



**Submission by Human Rights Watch  
to the Committee on the Rights of the Child  
on Eswatini  
84<sup>th</sup> pre-sessional, 2019**

***Protection of Education During Armed Conflict (articles 28 and 38)***

The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political commitment that provides countries the opportunity to express political support for the protection of students, teachers, and schools during times of armed conflict<sup>1</sup>; the importance of the continuation of education during armed conflict; and the implementation of the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*.<sup>2</sup> As of June 2019, 91 countries have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.<sup>3</sup>

The African Union Peace and Security Council has urged all of its member states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and so far, 23 of Eswatini's fellow African Union members have done so. This includes seven fellow members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Eswatini has contributed troops to the United Nations-approved African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In Somalia, attacks on students and schools, and the military use of schools has long been documented as a problem.

In addition, 17 of Eswatini's fellow Commonwealth countries have endorsed the declaration. According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack's

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<sup>1</sup> Safe Schools Declaration, May 28, 2015, [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/utvikling/safe\\_schools\\_declaration.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/utvikling/safe_schools_declaration.pdf) (accessed November 6, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, March 18, 2014, [http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines\\_en.pdf](http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines_en.pdf) (accessed November 6, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> "Safe School Declaration Endorsements," Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, accessed June 29, 2019, <http://www.protectingeducation.org/guidelines/support>

flagship report, “Education Under Attack 2018,” a pattern of attacks on education have been documented as occurring in six Commonwealth countries.

Human Rights Watch believes that endorsing the declaration sends an important message about the importance of protecting children in armed conflict and deterring the military use of schools.

Eswatini participated recently in the Third International Conference on Safe Schools in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, in May 2019.

*Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee:*

- Congratulate Eswatini for participating in the latest International Safe Schools Conference, and encourage Eswatini to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, and take concrete measures to deter the military use of schools, including by bringing the *Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict* into domestic military policy and operational frameworks.