summit to Protect Children in the Cyberspace hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is an example of the efforts deployed in order to provide a safe digital learning environment. The GCC reiterate the importance of quality and inclusive education.

Kuwait protects education as a right enshrined in its constitution, which also encourages scientific research and guarantees that education is provided free of charge at primary, secondary and higher levels. Education is supported by the state and Kuwait has also provided schools in juvenile detention centres. Kuwait has also set up literacy centres in conjunction with private sector partners and civil society organisations. The country has tried to ensure that there is collective responsibility for ensuring education. This is vital for creating independent societies.

Lebanon shares the SR's views that safety is an essential part of the right to education and that learners and educators must be safeguarded from harmful physical, emotional and psychological practises. Following severe damages to Lebanese schools and educational system caused by the Israeli aggression last year, Lebanon remains nevertheless strongly committed to the right to education and to the fundamental role of schools as safe and empowering spaces. In this context, Lebanon reaffirms its strong support to all relevant international tools, including the Safe Schools Declaration, and remains committed to its full implementation. Despite ongoing economic and humanitarian challenges, Lebanon aims at providing safe, inclusive and child-centred education. This includes strengthening psychosocial support, promoting nonviolent discipline, improving reporting mechanisms and advancing human rights education. Lebanon is also planning to review digital safety policies and emphasise that all school security measures must respect international human rights standards. Finally, as an overburdened host country to



hundreds of thousands of refugee learners, Lebanon echoes the SR's call for greater international cooperation and fair resource allocation.

Libya attaches great importance to the right to education. This is why it adopted a free education system across levels. In the context of the current report, Libya agrees with the SR that safety in education is of the essence and it's a precondition for achieving the right to education. The education environment should be free from violence and discrimination and exclusion so that the educational process is efficient. The Occupying Power in Palestine has conducted a systemic effort to destroy the education system in Gaza, with the children, pupils, and teachers losing their lives. About 80 percent of schools have been completely destroyed, which the SR has qualified as *scholasticide*. The Occupying Power targets the entire education system in Palestine.

Malawi acknowledges that education is a fundamental pillar of development, and safety within schools is paramount to guaranteeing equitable access, fostering inclusivity and nurturing innovation. In our context, Malawi recognises that many children, particularly girls and those from marginalised communities, face challenges that hinder their educational progress, including violence, abuse and inadequate infrastructure. These barriers undermine not only their right to learning, but also their dignity and potential. Malawi reaffirms its commitment to strengthening measures that ensure safe, inclusive and resilient educational environments. It echoes the call for international collaboration to address systemic issues such as gender-based violence, bullying and the impact of crisis on education.

Malaysia is committed to ensuring the safety of education across all dimensions. Nationally, Malaysia continues to implement the Safe Schools Declaration, invest in disaster risk reduction and promote digital literacy. In addition, its newly enacted Online Safety Act focusses on curbing harmful content online including to support safer digital learning environments. Malaysia remains gravely concerned by the continued devastation of Gaza's education system. Last year, Malaysia raised the alarm on the systematic targeting of schools, universities, students and educators, also qualified as *scholasticide*, through a joint statement that garnered wide cross-regional support. Malaysia deeply regrets that these attacks have persisted unabated with little accountability and growing impunity. Such acts not only violate international law but also erase the hopes of generations. The delegation reiterates its urgent call for a ceasefire for accountability and for international efforts to rebuild the education sector in Gaza.

Malta shares the SR's view that schools should provide safe spaces for all children in all circumstances, including conflict situations. There are still too many instances where children are the primary victims of their political and or social situation that leads to disruption of their education with lifelong implications. Malta's own experience showcases the importance of strengthening and expanding education to all. For decades, Malta has provided free pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education for all girls and boys, women and men. It is with this experience in mind that Malta supports the upcoming intergovernmental Working Group on a new Optional Protocol to the CRC. This process should result in a strong, focused optional protocol that explicitly recognises every child's right to early childhood care and education and guarantees the availability of free public education for pre-primary and secondary education. Expanding a safe, enabling and inclusive learning environment is the best investment for future that every state can make.



Mauritania believes that safety in schools is a prerequisite for high quality education and learning. As education is a fundamental right, Mauritania deployed multiple efforts to ensure that school environments are inclusive. The country has set up programmes to ensure that the appropriate resources are available and has monitored the quality of education. It has also distributed school textbooks and launched an educational television channel. When it comes to the importance of parity between girls and boys, Mauritania also has preschool education for 46,000 children and there are over 100,000 children who receive a grant so that they can attend school and eat properly. Nevertheless, overarching reforms are needed, including better governance and promoting the value of the teaching profession and to ensure that vocational education is valued as well.

