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# UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION

STRENGTHENING CIVILIAN  
CAPACITIES TO PROTECT  
CIVILIANS AGAINST VIOLENCE

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Huibert Oldenhuis, with Ellen Furnari, Rolf Carriere, PhD,  
Thor Wagstrom, PhD, Ann Frisch, PhD and Mel Duncan

An Introductory Course in 5 Modules

January 2021 (second edition)

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Design: Claire Guinta

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Operazione Colomba  
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# FOREWORD

Dear Students and Seekers,

I invite you to read this manual and learn more about Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP).

I first learned about this work when I was asked to endorse Nonviolent Peaceforce in 2000.

Since then I have followed their work and find it bold and audacious.

In 2014 I was appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to chair a High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. For the next six months a distinguished and experienced group of experts were driven by the desire to take a dispassionate look at these operations to ascertain their relevance and effectiveness for today and tomorrow's world. At several stops we were able to learn about UCP, a new concept to many of my colleagues.

In our report, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace, People and Prosperity- Politics, Partnership and People*, issued in June of 2015, we recommended that unarmed strategies must be at the forefront of UN efforts to protect civilians. Our report noted the positive contributions of UCP and further recommended that UN missions should work more closely with local communities and national and international non-governmental organizations in building a protective environment.

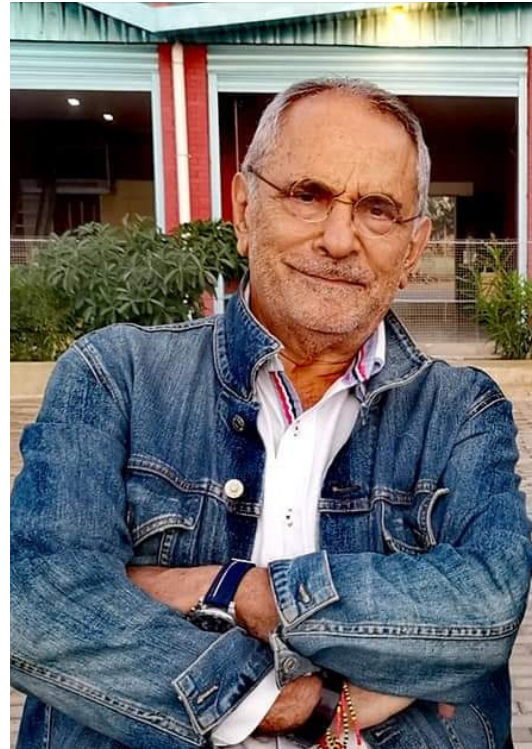
Since that time I have watched in horror as now more than 68 million of us have had to flee our homes because of violent conflict. Famines have reached biblical proportions. With climate chaos, the rich getting richer off of wars and a global pandemic, more of us are starving, fleeing and dying. The world needs effective and affordable ways to confront the business of killing. That's where you come in. I ask that you read this manual, take a course or training, and then challenge yourself about what you can do to make our world a safer and more secure place.

I have devoted my life to fighting for people's self-determination. I have intimately experienced brutality and violence. I am not a romantic pacifist. Yet, I have seen the power of compassion and know that it takes more courage to actively use nonviolent methods to resist violence than it does to take up arms. Let us struggle together until every member of the human family is able to thrive.

In Solidarity,



José Ramos-Horta  
Former President, Timor-Leste (2007-2012)  
1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate





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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The original version of this manual was developed in 2014-15 as the central component to an online course developed in collaboration with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Since then, the manual has been used as a major component for courses on Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) by several different universities and NGOs for a number of different audiences. Many of them tailored its content to the needs of their own audience and developed additional tools to convey its core messages.

At the same time Nonviolent Peaceforce organized a series of workshops across the world to articulate good practices about UCP. These workshops have brought UCP practitioners from over 50 organizations working in 18 countries together within their respected regions, including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, and Central/South America. A workshop in Europe is planned for early 2021. This meeting of practitioners, joined by a few partners organizations and academics, has provided new insights into effective ways unarmed civilians protect others and prevent violence – be it others in their own communities, their own nations, or internationally.

In this second edition we have included some of the insights and observations from people who have taught courses on UCP as well as the field practitioners who participated in the good practice workshops. Additionally, we have included recent developments in the international articulation of civilian protection and related topics, such as UN declarations and reports as well as new models of UCP, developed by UCP agencies since 2015.

The university courses, good practices workshops, increased research papers, and references to UCP in UN resolutions show us that UCP is beginning to emerge as a field of practice. We believe that this manual can contribute to the development of standards of practice, exemplary models and resources that can accelerate the growth of this emerging field and expand the global community of UCP practitioners. With this in mind, we realized that our presentation of UCP needed to be more inclusive of diverging viewpoints and practices.

It was clear at the good practice workshops that there is a wide variety of approaches in this work, and differing use of terms as well. For instance, especially in Central and South America, the work is primarily referred to as accompaniment. In this manual we generally use the word accompaniment to refer to a specific set of methods, but not the overall approach. However, we are aware that some practitioners see accompaniment as something different than UCP. Perhaps the most contentious issue in the workshops has been the understanding of the principle and practice of nonpartisanship. While for some it is more of a semantic difference – using different language to describe similar principles –, for others there is an embrace of the principle of solidarity and practice of being partisan for those most impacted by the violence, or most oppressed. In this manual we continue to reference nonpartisanship as a core principle, while understanding that it is not embraced by all, particularly those who understand accompaniment as separate from UCP. Reflecting the learning from the good practices workshops, this manual also includes advocacy as a separate UCP method, and elaborates on what this means in practice.

Conversations with scholars, practitioners, and local partners also made it clear that the original manual was not sufficiently inclusive of UCP as practiced by local communities. Indeed, the manual was originally written from the perspective of external, international UCP organizations. In this new edition we have included more references and examples of how local people are protecting themselves through various unarmed, nonviolent, civilian to civilian methods. We are continually discovering local groups that are applying various methods of UCP, but not aware that they are part of a broader community. These efforts are not only critical and often effective, but they are the most sustainable form of civilian protection. However, doing justice to the many ways people protect themselves nonviolently, and the growing body of research and writing on civilian self-protection, would have required a much larger reorganization of this manual. This was beyond the scope of our capacity. Therefore, the manual remains primarily focused on the experience of external, international organizations that apply UCP in a context that is not their own. The authors believe that nonetheless, there will be valuable learning here for any unarmed civilian protection efforts.

The authors hope that this manual provides a useful starting point for those beginning to learn about UCP as well as an opportunity for people already familiar with UCP to deepen their understanding of its theory and practice. It is not a substitute for a specific training in UCP methods. While we have made an effort to provide a wider perspective, we acknowledge that it remains heavily reliant on the experiences of Nonviolent Peaceforce. We warmly welcome any further exchange of knowledge and experiences, so that the practice of UCP can be refined for the benefit of all those whose reality continues to be dominated by violent conflict.

**Huibert Oldenhuis and Ellen Furnari**

**January 2021**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAAFG	Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups
CDA	Collaborative for Development Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CPC	Civil Protection Component (Philippines)
CPR	Communities of Popular Resistance (Guatemala)
CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
EU	European Union
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission (Georgia)
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh movement)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
GPH	Government of the Philippines
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IASC	United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IHRL	International Human Rights Law
IMT	International Monitoring Team (Philippines)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization

IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRL	International Refugee Law
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JIU	Joint Integrated Unit (South Sudan)
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and others
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines)
MONUC	United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MRDA	Mundri Relief and Development Association (South Sudan)
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
NCOORD	National Coordinating Office on Refugees and Displaced of Guatemala
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	Nonviolent Peaceforce
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBI	Peace Brigades International
PoC	Protection of Civilians
PPF	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
TMF	Truce Monitoring Group (Bougainville)
UCP	Unarmed Civilian Protection
UNAMSIL	United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WES	Western Equatoria State (South Sudan)
WFP	Witness For Peace
WPS	Women Peace and Security
WPT	Women Peacekeeping/Protection Team
YPS	Youth Peace and Security



PEACEKEEPERS COURSE  
CP TRAINING

**JPST**  
Joint Peace and Security Team

NP Photo / Conducting trainings for Joint AFP, PNP, MILF Peacekeepers in the Bangsamoro, Philippines / November 2020

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# INTRODUCTION

*Unarmed strategies must be at the forefront of UN efforts to protect civilians. Humanitarian organizations play essential roles in protecting civilians. Where appropriate, timely coordination between missions with humanitarian actors is indispensable in pursuing unarmed strategies as these partners often work closely with communities, especially internally displaced persons. Many non-governmental organizations, national and international, also ensure protection by their civilian presence and commitment to non-violent strategies for protection. Missions should make every effort to harness or leverage the non-violent practices and capabilities of local communities and non-governmental organizations to support the creation of a protective environment.*

*With respect to protecting civilians, the Panel recommends that: In view of the positive contributions of unarmed civilian protection actors, missions should work more closely with local communities and national and international nongovernmental organizations in building a protective environment.*

*High-Level Independent Review Panel on United Nations Peace Operations,  
16 June 2015*

Today, an estimated 2 billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected areas of the world, where they are extremely vulnerable to the impact of violence and disasters. This number is projected to increase, as the population in these areas is growing twice as fast as the rest of the world (UNOCHA, 2019). These locations are also most often vulnerable to the havoc wreaked by climate chaos. In these areas, civilians are faced with a wide variety of abuses and human rights violations, including killings, torture, sexual abuse, and forced displacement. In many situations children are abducted or recruited into



armed forces; women trafficked for sexual exploitation; and human rights defenders<sup>1</sup> imprisoned or killed. Even humanitarian aid workers, delivering aid to survivors of war, are not free from intentional (or targeted) attacks. Recognizing the overwhelming need, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has insisted that ‘human protection is a defining purpose of the United Nations in the twenty-first century’ (Ki-Moon, 2012).

Since 1999 UN peace operations have assisted states recovering from war to protect civilians. However, there are many situations of war and violent conflict where UN peace operations cannot be deployed or are ineffective and where government actors are not willing or able to provide protection to some or all civilians. The international community has struggled, in theory and in practice, with the question of its responsibility to protect (R2P) civilians within the territory of sovereign states. While still the subject of debates and reports, R2P has not been implemented since the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya. In addition, the scale and complexity of protection challenges in the Balkans, Rwanda, Darfur, Libya, and Syria have demonstrated that threats to civilians are complex and dynamic: no single international actor is capable of mitigating them without significant support from other institutions (O’Callaghan, 2007).

The international community has begun to recognize that humanitarian organizations and civil society groups have played and are playing a long-established and often critical role in seeking to address large unmet protection needs. A small number of these organizations and groups focuses specifically on providing direct physical protection to civilians – an area of work that conventionally has been covered by the military and police, and of course by UN peacekeepers<sup>2</sup> wherever peace operations are deployed. When unarmed non-governmental or civil society groups provide protection to civilians we call this Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), which is the focus of this course.<sup>3</sup> UCP is the practice of civilians protecting other civilians in situations of imminent, ongoing, or recent violent conflict. It involves international civilians protecting local civilians, local civilians protecting each other, and even local civilians protecting international or non-local civilians. The practice of UCP is nonviolent and generally nonpartisan. Protection is provided on invitation from local actors. It supports local actors as they work to address the roots and consequences of violent conflict. This practice is grounded in international law, in the principle of civilian immunity in war, and in the protection afforded by international conventions (these sources are elaborated in Module 2).

More specifically, UCP is a strategic mix of key nonviolent engagement methods, principles, values, and skills. Specially trained civilians, in close coordination with local

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1 Human rights defenders act to promote or protect human rights, including civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Particular issues of concern in areas of violent conflict are executions, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, discrimination, forced evictions and access to health care. Human rights defenders also investigate and report on human rights violations and abuse. They accompany survivors of human rights violations, take action to end impunity, support better governance, contribute to the implementation of human rights treaties, and provide human rights education.

2 Many other humanitarian organizations and civil society groups focus on different areas of protection, for example by providing basic necessities to survivors of violence or advocating for the protection of social and cultural rights.

3 Scholars and practitioners have used other terms for this practice, including Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping, Proactive Presence, Proactive Engagement, and Protective Accompaniment



actors, apply UCP to prevent violence, provide direct physical protection to civilians under threat, and strengthen local peace infrastructures. Practitioners of Unarmed Civilian Protection engage with affected individuals and communities at the grassroots level for extended periods of time. They provide, for example, protective presence for civilians who are about to flee their homes. This physical presence, close to where threatened and vulnerable people live, may be provided twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for several weeks or even months. UCP practitioners can also employ a range of other methods, such as monitoring ceasefires, accompaniment, rumour control, and capacity enhancement<sup>4</sup> for civilian protection. UCP is applicable at various stages of a conflict; during early stages to prevent violence, during crisis situations to stop violence or de-escalate tensions, and at later stages to help sustain peace agreements and create a safer space for peacebuilding efforts.

