

Case Studies of Unarmed Civilian Protection

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Introduction

Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) provides direct protection to civilians under threat as well as serves as an important complement to armed peacekeeping and development because it has the potential to directly and positively impact women, both as subjects of protection and as actors for protection. UCP protects vulnerable women in violent situations. It gives them capacity and agency as trained civilian protectors (over 40% of unarmed civilian protectors are women) to lessen tension, protect civilians, resolve conflicts and work for peace in their own communities in a sustainable and non-militaristic way.

The UN should incorporate and scale up unarmed civilian protection in peace operations and development assistance in conflict-affected countries, both in the framing of mandates and in the provision of resources. UCP should be recognized as a legitimate expenditure of Official Development Assistance (DPA) funds. The UN should support a permanent roster of organizations and trained women from around the world who are available to provide unarmed civilian protection and UCP training. Where appropriate, the UN should encourage the deployment of UCP teams alongside armed missions, DPA political missions and in conflict-prone situations where armed peacekeepers are not deployed.

¹ JANZEN, R. (2014). Shifting Practices of Peace: What is the Current State of Unarmed civilian Peacekeeping? *Peace Studies Journal*, 7, 3. Retrieved from <http://peaceconsortium.org/peace>



What is Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP)?

Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is the practice of deploying professionally prepared unarmed civilians before, during, or after violent conflict in order to prevent or reduce violence, to provide direct physical protection to civilian populations under threat, and to strengthen or build resilient local peace infrastructures. Unlike traditional military peacekeeping or armed private security firms, this is done without the use of, or reliance on, weapons, and therefore it is based on a different paradigm, which emphasizes relationships over threat power.

Although organizations implement UCP in a variety of ways, they usually share key methods, key principles (e.g., nonviolence, nonpartisanship), key sources of guidance (e.g., International Humanitarian Law), and key skills.

Unarmed civilian protection practitioners engage with affected communities at the grassroots level for varying periods of time, usually ranging from a month to a few years. The four main methods of UCP are (1) proactive engagement, (2) monitoring, (3) relationship building, and (4) capacity development. Each of these methods has a number of applications, which are: (1) protective presence, protective accompaniment and inter-positioning; (2) ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, and early warning/early response; (3) confidence building, multi-track dialogue and local-level mediation; and (4) training and supporting local UCP infrastructures (see figure on page 3). UCP methods operate in a dynamic interaction, reinforcing each other. They are also

selected on a case-by-case basis, depending on specific needs of the focus population, the type of conflict and context, as well as the mandate and capacity of the implementing organization. That's why UCP may look different in each deployment.

In addition to the important work done by International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and others - each within their own protection mandate, methods, funding and niche - the UCP methodology described here has been pioneered, developed and refined by civil society organizations such as Cure Violence, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Peace Brigades International and The World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Protection in Israel and Palestine.



Why does UCP work?

UCP is a relationship-based approach to violent conflict. UCPs rely on relationships to achieve their objectives through:

1. Long-term physical presence and visibility ('being there!'), UCPs:

- Provide nonpartisan protection for civilians.
- Communicate to civilians in armed conflict that they are not alone.
- Change the dynamic of a conflict on a psychological level.
- Elevate the status of local organizations committed to protection, reconciliation and human rights, thus enhancing local civil society.

- Model nonviolence in high-intensity conflicts, thus providing a window for local actors to see an alternative way of responding to conflict.

2. Persistent, hands-on engagement, UCPs: protectors:

- Network and build multi-layered relationships with key actors.
- Coordinate and communicate with key actors (including those who are armed), thus opening up channels of communication.
- Increase the acceptance of UCPs by actors, thereby directly improving the security levels in the field.

3. Building local capacities, UCPs:

- Enhance the abilities of local individuals and peace infrastructures to respond to incidents of violence and ensure the protection of civilians.
- Build the confidence of local actors in their own abilities, including their proficiency in utilizing local institutions.

4. Critical analysis, direct observation and on-the-ground witnessing, UCPs:

Identify and work with the sensitivities, vulnerabilities, and points of leverage associated with those involved in the conflict (Mahony, 2006), including those who:

- Desire to look better than their opponents.
- Have concerns over their personal or political reputation.
- Want to avoid repercussions, including blame, retribution, or sanctions.
- Have individual moral or religious concerns.
- Worry about damage to their international status.
- Fear tribunals prosecutions.
- Fear losing international aid and political support.