Mongolia notes concerns over the growing challenges posed by violence, discrimination and other safety risks faced by students, particularly vulnerable groups in education settings. These challenges hinder not only students' physical and mental well-being, but also their right to learn and thrive. Committed to promoting a safe and inclusive education system, the Government of Mongolia has launched an action plan on safe and healthy schools for 2025 to 2028, which includes comprehensive strategies to respond to safety concerns promptly. In recent years, Mongolia has implemented anti-bullying programmes across schools and established child protection mechanisms within schools. Recognising the importance of mental health, Mongolia has expanded mental health support services in schools. These include the hiring of school psychologists, as well as initiatives that raise awareness of mental health issues and provide emotional support for students. The government remains committed to furthering its efforts to ensure that all children, youth and students can pursue their education in an environment free from fear, discrimination and violence. Mongolia will continue to work with international partners to share best practises and experiences to improve school safety globally.

Morocco notes with concern that safety in education is under threat. It is threatened amongst other things by interpersonal violence, discrimination, environmental disasters, and fragile infrastructure. The Kingdom of Morocco, whose constitution protects the right to modern, accessible, and quality education, has made the safety of learners and pupils in and around schools a top priority. The Kingdom launched a national campaign against harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying with tangible results. More than 3,000 schools have benefited from this campaign. Similarly, a convention was signed between different ministries to prevent acts of violence and their regular patrols. In the same vein, and following an intersectoral approach, Morocco has established a national programme for school and university health, which seeks to protect and maintain pupils' health. Also, aware of how important it is to take care of our pupils' mental health, Morocco has launched a national mechanism for dealing with psycho trauma.

Nepal stresses that children can fully enjoy their right to quality education only when there is a safe, violence-free, dignified and healthy school environment. No children should perceive any risk or threat of any means within and outside the school. Children and youth today face various forms of cyber bullying. Nepal asks for the SR's guidance on how to effectively ensure psychosocial as well as digital safety of children and youth both within and outside the school environment.



Niger points out that the right to education is a fundamental right which is recognised both in national and regional and international texts. It ensures for every individual access to quality education without discrimination in order to show personal development, autonomy and active participation in society. In Niger, demography is a major challenge and is putting a lot of pressure on the educational system. Regarding access to education, the growth of school enrolment rates is not just swift, but it also varies depending on the education cycle you look at. To address this, the government has, in addition to the fundamental law which guarantees the right to education for all citizens, ensured that primary education is both free and compulsory. Niger has developed policies and strategic plans for improving access to education, reducing disparities and improving the quality of education. Finally, Niger reiterates the government's commitment to continuing its efforts to ensure that education is accessible to all, especially for children in emergency situations and zones of insecurity.

Paraguay commends the SR's on her report and her holistic approach on the right to be safe at school. Paraguay was struck by her remarks on the various dimensions of safety, physical, psycho-emotional, social and digital safety, and her holistic approach to all rights holders and educational stakeholders in all contexts, in view of all dangers and all levels of education in the public and private sector. This comprehensive approach is a major challenge for states, particularly those in development. Paraguay will spare no effort, as ever, to provide safe schools with the necessary holistic approach to progress on all fronts, on all factors, stakeholders, contexts and levels. Paraguay has adopted a number of legal institutional mechanisms for ensuring safe schools, including protocols for dealing with violence and bullying and safety for state, private and subsidised schools.

Peru emphasizes that violence, bullying, discrimination, the undue use of intrusive technologies all seriously undermine the right to education, and they have a disproportionate impact on girls, pupils with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Peru fully agrees that safety at school cannot be understood solely as physical protection. Rather, it should also be understood as a guarantee of an environment that is free from intimidation, repression or exclusion. Peru highlights its commitment to promoting safe schools, especially in times of conflict or disaster, as a crucial topic for education and the safety of students through the Safe Schools Initiative, which offers information and resources for the prevention of and response to emergencies such as the El Niño phenomenon. Furthermore, Peru has a Safe and Happy Schools Programme, which seeks to certify safety at schools by ensuring they improve their infrastructure and ensure safety for all pupils. Peru has also established protocols for addressing violence against girls, boys and adolescents, which integrates the entire educational community and local specialised services in addressing violence against school children. Peru reiterates the need for safe school environments and appropriate management. In too many places, young people do not feel safe while pursuing education. According to the report, violent incidents rose by nearly 20% in 2022-23. Schools are militarised, attacked or closed.