*It is estimated that 'between 1500 BCE and 1860 CE there were in the known world an average of thirteen years of war to every year of peace'. In that whole period of well over 3000 years 'more than 8000 peace treaties were concluded—each one of them meant to remain in force forever. On average they only lasted two years!' (Stevens, 1989) One obvious conclusion is that peace treaties don't guarantee peace—because they often don't resolve conflicts nor do they address the underlying causes: 'post-war' is not the same as 'post-conflict'. At best, peace treaties provide a brief interlude without violent action, to give the conflict parties a chance to get down to the tough task of peacebuilding, to address the deeper reasons for the war, and to get the peace right. (Carriere, 2011).*

UCP practitioners operate in a variety of conflict situations<sup>5</sup>, including places where UN or other regional and international organizations are currently not present. The entry of UCP teams into these places can be easier than the entry of armed or more formal protection actors, as they do not require an internationally agreed mandate. UCP supports peace infrastructures at the sub-national and grassroots level, which is where ceasefires often unravel, leading to the spread of violence and relapse into war. These peace infrastructures include Early Warning Early Response systems, weapon-free zones, and women protection teams. UCP attributes a special role to women as peacemakers and peacebuilders. It plays a role in accompanying bottom-up peacemaking efforts. In the process, UCP strengthens peace infrastructures at lower levels and connects them with actors at higher levels.

UCP practitioners also operate alongside and collaborate with UN peacekeepers (military, police, and civilians) and humanitarian organizations, with job descriptions

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4 Capacity is the ability of individuals, institutions, and broader systems to perform their functions effectively, efficiently and achieve their development objectives in a sustainable way. Capacity development is a long process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.

5 The World Development Report 2011 recognizes multiple forms of violence: (1) local intergroup conflict; (2) “conventional” political conflict (contests for state power or for autonomy or independence); (3) widespread gang-related violence; (4) organized crime or trafficking with accompanying violence; and (5) local conflicts with transnational ideological connections (Chapter 1, Table 1.1). This course will focus on the first two forms of violence and also the fifth: forms for which UCP offers approaches that have proven effective.

that partly overlap and partly differ. In places where UN peacekeepers operate, UCP practitioners, while never accepting force protection, may have complementary roles, for example in strengthening community-based protection capacities. Furthermore, they could play a role in accompanying or supporting mediation processes (e.g., by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs or the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue) through on-going engagement with conflict parties at the local level. In this context, UCP practitioners may play an important role in identifying and addressing protection needs of particularly targeted groups, such as human rights defenders. Moreover, while communities in affected areas may rely on armed protection against large-scale attacks, they may find it easier to approach UCP team members (who live in their midst) to meet their needs for individual protection.

‘Unarmed’ does not mean ‘without influence’ or ‘defenceless’ (Carriere, 2011). There are many ways to deter violence. In most situations of violent conflict there are points of leverage that unarmed civilians can use. Whether using the ‘soft power’ of encouragement or the threat of consequences such as loss of reputation, unwanted consequences or loss of support as deterrence, civilians can at times deter violence. The nonviolent approach to protection and keeping the peace also supports the transition from a culture of violence to a culture of peace and nonviolence. It shows (or reminds) affected communities that it is often (but not always) possible to reduce violence without the use of weapons or reliance on armed force. Moreover, it enables communities to participate actively in the process of peace and security and to shape their own destiny.

A key objective of UCP is strengthening the capacities of civilians to protect other civilians. As stated by Jean-Marie Guéhenno, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, strong civilian capacities are considered to be essential in the transition from war to sustainable peace.<sup>6</sup> Guéhenno went on to say that even countries devastated by conflict possess some of the needed capacities for peace, but that international actors often focus on what they themselves can provide, rather than listening to the real needs and capacities of those whom they serve. These observations lie at the heart of UCP.

UCP uses a bottom-up approach to protection and keeping peace. It starts by listening to the protection needs of civilians and identifying local capacities for peace. It then works to protect and nurture these existing capacities, strengthening them in areas where local actors require assistance. Above all it aims to strengthen local civilian capacities to protect civilians from violence, so that local actors can take ownership of UCP. The capacity enhancement process is not limited to stand-alone training courses. It is illustrated and supported by the visible day-to-day practice of UCP practitioners in the area. This allows local actors to assess the applicability of UCP in their own context. More importantly, it allows them to be involved in day-to-day practice, fuse it with existing local (UCP) practices, or hone new skills until they feel confident to apply them. UCP requires ongoing and deep engagement with local communities to determine what are the most appropriate approaches and combination of methods which shift, sometimes quickly, as conflict conditions change. Thus UCP is a systems approach to protection, defining a process more than a prescription of methods.

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6 Addressing the Advisory Group to the UN Secretary General on Civilian Capacities in the Aftermath of Conflict, 2011

## Overall Goal

This publication aims to make a contribution to the common objectives of protecting civilians and enhancing nonviolent responses to violent conflict. More specifically, it offers an introduction to the foundations and practices of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), its principles, sources of guidance, methods and required skills as well as offering an overview of UCP in practice. Although people have been protecting themselves nonviolently for thousands of years and the idea of unarmed civilian protection as a particular practice has been around for almost a century, it is only in its more recent manifestation that UCP has begun to receive serious attention in UN and donor circles as well as from the leadership of organizations and governments operating in settings of violent conflicts.

## Audience

This manual is intended to provide an introduction to UCP for people whose work includes or is solely focused on the nonviolent protection of civilians. It includes leadership and staff of aid agencies and civil society organizations working in conflict situations (at different levels and in different capacities) and interested in strengthening their capacities to protect the people they serve as well as their own staff. This second edition of the manual increasingly focuses on UCP as practiced by local civil society, individuals and groups of people, who are interested in protecting themselves and others in their own environment. Though self-protection is not the main focus of this manual, there is much here for people so engaged. The manual also addresses a broader audience including university students, journalists, and civilian, military, and police personnel working in conflict and post-conflict environments (as part of a UN or non-UN operation) interested in gaining an appreciation of UCP principles, practices, methods, and required competencies. Some modules may be of interest to staff of donor agencies, policy makers and diplomats searching for effective and affordable ways to prevent violence and protect civilians.

## Content and Learning Objectives

This manual is designed as reference point and aid to online facilitators and face-to-face trainers. It contains summaries of key messages, recommendations for further study (reading, viewing and listening), bibliographies, and some appendices, including a glossary of terms. At the end of the manual, readers will be able to:

- Describe the key definitions, principles, objectives and sources of guidance for UCP;
- Demonstrate an understanding of UCP methods by selecting them for application to a variety of conflict scenarios;
- Analyse a conflict scenario and devise a plan for identifying and assessing the needs

- of specific at-risk populations;
- Identify key features of an effective UCP implementation plan and exit strategy, with a view toward maximizing the security both of UCP staff and local civilians.

**The manual is composed of five modules.**

## **MODULE 1 | INTRODUCTION TO UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION**

The module introduces the concept of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) by presenting some of its fundamental principles and rationale, defining relevant terms, and by placing it within the history of nonviolence and peacekeeping – two traditions from which it is born. The module concludes by presenting some of the main actors who practice or support UCP and related activities.

## **MODULE 2 | UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION: OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES AND SOURCES OF GUIDANCE**

The module dives into the core of Unarmed Civilian Protection by exploring its key objectives, principles, and sources of guidance. By expanding on these, you will acquire a deeper understanding of UCP, how it functions, its use of encouragement and deterrence, and how it is placed within the greater frame of humanitarian intervention.

## **MODULE 3 | UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION: KEY METHODS**

The module introduces and describes UCP methods and related competencies. It then discusses how, when and where these methods and skills are used. Practical case studies illustrate different strategic applications of methods in a conflict context.

## MODULE 4 | UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN PRACTICE: KEY COMPETENCIES NEEDED WHEN ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

The module describes the first steps UCP agencies take in preparing to enter and when entering the community. It begins with a description of the core competencies of UCP practitioners, that guide the recruitment, training, and deployment process. It then moves into the issue of conflict analysis, which supports UCP teams in understanding conflict dynamics, and lays the foundation for strategic planning. The section on conflict analysis is followed by a description of different types and stages of conflict.

## MODULE 5 | UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN PRACTICE: LIVING IN AND EXITING THE COMMUNITY

After describing the final components of the UCP programming cycle, the module presents a case study from South Sudan that brings the learning from all five modules together. This case study is used to show how the different components of the UCP programming cycle described in Modules 4 and 5 and the UCP methods described in Module 3, can be applied in a particular situation of violent conflict. The module concludes with a number of key dilemmas that UCP practitioners may experience throughout the UCP programming cycle.

### ICON LEGEND



Assignment



Summary of Key Messages



Case Study



Recommended Resources for Further Study



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Acoguate Photo / Presence at march for peace, Huehuetenango, Guatemala / 2019

# 1

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MODULE 1  
INTRODUCTION TO  
UNARMED CIVILIAN  
PROTECTION



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## OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*The Special Committee underlines the relevance of unarmed strategies to protect civilians in peacekeeping operations as political instruments that can effectively protect civilians by helping to bring an end to violent conflicts, shoring up the confidence of parties in peaceful solutions and working to advance peace processes. In this regard, and taking into account the positive contributions of unarmed civilian protection, the Special Committee stresses that peacekeeping missions should make every effort to leverage the non-violent practices and capabilities of local communities to support the creation of a protective environment.*

*Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 2018 substantive session, p. 65, 12 February–9 March 2018, New York*

More people are displaced today because of war, violence, persecution and other emergencies than any other time since the UN High Commissioner on Refugees started keeping track. An increasing number of people are at risk because of violent conflicts. In its 2020 report, UN High Commission on Refugees cited 79.5 million displaced people, with 10 million fleeing their homes in the past year, the highest global displacement on record. This number is compounded by climate refugees as an increasing number of people flee conflicts related to climate disruption. The closing of borders as a response to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic has made it more difficult for people to flee their countries and seek asylum.

While civilians have always been affected by wars and violent conflicts, the extent and complexity of civilian protection needs has received more attention in recent decades. Rape and other attacks on civilians are more clearly acknowledged and better understood as ‘weapons of war’, not just side effects. As a consequence, protection responses have increased and diversified. Multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations<sup>1</sup> have included

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<sup>1</sup> These combine military, civil administration (including election and human rights monitoring and police support) and humanitarian expertise, together with political negotiations, and mediation.

the protection of civilians in their mandates, while many humanitarian organizations have built it into their assistance programmes. However, there are many situations of war and violent conflict, where peace operations are not deployed or are not sufficient and where government actors are not willing or able to provide protection to all civilians. And though humanitarian organizations may be operating in these areas, they rarely provide direct physical protection to threatened civilians; that is generally considered the role of the police or military.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional approaches for the protection of civilians are not keeping pace with the need. Despite significantly increased needs, the 2021 UN peacekeeping budget remains the same as the previous year's. In fact, if all approaches for the protection of civilians were added together—armed, unarmed, governmental, NGOs—the total capacity would not come close to meeting the needs. Effective and affordable methods must be identified and scaled up.

Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) has been developed in response to these concerns. Specially-trained and organized civilians apply UCP in situations of violent conflict, imminent violence, and post-crisis situations. Instead of arms they use a mix of nonviolent strategies to prevent violence, protect threatened civilians, and enhance the capacities of local peace mechanisms to respond at multiple levels to situations of violent conflict. While implementing organizations use different methods, depending on the organizational approach and context, the concept and practice of UCP is demonstrably effective (Beckman, 2013; Cure Violence, n.d.; Gunduz and Torralba, 2014; Mahony et al., 1997; PBI, 2009; Schweitzer, 2012; Furnari 2016, Julian 2020;). It might, however, be the least understood and least recognized among the different roles, strategies, and capacities civil society organizations can bring to peace processes. Still, it reflects a profound shift that is taking place in the global discourse on international response to conflict: from a concern for solely national security to national and human security, from the defence of states to the protection of civilians, and from the implementation of violent defence to the reduction of violence (Schweizer et al. 2010, p.17). In short, civilians protecting civilians!

Module 1 starts with an introduction to UCP, followed by definitions of some key terms. It then presents a diagram that defines and explains the spectrum of UCP approaches and provides an overview of two traditions in which UCP is rooted, namely nonviolence and conventional peacekeeping. It concludes with a presentation of the main actors of UCP.



