

Danish Statement on the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict

Denmark hereby endorses the Safe School Declaration and in doing so reaffirms its commitment to reduce the adverse impact of armed conflict on children, schools and universities in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Denmark welcomes and concurs with the broad political support to promote and protect education and facilitate the continuation of education in situations of armed conflict.

The Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities recognise the importance of education and the protection afforded under international humanitarian law to civilians and civilian objects, including schools and universities and the students who attend them.

Denmark refers to United Nations Security Council resolutions 1998 (2011), 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015) that urges all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools in accordance with international humanitarian law and encourages Member States to consider concrete measures to deter the use of schools by armed forces and armed groups in contravention of applicable international law. In this regard, Denmark highlights the recent publication of the Danish Military Manual with its Additions in regard to protection of schools and other places of education.

Denmark notes that the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict are non-legally binding, voluntary and do not affect existing international law. The guidelines aim to provide guidance with the ambition of reducing the impact of armed conflict on education. Compliance with international humanitarian law remains the best means to protect schools and other civilian objects from unlawful attack, and Denmark calls on all parties to armed conflict, including non-state actors, to adhere to established international legal obligations. The endorsement of the Declaration is an opportunity for Denmark to reaffirm her commitment to international law, including international humanitarian law.