That intentional, proactive, strategic, professional presence without resort to armed force can, in many cases, safely provide protection to people under threat of imminent violence, while at the same time reducing violence and strengthening local peace capacities. Presence is protection!

In my experience, engaging even the worst abusers in this manner may yield unexpected results: you give a fellow the choice between solving the issue quietly, among ourselves, based on a gentleman's agreement – or putting him on the line by raising the case with his superiors. Not only may one solve the issue, but you may create a bond of confidence with the fellow, an ally who does not perceive you as an enemy, and who may be useful in solving future cases. *ICRC protection officer.*¹ (p. 50)

UCPs, by necessity, work in areas that are directly experiencing violence and engage in activities avoided by many other NGOs and INGOs. This does involve a level of risk. The work requires them to be constantly thinking about, analyzing, and responding to the potential for violence. Unlike other INGOs, where decisions about security are often made far from the field, decisions about UCP security are usually made in the field, by staff who are constantly and actively engaged in protection activities. They are very security conscious. The risks that UCPs take are carefully calculated through systematic risk assessments, ongoing context analysis, and consultation with other protection actors in the field. Moreover, staff safety and security are based on the same logic as UCP methods for providing protection to civilians. UCPs heavily rely on their extensive, multi-tiered network of relationships, especially with affected communities. In a very real way, UCPs are being protected by those they have come to protect.

¹ Mahony, L. (2006). Proactive Presence. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Retrieved from: http://www.fieldviewsolutions.org/fv-publications/Proactive_Presence.pdf p.50.

Case Study

I. UCP Methods for Protecting Civilian in Bentiu Area, South Sudan

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (2015)

Protective Accompaniment

In mid 2014, women living in the Bentiu Protection of Civilians area in South Sudan alerted the Nonviolent Peaceforce team living there, that women were being raped and sometimes ganged-raped by soldiers when they went out to gather firewood and water. The women reported that sometimes the soldiers would describe the assaults as part of their job. Often older women took on these chores to protect the younger ones, and decrease the likelihood of attack. Women had to choose between their personal safety and providing for their families' basic needs. NP began accompanying the women when they left the camp, sending 2 or more trained civilian protectors along with them. In the year since this accompaniment has been offered no woman has been attacked when accompanied. Instead, the soldiers look the other way.

In the past year NP has provided over 1,000 accompaniments for vulnerable people, primarily women and children, throughout South Sudan.

Case Study

II. The Return of Child Soldiers in Sri Lanka

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (2006)

Protective Accompaniment

One morning a group of mothers came to the office of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in a city on the east coast of Sri Lanka. The night before, the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) had abducted their sons at a Hindu Temple Festival and the mothers were desperate to retrieve their children. The UCPs helped the mothers locate the camp where the children had been taken; since NP's regular strategy is to engage all conflict participants, NP staff had already had some communications with the LTTE. NP staff accompanied the mothers to the camp. When the mothers told the camp commanders that they wanted their sons, they were told to go away, but they held firm, backed up by the presence of expatriate UCPs. The camp leaders then sent for their superiors to deal with the situation. Negotiations continued for 36 hours. NP members called in UNICEF to bring food for the mothers; that pushed the negotiations forward because UNICEF had secured commitments in the past from this faction not to recruit children. Finally, the 26 boys were released (with bus fare!) and they returned home.

Subsequently, the LTTE issued a press release stating that 26 boys had run away from home and had come to their camp wanting to join up, but they had sent the boys away since they don't use children as soldiers.



Case Study

III. UCPs Protect Human Rights Defender in Colombia

Source: Luis Enrique Eguren, Field protection for human rights defenders: accompaniment by international observers, a case study, Peace Brigades International, January (2002)

Protective Accompaniment

Mario Calixto was the president of the Human Rights Committee of Sabana de Torres, a small town in central Colombia. He was under heavy threats by local paramilitary forces, due to his denunciations of acts committed by these paramilitary groups.