Poland gives the floor to a **Youth Delegate** who throughout its term conducted consultations with students in Poland on SDG 4 on quality education. There is a strong consensus that at every stage of education, schools and universities should be seen as vital spaces where young people are shaped as citizens, with values, empathy and a sense of responsibility for their communities. However, as the SR noted, upholding the right to continuous education that fosters these values



remains a significant challenge in conflict zones. Poland's own profound transition at the turn of the century underscored how vital education is in fostering innovation, civic identity and democratic values through schools and universities. Today, in Poland, statistically, there is one child from Ukraine in every classroom. The Polish education system responded in a spirit of solidarity to the needs of both students and teachers who found themselves in a completely new situation. Yet, the vast majority of students in Ukraine and many other regions around the world remain in active conflict zones.

Portugal welcomes the SR's report, which provides countries with useful guidance on how to address the impacts of environmental disasters, technological and health hazards, as well as conflict and violence in education. Only by guaranteeing the integrity of students, educators and staff can we aim at fulfilling the right to education for all. Portugal is committed to keep on fighting against any form of violence and discrimination in education, including attacks to schools or military use of schools, restrictions to the right of academic freedom, violent punishment, online and offline harassment and bullying. Portugal is particularly concerned with the increase of armed conflicts around the world, which left millions of children out of school. The international community cannot be indifferent to the long-lasting effects of this scourge of war in generations to come. On the ongoing Human Rights Council session, Portugal will once again table the resolution on the right to education, which builds upon your most recent recommendations.

Qatar emphasizes that the right to education is a fundamental right guaranteed by international and regional human rights mechanisms and national laws. It should be provided to all on an equal footing. It includes the right to a safe educational environment free of violence, harassment, bullying, coercion and discrimination. Qatar has given priority to the right to a safe and inclusive educational environment and providing educational and vocational training to all on equal footing. Qatar has provided quality education to millions of children who have been deprived of this fundamental right due to armed conflict and catastrophes, such as the initiative 'Educate a Child', which provided quality education to more than 19 million children in more than 60 countries, in addition to the initiative 'Women in Conflict Zones' that provided quality education to women and girls. Qatar has also taken part in many international initiatives, namely the UNGA decision to celebrate - on 9 September - the International Day to Protect Education from Attacks.

The **Republic of Korea** has learned from its history of social economic development that realisation of the right to education is of utmost importance for the development of both individual students and society as a whole. It is a fundamental pre-requisite for realising the right to education. Achieving safe educational settings needs rights-based, all hazards, context-specific and whole school approach. The government of Korea released the fourth basic plan for school accident prevention in December 2024 with a vision of integrated safety management based on AI system. Field-orientated safety education and securing the daily life safety of students from vulnerable environments. Korea views students not only as targets for protection but also as agents for securing their own safety. To cultivate their risk literacy, schools conduct hazard identification and mitigation programmes in which students themselves find risk factors around schools and seek ways to improve them.

Romania welcomes the focus of the report on the safety in education, an aspect really essential for the full realisation of the right to education by all school users. The brutal and more insidious



attacks against students, educators and educational institutions in recent years in numerous forms, and not only in a conflict situation, but also in peaceful societies, show a level of violence that is incompatible with the meaning and aims of education. There should be fought against through a rights-based, intersectoral approach and with rational determination by states and all relevant stakeholders. The seriousness of safety issues in education makes it critical the availability of mental health services and of professional training for all those involved in educational activities. Romania is a strong supporter of the right to education and of all efforts towards ensuring its full and safe realisation. Romania has endorsed Safe School Declaration and has joined the cross-regional core group of the resolution calling for a new optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to strengthen rights to early childhood education and to free public pre-primary and secondary education. Each of these initiatives is a step in the right direction. Romania looks forward to the discussions of the Working Group in September and invites all states to take part and support an efficient process that leads to a stronger, focused Optional Protocol.

