

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education

SAFETY AS AN ELEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND A PRECONDITION FOR ITS FULL REALIZATION

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

19 November 2024

For her upcoming report to be presented at the 59th session of the Human Rights Council in June 2025, the United Nations [Special Rapporteur on the right to education](#), Ms. Farida Shaheed, will consider **safety as an element of the right to education and a precondition for its full realization**. She is inviting States, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, national human rights institutions, academics, educators, business actors, as well as civil society organizations to share their views and experiences.

Safety directly affects access, quality and equality in learning environments. Without safety, students face significant barriers to participation, limiting their ability to learn and thrive. The lack of safety also impacts equality, as groups living in vulnerable situations are often exposed to greater threats to their safety, exacerbating educational disparities.

States have an international obligation to take positive measures to ensure that schools provide a secure learning environment, free from threats of violence and discrimination, and to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment. This is a fundamental aspect of realizing the full scope of the right to education under international human rights law. Under Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), Art. 19 of the Convention of the Rights of the child (CRC) and Art. 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), quality education is not limited to mere access but includes the environment in which it is provided. International commitments under the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) include ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This encompasses the provision of safe, non-violent and effective learning environments where safety is seen as integral to achieving quality education and reducing inequalities in education.

The Special Rapporteur intends to take stock of the implementation of international standards and guidelines, national legislation and policies, as well as innovative community practices, to ensure physical, digital and psycho-emotional safety in educational settings, within the framework of ensuring the enjoyment of the right to education and human rights for all.

In addition, the Special Rapporteur will analyse the challenges and shortcomings within existing systems, identifying barriers such as inadequate laws and policies, implementation gaps, under-resourced programs and services, all of which may hinder the creation of a safe educational environment. This includes addressing a wide range of school safety issues, such as physical infrastructure (safe buildings, emergency procedures), prevention of violence, bullying, harassment, and protection from external threats (e.g., use of weapons and school shootings, surveillance).

Name of the country/entity submitting information	
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Contact details (will be deleted from the published form)	
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Questions (feel free to respond to those which are most relevant to your work)

1. Please provide examples of **national legislation and/or policies** governing physical, digital, emotional and psychological safety in education, including measures to address:
 - a. Challenges related to building and upgrading educational facilities to be child-, disability-, and gender-sensitive, and that provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.
 - b. Presence of security personnel in schools, including armed police or other law enforcement officials;
 - c. Access to schools and safety *en route* to and from schools, including safe transportation;
 - d. School health and safety services, including water and sanitation, school meals, medical support and vaccination requirements to access education;
 - e. School violence, including physical and sexual harassment, bullying, weapons, and school shootings, as well as existing reporting mechanisms;
 - f. Data privacy and cybersecurity;
 - g. Cyberbullying and any form of online violence against students, teachers and staff;
 - h. Surveillance in schools and educational environments, including online surveillance, facial recognition and emotional recognition;
 - i. Mental health, including sufficient mental health resources, counselling and psychological support for students struggling with stress, anxiety, depression and trauma.
2. How does your country's education policy address the **balance between security measures, like facial recognition, surveillance or school security officers, and the rights of students to privacy and a non-intimidating learning environment?**
3. What are the **national regulatory approaches** to monitoring and ensuring safety? These may include licensing, accreditation, monitoring of compliance with safety requirements and the work of oversight bodies. Are there different safety requirements for **public and private** educational institutions and safety requirements for **homeschooling and private tutoring**?
4. Please share recent **statistics** on safety incidents, violence, bullying and harassment in schools at the national level. Which data collection methods are used to track such incidents, and how is the data used to shape policies? Which indicators are used for measuring safety in education?
5. What are the legal standards of **criminal, civil or administrative liability** of students under 18 years old, for harm they caused in an educational context. Please include examples where either their parents (legal guardians) or educational institutions would be held liable for such harm. Please provide reference to available cases.
6. Please share available information on **militarization and securitization of public schools**, including presence of the military in or around schools, compulsory military training in schools, teaching of military-related subjects or the recruitment of students

for the army by either state or non-state entities. Which rules govern the work of specialized military schools?

7. Please provide examples of **institutional measures** to ensure safety in educational institutions, such as safety protocols, emergency preparedness protocols, teacher trainings, crisis management plans.
8. Please provide examples of **community-based measures** to ensure safety in education, such as ‘neighbourhood watch’, carpooling or other community projects.

How to submit information

Submissions should be sent electronically no later than **20 December 2024** to hrc-sr-education@un.org, using the email title: “Contribution: safety in education”.

Kindly limit your responses to **3,000 words** and attach annexes where necessary. To facilitate their consideration, please send responses in a Word document, and in English, French, Russian or Spanish. Please clearly specify the entity making the contribution.

Kindly note that all **contributions will be posted on the OHCHR website**, unless you opt out. Please **do not include any personal details** which you would not want to be found online.