On the evening of 23 December 1997, two armed men came to Mario's house and intimidated and threatened him while 'asking' him to go with them: this method is widely used in Colombia to kill human rights defenders. Mario was in the presence of two expatriate observers from Peace Brigades International (PBI) at the time. In fact, he had been receiving protective accompaniment by PBI on a regular basis for several weeks. The observers from PBI intervened and asked the gunmen to leave, which the gunmen finally did, visibly puzzled by the consequences of acting in front of expatriate witnesses. After this incident, Mario and his family were forced to move to another part of the country, but they were willing to continue with their human rights work from the new location.

This incident was not an everyday case, but highlights the significant work undertaken by the 36 expatriate observers deployed by PBI in the midst of the protracted armed conflict in Colombia. It is also a good example of the interface between policies/strategy (the evident presence of PBI observers – the only expatriates in a small town and in regular contact with NGOs, civilian authorities and security forces) and perceptions/reactions (the puzzled reaction of the armed men, dissuaded from acting, afraid of the potential consequences of their action in the presence of two expatriates). This incident demonstrates the unique blend of policies and perceptions that frequently characterizes the practical field-work of protecting human rights defenders.



Case Study

IV. Accompaniment of Returnees to Guatemala

SOURCE: Schirch, L. (2006). Civilian Peacekeeping, Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute, p22.

Protective Accompaniment

From 1981 to 1983, indigenous Mayan campesinos fled Guatemala from the terror of the anti-insurgency policy of Rios Montt, then President of Guatemala. This led to the massacre of at least 100,000 campesinos and the destruction of numerous highland villages. Some refugees slipped back into Guatemala during the mid-to-late 1980s and early 1990s. On 8 October 1992, the Guatemalan government signed accords with the Permanent Commission (representatives of the refugees) to allow for their collective, organized return.

The refugees declared themselves Communities of Popular Resistance (CPRs) and engaged in a form of nonviolent direct action by choosing to re-enter the conflict zones as unarmed civilians. The CPRs requested a high profile protective international presence in moments of crisis. Several different UCP actors, including the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation and Witness for Peace (WFP), decided to respond to this request and accompany the refugees on their return to Guatemala. The presence of expatriates allowed the CPRs to return publicly and increased the political cost of violence against the CPRs.

The accompaniments were carried out from 1992 to 1997 and were coordinated by the National Coordinating Office on Refugees and Displaced of Guatemala (NCOORD) under the UN repatriation plan and repopulation of the conflict zones. At the first organized return, 100 buses, each bus including a

pair of UCPs, departed from Mexico to Guatemala. As one of the UCPs from WFP recalls, “Just on the other side of the border the roadsides were jammed with thousands of Guatemalans loudly cheering, waving the Guatemalan flag. It was such a heartfelt and warm homecoming.”

When the returnees paused for the night and were assigned to military-type tents, they refused to use them, as they brought back too many memories, and demanded that they be replaced with civilian tents. Furthermore, when the Guatemalan government provided medical help, the returnees discovered that some of the doctors and nurses were military personnel and suspected them of being infiltrators. The leadership of the returnees then demanded that the military personnel leave, making it clear that they felt safer with the presence and accompaniment of the UCPs.

Case Study

V. UCPs and UN Peacekeepers Collaborate in Jonglei, South Sudan

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (2013)

Protective Presence

When community members in southern Jonglei State in South Sudan approached the UCPs of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) with concerns that certain areas had become unsafe, NP facilitated dialogue between the community and UN peacekeepers in order to address protection issues. This dialogue included a community security meeting with only women, who were given an opportunity for the first time to express their security concerns and protection needs directly to UN peacekeepers.

As a response to security concerns expressed by the community, NP worked together with UN peacekeepers on the ground, UN Police (UNPOL) and the national police service to set up a system where they would jointly patrol certain areas. UNPOL, the UN peacekeepers, and NP's team took turns throughout the day, morning, afternoon, and evening to make patrols in the area where there had been violence. An emergency phone tree was also established and phones were distributed among the key actors in the area.

There was one place in Kandako, at a water access point, where women experienced sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers. Women reported 18-20 cases of rape per month. They said they were unsafe when getting

water. This was not an issue that was immediately publicly expressed due to the sensitive nature of the topic. NP talked with the UN peacekeepers, explaining the situation to them. The peacekeepers responded by saying that they would collect their own water at that particular borehole. They would go there as another way to boost their presence. Over a six to eight week period of doing these patrols, the number of reported rapes per month dropped from eighteen to zero. NP received feedback from the soldiers who would say, "We know that you're here, and we know why you're here." The soldiers were a bit frustrated, but they moved on and left the women alone.