The **Russian Federation** believes the report is an attempt to create a new category of law which is safety at school and to define the criteria, meaning that the SR is moving beyond her mandate. Taking prerogatives she does not have, the SR is interfering in relevant UN mechanisms that work in this field and other parts of international law. The safety of schools is being described as certain infrastructure and it is also addressed in context of conflicts and it falls under international humanitarian law. Russia believes that the approach used in the report is counterproductive in terms of addressing these problems. However, Russia does not think it is appropriate to look at harassment to follow a discriminatory policy. Russia denounces discrimination in the Baltics and other states. Russophobia that is carried out by the governments of these states in the provision of education takes the form of the denial of Russian language tuition and this is harming interests of many people. Russia calls on the SR to pay close attention to this.

Senegal reiterates its commitment to the right to education and recognises that safety at schools is a fundamental part of delivering on the right to education. In the face of conflict, public health crises, and climate change and population displacement which are threatening the right to education, it is essential to join forces in order to protect educational environments and schools from violence. Teachers and non-teaching staff and parents have a right to protect their children against any threats within the school environment and beyond. Senegal calls for efforts to be made to ensure access for every young person to quality education while paying particular attention to girls and persons with disabilities. The opportunities offered by digital technologies should be leveraged for enhancing access to education for the greatest possible number. Reaffirming its commitment to quality education that leaves nobody behind and which is a source of transformation and social progress, Senegal calls on the international community to continue cooperation on education for sustainable development.

Sierra Leone underpins the SR's call for a critical review of school security measures to ensure compliance with human rights standards. Sierra Leone was among the first to endorse the Safe School Declaration and continues to integrate its principles into national school safety policies. In 2018, under President Julius Maada Bio's leadership, the government launched the Free Quality Education Programme, which provides free education for pre-primary to secondary levels. This initiative will significantly increase educational access for millions of children in Sierra



Leone, especially those from disadvantaged communities. Last July, Sierra Leone, the Dominican Republic, Luxembourg introduced UNHCR Resolution 56/5, establishing an Intergovernmental Working Group on a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Protocol aims to strengthen the rights to early childhood education and make pre-primary and secondary education free and public. Sierra Leone strongly encourages all member states to participate in the Working Group's first meeting, scheduled for September 1-4. Sierra Leone further urges all delegations to support developing a new Optional Protocol that will expand access to free education for millions of children across the world. Together, let us take concrete and decisive action to eradicate illiteracy. It is a duty we owe to future generations.

Slovakia agrees that safety in education as a prerequisite for the full execution of the right to education. Therefore, the school safety should not only be seen as the protection of all school users from the potential dangers and threats inside the educational institutions, but also a guarantee for the full physical, psycho-emotional, social and digital support. The health and well-being of every individual teacher or student matter. While we are witnessing an increasing trend of bullying, cyberbullying, violence, aggression, social exclusion within the school facilities, mental health services in schools are largely insufficient. Slovakia believes that more training and education to fight discrimination or violence, the presence of psychologists, health care providers or social workers in schools may also increase the level of safety in our educational facilities. It is the primary responsibility of the state to provide for safe and free education. Slovakia looks forward to the upcoming work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on a new Optional Protocol to the CRC that would explicitly recognise every child's right to early childhood care and education and guarantee the availability of free public education from pre-primary to secondary education as every child's right.

South Sudan concurs with the SR's findings to the effect that physical, emotional, social, and digital safety entail the right of learners, teachers, educators, and non-teaching staff to freely enjoy and exercise their rights in all aspects of education without discrimination, fear, or intimidation. Although a post-conflict country with educational challenges that include, among others. Inadequate infrastructure, economic instability, and vulnerability to natural disasters due to climate change, South Sudan believes the right to be safe in education is key and fundamental to the realisation of the right to education. In support of this right and to promote education for all, South Sudan, besides having enshrined the right to safe education as stipulated in Article 29 of our national constitution, has also endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, which is a global commitment to protect and safeguard education in conflict situations to ensure schools remain safe spaces for learning.

Tanzania stresses that education is the key that opens doors to freedom and the attainment of sustainable employment for all. For this reason, it remains a top priority for the government of Tanzania to ensure that the right to education is implemented. The government has promulgated laws and policies for affording compulsory education for all children, prohibiting early marriages and sexual offences, re-registering impregnated school girls, re-registering impregnated school girls, providing loans to higher education students, sponsoring students with special needs, increasing the number of teachers and trainers, increasing the construction and registration of both public and private schools, colleges and universities, expanding the school meals programme, equipping schools and colleges with requisite learning materials, to name just a few.



These efforts and others collectively reflect Tanzania's enduring commitment to building an equitable, high-quality and inclusive education system that empowers all citizens.

