

Special contribution: Enough is enough

Almost seventy years have passed since a generation of political leaders met in the wake of a terrible conflict and made a simple two-word promise: 'Never again.' The United Nations was created to prevent a return to the rivalries, wars and human rights violations that had cost so many lives and wasted so much potential. Yet the human cost and the waste goes on – and we have to stop it *now*.

This UNESCO report is long overdue. It documents in stark detail the sheer brutality of the violence against some of the world's most vulnerable people, including its school children – and it challenges leaders of all countries, rich and poor, to act decisively.

My appeal to world leaders is to make a simple statement of intent: 'Enough is enough.' As members of a single ethical human community, none of us should be willing to tolerate the human rights violations, the attacks on children and the destruction of schools that we see in so many armed conflicts. Let's draw a line under the culture of impunity that allows these acts to happen, and let's start protecting our children and their right to an education. I appeal to all political leaders, and to the

countries and armed groups involved in violent conflict, to remember that they are not above international humanitarian law.

I also appeal to leaders of the rich world to provide more effective support to those on the front line. In my travels around the world I have often been humbled by the extraordinary efforts, sacrifices and determination that parents and children demonstrate in seeking education. When villages are attacked and people are displaced, improvised schools appear out of nowhere. Destroy a school, and the parents and kids do everything they can to keep open the doors to education. If only donors would show the same resolve and commitment.

Far too often, people in conflict-affected countries get too little support for education. And they often get the wrong sort of support. As this report shows, development aid suffers from the syndrome of too little, too late. One result is that opportunities to rebuild education systems are being lost.

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu
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