As an NP staff member recalls, "Patrolling in Kandako was one of the most effective things we did. It not only made civilians feel safer, I believe it actually made them safer as well. We started patrolling in March 2012 one week after a civilian was killed in the area. In the eight months that we were patrolling, no civilians were shot. Two days after NP's forced evacuation from Pibor County in October 2012 three people got shot. One of them died."



Case Study

VI. Protecting Patients at a Hospital Amidst Tribal Violence in Jonglei, South Sudan

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (2012)

Protective Presence

On 4 January 2012, the Government of South Sudan declared the state of Jonglei a disaster zone as a result of massive tribal clashes that occurred in late December 2011. While there is a long history of violent and brutal conflict between the Lou Nuer and Murle tribes, the situation escalated dramatically when an estimated 5000 Lou Nuer and Dinka combatants marched on Pibor town for an apparent retaliation attack. The combatants burned down entire villages en route to Pibor and wounded, killed, and abducted numerous Murle women and children.

Victims of the violence with life-threatening injuries from all three tribes were evacuated to the Juba Teaching Hospital (in the capital city). Patients in the hospital included two infants who had been found lying beside their dead mothers with their skulls cut open, and a four-year old girl found with her abdomen slit open and her intestines exposed.

Members from Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) went to the hospital to assess the situation after members of the three tribes started visiting the hospital and threatening each other. When injured Lou Nuer combatants at the hospital claimed they would 'finish the job' and kill the Murle patients, the Murle patients began locking themselves inside their ward with a chain and padlock and were not letting anyone in. As a bystander said: "It was awful. It smelled like rotting flesh. They were all on top of

each other because it was too small, but they were too scared to come out or to let anyone in."

Nonviolent Peaceforce engaged with patients and hospital staff, as well as with representatives from the different tribes. NP provided a protective presence in different wards of the hospital. They also convinced the hospital staff to request police presence to guard the injured Lou Nuer combatants, and they worked together with the police to maintain a safe space inside the hospital. Members of NP stayed at the hospital twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for a period of three months. No violent incidents happened during those three months.



Case Study

VII. Monitoring Ceasefire Agreements and Cultivating Confidence in Western Mindanao, Philippines

Source: *Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines (2011)*

Monitoring and Confidence Building



In the Philippines, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) was part of the International Monitoring Team that monitors peace processes and ceasefire agreements between the national government and the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front.

On 7 April 2011, a sudden firefight erupted in one of the most isolated and disputed locations of western Mindanao. Some 400 armed men from law enforcement agencies surrounded an island with land troops and military boats in an operation aimed at securing the arrest of a criminal group. A firefight lasting four-and-a-half hours ensued, in which several loud explosions were heard, displacing about 4000 civilians (the entire population of the island.)

Thirteen houses were burned and nine suspected criminals were killed.

On the request of local stakeholders, NP's Quick Response Team, comprised of both international and national protection monitors, embarked upon a three-day verification mission. The prompt intervention of NP helped to ensure the immediate and safe return of the 4000 frightened civilians to their homes. Before NP's presence, they were reluctant to do so for fear of further attacks. NP's presence also helped to ensure that the incident was dealt with immediately and was afforded proper attention by higher authorities, one result of which was compensation to the families whose houses had been burned.

As per the Civilian Protection Component's mandate, the resulting detailed report was sent to the International Monitoring Team who, in turn, shared the report with the both the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Peace Panels. The key parties to the peace process, on the basis of NP's verification, conducted an investigation of the incident. Further, the report was discussed at length during a subsequent round of exploratory talks on the peace process.

Local residents of the secluded island requested that NP establish an office there to help ensure their safety and security.

The four-year ceasefire led to a peace framework agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed in March of 2014.

Case Study

VIII. Conflict Mitigation at Yida Refugee Camp in Unity State, South Sudan

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (2012)

Multi Track Dialogue

The influx of large numbers of refugees in Yida, South Sudan, led to a conflict between the host community and the refugee community. The refugee site had been growing at an exponential rate, placing both the camp and the host community at high risk of conflict and violence.

When Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) approached the leaders of the host community to assess the situation, they complained about a shortage of food and difficult access to necessities as a result of the way refugees were overusing the natural resources in the area. Moreover, the host community felt marginalised by the international community, as they exclusively focused their services provision towards the refugees. The lack of communication channels between representatives of refugees and the host community, as well as between representatives of the host community and international service providers, further complicated the conflict, because underlying tensions and problems could not be addressed.

UCPs from NP first approached local authorities and chiefs as well as the refugee council. Then they accompanied some of these actors to the host community leaders to initiate dialogue. They also approached representatives from International donor

agencies to obtain their support and involvement. Over the course of weeks, the UCPs engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the various groups, facilitating dialogue and supporting the groups to establish specific, implementable agreements on how to share the resources and move their cattle during the dry season.

Though it was a challenge for international aid agencies to deviate from their official mandate to provide services for refugees only, a number of them decided in the end to extend some of their relief services and resources to the host community, which helped to further improve the relations between the parties.



Case Study

IX. Capacity Development, Confidence Building, Dialogue and Protection Complementing and Reinforcing Each Other in Papua, Indonesia

Source: Peace Brigades International (2007)

In 2007, Peace Brigades International (PBI) conducted a workshop with a local partner in Wamena, Papua, Indonesia, to build the capacity of civil society leaders in conflict transformation. The workshop brought together a number of community leaders, as well as a human rights defender who had barely started his activities in an isolated community with high levels of violence.

During the workshop, unidentified actors showed up, trying to disturb the workshop process and intimidate the participants. While some of the PBI volunteers continued with the workshop, others went quickly outside to meet the unidentified actors, engaged with them, and persuaded them to leave.

For some of the participants, the workshop was the first time ever they were asked to share their views, to talk freely about conflict, and to learn about nonviolence. For the new human rights defender, it was an opportunity to connect to other local defenders and learn from their experience - a very active local human rights defender, frequently accompanied by PBI, was invited to the workshop as a guest speaker. One of the local facilitators, who designed his own session about the use of traditional culture in conflict transformation by using PBI's participatory training models, concluded the workshop by saying that the activity had made him realize that the Papuans would not need external actors like PBI to build peace. It was something they were able to do themselves.

The human rights defender established a dialogue forum in his own village soon after the workshop, inviting PBI to attend and provide a protective presence. PBI, together with the local partners and workshop participants, organized a public event in Wamena town to celebrate the International Day of Peace. A year later, these same actors repeated the event without active engagement of PBI. Local human rights defenders copied the model and launched their own public event to celebrate the International Day of Human Rights.

Case Study

X. The Small Girl and the Big Man

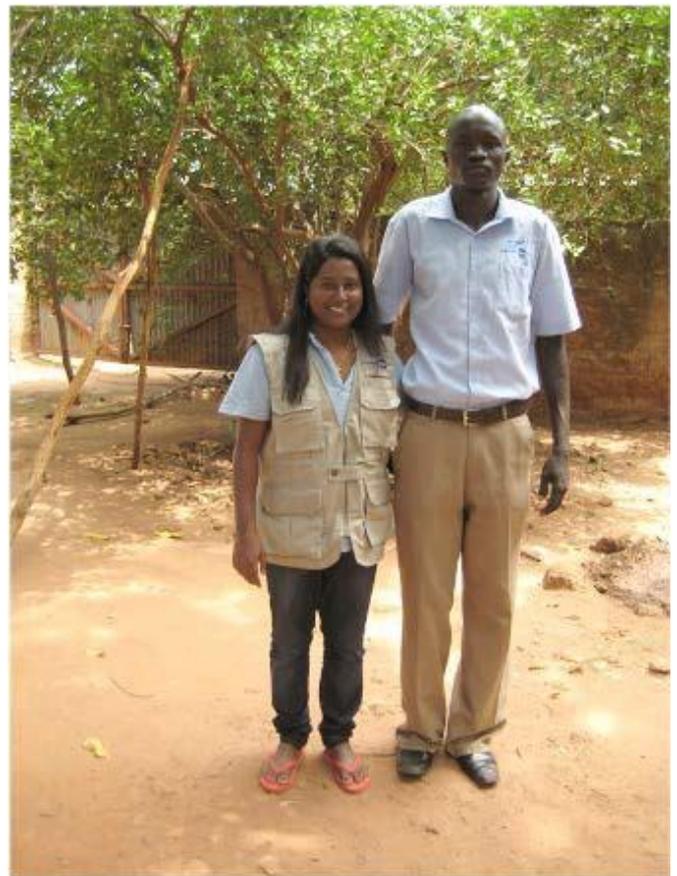
Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce, South Sudan (2012)