Tunisia concurs with the SR on the importance of safety in the educational institutions that should be free of violence, discrimination, violations and threat. Learners should enjoy the right to education and teachers should be able to fulfil their mandate in the best environment. Tunisia reiterates its strong condemnation of the systemic and ongoing targeting of educational institutions in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory, including the deliberate restrictions on the access of pupils or teachers and students to their educational institutions. Guaranteeing education as a basic constitutional right, Tunisia has a comprehensive system that calls for compulsory education until the age of 16 without discrimination, including vocational education, classical education and continuous education. All efforts are deployed in order to limit dropouts. Tunisia further pays due attention to the training of teachers to develop their capacities to improve their professional situation.

Ukraine on behalf of countries of the Lublin Triangle also comprising Lithuania and Poland, expresses its full support to the recognition of safety as a fundamental and inseparable element of the right of education. The right is under direct and systematic attack in Ukraine every day, where Russia continues its war in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Just two days ago, one of the deadliest missile and drone attacks struck residential areas in numerous Ukrainian cities. In Kiev, 28 civilians were killed, over 140 injured, and 26 educational institutions, including kindergartens, schools and universities, were damaged. At the same time, in Odessa, in a kindergarten, a centre for children with disabilities and a university were also targeted. These are not singular atrocities. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, more than 4,000 educational institutions in Ukraine have been damaged, of which 387 completely destroyed. The group calls on everyone not to forget that among the most heinous crimes of Russia's aggression is the forced transfer of Ukrainian children, their re-education and indoctrination aimed at erasing Ukrainian identity, and urge the international community to join efforts to bring Ukrainian children back home.

The **United Arab Emirates** concurs with the SR that the safety of education is a basic foundation of the right to education. Family empowerment is also essential to provide a safe environment for children. In this context, the UAE declared the year 2025 as the year of society for more cohesion of family and social values. Based on the national commitments to the CRC and SDGs, the UAE has established a legislative framework to protect children inside the educational environment. The *Wadeema* Law, which is a federal law on children's rights, has sought to protect children from all forms of violence, harm, exploitation within the educational institutions. Based on the UAE's efforts to develop education, the UAE has added artificial intelligence in its school curricula starting in 2025 to enable children to acquire the skills and capacities of the future.

Venezuela on behalf of the group of friends in defence of the UN Charter states that education is a fundamental human right and a key tool for the promotion of peace, justice, solidarity, sustainable development and human rights. The group reaffirms its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 4. The group expresses its concern at the fact that 771 million young people and adults are illiterate and more than 250 million children and teenagers do not go to school. Developing countries are the worst affected by the increase in



structural inequalities, polarisation, the lack of opportunities and noncompliance with development financing obligations. The group calls for the mobilisation of greater financial resources and investments in order to support national efforts in the global south for inclusive and active and quality education and in order to promote learning opportunities on a permanent basis for all. The group further highlights the importance of international cooperation on education, including technical cooperation and capacity-building, which have made it possible to bring knowledge and learning to low income persons who live in remote or hard to access areas. These educational programmes are a valuable contribution to the full realisation of the right to education.

Yemen has a very complex educational situation in Yemen due to the war triggered by the Houthi militia. This has destroyed school infrastructure and has created a huge toll on the quality of education. The Houthis have been creating educational syllabuses which are in line with their sectarian beliefs. This has had an impact on references for children and youth and compounded sectarian divisions in Yemeni society. Children are being deprived of their rights and teachers are not being properly paid. For these reasons, Yemen calls upon the international community to help ensure safety in schools, notably by enabling the Yemeni government to regain control of schools and to protect vulnerable children and children with disabilities, children who have been displaced. In closing, Yemen stresses the need to strengthen the inclusive nature of education.

Zambia welcomes the SR's Report and takes note of its conclusions and recommendations, particularly the obligation of states in ensuring the right to be safe in education. Zambia recognises the barriers that prevent safe and inclusive learning for children around the world disproportionately affects girls, children with disabilities, refugees and displaced children. In Zambia, the Children's Act prohibits corporal punishment in an effort to address violence against children. The government endorsed a safe school declaration that restricts the use of schools for military purposes. Zambia has also established policies that strengthen child protection systems within the education sector.