## Summary of Key Messages

- The nature of war has changed dramatically over the past century. The protection needs of civilians have increased and diversified. UCP offers a civilian-to-civilian protection approach that embraces the principle of the primacy of local actors and

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<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian actors are increasingly called to do more to help people to stay safe. In 2013 the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) made a formal commitment to placing protection at the centre of humanitarian action. For more information, see section 1.4.4.

nonviolence.

- UCP is to be seen as complementary to conventional peacekeeping, the work of the ICRC, and other organizations whose work includes efforts to protect civilians in some degree. UCP practitioners operate in a variety of conflict situations offering civilian-to-civilian protection, including situations where no armed peacekeepers are deployed.
- Instead of using the threat of force, UCP practitioners employ a mix of key nonviolent methods, principles, values, and skills. Specially trained and organized civilians apply UCP in order to prevent violence and provide direct physical protection of civilians under threat.
- Key UCP methods are proactive engagement, monitoring, relationship building, and capacity enhancement. Key principles of UCP are nonviolence, non-partisanship, independence, primacy of local actors, civilian-to-civilian relationships, and civilian immunity in violent conflict.
- Though UCP has roots in the tradition of nonviolent action as well as the tradition of peacekeeping, it is not the sum of both traditions but rather a fusion of different components from each, leaving behind nonviolent resistance and armed protection. From this fusion, UCP has emerged into something new and distinct.
- While UCP work is traditionally associated more with the concept of peacekeeping, UCP agencies have increasingly incorporated peacebuilding skills and models into their work, especially those that emphasize encouragement as a primary tactic to protect civilians. Building bridges between communities and armed actors, mediating between factions, facilitating dialogue, or cultivating relationships of trust in hostile environments are typical peacebuilding strategies used by many UCP actors.
- The main actors of UCP are (1) UCP personnel, (2) the populations served (e.g. displaced people, women, children, human rights defenders), (3) the civilians and organizations that invite a UCP presence, and (3) local partners.
- UCP is an additional approach to peacekeeping. It is not a perfect instrument. It is not a panacea. But it is a tool that in some circumstances is the right one, the appropriate one, *the* most effective one. It is a tool that can sometimes be productively deployed on its own, and sometimes alongside other instruments such as a conventional peacekeeping operation.

# 1.1

## Introduction to UCP

### 1.1.1

#### Understanding the need for the protection of civilians and reducing violence

UCP seeks to reduce violence and provide direct physical protection in situations of imminent and active violence, and in post-crisis situations. Understanding this need is a prerequisite for understanding the purpose of UCP. Warfare is one of humankind's most destructive activities. In the 19th century, it was widely accepted in the Global North that the military of a so-called 'civilized country' fought the armed forces of the enemy—*not* enemy civilians. killed compared to one civilian. Civilian immunity was a central principle in the military practice of major European powers and was embedded in international conventions (Primoratz, 2010, pp 1-2), though it was not extended to civilians in the Global South who were often seen as less than human, or certainly less valuable than Global North civilians.

However, the nature of violent conflict has changed dramatically during the past century. Modern weapons, especially small arms, have been one key factor in a radical increase in civilian deaths during wars and violent conflicts. Also, the shift from inter-state to intra-state wars during the late 20th century has brought violence directly into communities. In contemporary violent conflicts, the outdoor café, the inter-village bus, and the weekend marketplace have become battlegrounds (Anderson, 1999, pp 11-12). While the casualty rate of civilians, in comparison to that of combatants, has increased significantly since the beginning of the 20th century (Rupesinghe, 1998), there was a downward trend in the number of state-based armed conflicts after the end of the Cold War, continuing until 2012. Since 2015 casualty rates have remained at peak levels.<sup>3</sup> In many internal conflicts involving government armed forces and rebel groups, civilians are trapped between the two factions, and are sometimes specifically targeted or used as human shields. Many more die from indirect violence. Even humanitarian aid workers, delivering assistance to survivors of war, are not free from attacks, whether intentional or unintentional. 2019 witnessed the highest number of attacks against aid workers in a decade.<sup>4</sup>

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3 <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/charts/>

4 <https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/report/summary>

Though violent conflicts affect entire civilian populations, it is the women, children, disabled, stateless, and displaced people who tend to be most vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> Discrimination and violence also takes place against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary people on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity, though their numbers are much smaller. Access to basic services for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) is often difficult and IDPs are easy targets for exploitation and abuse. Women, children and in many cases men face heightened risk in the form of rape, sexual humiliation, and other types of violence. Many children are separated from their families during emergencies. Sometimes they are deliberately abducted and forced into roles of combatants, spies, messengers, or sex slaves. Both during and after conflicts, women and children are particularly exposed to the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance.<sup>6</sup>

People living in violence-affected countries struggle to address the root causes of conflicts, promote reconciliation and reach development goals. The 2015 adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in motion a global commitment for fifteen years of collective action to tackle the world's most pressing problems. In particular, the adoption of SDG 16 (to 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels') recognizes the crucial links between conflict, poverty, peace, and prosperity. SDG 16's targets include to 'Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere' and '[to build] capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence...'

However, "[e]xtreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in places characterized by fragility and violent conflict: by 2030, 85 percent of the extreme poor—some 342 million people—will live in fragile and conflict-affected states.<sup>7</sup> As the links between poverty, insecurity, and violence are substantiated, it becomes clearer that protecting civilians in vulnerable environments is an essential ingredient of building and sustaining peace. The protection needs of civilians are diverse and not only related to armed conflict. They may also arise in the following situations:

- Post-conflict situations, in which the lack of effective rule of law fosters violations and abuses;
- Natural disasters, in which natural hazards combined with poverty and social vulnerability put people at extreme risk;
- Famine, where drought, discrimination, political mismanagement and/or deliberate starvation cause severe risks;
- Epidemics and pandemics, where lack of access to preventive measures and adequate health care put people at extreme risk,
- Protracted social conflicts, in which discrimination, violence, exploitation, and impoverishment are constant risks (Slim & Bonwick, 2005).

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5 Though categorizing vulnerable populations allows for a more focused response in providing protection, the categories should not be treated as absolute. There often are significant differences in the levels of vulnerability within each category.

6 <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/demining/>

7 Overseas Development Institute, SDG Progress: fragility, crisis, and leaving no one behind, 2018. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12427.pdf>

While all the protection needs of civilians in all these situations deserve to be met and are increasingly explored by UCP actors,<sup>8</sup> the main focus of this course is on the practice of UCP to offer direct physical protection to threatened civilians in situations of violent political conflict.<sup>9</sup>



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Ferris, E. (2011). *The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action*, Chapter 10. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Furnari, E. (2016) *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence: Case Studies of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping*. Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation.
- InterAction, (2020) *Embracing the Protection Outcome Mindset: We All have a Role to Play*, p.2, InterAction Washington D.C. <https://protection.interaction.org/embracing-the-protection-outcome-mindset-we-all-have-a-role-to-play/>

## 1.1.2 Key characteristics of UCP

### WHAT IS UCP?

UCP is the practice of unarmed civilians providing direct physical protection to other civilians before, during, and after violent conflict, to prevent or reduce violence, and strengthen or build local peace infrastructures. The purpose of UCP is to create a safer environment, or a 'safer space', for civilians to address their own needs, solve their own conflicts, and protect individuals and populations at risk of harm or death in their midst. This 'safer space' is created through a strategic mix of key nonviolent engagement

<sup>8</sup> Cure Violence for example has effectively applied UCP in urban settings within the USA. UCP actors have also provided protection to refugees at borders, where they are being harassed by national security forces or local gangs. In 2020, with the Covid-19 pandemic raging, some UCP teams are focused on training methods to prevent the spread of the virus.

<sup>9</sup> The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research defines a political conflict as a positional difference regarding values relevant to a society – the conflict items – between at least two decisive and directly involved actors, which is being carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions or the international order, or that hold out the prospect of doing so (2014). It includes conflict over territory, secession, decolonization, autonomy, system/ ideology, national power, regional predominance, international power and resources.



methods, principles, values, and skills. Organizations implement UCP differently; they may not use all of the methods listed in Figure 1 below and might include other methods not listed. Additionally, scholars and practitioners have used different terms to describe the theory and practice of UCP, including Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping, Proactive Presence, Protective Accompaniment and Violence Interruption. For the purpose of this course, the term Unarmed Civilian Protection will be used. Though there may be subtle differences between the theories that lie behind these terms, the respective practices are basically very similar.

The five main methods of UCP presented in this manual are proactive engagement, monitoring, relationship building, capacity enhancement, and advocacy. Each of these methods has a number of applications:

- **Proactive engagement:** protective presence, protective accompaniment, and interpositioning;
- **Monitoring:** ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, and early warning/early response;
- **Relationship building:** confidence building and multi-track dialogue;
- **Capacity enhancement:** enhancing self-protection capacity and strengthening local protection infrastructures;
- **Advocacy:** Educating and organizing.

Frequently, UCP methods and applications are used in a dynamic interaction, reinforcing and complementing each other. They are also selected on a case-by-case basis, depending on the specific needs of the identified population, the type of conflict and context, as well as the mandate and capacity of the implementing organization. As such, UCP may emphasize various methods and applications differently in different situations, as well as in different phases of a particular conflict. UCP is more dynamic process than prescription.

It is the application of these methods—supported by key principles (e.g. nonviolence, nonpartisanship) as well as key sources of guidance (e.g. International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law) and key skills (e.g. facilitating, analysing)—that characterizes UCP (figure 1). Unarmed Civilian Protection practitioners are always unarmed and operating generally as a nonpartisan ‘third-party presence’. UCP methodology has been pioneered by organizations such as Peace Brigades International, Witness for Peace, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Meta Peace Team, and Nonviolent Peaceforce.

*PBI makes us brave, which is very important for our job. Sometimes we have to go to dangerous places, and the existence of PBI makes us more secure in this sort of travel. PBI really helps us to make a space so we can travel and do our job in defending people without fear.*

*Afridal, Director of LBH Banda Aceh, a legal aid institute, about protective accompaniment provided by Peace Brigades International (PBI)*



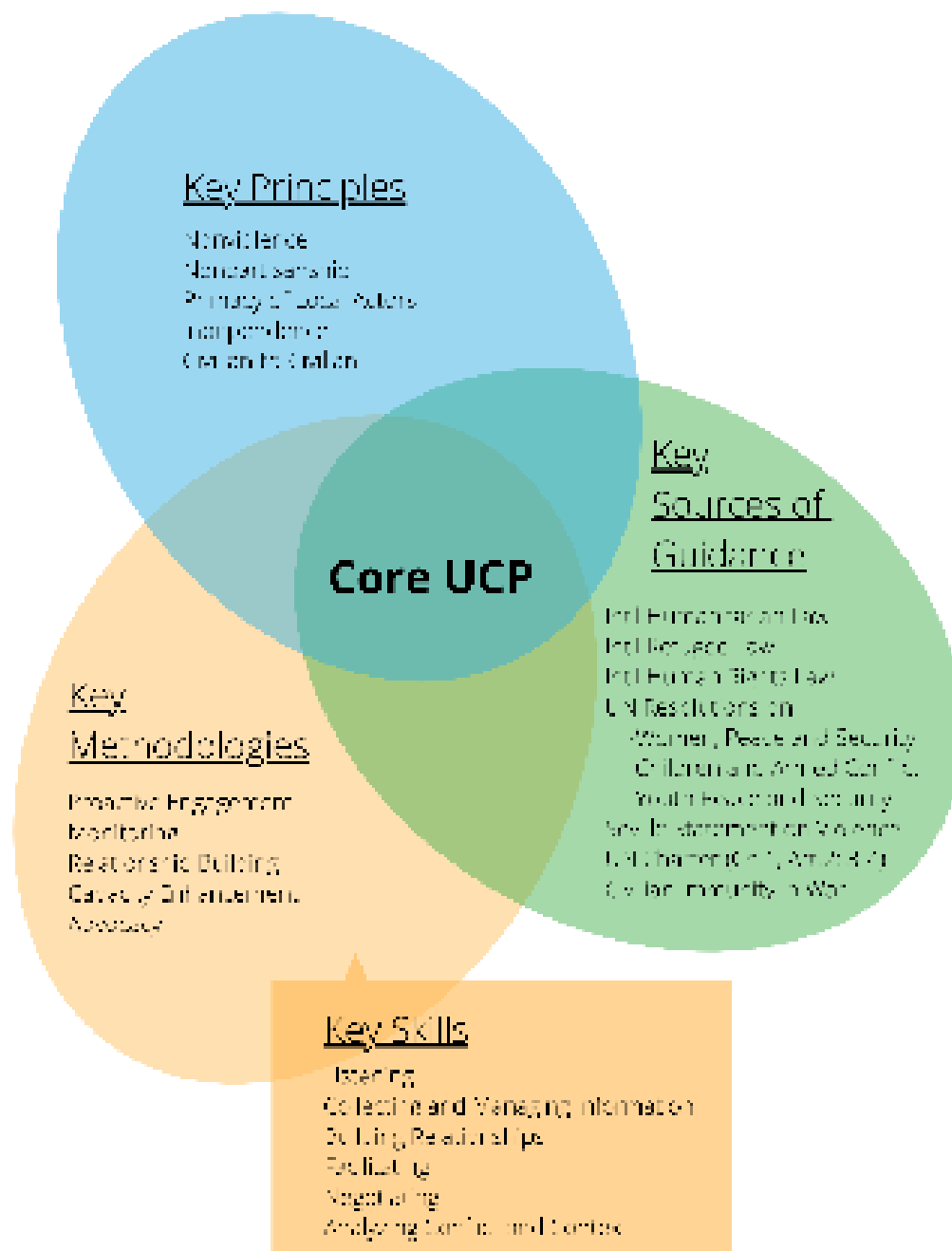


Figure 1: UCP is a strategic mix of key nonviolent engagement methods, principles, values, and skills. It is presented as a Venn diagram because UCP brings together these elements in various ways by different organizations. These organizations may use some, not necessarily all, of the methods and principles that are presented here. They may also use different terms to describe these methods and principles.

