

Iranian Center for International Criminal Law,
Platinaweg 25
The Hague
The Netherlands

19 March 2026

The Rt Hon. Gordon Brown
United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education

**Support for Establishing a Dedicated International Mechanism for Crimes Against
Children in Armed Conflict**

Your Excellency,

The Iranian Center for International Criminal Law (ICICL), a non-governmental organization with consultative status at the United Nations—dedicated to advancing international criminal justice, particularly in Persian-speaking regions—warmly welcomes and strongly supports your recent call for the establishment of a dedicated international criminal court and a more effective international mechanism to prosecute crimes committed against children in armed conflict.

Your emphasis on the necessity for schools to enjoy the same level of protection as hospitals under international law, and your reference to the devastating strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah girls' school in Minab, Iran, powerfully highlight the urgent need to address existing gaps in accountability and reparations and the persistent cycle of impunity.

Existing international legal frameworks—including the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Rome Statute—provide vital protections. Yet, as your initiative rightly underscores, grave violations continue to occur with far too little accountability.

The military operations launched against Iran on 28 February 2026, characterized by many in the international legal community as an unprovoked act of aggression and a manifest violation of the UN Charter, have already resulted in catastrophic civilian harm.

Within this context of illegal use of force, the attack on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School, occurring at the onset of military operations, stands as a harrowing example of a grave breach of International Humanitarian Law. According to available reports, at least two missile strikes hit the school during peak instruction hours, killing approximately 168 people—primarily schoolgirls between the ages of seven and twelve. The circumstances of this strike suggest that the attack was not a secondary result of collateral damage, but rather an intentional targeting of a civilian object, amounting to war crimes.

Such atrocities also represent a flagrant violation of the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use.

The scale of this tragedy has deeply shocked the public conscience. The families of the Minab victims have repeatedly called for justice, reminding the international community that behind every statistic lies a devastated family and an irreparable human loss. Reports of widespread school closures across several Iranian cities further demonstrate the severe and adverse impact of the conflict on the fundamental right to education.

In this context, your proposal for a specialized international judicial mechanism represents a significant and necessary step forward. Such a mechanism could help end the persistent cycle of impunity surrounding crimes against children.

As a constructive next step, we respectfully suggest that a High-Level Technical Working Group or an international dialogue forum be convened under your leadership. This would bring together States, international organizations, and legal experts to explore practical pathways for drafting the statute of such a mechanism.

We also encourage the preparation of a comprehensive international report examining the Minab school attack. Such an initiative would contribute to the factual record and assist future accountability efforts. We note that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights,


Volker Türk, has also called for an investigation—echoing the recent statement of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that children must never be treated as collateral damage in armed conflict.

Finally, while international mechanisms are essential, the protection of children requires the active engagement of States. We encourage all parties involved in or affected by conflict—including the Government of Iran—to strengthen their commitment to international initiatives to safeguard students.

The ICICL stands ready to contribute to this effort through legal research, academic dialogue, and advocacy. We commend your tireless leadership and hope that your initiative will help advance a system of justice capable of protecting the world’s most vulnerable victims.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

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