Zimbabwe reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of the right to education for all children in accordance with its national laws, regional and international instruments. Zimbabwe is committed to the protection of children from abuse by ensuring that children have a safe and supportive environment to grow, learn and thrive. To ensure safety in education, the government is implementing the following measures: encouraging the strengthening of community involvement in school activities; strengthening the enforcement of children's protection laws in schools; the provision of specialised and continuous training and capacity-building of teachers and school workers; the improvement of fiscal infrastructure of schools for the enhancement of the safety of children; and the improving access to mental health and psychological support services. Zimbabwe stands ready to strengthen cooperation with all stakeholders in our shared pursuit of leaving no child behind.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations and UN Agencies

The **European Union** agrees the right to education can only be fulfilled if the right to be safe in education is respected. The report identifies safety in education as a multidimensional phenomenon that must consider different hazards, climate and environmental disasters,



technological and health hazards, conflict and violence, everyday hazards, particularly for women and girls and those in most vulnerable situations such as refugees and persons with disabilities. The EU and its member states are committed to fighting any form of violence and discrimination in education, including bullying offline or online. The EU reaffirms the human right of everyone to education. SDG 4 foresees inclusive and extra quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. This includes guaranteeing that all learners, educators and non-teaching staff are protected from any violation of their integrity, any form of discrimination, violence and harassment in all educational spaces and processes, including digital ones. The EU calls on all states to use the comprehensive school safety framework 2022 to 30 as important guidance on this behalf.

The **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation** reiterates its steadfast commitment to advocating for the right to education, which is essential for upholding dignity, equality, and justice. Education is a fundamental human right and a tool to promote respect for human rights, understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations and peoples. The international community should give priority to the right to education as a cornerstone in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and strengthen the foundation for resilient and peaceful societies. The OIC fully concurs with the importance to address all dimensions of safety in education, including physical, psycho-emotional, social, and digital ones. In this regard, the OIC is deeply concerned by the intentional destruction of the Palestinian education system. The Israeli occupation forces have completely decimated the educational infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, leaving a whole generation of Palestinian children and youth without access to education. The OIC has expressed strong condemnation regarding the Israeli Occupation Authority's decision to close UNRWA schools in the occupied Aleppo city. This unlawful decision jeopardises the fundamental right to education for Palestinian children and dismantles the very foundation of Palestinian society. The OIC further stresses the need to protect the fundamental rights of Afghan girls and women, especially their right to education and work.

UNESCO welcomes SR's report, which underscores the safety as a fundamental component of the right to education. Safety goes beyond the absence of harm. It requires proactive protection and promotion of learners' physical as well as emotional well-being, both on and offline. Globally, 1 billion children experience violence each year. UNESCO's Atlas reveals that only 17% of countries provide comprehensive legal protection against both corporal punishment and gender-based violence in schools. That's why UNESCO's 2024 Report titled 'Safe to Learn and Thrive' calls for the whole-of-the-system response, including strong legislation, teacher training, student support and safe learning environment. As part of this effort, UNESCO's current consultation of 1960 Convention highlights measures implemented to promote safe and inclusive learning environments. In closing, UNESCO reaffirms its commitment to supporting its member states in advancing this fundamental objective.

UNICEF welcomes the SR's report and its timely focus on the right to be safe in education. Despite global recognition of education as a fundamental right, violence in and around schools continues to undermine children's rights, learning and safety, affecting an estimated 246 million children each year, particularly girls, children with disabilities and those affected by crisis. UNICEF reminds that states have a duty to ensure education systems uphold children's rights and safety. UNICEF echoes the SR's call for a whole-of-society, systems-based approach, one



that bans corporal punishment, invests in mental health and addresses harmful social and gender norms. The Safe2Learn initiative, hosted by UNICEF, is a coalition of 15 international organisations collaborating to end violence in and around schools. Countries are advancing the Safe2Learn call to action to embed violence prevention and response through national education systems. UNICEF urges all states to comply with their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to endorse the call to action, and to act on this agenda so every child is safe to learn. UNICEF stands ready to support.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **Ethiopian Commission for Human Rights** emphasizes that education is a fundamental human right which is essential for individual and societal development, and welcomes the newly enacted general education proclamation of 2025 by the government. However, the right to education in the country has been affected by conflict and natural disasters depriving children of their basic rights. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been closely monitoring developments in this area and advocating for the reconstruction of damaged schools as well as the return of out-of-school students. Despite some measures taken by the government to reconstruct damaged schools, official data indicates that over 7.2 million students are currently out of school nationwide. This situation requires immediate attention and action. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reiterates its strong call to government and international partners to take swift and coordinated action to restore education services and facilities in areas affected by conflict and natural disasters, including allocation of adequate budget by the government.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **International Organisation for the Right to Education and Freedom of Education** raises a concern regarding certain formulations in the report assessing the educational system of the United States, in particular the reference in paragraph 41 to a universal right to public education. This language departs from the established international legal framework. While Article 13 of the ICESCR guarantees the right to education, it does not equate that right with governmental-operated education alone. On the contrary, Article 13.3 explicitly affirms the liberty of parents to choose for their children's schools other than those established by public authorities. Framing the right to education as exclusively a right to public education risks inverting the proper hierarchy of rights at the expense of parental freedom and diversity of education provision. It is important to note that none of the core international human rights instruments, the ICESCR, the ICCPR, or the CRC, recognise a right to public education per se. Rather, they uphold the broader right to education while safeguarding pluralism and parental choice. The Organization has observed that in various contexts, the language emphasising a singular mode of education provision has preceded forms of indirect discrimination against minorities. A narrow interpretation that focusses solely on state provision might unintentionally marginalise children whose families seek pedagogical or cultural education alternatives better aligned with their cultural conviction.