The different applications of UCP methods combine selective elements of UN peace operations and humanitarian efforts. They can be characterized as responsive, remedial,

or environment-building actions (see figure 2) (Caverzasio, 2001).

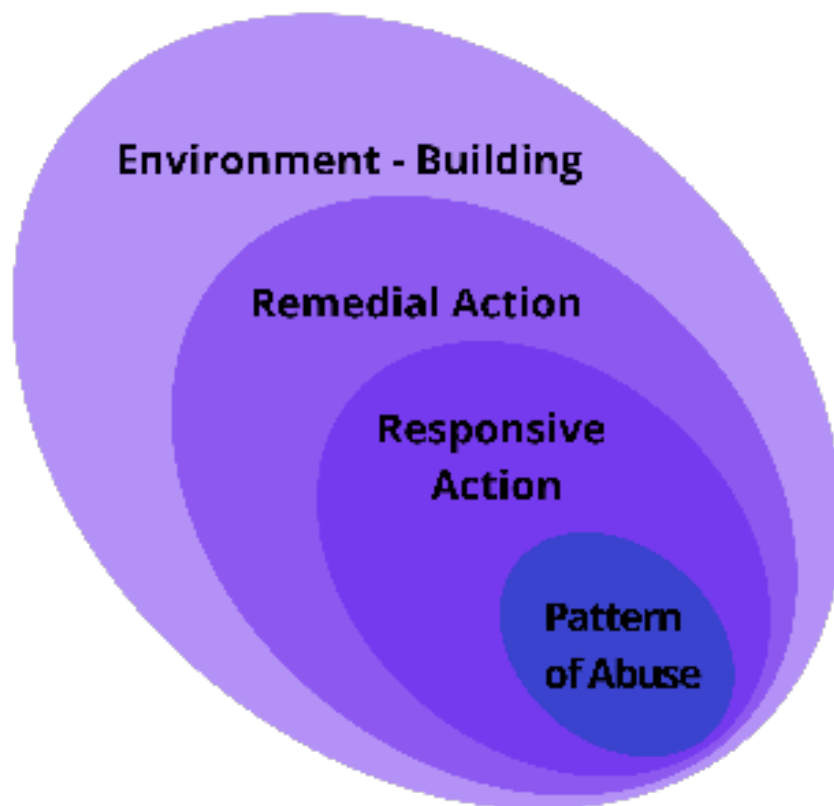


Figure 2: The different applications of UCP methods can be characterized as responsive, remedial, and environment-building actions (Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2002) *Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting Rights through Humanitarian Action, Programmes and Practices Gathered from the Field*, page 115.)

**Responsive action** is undertaken in connection with an emerging or established pattern of violence. It is aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence against civilians, putting a stop to it, and/or alleviating its immediate effects.<sup>10</sup> For many UCP organizations, this is the core focus. Examples within the context of UCP include:

- Providing visible protective presence and accompaniment for vulnerable civilians. UCP practitioners may, for example, accompany threatened human rights defenders when they travel to document abuses or violations. They may also be visibly present in the homes and workplaces of threatened civilians or monitor public gatherings to prevent the excessive use of force; Establishing safe spaces, weapon-free zones, and peace zones or temporarily relocating civilians under severe threat to 'safe houses'

<sup>10</sup> Direct physical protection is a form of responsive action, though not all responsive action is direct physical protection. As most humanitarians do not apply direct physical protection this distinction is not made in the egg model. Humanitarian actors, such as UNHCR, sometimes refer to direct physical protection and other forms of protection that are not included in the humanitarian framework as 'general protection'.

until the threat is diffused;

- Bringing together conflicting parties in safe and neutral spaces and/or enhancing the capacities of mediators to mediate disputes by accompanying the process with presence and engagement;
- Providing rumour control and the monitoring of ceasefires to de-escalate tensions and enhance advancement of peace processes to final peace agreements;
- Engaging with aggressing parties and facilitating their commitment to uphold international or local norms, not to attack civilians, women, children, the disabled, hospitals, health centres, schools, religious places, and/or foreigners.

**Remedial action** is aimed at supporting people in restoring their dignity and ensuring adequate living conditions subsequent to a pattern of violence. It usually involves access to rehabilitation, restitution, compensation, and repair. Remedial activities are longer-term and aim to assist people living with the effects of a particular pattern of abuse. Examples of remedial action in the context of UCP include:

- Facilitating access to justice and other services for survivors of violence (accompaniment of survivors to hospitals or to state duty bearers to report abuse);
- Facilitating access to international actors such as UN Special Rapporteurs;
- Disseminating information and referring survivors of violence to service providers to ensure appropriate and timely assistance;
- Tracing and reunifying separated, unaccompanied, and abducted children with their families or primary caretakers.<sup>11</sup>

**Environment-building action** refers to a more structural process aimed at creating and/or consolidating an environment conducive to full respect for the rights of individuals and groups. Examples in the context of UCP include:

- Establishing community security meetings or working groups with communities to raise awareness, share information about security or create protection strategies;
- Strengthening or establishing women or youth protection teams and building their capacity;
- Strengthening or supporting the functioning of community-based ceasefire monitoring mechanisms and early warning early response systems;
- Supporting state duty bearers and advocating for additional protection mechanisms (police posts, courts etc.) where necessary;<sup>12</sup>
- Establishing interactive dialogue frameworks in partnership with local actors to connect grassroots peacebuilding structures to higher-level peace process.

By and large, these actions are part and parcel of UN peace operations, where they are employed. But as the UN has acknowledged, UN peacekeeping missions (now called

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11 Humanitarian actors may see this and other examples as ‘responsive action’, as they may take the violence of separation as their reference point rather than the incident of violence that led to the separation. Remedial actions would then be, for example, healing the trauma of separation or resolving problems in the reintegration process.

12 By ratifying a UN human rights treaty or convention, the state (as principal duty bearer) automatically assumes the role of guaranteeing these rights (of the right holders), namely the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil people’s rights. Non-state duty bearers (aka moral duty bearers) include parents, teachers, principals, administrators, NGOs etc.

peace operations) and the UN's Peacebuilding interventions are not always deployed sufficiently or at all in some conflict-affected areas where civilians face serious risks.

## HOW DOES UCP WORK?

*Armed actors on both sides confirm that the presence of a third party 'watching over them', including NP [Nonviolent Peaceforce], has served to temper their behaviour.*

*Gunduz & Torralba, 2014, p. 12*

Frequently people ask, how would unarmed civilians be able to reduce violence and protect civilians? Rather than relying on the threat of armed force, UCP practitioners use physical presence and visibility, networks of relations, community acceptance, and positive engagement to achieve their objectives. While they do not resort to threats, UCP practitioners may bring attention to the costs or negative consequences of abusive behaviour. Modelling nonviolence in a high-intensity conflict creates opportunities for local actors to see alternative ways of responding to conflict or to reinvigorate traditional nonviolent conflict resolution practices.<sup>13</sup> Social norms guide much of behaviour, and many people prefer to cooperate as long as others are doing their share (World Development Report 2015).

UCP is much more proactive than mere presence and observation. The effectiveness of UCP methods comes primarily from coordinating and communicating, engaging with key, armed and unarmed actors, and building multi-layered relationships. Effective coordination and communication with relevant actors and stakeholders at various levels of society open up channels of communication. It also enhances the capacities of local peace infrastructures to respond to incidents of violence and ensure the protection of civilians. Moreover, it increases the acceptance of UCP personnel by all actors and directly improves the security levels of UCP teams in the field.

In situations of violent conflict all parties have multiple sensitivities, vulnerabilities, and points of leverage, and international 'proactive presence' tacitly activates those sensitivities (Mahony, 2006). A conflict party usually wants to appear more legitimate than its opponents. Moreover, most conflict parties have several good reasons to pay attention to third parties: first, because their personal or political reputation is at stake; second, because they want to avoid repercussions including blame, retribution, or sanctions; and finally, because of individual moral concerns (Carriere, 2011) or personal and familial shame. Therefore, "unarmed" does not mean "without influence" or "defenceless".

Negative consequences to potential perpetrators include damage to international status, implied threat of referral to the International Criminal Court, and loss of international aid, political support, tourism, etc. In most contexts of violent conflict, human rights abuses and violations rarely happen when external actors (for example, foreign nationals)

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13 Scientific research on mirror neurons demonstrates that modelling has more than a moral influence; it has a physiological effect on the brain. (Nagler) Please see some examples of this in the case studies that follow.

are present to witness the crimes.<sup>14</sup> Outsiders play a vital role in providing impartial protection or expressing solidarity. In a subtle but important way a third party changes the dynamic of any conflict on a psychological level. Such witnesses greatly increase the likelihood that potential perpetrators will face negative consequences for their actions.

While outsiders have often played a vital protection role in conflict situations, local actors should not be overlooked as effective actors in promoting their own security. For example, when Colombian villagers stood together as a community against abuses by FARC armed actors, it seems that this “civilian pushback activated particular concerns and provided ‘normative cover’ that empowered more dovish commanders over their hard-line or abusive counterparts”, and this “brought about a reset in their default positions about the use of violence”. Furthermore, “evidence indicates that, as in Colombia, local civilian communities and activists in Syria had more success interacting with rebel fronts than well-known global humanitarian organizations that were operating more intermittently and at higher levels of interaction” (Kaplan 2013). Krause documents a case in Nigeria where older women and religious leaders prevented young men from entering their community during inter-communal conflicts. International UCP agencies typically aim to support such communities and to connect their efforts to higher levels of interaction as well as to communities on the other side of conflict fault lines.

Though pressure or discouragement may be needed in certain circumstances, the ‘soft power’ of encouragement is UCP’s preferred strategy.<sup>15</sup> UCP practitioners will try to encourage potential perpetrators to achieve their goals without the use of violence. This is a practice that is rooted in a long tradition of active Nonviolence. Though UCP teams may not be successful in persuading conflict parties to refrain from battle altogether, combatants may be willing to reduce their impact on civilians. They may, for example, be persuaded not to attack schools and hospitals or to agree on a temporary ceasefire that allows for the evacuation of sick and elderly civilians. Such concessions are often the result of a long process of developing relationships and trust with all parties. These accommodations have been negotiated by local people doing UCP-type work as well as by internationals. The nonviolent approach to protection and keeping peace also supports the transition from a culture of violence to a culture of peace and nonviolence. It shows affected communities that it is possible, more often than is expected, to reduce violence without the use of weapons or reliance on armed force. Moreover, it enables these communities to participate actively in the process of peace and security and to shape their own destiny.

*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 you solve the issue, but you may create a bond of confidence with the fellow, an ally who does not perceive*

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14 There are exceptions; in some locations in Iraq or Afghanistan, for example, the presence of foreigners has increased the security risk of local actors. It is crucial to perform a thorough analysis of local context in order to determine whether international presence is likely to have the desired affect or not.

15 When pressure is applied, most often it is applied indirectly through other parties, such as embassies or human rights advocacy organizations that may not have a field presence in the country, at least at senior management level.

