



**Human Rights Watch Submission**  
**to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child**  
**Review of Lithuania**  
**95th Session**  
*December 2023*

We write in advance of the 95th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the “Committee”) and its review of Lithuania. This submission solely focuses on the protection of education from attack.

**Protection of education from attack (article 28)**

The Safe Schools Declaration<sup>1</sup> 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; 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> In June 2022, the UN Secretary-General encouraged all governments to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.<sup>3</sup> As of October 2023, 118 states had endorsed the declaration, including 24 of Lithuania’s fellow European Union member states and 26 fellow NATO member states.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, Lithuania has strongly supported Ukraine following its full-scale invasion by Russia. Ukraine endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2019 and adopted an action plan on its implementation in 2021. As of January 2022, 1,000 Ukrainian military officials had been trained in the Safe Schools Declaration and the “Guidelines,” according to the Global Coalition to Protect

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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 May 12, 2023).

<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 May 12, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, “Children and Armed Conflict,” A/76/871-S/2022/493, June 23, 2022, para. 291.

<sup>4</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, “Safe Schools Declaration Endorsements” (webpage), 2023, <https://ssd.protectingeducation.org/endorsement/> (accessed November 9, 2023).

Education from Attack.<sup>5</sup> In July 2022, according to information shared with Human Rights Watch by the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, a high-level military order was issued to further restrict military use of educational facilities.<sup>6</sup>

*Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee ask the government of Lithuania:*

- Do any Lithuanian laws, policies, or trainings, provide explicit protection for schools and universities from military use during armed conflict?

*Human Rights Watch recommends that the Committee ask the government of Lithuania to:*

- Endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.
- Ensure Lithuanian laws, policies, and trainings provide explicit protection for schools and universities from military use during armed conflict.

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<sup>5</sup> Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, “Practical Impact of the Safe Schools Declaration,” January 2022, as cited in Human Rights Watch, “*Tanks on the Playground*”: *Attacks on Schools and Military Use of Schools in Ukraine* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/11/09/tanks-playground/attacks-schools-and-military-use-schools-ukraine>.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Watch, “*Tanks on the Playground*”.