L'Oeuvre d'Orient recalls Pope Francis's key message on the importance to ensure a safe environment for education, especially in humanitarian emergencies. L'Oeuvre D'Orient, which supports Christian communities in the East, supports more than 400 schools in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel, Ukraine, Tigray, and elsewhere. They open to all religions and all social



classes. In these regions, which are marked by conflict and poverty, insecurity, displacement, hunger, and destruction are all forms of unspeakable violence, which is depriving millions of children of their fundamental rights to safety and education. Schools guarantee future prospects. They are a place for protection, stability, and peace. In Lebanon, Christian schools have some 200,000 children enrolled, and 99% of pupils in some schools are Muslim. So the schools play a role of a bridge between communities. One of them was struck by the bombings in South Beirut. In Gaza, the last Christian school, which is still standing today, is a refuge for the 450 last Christians left in the strip. It is unacceptable to see schools bombarded. Yet almost all states are committed, via the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, to implementing all measures in order to protect and promote the rights of the child. L'Oeuvre D'Orient calls for Christian schools to be supported. They offer models for coexistence and living together, and we need to ensure children have a safe environment.

Transatlantic Christian Council, recalling that the importance of education cannot be overemphasised, cites the Bible in a passage evoking education as a primary responsibility for parents is an invaluable gift from God. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights further underscores the right to education, including the role of parents in choosing the kind of education their children receive. Christian educational institutions, whether public, private, or home schools, therefore uphold parents' right to choose education consistent with their beliefs. Interlinked with this right is also the right to select textbooks based on Christian values and the interests of the child. This especially applies to sexuality education. While the report calls on states to immediately implement comprehensive sexuality education, no such obligation exists under international law. Schools and states should therefore retain the freedom to adopt alternative curricula reflecting Christian convictions on marriage, abstinence, and sexuality. The Christian Council therefore respectfully urge governments and the SR to uphold the religious freedom of educational institutions.

Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA) shares the SR's concern about the increasing numbers of censorship laws, book bans, and content limitation restricting classroom discussion on race, gender identity, and diversity in the USA. By limiting students' access to critical knowledge, suppressing inclusive education, and creating hostile learning environments, the foundation of a strong democracy is under attack. The dismantling of the US education department, the cutting of federal education funding, and the disciplinary measures against students voicing political opinions violate not only the right to education, but also the right of freedom of opinion and expression. IIMA recommends US Aid to ensure that quality education is affordable for every child by restoring federal education funding; ensure access to education for all, including communities particularly impacted by absenteeism by implementing comprehensive strategies to remove barriers to regular school attendance; invest in mental health support and restorative practises to create a safer and more supporting learning environment; and guarantee academic freedom, eliminating censorship, and allowing students, scholars, and teachers to express their views without fear of facing disciplinary measures to silence dissent.

Save the Children International welcomes the SR's report and its call for states to adopt an all-hazards, context-specific, systemic approach to safety anchored in the Safe Schools Declaration and the Comprehensive School Safety Framework, and echoes the strong recommendation that



all states should endorse both frameworks. These tools are essential to realising the right to safe, inclusive, and quality education for all learners, in all contexts, and from all hazards. Save the Children is deeply concerned by the growing military use of education environments, including in time of peace, and it echoes the SR's recommendation that all schools should be operated by civilian authorities. It urges all relevant actors to implement the guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use to restrict this practise and safeguard the civilian character of education. Save the Children shares the SR's grave concern for the situation in Gaza, Sudan, the DRC, Ukraine, and Haiti. Save the Children calls for accountability and redress for education-related violations and crimes. It looks forward to the SR's policy brief on the right to education in armed conflict, hoping it will call for systematic prohibition of military use of education facilities in armed conflict.