*you as an enemy, and who may be useful to solve future cases.*

*ICRC protection officer (Mahony, 2006, p.50)*

## WHAT ARE THE MAJOR STRENGTHS OF UCP?

UCP contributes a number of strengths to the challenging task of reducing violence and protecting civilians. These strengths include:

- the *applicability* of UCP to a wide array of contexts;
- the *flexibility* of UCP due to its bottom-up approach;
- the *accessibility* of UCP personnel to civilians;
- the *level of access* UCP teams get to armed actors and physical locations;
- the *level of trust* they gain and generate;
- the use of *nonpartisan advocacy* for civilian protection;
- the *unarmed status* of UCP practitioners, which reduces risk of harm to civilians and promotes the perception locally and internationally that they are agents of peace;
- the promotion of *sustainable self-protection* and *peacebuilding* in the communities in which UCP is deployed; and
- the *modelling of nonviolent behaviour* in a high intensity conflict



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Lazaro, F. (2012.) *On Mindanao, Protecting Civilians in a Combat Zone with Eyes and Notepad*, PBS Newshour, [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/world/july-dec12/mindanao\\_12-25.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/world/july-dec12/mindanao_12-25.html)
- Unarmed Civilian Protection, <https://tinyurl.com/Overview-UCP><sup>16</sup>
- Detering violence in emergencies, Jonglei, South Sudan<sup>17</sup>
- <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6xXWYhAU8biM1VnNjJxc0lZU0k/edit>

### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Wallis, T. (2010). Civilian Peacekeeping. *Oxford Encyclopedia of Peace* <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/civilian-peacekeeping-entry-oxford-encyclopedia-peace-oup-2009>
- Shah, K. (2013). *Diary of a Peacekeeper*. Page 5 of this document: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/news/newsletters/2013/fn2013winter.pdf>
- Schweitzer, C. (ed.) (2010). *Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely Tapped Resource*. Belm-Vehrte, Germany: Sozio Publishing. [http://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/news/CP\\_A\\_Barely\\_Tapped\\_Resource.pdf](http://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/news/CP_A_Barely_Tapped_Resource.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> This video, sponsored by the Permanent Missions to the UN of Australia and Belgium introduced UCP at and event at the UN in May 2018.

<sup>17</sup> This video presentation provides background information on the case study presented in box 2



# 1.2

## Definition of terms

### UNARMED

Unarmed means not equipped with or carrying weapons (Oxford, n.d.). In the context of UCP this means that organizations or agencies implementing UCP will not be equipped with or use weapons to protect themselves or their beneficiaries. It sends a clear message to all parties that they are not taking part in the conflict and pose no physical threat to anyone. UCP personnel are less of a target than those who carry weapons, and they may gain access to areas where armed peacekeepers are not welcome.

Whereas the reliance on armed force, including force protection by a third party, is avoided by all organizations and agencies that implement UCP, their approach towards local actors who carry or use weapons varies. These variations depend on the local context, the nature of the conflict, and the mandate of the organization. Many UCP agencies will not provide protection services to individuals and groups that are equipped with weapons. In some cases UCP agencies do not provide any services at all to armed actors, including capacity development for security forces. In other cases UCP groups will provide training to armed groups on human rights and humanitarian issues like the Grave Violations of Children's Rights. However, grey areas remain, especially for rural areas. Here, the distinction between an armed and unarmed actor can be hard to make. Traditional weapons (e.g. machetes, spears) play a prominent role in daily life (for cutting grass, fishing, etc.). Moreover, people may appear unarmed but could secretly be part of an armed militia group, for example.

### CIVILIAN

The International Committee of the Red Cross defines civilians as those persons who are not combatants (members of military/paramilitary forces) or members of organized armed groups as parties to a conflict. The ICRC also excludes those who participate in a mass uprising (ICRC). A combatant, on the other hand, is defined as a person who takes an active part in hostilities, who can kill, and who, in turn, is regarded as a lawful military target. He or she can be a member of the armed forces (other than medical personnel and religious ministers), or of an armed organized group. Under international humanitarian law, armed forces are subject to an internal disciplinary system, which must enforce compliance with the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict.

The definition of "civilian" is important because UCP is carried out *by* civilians *for* civilians. At its core and on the outset, it is a partnership between UCP teams and local civil society, or organized by civil society within its own communities (though other partnerships may develop with local government, security sector, and humanitarian organizations over time). This partnership includes the invitation from local civil society organizations (mostly from NGOs) for UCP organizations to establish a physical

presence in their country and in specific communities within that country. The civilian-to-civilian partnership derives from global solidarity among civilians, some of whom have experienced similar violence elsewhere. Moreover, it de-emphasizes the role of armed conflict parties as the *sole* actors involved in providing protection and managing security. Finally, it encourages civil society leaders and organizations to increase their role as peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peacebuilders.

Though the definition of a civilian may appear to be clear, it sometimes creates confusion for UCP implementers at the field level. In areas of protracted conflict, a disproportionately large segment of society has been or still is affiliated in one way or another with armed forces. They may not be bearing arms, but may be aiding armed forces or groups. For example, members of local civil society organizations may be employed by the armed forces because NGO work does not allow them to make an adequate living; or a church minister in one small village may be employed in a neighbouring village as a police inspector. (For more information on civilian immunity, see module 2). Moreover, those aiding armed groups may do so freely and voluntarily, but they may also do so in response to pressure and threats from the armed group.

## PROTECTION

Protection is defined by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as a concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee, and international humanitarian law.<sup>18</sup> Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution, and rehabilitation. This is a very broad definition that can be applied to nearly every effort that aims to make an improvement in people's access to their rights in any situation. It allows for a holistic approach to protection that includes the access to medical care, freedom of movement, and the recognition of dignity. It has also made humanitarian and development actors more aware of the potential threats and opportunities their interventions pose to the safety and security of affected populations in situations of war and violent conflict as well as natural disasters and famine.

Though protection mainstreaming or 'safe programming' has broadened the discourse about the safety and security of civilians in high-risk situations, it has also created a false impression about the amount of attention and resources dedicated directly to physical safety and security—the core of what most people think of as protection.<sup>19</sup> In order to understand protection within the context of UCP it is useful to distinguish four different areas of protection. These areas are visualized in the multi-layered onion model, shown in figure 3.

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18 IDP Protection Policy. (IASC, 1999). The definition was originally adopted by a 1999 Workshop of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Protection.

19 Studies into peacebuilding projects also mention the lack of attention to and the need for direct protection. Comparing 13 case studies on the role of civil society in peacebuilding, Thania Paffenholz mentions this as one of her most striking findings: 'while protection was always highly relevant during armed conflict and war, it was performed only to a far lower degree.' (Paffenholz, 2009, p.6).



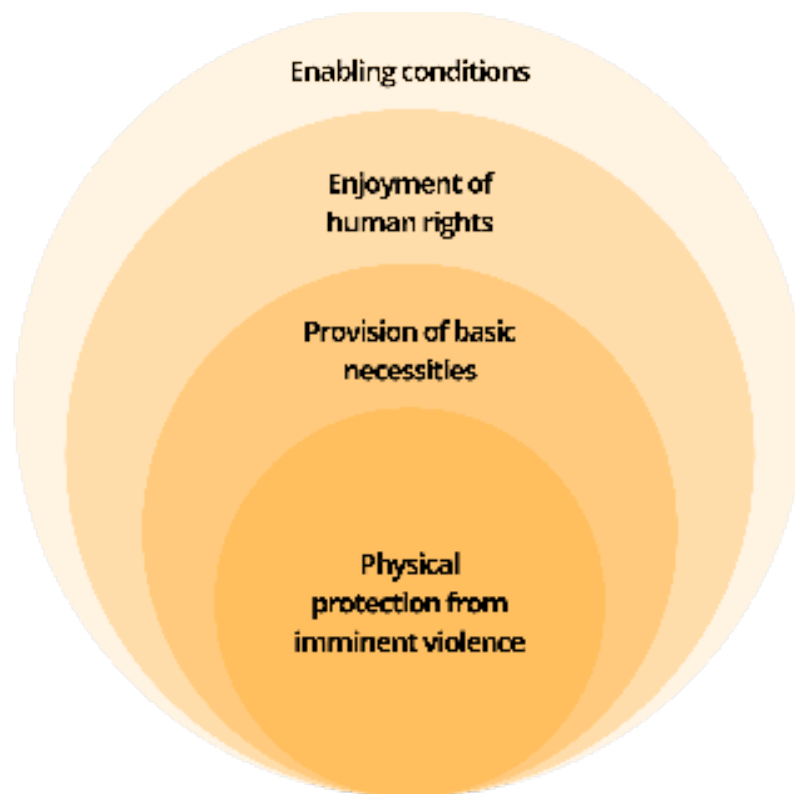


Figure 3: This multi-layered onion model, created by Paul D. Williams (Williams, 2010, p.22), is an adaptation of the ICRC's egg model, depicted in figure 2. It shows four layers of protection. UCP practitioners, like the military, the police, and UN peacekeepers, mainly operate in the red-coloured area of physical protection from imminent violence.

The first and broadest area of protection relates to long-term environment building work that creates the enabling conditions necessary for the enjoyment of human rights. Setting policies and acceding to international conventions form part of this work. It does not target specific moments of abuse. It aims to build structures and capacities to change attitudes in society, which will make abuse less likely to occur in the future. This category is similar to the category of 'environment building' depicted in the ICRC egg model of figure 2.

The second area of protection relates more directly to the enjoyment of human rights. Here the focus is to protect, promote, and fulfil human rights. It aims to raise awareness about injustice or abuse and to reform or remove damaging structures that make abuse more likely. Examples include the promotion of equal rights for women and men, access to justice by minority groups, and attention to good governance practices. Many human rights advocacy groups as well as rights-based development agencies that contribute to protection operate in this area. Unlike the outer layer, this work is generally in reaction to abuses and the threats of abuse.

The third area of protection relates to the provision of basic necessities. Elizabeth Ferris has called this "humanitarian protection" or "access to lifesaving assistance" (Ferris, 2011, loc.3804). It is a more immediate response to a particular situation of violence or

crisis and relates to the incorporation of protection into humanitarian relief. For some, aid itself *is* protection. As Furnari describes in her analysis of local ceasefire monitors in the Philippines, “many believe that aid is a form of protection and protection a form of aid” (Furnari, 2016.) Ferris points out that humanitarian protection is usually not about preventing people from getting hurt, but responding to people who are already hurt (i.e. remedial action). It includes for example the timely delivery of medical assistance to protect survivors of violence from further harm or the provision of life-saving information to populations affected by natural disasters. While one may conclude that the protection efforts of humanitarian agencies fits this category, most agencies would rather place such efforts in the previous layer (i.e. protection as the enjoyment of human rights). They would point out that, in addition to providing lifesaving assistance (in a safe manner), they are taking steps to reduce risk and restore well-being and dignity of people affected by crises (i.e. Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action).

*We humanitarians need to be honest about what we call protection. Limited risk reduction or raising awareness should not be branded ‘protection’ activities when we know the word conveys so much more to the public. That is false advertising—placing the shiny wrapper of protection on our work and handing it to a public unable to look inside the box. Put simply, the protection fig-leaf is our creation, and it is our responsibility to put it right.*

*Marc DuBois, Executive Director, Médecins Sans Frontières – United Kingdom  
(Dubois, 2010, p 4.)*

The fourth area of protection relates to physical protection from imminent violence or physical safety and security. It is based on a minimalist definition of protection as “defending or guarding from imminent danger or injury”. Physical protection includes direct interventions to prevent people from getting hurt and to remove or reduce threats. Traditionally, this has been the domain of the military and the police. Currently, unarmed civilians are increasingly involved in this area of protection, both within UN peace operations and within civil society groups. This reflects the recognition of the unmet need for the protection of civilians. **UCP practitioners can operate in all four areas of protection, but their main focus lies with providing physical protection from imminent violence.**<sup>20</sup>

## PEACEKEEPING

Peacekeeping, as defined by the UN, is action undertaken to preserve peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers (United Nations, n.d., p.97). Peacekeepers are defined as ‘military, police and civilian personnel, who work to deliver security, political and early peacebuilding support’ (United Nations n.d.). Some NGOs that apply UCP also use the

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20 The role of UCP practitioners in providing basic necessities is minimal. They usually don’t provide material aid, but they may provide life-saving assistance by, for example, accompanying or transporting survivors of violence to hospitals in rural areas. See also appendix 3 for a comparative chart on UCP and “humanitarian protection.”

term peacekeeping or “keeping peace”. They would define it somewhat differently, i.e. as “action undertaken to prevent or reduce violence, provide direct protection to civilians, and stabilize the environment to make serious peace processes possible” (Carriere, 2011). Furthermore, UCP organizations do not portray their efforts as ‘delivering security’. They prefer to describe their activities as collaborative action undertaken by UCP personnel and local actors to increase the safety and security of vulnerable populations and individuals.