Early Warning/Early Response

In the Lakes State area of Yirol, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) worked with the local community to identify early warning signs of impending violence, and devised a multi-ethnic community response. Late one afternoon, youth from different clans converged at a cattle camp, and violence broke out. The early-warning alarm sounded, and a local/international NP team set out for the cattle camp, including several Dinka men well over six feet tall, and a UCP from India who was less than five feet tall.

When the team arrived, one of the fighters asked a local protection team member about this short person: “Who is this small girl and where does she come from?” The civilian protector explained that she had come from India. The young warrior called off his men. “In our culture, we don’t want to do something bad in front of outsiders,” he explained. “This problem has become so serious that people are coming here from other countries. I will stop now.”

The team got a promise from all sides that they would not fight, and instead would wait for the chiefs to come and talk. The next morning, the chiefs arrived and mediated a deal. NP monitored the process at the chief’s request, and a violent conflict was averted.



Case Study

XI. Averting Violence and Displacement in Mindanao, Philippines

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce, Philippines (2013)

Supporting self-sustaining local UCP infrastructures

“It was not long ago that in barangay (village) Mamaanon that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), heavily armed and ready to fight, came as close as 50 meters to one another. If it was not for Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) who intervened, the community would have experienced the effects of another war. Piagapo is already affected by conflict and cannot afford anymore, so I would also take the opportunity to appeal the community to support Nonviolent Peaceforce for the wonderful work they have been doing for peace in our community.”

This was said by the former Mayor and current Chairperson of the Association of Barangay Captains of Piagapo municipality on 8 November 2012 during a programme which included the official signing of a peace covenant between local military and MILF commanders, all in the presence of NP and the community.

The Chairperson was referring to an incident wherein, due to a lack of coordination and miscommunication, members of the AFP and the MILF were set for an imminent armed clash. The roughly 800 inhabitants of the barangay were panicking and preparing to flee.

A local early warning and early response monitor, trained by NP, informed NP’s local partner, the Kalimudan Foundation Inc., which in turn informed NP. NP immediately contacted the MILF government bodies responsible for coordinating

troop movements so as to avoid violent clashes under the ceasefire agreement.

They also contacted the security component of the International Monitoring Team of which NP is a part, which, in turn, is a third-party ceasefire mechanism led by Malaysia.

Within an hour, the ceasefire mechanisms did what they were designed to do – prevent open hostilities by utilizing structured lines of communication. Sometimes though, these lines become plugged, which is where NP and the local early warning mechanisms have a profound impact, at many levels. A clash was avoided, thereby preventing the loss of life. Civilians did not flee and the terrible consequences of such an action, like the disruption to livelihoods and education, was avoided.

And at the higher level? At the time, MILF and Government representatives were meeting in Malaysia for peace talks. Had violence occurred that day, it is likely that the talks would have been cut short, and had the violence spiraled out of control, in a worst case scenario, the delicate talks could have potentially been derailed. It was not long after the incident in question that the MILF and the Government signed a Framework Agreement for peace – a monumental step in achieving a just and lasting peace.



Case Study

XII. Women's Peacekeeping Teams, South Sudan

Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce, South Sudan (2012)



In South Sudan, ten women's peacekeeping teams (WPT) have been formed and trained by Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP). These teams work with a variety of UCP methods, including accompaniment, dialogue, rumor control and early warning/early response. Some help with the return, integration and protection of children who have been abducted. Some are able to use their peacekeeping methods with families, intervening in plans for early marriages, which often occur when families are facing economic hardship and marry off their female children in exchange for cattle.

The WPTs work with family members, encouraging them to discourage these marriages and keep the girls in school. The teams train other women to defend their children. They encourage women to report rape, and will accompany them throughout the legal process. The women's teams keep in mind the advantages of working with the local chiefs and other male leaders in shifting the communities' attitudes toward protecting women.