Edmund Rice International (ERI) states that the SR's report resonates deeply with ERI's findings conducted across various schools in Africa, India, and South America, conducted especially to understand the increasing levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and even student suicides, especially in the post-COVID era. ERI's findings revealed that the mental well-being of children must be a critical focus on the educational system, and this should be supported by mechanisms created by the state in consultation with its stakeholders. India has advanced student mental health through initiatives like the Dalai Lama's Manodharpan and Happiness curriculum. Yet, challenges remain due to limited personnel, inconsistent implementation, and rising student suicides despite state-level efforts. To foster a truly safe and inclusive learning environment, ERI urges, especially in India and other developing nations, to implement and fund a comprehensive child protection policy and regularly reviewed school safety protocols; appointment of trained child protection officers and school counsellors; life skills and comprehensive sexuality education; regular training for teachers and counsellors on child protection laws; and infrastructure to ensure safety, including helplines and peer support systems.

The **Association for the Protection of Refugees and Internal Displaced Women and Children** draws the Council's attention to the dire humanitarian situation caused by the recent military assault carried out by the Israelis on civilian areas within Gaza. These attacks took place at a critical time during the final days of the academic year when the students were in the midst of their final examination and assessment. As a direct result, many students were unable to complete their exams and the educational process has been severely disrupted. Moreover, repeated strikes on civilian infrastructure, including residential homes and Al-Haq Hospital, have led to the killing and injury of dozens of children. Alarming, due to the psychological trauma and sheer intensity of the bombardment, several children reportedly suffered heart attack and sudden cardiac arrest. The Association expects that the SR will explicitly condemn these acts, ensure that they are thoroughly documented, and reflect them in the SR's official reports. Furthermore, the Association calls upon all freedom-seeking member states to take immediate action to halt Israeli war mongering in the region and to protect the right to education, life, and physical and psychological well-being of children and students.

Luis de la Calle Foundation advocates for the integration of music as a core pedagogical tool in the fifth phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Its work shows that the structured musical experience fosters empathy, resilience, and a shared sense of humanity. When guided by skilled educators, music-based learning is inclusive, emotionally safe. Music is



effective in helping learners internalise human rights values as well. It requests states and the UNHRC to consider music-based components in their education strategies. These approaches can engage learners from the earliest stages of development, making them universally useful and effective. The Foundation invites civil society educators and UN bodies to collaborate with us in promoting human rights education through music and the arts. Let us ensure that all learners not only understand their rights, but truly experience them.

Learning Without Borders (Association Apprentissage sans Frontières) supports the conclusions of the SR on the right to education. States need to recognise safety in education as a key component of the right to education, which guarantees the protection for the physical, mental and identity integrity of all stakeholders at schools. This involves violence-free learning without any discrimination, where each and every person can exercise fully their human rights. Learning Without Borders reiterate its commitment to the protection of cultural diversity and inclusion. Learning Without Borders encourages states to further invest in their education policies in order to guarantee safety in education for learners, teachers and non-teaching staff. It also urges states to cooperate and to promote and integrate this report in a meaningful way in their human rights promotion activities.

Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan (RSKS India) commends the SR for emphasising inclusive development in education. Yet, for millions of girls across the globe, the right to education remains aspirational. Social norms, poverty, early marriage and inadequate infrastructure continue to hinder girls' access to quality education. RSKS India believes that inclusive development must place girls at the centre. Education is not only a fundamental right. It is a pathway to equality, leadership and resilience. RSKS India has seen firsthand how innovative grassroots solutions can transfer realities. Community-based learning hubs that bring education directly to rural girls, mobile digital classrooms to reach remote areas with quality content, mentorship programmes connecting Nehru-Litzen girls with local women leaders, fathers' engagement initiatives to shift harmful gender norms at the household level. These models work because they are human-centred, culturally relevant and rooted in trust. Policies must prioritise gender-sensitive curricula, invest in female educators and ensure safe learning environments. True inclusive development means every girl, everywhere, not only sits in a classroom, but thrives and leads. Let us ensure that no girl is left behind.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

57 State Delegations

4 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Agencies

1 National Human Rights Institution

10 Non-Governmental Organizations