The role of peacekeeping and keeping peace can be understood better when it is contrasted with peacemaking and peacebuilding. Johan Galtung, one of the pioneers of peace research, suggests that all conflicts have three major components (Galtung, 2000). First, there are the *Attitudes* (A) of the conflicting parties. These attitudes tend to become more and more hostile towards each other as the conflict escalates. In order to reach some sort of settlement of the conflict, the parties must first change their attitudes and perceptions of each other. This, broadly speaking, Galtung defined as the process of *peacemaking*. Second, attitudes in conflict situations are very much affected by the *Behaviour* (B) of the belligerents. Escalating degrees of violence make it more and more difficult to see the mutual benefit of ending a conflict. Therefore, it is essential to find ways of tackling the violence itself in order to de-escalate the situation and to enable the peacemaking process to develop. Galtung defines this as the task of *peacekeeping*. Third, there is the matter, or matters, over which the conflict is being waged, or the *Causes* (C) of the conflict. Tackling the actual causes of the conflict or structural violence is what Galtung defines as *peacebuilding* (Wallis & Junge, 2001, p.3).

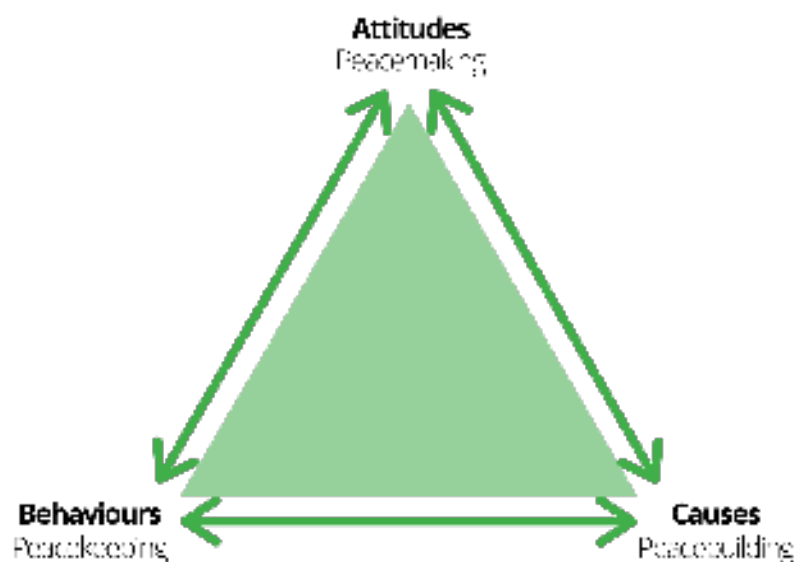


Figure 4: Galtung's ABC Conflict Triangle

Conflicts generally pass through well-recognized stages, including the very early stages of *latent conflict*, which may simmer for years, before yielding to a *confrontation stage*. This is the stage during which attitudes harden and options are closed, until the confrontation turns into a *crisis stage* of actual hostilities. The crisis will sooner or later lead to an *outcome*, a stage in which levels of tension, confrontation, and violence decrease. Finally,

there is at least one *post-crisis* stage, often a precursor to the next conflict and the cycle starting all over again. While described here as linear, as will be discussed later in this course (Module 4), conflict is rarely so neatly segmented. Peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding are usually positioned in specific stages of the conflict. Peacemaking is most often launched after a crisis. Peacekeeping follows peacemaking and is sustained until the situation is stable enough for peacebuilding, which is usually carried out during the post-crisis stage. Though knowledge of the different stages and of the corresponding interventions allow UCP practitioners to better understand the roles they can play in these stages, the reality of peace and war is often more complex. Many conflicts relapse into the crisis stage more than once before entering a more stable post-crisis stage.

The world has been more successful at peacemaking than peacebuilding. According to Uppsala University, in the period between 1975 and 2011, only 125 peace agreements out of 216 were followed by the termination of violence for at least five years (Högbladh, n.d., p.51). Former parties in the conflict often underestimate the complexity of addressing the underlying causes of conflict and resume arms before the peacebuilding process can be completed. Sustained peacekeeping efforts can reduce the chance of a premature return to hostilities. In other words, peacekeeping is a key link between peacemaking and peacebuilding. If effective peacekeeping does not occur, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and development efforts risk failure almost as soon as they have begun—too soon for local actors to address the underlying causes of violence.

**As UCP aims to mitigate or prevent violence in order to de-escalate situations, it is essentially a peacekeeping intervention.** However, unlike UN peacekeeping, which is generally applied after an official peace agreement has been reached, UCP may be applied in all stages of a conflict. It is generally a ‘bottom up’ approach, starting with individuals and/or communities, while frequently linking to wider arenas of conflict. It can be launched before a crisis occurs to prevent violence. It can also be sustained when peacebuilding efforts are well underway to ensure that the cycle of violence does not start all over again. Depending on the organization mission and context, UCP practitioners may be directly or indirectly involved in peacemaking or peacebuilding. They may accompany peacemaking processes and provide a safer space for local actors to make and build peace. They may also facilitate the contribution of people at the grassroots to ‘track one’<sup>21</sup> peacemaking activities. Throughout this process UCP practitioners serve to underline the centrality of the protection of civilians. More information about the stages of conflict, and the application of UCP in various stages, will be provided in module 4.

## NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolence can be defined as the use of peaceful means, not military or physical coercion, to bring about political or social change. For many, nonviolence is more than that; a way of life, "a kind of energy we can learn to develop and deploy in human interactions" (Nagler, 2020, p.16). According to Martin Luther King, Jr. "Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit.

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21 Track One refers to official government diplomacy whereby communication and interaction is between governments. Track Two Diplomacy is the unofficial interaction and intervention of non-state actors. Track Two was coined and developed by the US diplomat Joseph Montville.

You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him” (Cain, 1964). As an ethical philosophy, nonviolence upholds the view that moral behaviour excludes the use of violence; as a political philosophy it maintains that violence is self-perpetuating and can never provide a means to a lasting peaceful end. As a principle, it supports the pacifist position that war and killing are never justified. As a practice, pacifists and non-pacifists have used nonviolence to achieve social change and express resistance to oppression (Peace Pledge Union n.d.). It is this framework of philosophy, principle, and especially practice that distinguishes ‘nonviolence’ from ‘unarmed’. Unarmed only explains that a person or group is not equipped with or carrying weapons. Nonviolence assumes that people take active roles, making choices and commitments and building on their experience.

The degree to which principle, philosophy, and practice are applied greatly differ among practitioners of nonviolence. Some practitioners regard the principle and philosophy as ideal, but not always applicable, or may even reject them altogether. They practice nonviolence because they believe it to be the most effective or least costly strategy for social or political change in a particular situation. They may also use nonviolence for the lack of better alternatives because a military or other violent option is not available or viable. There are also those practitioners who adhere to the principle and philosophy of nonviolence under any circumstances. For these practitioners nonviolence is a moral stance and a way of life. UCP does not choose between these two positions. The fact that nonviolence is a key principle of UCP simply means that it is part of the mandate of UCP agencies and that UCP team members strictly adhere to nonviolence under all circumstances during their employment. It does not imply that individual UCP practitioners view nonviolence as a way of life or a moral stance. Nonviolence will be further explored in section 4 of this module as well as in module 2.

## PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Proactive engagement refers first of all to the need of being proactive for the sake of providing protection. This engagement involves building relationships—ideally, in advance of a conflict—with relevant actors and other stakeholders at all levels, from grassroots on up. It also involves opening up and maintaining reliable channels of communications among relevant actors. Those who are working to protect civilians may use relationships and communication channels with conflicting parties on all sides to call for a temporary ceasefire or a humanitarian corridor to evacuate vulnerable populations or individuals. Moreover, proactive engagement involves enhancing the capacities of key actors to ensure protection of civilians. You will find more information on proactive engagement in module 3.

Some UCP practitioners describe the method of proactive engagement as “proactive presence”. Both terms distinguish the method described in the previous paragraph from the presence of international observers who do not purposefully use their presence to maximize its protective potential for civilians. The UN Office on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect declares that the “presence of the United Nations, INGOs or other international or regional actors in the country and with access to populations” can “contribute to preventing or lessening the impact of serious acts of violence” against vulnerable populations, while the absence of an international presence



increases the risk of atrocities.<sup>22</sup> Many observers, monitors, and humanitarian aid staff do make conscious efforts to have a protective influence, even when it is not part of their mandate. When foreign nationals do not or cannot engage proactively, however, their presence may offer some protection, or it may have no effect at all. If they are present and fail to respond, their inaction could even be taken as tacit acceptance of abuses. Just as the presence of food warehouses does not guarantee food security in a famine, so it cannot be assumed that, simply by being there, an international presence provides protection.

*What is needed...is not passive presence for its own sake, but well informed and carefully analysed strategies and tactics that use the presence of each [UCP practitioner] to influence all the actors around them.*

*Liam Mahony, 2006*

## MONITORING

Monitoring is essentially the practice of observing compliance to a standard. Within the context of civilian protection, this standard usually refers to specific human rights laws or a set of provisions outlined in ceasefire agreements. In conjunction with documenting and reporting, monitoring is usually regarded as a systematic and purposeful collection of data as well as the analysis and dissemination of such data for immediate use by relevant and interested parties.

Within the context of UCP, monitoring goes beyond observing and reporting to designated institutions on compliance with agreements. It involves direct engagement with ceasefire parties or combatants at the field level to prompt immediate interventions to reduce violence against civilians. UCP monitoring may take place within a formal structure, or not. Monitoring within the context of UCP also refers to observing the security situation for the purpose of rumour control or Early Warning Early Response. The observation of political events (e.g. demonstrations, elections), legal proceedings (e.g. trials, tribunals), or social processes (e.g. holidays, celebrations, parades) in situations of potential violence is often referred to as monitoring as well. All of these activities are then a mixture between monitoring and proactive engagement. The monitoring of a trial may be intended to observe compliance to the law as well as to provide protection to lawyers, witnesses, or the accused through physical presence and visibility. More information on monitoring will be provided in module 3.

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building relations with local and international key actors at the grassroots, middle-range, and top levels of society (including, for example, UN Special Rapporteurs) is one of the central components of UCP. Relationships are in a sense the core 'tools' for UCP whether undertaken by local people in self-protection, or by people from outside the community.

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<sup>22</sup> United Nations, Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes - A tool for prevention, 2014, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/548afd5f4.html> [accessed 14 August 2020]

Relationships are used to prevent or reduce violence, create community acceptance, control rumours, communicate needs, dissuade potential perpetrators, connect communities with duty bearers, and influence decision makers. A crucial element for the effectiveness of UCP comes from establishing, maintaining, and improving relationships with actors who have the power to influence potential perpetrators of violence or parties in conflict. These actors include government representatives, armed actors (state and non-state), clan chiefs, and local religious and community leaders. While establishing such relationships inherently provides some protection, these influential persons can be specifically called upon if and when threats do occur. They may be able to use their influence to dissuade potential perpetrators from actualizing their threat.

## CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

Communities are not blank slates. Capacity enhancement begins with recognizing the protection mechanisms that already exist. It then strengthens knowledge, skills, and abilities that individuals or groups deem relevant. In the context of UCP, capacity is enhanced in order to increase knowledge about and effectiveness of local efforts, mechanisms, and protocols for violence prevention and protection. Capacity enhancement is not limited to training civil society organizations and armed actors, but often involves a longer-term process of supporting local actors, recognizing their own expertise and then exploring their full potential as peacemakers, peacebuilders or human rights defenders. This may include assistance in expanding networks, strengthening security management systems, or the establishment of self-sustaining protection networks. Capacity enhancement at the grassroots level is most effective when it is tailor-made, context-specific, participatory, and embedded in long-term strategies that are driven by local actors. More information on capacity enhancement will be provided in module 3.

# 1.3

## The spectrum of UCP

If you look at the Venn diagram in Figure 1, you see three main regions representing important components defining UCP. One region comprises the key principles of UCP, including, for example, nonviolence, nonpartisanship, independence. Another represents the key sources of guidance: the international conventions on humanitarian protections, human rights law, refugee law, and resolutions regarding women, children, and other vulnerable persons. The third region contains the key methods of UCP: proactive engagement, monitoring, relationship building, and capacity enhancement. The key skills are related to the key methods, but are not central to defining UCP for our purposes. The different components of the diagram will be explored in more detail in module 2 (key principles and sources of guidance) and module 3 (key methods) and module 4 (key skills).

Where the three regions intersect is a triangular shaped area called ‘Core UCP’. This means that efforts of keeping peace and protecting civilians are regarded as ‘UCP’ when they draw on all three regions. The word ‘core’ has been added, because there is no consensus on a definitive list of methods and principles that constitutes ‘UCP proper’. Even where UCP actors follow the same principles and methods, there are subtle differences in their interpretation and application as well as the language that they use to describe them.