UCP

Mega Cases

(Excerpted from forthcoming UCP Good Practices Review by Ellen Furnari et al)

Colombia

Peace Brigades International (PBI) began work in Colombia in 1994 at the request of human rights defenders, who knew of PBI work in Central America. PBI is the largest of the UCP organizations in Colombia, and in 2015, has 23 staff in 3 field sites. The Red de Hermandad (Sisterhood/Brotherhood Network) came to Colombia five years after PBI, in 1999, and Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) arrived in 2001, after six years of experience in Palestine. The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) established its team in San José de Apartadó in 2002, and SweFOR and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) arrived in 2004. Operazione Colomba, (Operation Dove) also arrived in Colombia after working in Palestine. The Quebecois organization

Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie (PASC) arrived in 2003; International Peace Observatory (IPO) established a team in 2005, which closed in 2013; Operazione Colomba and Peace Watch Switzerland established teams in 2009; and International Action for Peace (IAP) in 2010. In all, there are at least 12 international organizations engaged in providing some combination of UCP practices in Colombia, as well as various local and national organizations.

While the location, focus, and size of each organization varies, the two primary types of work are providing protection 1) to individual civilians at risk due to their work protecting human rights, and 2) to communities at risk because they have declared themselves zones of peace so they resist involvement with rebels, militias, the army or any other armed groups. In

Colombia, UCP is referred to as accompaniment; organizations accompany individuals, organizations and communities. Accompaniment includes having well-trained international staff (often trained volunteers) that visibly spend time with people in their work places, homes, and communities. Organizations notify local and national government officials of their presence and plans, so that there is no possibility for someone to claim they didn't know the UCP staff were there. Generally, UCP organizations combine presence with building relationships with those who might threaten the safety of civilians, and advocating for civilian safety with authorities.

UCP teams are generally made up of about half men and half women. Female human rights defenders and women in communities often find it easier to talk with other women and discuss their needs. They appreciate, however, the greater respect that international men often receive from authorities.

A recent case study on UCP in Colombia reports, "Accompaniment often includes emotional support. In Colombia, accompaniment can also refer to support or collaboration: a human rights defender, for example, who has a legal case or litigation for a human rights violation is "accompanying" the process. The concept in Colombia is also tied to the dissuasion of violence, and to the analysis that indicates that international presence has dissuasion against violations committed by the armed forces and paramilitaries, but not as much against violations by the guerrillas. As such, this dissuasive presence is not so much an *interposition* between armed groups, as *being by the side of*."

Accompaniment has proven to be an effective deterrent of violence in many contexts in Colombia. Those who have been accompanied by these organizations have stated that they are still alive because of the accompaniment, that their work has been strengthened since the protection has allowed them to go places they couldn't otherwise, and that the sense of solidarity with others has been crucial, particularly to communities in isolated areas. Because these groups and communities have continued to function, their activities have impacted the broader peace process in Colombia.

Mindanao, Philippines

During the long history of fighting between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), civil society became increasingly active. Beginning in 2002, several organizations formed the Bantay Ceasefire, a ceasefire monitoring organization. Bantay Ceasefire trained hundreds of civilians to monitor the ceasefire and other agreements between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and government. While they had an impact, they felt that having internationals with them would strengthen their work. Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) established a project in 2007, based in Cotabato City and with field teams in several regions. The work continues as a collaboration between local civil society organizations and NP, as well as in coordination with other networks such as UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Currently, there are over 25 civil society organizations fielding civilian monitors. NP at present has 52 staff operating out of four field offices and the main headquarters.

In order to protect civilians in the midst of the ongoing fighting between armed groups, formal mechanisms for communication and reporting were developed over time under the supervision of NP's International Monitoring Team (IMT), the MILF, and the government. In 2009, NP and three civil society groups were formally tasked as the Civilian Protection Component of the IMT. UCP work in Mindanao includes building a network of complex relationships with people in communities, government, other civilian organizations, and with the army and MILF. These relationships are valuable to advocate for civilian protection, perhaps requesting the army to move its soldiers from an area near a school, or getting both sides to cease fighting while civilians in the area are evacuated. The information needed for advocacy is collected through frequent visiting and patrolling, often in rural and isolated communities, and allows NP and others to not only request that armed actors change their behavior, but also inform civilians of the actual conditions and contain rumors that might cause them to flee their homes unnecessarily. Civilian protectors give particular attention to the needs of women and children, and focus on the recruitment of child soldiers and the safety of women in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps. Civilian ceasefire monitors are themselves frequently women. NP's staff in Mindanao is about 70% Filipino and about 50% women.