Adding to this complexity is the fact that UCP organizations rarely, if ever, apply the identified principles, methods, and sources of guidance all together in the exact same format. Instead, they are used in a strategic mix selected on a case-by-case basis, specific to focused populations and conflict and appropriate to context. Therefore, UCP will look different in different situations and at different phases of the conflict. It is more of a systems approach than a static set of practices. An overly rigid definition of UCP ignores the necessary flexibility and systemic nature of this practice and could stifle its creativity. Hence, this section presents UCP as a spectrum of efforts that are more or less ‘core UCP’. Examples and case studies will be used throughout the course modules to illustrate the variety of situations and responses.

This spectrum of UCP can be placed within a wider field of unarmed (and armed) efforts for the protection of civilians (see figure 2 and 3, section 1.2). As stated before, a whole host of actors are involved in addressing the protection needs of civilians (see definition of protection in section 2 above). The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), for example, is a well-known unarmed, nonpartisan, civilian actor that engages parties in situations of violent conflict to prevent violence. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) like the African Union (AU), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also organize unarmed missions with civilians, sometimes in conjunction with armed interventions and sometimes not. UN peace operations (managed by the UN’s Department of Peace Operations, DPO) include police and other civilians whose work concerns protection, although these personnel typically are less than 15% of the mission.

Whether these actors and the organizations they represent should be placed inside (at the edges) or outside of the UCP spectrum is debatable. One could argue that most of these organizations are aligned to or reliant on armed forces. Furthermore, none of them are independent of agendas and commitments made by international bodies far from the field and often controlled by complex geo-political power relationships. Others argue that these multi-lateral organizations cannot carry out UCP fully, but they can use various UCP methods to expand their ability to protect. Some people have argued that the efforts of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal, could be regarded as UCP (see module 3). A similar case could be made for the unarmed EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia that has contributed to improving the security situation through visible presence and daily patrolling in high-risk areas, reporting of incidents, and confidence building (EUMM, n.d.). UN Volunteers, too, have found themselves in situations where they performed UCP (Weiss & Minear, 1996). As previously mentioned, although the presence of international field staff (whether election monitors, human rights monitors, or humanitarian aid staff) may in itself have some protective impact, UCP implies consciously and intentionally using presence to protect other civilians. The ICRC is a special case: it has legally defined rights, of long



standing, to be active in zones of war.<sup>23</sup> As a hybrid IGO-INGO it is specifically mandated to ensure compliance with the Geneva Conventions and related humanitarian laws, with a focus on the protection of prisoners of war and political prisoners, but also on other victims of armed conflicts to whom it provides humanitarian relief assistance (Carriere, 2011).<sup>24</sup>

If a classification were to be made, however, the UCP spectrum could be distinguished from the wider field of unarmed protection efforts by:

- 1. a reliance on physical presence at the community level to respond to imminent threats of violence:** Field level means the place where violence takes place, whether that is an isolated jungle or the suburbs of a modern city. High-level diplomacy, training and advocacy may play a significant role, but immediate responses on ground are the centre of gravity;<sup>25</sup>
- 2. deep engagement with communities:** Strategies and practices are developed with communities, enhancing many of the protection mechanisms that they already have in place;
- 3. the centrality of direct protection methods:** While their actual use may be limited in some areas or periods, they remain at the core of violence prevention and protection strategies; and
- 4. a deliberate use of Nonviolent methods to protect civilians.** This implies a shift in thinking about the use of and reliance on (the threat of) force. It underlines the distinction between unarmed and Nonviolent.

While definitions and models have their limitations, they help to clarify the niche that UCP fills. It operates primarily within the innermost circle of the protection onion (Figure 3), unlike most other humanitarian efforts. Traditionally, this is the domain of the military and the police. Currently, unarmed civilians are increasingly involved in this area of protection, within UN peace operations, humanitarian programs and within civil society groups. This reflects the growing recognition of the unmet need for the protection of civilians (Paffenholz, 2009). UCP practitioners can operate in all four circles of the protection “onion”, but their main focus lies with providing physical protection from imminent violence.

In no way does this differentiation imply a value judgement about the effectiveness or contribution of organizations that operate in other layers of the protection field. In fact, they all share the terrain, having different peace mandates, fulfilling complementary roles in protecting civilians, deterring violence and developing local peace infrastructures. Our interest here is to highlight the unique role that UCP plays among the various layers of protection work.

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23 The ICRC also has financial security, with significant funding from governments.

24 ICRC also sets authoritative standards for protection actors constituting the minimum obligations that apply to any humanitarian or human rights organization (including UCP organizations) engaged in protection work in armed conflict and other situations of violence (ICRC 2013).

25 Some UCP organizations don't operate at the field level because of government restrictions, but they still focus their efforts on field-based protection responses, albeit indirectly, through enhancing local capacity for UCP.

# 1.4

## UCP, peacekeeping, and nonviolence

*The decision to go to Bougainville unarmed caused some angst in the Australian Defence Force at the time, but it was the right one. At least two occasions I encountered may have gone differently if we had been armed. Perhaps more fundamentally, the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) experience reaffirmed for me that the role of peacekeepers is to not only stand between the warring sides to prevent more suffering but also to encourage the coming together of divided people.*

*Andrew Rice, Australian Department of Defence, 1999 (Schweitzer, 2010, p.7)*

UCP is rooted in two main fields of practice: one field of practice is that of peacekeeping, and the other is the practice of Nonviolence.<sup>26</sup> This section provides a brief overview of both and describes how UCP is a fusion of these two. Some UCP practitioners argue that UCP is also rooted in peacebuilding and/or human rights advocacy. In this module they are presented together with humanitarian assistance, as fields of practice that have influenced UCP as it evolved (see section 1.4.4.).

### 1.4.1

#### Peacekeeping

*Over the last 50 years of peacekeeping, when it has been successful, it has not been the tanks or the machine guns that have kept the peace. In fact, these have been rarely used. It's been the blue helmets themselves that kept the peace, or rather, what they represent. Soldiers on UN peacekeeping missions represent the UN; they represent the international community; they represent world public opinion. That's what gives them the authority ... to actually keep the parties from fighting each other, to keep the environment safe for civilians, and to create the conditions for peacemaking and peacebuilding activities.*

*Tim Wallis, Former Executive Director of Nonviolent Peaceforce (Schweitzer, 2010 p.29)*

UCP also builds on the practice of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping was 'invented' during the 1956 Suez Crisis by Lester B. Pearson, then Canadian Secretary of State for External

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26 Recognizing there are significant differences in size, scope and process with UN peacekeeping.

Affairs who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this work. Working with UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and Dr. Ralph Bunche, UN Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs, Pearson crafted the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). UNEF was a lightly armed international military force that occupied an interpositional buffer zone between the belligerent parties, with their consent. Peacekeeping troops were “to use their weapons only in self-defence and even then with the utmost of constraint”.<sup>27</sup> The purpose of UNEF, and of the other peacekeeping missions that were deployed during the Cold War, was to stabilize international conflicts. By this method, time and space were provided for politicians and diplomats to work out a long-term durable solution. Eighteen such missions were deployed before 1990.<sup>28</sup>

The beginning of modern peacekeeping operations coincides with the end of the Cold War in 1989–90. A new type of violent conflict came to characterize the international scene. These wars were mostly intra-national (as opposed to inter-national) and often involved *several* belligerent factions. Conflicts involved regular military forces, militias, insurgents, heavily armed organized criminals, brigand bands, local warlords, and petty criminals. While local in scope these wars are often proxies for larger geo-political conflicts and/or to protect resource exploitation, arms trades, and other illicit activities. Civilian elements of the population frequently became the target or object of military operations conducted by one or more of the fighting forces.

While the Charter of the United Nations specifically prohibits Member States from interfering in the internal affairs of other states, the vicious internal wars and genocides of the 1990s (e.g. Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia) have led to a broader interpretation of what this means. The Security Council has authorized intervention, under the provisions of Chapter VII, whenever an internal situation presented a sufficient threat to international peace, security, and stability. These modern peacekeeping operations are dramatically different from the majority of the earlier operations that preceded them during the Cold War period (Morrison et al, 1999, p.1572).

Alan Doss, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) observed that the resolution authorizing the first multi-dimensional peacekeeping mission in the Congo in 1960 (MONUC) was three paragraphs long. He goes on to say that “MONUC[’s] ... last mandate resolution had something like forty-nine operational paragraphs covering, at the top, protection of civilians, first priority, but then added everything else that followed including monitoring illegal smuggling of minerals, arms, you name it. Once we have recognized that we need a comprehensive approach, we knew we needed more civilians.” (Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2012)

One important difference is the incorporation of the protection of civilians into the

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27 Background UNEF, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/unef1backgr1.html>

28 Note that the very first ‘peacekeeping’ type of operation conducted by the UN (before the term ‘peacekeeping’ was coined), which was in Palestine in 1948, was unarmed. UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization) consisted of unarmed military observers, essentially a military operation but without weapons (Schweitzer 2010, p.27).

mandate of peacekeeping operations.<sup>29</sup> The notion of protection of civilians first appeared in the UN Secretary-General's Report on the Situation of Africa of 13 April 1998 (S/1998/318 or A/52/871) (UN Security Council 1998). In this report Kofi Annan referred to the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict as a 'humanitarian imperative'.<sup>30</sup> Since then, the notion of protection of civilians has become more and more central to the mandate of peacekeeping operations. The first mission provided with explicit protection language in the mandate 'to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence', was authorized in 1999.<sup>31</sup> By 2012, approximately 90% of nearly 100,000 uniformed UN peacekeepers deployed worldwide were operating under such a mandate.

Among recent noteworthy developments regarding the protection of civilians in the context of peacekeeping operations are UN publications such as *Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines* in 2008 (United Nations n.d.) and the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. The 2008 Guidelines aimed to address the intentional targeting of civilian populations during armed conflicts. It also called for the mainstreaming of the protection of civilians into the planning and conduct of peacekeeping. Finally, it clarified that missions may have to use force to ensure effective protection. The R2P doctrine states that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from four types of crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (2005 United Nations World Summit (A/RES/60/1, para. 138-140). If the state cannot or will not protect its civilians from these four crimes the international community has a responsibility to protect, first by providing resources to the state and only as a last resort, when approved by the UN Security Council, sending international troops to protect civilians. It was unanimously adopted in 2005 by the United Nations World Summit of Heads of States and Governments and reaffirmed a year later by the UN Security Council. Although R2P has not been included as part of the rationale for a mission since the 2011 intervention in Libya, the norms expressed are still of concern and instructive. In 2005 the Security Council also established a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism to monitor, document and report on the Six Grave Child Rights Violations. In 2016 the Security Council also passed a resolution 2286 (2016) strongly condemning attacks against medical facilities and personnel in conflict situations.

Though the protection of civilians has become central to UN peacekeeping operations, it took time to develop an understanding of what it meant operationally. An independent study, commissioned in 2008 by the UNDPKO (now DPO) and OCHA on the implementation of protection mandates in peacekeeping operations concluded: 'Strikingly, despite ten years of statements by the [Security] Council, adoption of three iterations of the Aide Mémoire and a number of mission specific and thematic resolutions,

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29 Though the protection of civilians only became part of the mandate of UN peace operations in 1999, it was long practiced by others, such as the ICRC and the UNHCR.

30 The following year the United National General Assembly approved the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, often called the 'UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders' (UN General Assembly, 1999). This was a full century after the Conventions of The Hague of 1899 (and then again 1907) on the protection of civilians in war were ratified and became international law.

31 This refers to the UN Peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

no Council document offers an operational definition of what protection of civilians means for peacekeeping operations...’ (Holt et al, 2009, p.57). These shortcomings were soon addressed (Breakey et al, 2012), and in 2010 DPKO issued the Operational Concept on the Protection of Civilians in Peace Operations (UNDPKO, 2010), which further articulated and clarified the meaning of protection of civilians in peace operations.

Most recently, in 2020, the DPO Handbook *The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping*<sup>32</sup> incorporated and translated into action the principles set out in the recently revised *DPO Policy on the Protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping*<sup>33</sup> and brought together the best practices of protection of civilians (PoC) in UN peacekeeping. The handbook restates the main features of the UN protection of civilians mandate as being:

- without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state;
- a coordinated and integrated action of civilian and uniformed mission components;
- to deter and respond to threats of physical violence against civilians;
- to respond within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment, through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force (p.3).

The handbook explains each of these features and captures lessons from a wide range of experiences to provide all mission components (civilian, police and military) with practical guidance, tools, and techniques to interpret and implement PoC mandates in contexts that vary greatly.