The work in Mindanao has had both an immediate impact of protecting civilians and a longer-term impact of supporting a peace agreement and maintaining a ceasefire. There are numerous reports of fighting being prevented through the coordination mechanisms, of people being able to evacuate ahead of fighting, and of temporary ceasefires so that trapped civilians can leave. Other reports highlight the role that NP has played in visiting remote areas where IDPs have congregated, and bringing their needs to the attention of service providers and the government. Informal conversations indicate that both the AFP and MILF have appreciated the role NP has played in supporting the work for peace.

South Sudan

At the request of local organizations, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) initiated a project in South Sudan in 2010. The initial focus was preventing violence related to the upcoming referendum for independence. It quickly became clear that the greater threat to civilian safety was intra-and inter-clan violence, often expressed in fighting between groups of cattle keepers and the communities from which they came. In 2012, this grew to include inter-ethnic fighting in Jonglei and other regions. NP's program expanded further with the outbreak of civil war in December of 2013. Currently, NP in South Sudan has over 150 staff operating in 11 field sites and the Juba headquarters. NP field staff are about 40% South Sudanese and 40% women.

Since its inception, NPSS has worked to establish a broad network of relationships in every region where they work. Using these relationships, they have brought community leaders together to engage in early-warning/early-response training and to develop ongoing community protection committees. They have: developed women's peacekeeping teams in many of their field areas; created and supported child protection teams; facilitated peace agreements between fighting clans and sub-clans; provided patrols and protection within IDP camps and accompanied people moving into and out of IDP camps.

A recent case study found impacts that "resulted from negotiating peace agreements between different ethnic groups or clans, providing direct protective presence through accompanying specific individuals as well as patrolling and being visible in communities, training for and implementing early warning/early response, coordinating with other protection actors such as police and the UN mission, and supporting such activities as local peace committees, women's peacekeeping teams, and the creation of weapons free zones.

There appears to be no aggregated numbers of people served, though specific reports for grants document numbers served. It appears that tens of thousands have benefitted indirectly from NPSS's work in communities and Protection of Civilians (POC) and IDP areas and the development of local structures and mechanisms for protection, and thousands have benefitted directly from protection, training, referral to needed services, etc. NPSS has influenced other humanitarian agencies both in the processes used to deliver aid and other services, as well as in choices about where agencies work and the kind of work they do there. There is no evidence that NPSS has influenced the overall political conflicts which led up to the initiation and continuation of the civil war, but there is little evidence that any organization, multilateral institution, or individuals are having much influence on moving the parties toward peace, though perhaps significant evidence of outside support for the violence²."

2 Africa Report #223. Retrieved from <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/sudan/223-sudan-and-south-sudan-s-merging-conflicts.aspx>

Recommendations



Unarmed Civilian Protection provides direct protection to civilians under threat as well as serves as an important complement to armed peacekeeping and development because it has the potential to directly and positively impact women, both as subjects of protection and as actors for protection. UCP protects vulnerable women in violent situations. It gives them capacity and agency as trained civilian protectors (over 40% of unarmed civilian protectors are women) to lessen tension, protect civilians, resolve conflicts and work for peace in their own communities in a sustainable and non-militaristic way.

The UN should incorporate and scale up unarmed civilian protection (UCP) in peace operations and development assistance in conflict-affected countries, both in the framing of mandates and in the provision of resources. UCP should be recognized as a legitimate expenditure of Official Development Assistance funds. The UN should support a permanent roster of organizations and trained women from around the world who are available to provide unarmed civilian protection and UCP training. Where appropriate, the UN should encourage the deployment of UCP teams alongside armed missions, DPA political missions and in conflict-prone situations where armed peacekeepers are not deployed.

For more information please contact:

Mel Duncan

Director of Advocacy & Outreach
Nonviolent Peaceforce

Email: mduncan@nonviolentpeaceforce.org

Mobile: +1 651-245-8706

Skype: [mel.duncan](https://www.skype.com/people/mel.duncan)



www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org