Increasingly the UN is recognizing the need for both unarmed approaches and the role of civilians in the protection of civilians. UCP is now included in numerous studies, reports and policies, as well as specifically cited in four Security Council resolutions and one General Assembly resolution.

*The privileging of the military response to violent conflict is counter-productive. All three reports offer a critique of the current privileging of huge, military-heavy peace operations. The current financing system favours this response to crisis and conflict, and this is exaggerated by the imperative to be seen to act quickly and decisively. All three reports see the UN’s preoccupation with militarised solutions as an obstacle to lasting peace and something that needs to change. The Global Study is very explicit with regard to the fact that militarised solutions, and the resulting militarisation of society, are detrimental to women’s security. This is a claim that is based on a solid body of research.*

*E. Stamnes, and Osland, K., The Synthesis Report: Reviewing UN Peace Operations, the UN Peacebuilding Architecture and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, p. 23, 2016.*

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32 [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo\\_poc\\_handbook\\_final\\_as\\_printed.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo_poc_handbook_final_as_printed.pdf)

33 DPO Policy on The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping





### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Listen)

- *Lester Pearson's Suez Solution*, <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/war-conflict/peacekeeping/peacekeeper-to-the-world/lester-pearsons-suez-solution.html>

## 1.4.2 Nonviolence

*Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. ... man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

UCP is built on a legacy of the use of nonviolent methods in movements for civil and political rights. Examples can be found from all over the world. They include nonviolent struggles against colonialism and dictatorships, campaigns against racism and police brutality, for women's rights, and the development of peace armies (i.e. organized units of unarmed men and women who place themselves between conflicting parties to prevent violence). The examination of such examples shows the variety of strategies, methods and applications, and the adaptability of active nonviolence. Only recently has serious attention been paid to the task of documenting and classifying early nonviolent methods (Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group Inc. 2005, p.19).

The association of nonviolent struggle with pacifism, passivity, weakness, religious beliefs, or isolated street protests has contributed to misconceptions about this phenomenon. However, recent studies on nonviolent campaigns against repressive regimes indicate that nonviolent campaigns are actually, by and large, more effective than violent campaigns. Analysing 323 campaigns from 1900 to 2006, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan found that major nonviolent campaigns have achieved success 53 percent of the time (with a 20 percent failure rate), compared with 26 percent for violent resistance campaigns (with a 60 percent failure rate).<sup>34</sup> Their research also shows an increasing success rate of nonviolent campaigns from 1940 to 2006, ranging from less than 40 percent success in the period from 1940 to 1949 to almost 70 percent in the period from 2000 to 2006. Campaigns using armed force, on the other hand, show a gradual decrease in success, ranging from over 40 percent to over 10 percent of success in the same periods (Chenoweth et al, 2011).

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34 Chenoweth et al; (2011) The balance refers to partial success

To place UCP in its proper context, it is important to understand the usual classifications of strategic nonviolent action:

- **To disrupt the status quo:** Nonviolent actions are used as a way to change social, political or economic conditions (e.g. Gandhi’s campaign for Indian independence, the US Civil Rights Movement). Nonviolent action is most frequently associated with these types of campaigns and activities;
- **To protect the status quo:** Nonviolent tactics are used for civilian-based defence of a country or territory against invasions and aggressors or to protect local customs and social structures from aggressors within a country. Professor Gene Sharp, a scholar of non-violent struggle suggests, “Their weaponry consists of a vast variety of forms of psychological, economic, social, and political resistance and counter-attack. The trained population and the society’s institutions would be prepared to deny the attackers their objectives and to make consolidation of political control impossible.” (Sharp, 1985, p.2-3). Such techniques were employed in East Germany and Poland during the Cold War and by Comunidades de Paz in Colombia. A more recent example involves the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, supported by over 80 other tribes and allied water protectors at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in the USA in 2016 to make a nonviolent stand to protect sacred burial grounds and drinking water sources against the construction of an oil pipeline.
- **To protect civilians and prevent violence:** Nonviolent methods are applied by civilians for the direct physical protection of civilians (themselves and others) from the threat of violence and the prevention of further violence. UCP clearly fits into this category.

In module 2, where the key principles of UCP will be described, more information will be provided on the characteristics of nonviolence and how it is applied within the framework of UCP.



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Dr. Michael Nagler, *Basics of Nonviolence*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzgl43fRA7I> (Michael Nagler 2013b)
- George Lakey. (2013). *Taxonomy of Nonviolent Action*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnnBCKRa3rM&feature=youtu.be>

## 1.4.3

### UCP: connecting peacekeeping with nonviolence

*Military peacekeeping has been one response and has produced limited positive results in certain situations, but its cost, effectiveness, timeliness and efficiency for the protection of civilians has come under scrutiny. The world is witnessing the limits of meeting violence with only armed, military means—and this is happening right at the time when the world of civilians needs much more, not less human protection: direct physical human protection should be an imperative. When confronted with the imminent threat of violence to civilians—or worse, the actual mass violence against civilians—the world should have more options to choose from... And, in any case, armed peacekeepers may not always be the best answer.*

*Libran Cabactulan, Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations, 2012*

The international community has recognized the limits of protecting civilians and keeping peace with military means only. UN peacekeeping operations have also responded to the diversity of contexts and protection needs, transforming themselves into multi-dimensional peace operations. Recognizing the need for ‘soft power’, they have given more prominence to their civilian components. At the same time, the UN has also chosen to deploy a more robust form of intervention by the military component of peace operations, its first offensive combat force in the form of a specialized ‘intervention brigade’ in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>35</sup> In renewing the mandate for the mission in South Sudan, the Security Council in May of 2014 unanimously authorized the mission to use “all necessary means” to protect civilians (S/Res/2155).

*The prevention of deadly conflict is, over the long term, too hard—intellectually, technically and politically—to be the responsibility of any single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared, and labour divided among actors.*

*Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1997*

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35 [https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo\\_poc\\_handbook\\_final\\_as\\_printed.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo_poc_handbook_final_as_printed.pdf). DPO Policy on The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping A/RES/70/262: Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. On 28 March, 2013 the UN Security Council authorized its first offensive combat force in the form of a specialized ‘intervention brigade’ that is part of MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Operating without a military component altogether, UCP has adopted some of the characteristics and methods from the practice of nonviolence (e.g. characteristics such as winning over instead of humiliating and/or containing a perpetrator of violence, and methods such as proactive engagement or building relationships with perpetrators). At the same time UCP has adopted characteristics and methods from the practice of peacekeeping (e.g. stabilization of conflicts, creation of space and time to allow for peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the promotion of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, shuttle diplomacy, and even interpositioning on rare occasions). In short, UCP is a fusion of nonviolence and peacekeeping. See Figure 5 (below).

However, UCP is not the sum of nonviolence and peacekeeping or peacebuilding. It is something new, leaving behind certain characteristics and methods of the traditions from which it originates and synthesizing a new approach that absorbs the best elements of them all. UCP generally doesn't engage in civil disobedience or directly (and possibly illegally) challenging unjust regimes. It has shifted from being an active, though nonviolent, party to the conflict to being a nonpartisan protector encouraging respect for human rights and International Humanitarian Law. UCP as a practice has generally (though not always) transformed from unarmed resistance towards repressive regimes into unarmed resistance against human rights violations and abuse. At the same time, UCP has maintained a commitment to nonviolent social change and adopted a strictly unarmed approach to protecting civilians and reducing violence.



Figure 5: shows UCP as a fusion between peacekeeping and nonviolence. UCP draws on one of the three pillars of Nonviolence identified in the narrative, namely the protection of civilians. Listed at the bottom of the diagram are examples of elements that UCP has absorbed from both peacekeeping and Nonviolence. These lists are not exhaustive nor are all the identified elements applied by all UCP actors (in the same way or to the same extent).

Though UCP in its current form, and as a fusion between peacekeeping and nonviolence, is a recent phenomenon, the concept of UCP is much older. Christine Schweitzer (2010, p.9) has identified a number of terms (and small-scale practices) that have been used in

Eyal Teutsch / Palestine-Israel Christian Peacemaker  
Team delegation / June 2007



recent history to describe similar concepts.<sup>36</sup>

- **Peace Army** (*Shanti Sena* in Sanskrit), a concept originating with Mahatma Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the 1930s;
- **Khudai Khidmatgar** ("Servants of God" commonly known as the "Red Shirts"), organized by Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the 1930's;
- **International Peace Army** (proposed by Maude Royden in 1931 for civilians to interpose between the Japanese and Chinese);
- **Nonviolent intervention across borders** (Moser-Puangsuwan & Weber, 2000)
- **Third-party nonviolent intervention** (this term is often used in the US-American nonviolence movement—it is unclear who coined it);
- **Peace force** (used early by the British MP Henry Osborne in a suggestion to send an unarmed force to patrol the demilitarized zone between Egypt and Israel in 1956); Interpositionary peace force (Weber, 1993);
- **World Police Force** (term probably used first by the British MP Richard Acland in 1958);
- **Cascos Blancos** (created by Argentine government in 1994 for volunteers to prevent and reduce risk in disasters);
- **White Berets** (a term developed in advocacy work, relating to the proposal of unarmed UN forces)
- **Peace teams**, a term becoming fashionable in the 1980s and 1990s, with a number of organizations referring to themselves and the type of work they were doing as 'peace teams' (e.g. Christian Peacemaker Teams, Balkan Peace Team, etc.).

Regardless of the differing terms that have been used to describe the concept of UCP over time, there has been a recurring interest in the option of employing unarmed missions for the purpose of providing protection and keeping peace. As a peacekeeping strategy, UCP has proven itself to be effective in many situations and can work in conjunction with other strategies. Whatever mix of strategies is used, the key is to be able to set up mechanisms for consultation and dialogue that are collaborative and not competitive. Lasting protection strategies need to bring in many actors, and need to address national as well as local issues, because no conflict has only national dimensions.

*Unarmed civilian protection is not a perfect instrument. It is not a panacea. It is not always the right tool, and it should sometimes be avoided. It is, however, a tool that in some circumstances is the right one, the appropriate one, the most effective one. It is a tool that can sometimes be productively deployed on its own, sometimes alongside other instruments, for example within the context of a more conventional peacekeeping operation. Let's make sure we have the systems in place to use it when we need it.*

*Chris Coleman, Director of the Civilian Capacity Project at the United Nations, 2012*

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36 Schweitzer notes that Charles Walker has already used the term 'civilian peacekeeping' in 1981. Moreover, she identifies four sources of UCP: 1) peace armies, 2) various proposals by individuals and organizations to establish a standing unarmed peacekeeping force, 3) different volunteer services that have developed since World War I seeking to contribute to reconciliation through voluntary work, and 4) military peacekeeping.



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Michael Nagler, Peace Teams, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deXGQyK6xak> (Martin Nagler 2013a)

## 1.4.4 Connecting UCP with peacebuilding, human rights and humanitarian assistance

While UCP, as a field of practice, may have emerged as a fusion of Nonviolence and peacekeeping, it is continuously evolving. UCP agencies have always drawn on methods and skills from a broad variety of fields of practice. They have also explored the application of UCP in emerging and evolving fields of practice or articulated their work in relationship to these fields of practice. These fields of practice include peacebuilding, human rights, and humanitarian assistance.

### **PEACEBUILDING**

As explained earlier, UCP has been developed first and foremost to tackle direct physical violence and de-escalate situations in which civilians face imminent threats of violence, rather than addressing root causes of violence. Thus UCP is associated more in traditional peace studies with the efforts of peacekeeping than peacebuilding. At the same time UCP agencies have increasingly incorporated peacebuilding skills and models into their work, especially those that emphasize encouragement as a primary tactic to protect civilians (see module 2). Building bridges between communities and armed actors, mediating between different factions in a community, facilitating dialogue between conflicting clan leaders or cultivating relationships of trust in hostile environments are typical peacebuilding strategies that many UCP actors apply.

As UCP practitioners have increased their attention to strengthening local self-sustaining protection efforts, they have entered more deeply into the field of peacebuilding. Self-protection strategies often require peacebuilding. For example, in the village of Loco Loco in South Sudan women reached across tribal lines to stop gender-based violence at check points. After acknowledging that “Your men rape us and our men rape you,” they created a strategy where teams comprised of women from both tribes went to the check points and told the men to stop.

Finally, the practice of providing protection, security, and conflict resolution often occurs simultaneously or overlaps, especially at the grassroots level, where UCP actors are most active. The ways in which peacekeeping works to protect people and prevent

violent conflict matters greatly in terms of the environment created being receptive to peacebuilding efforts. PBI, for example, describes their work as “making space for peace.”<sup>37</sup> And peacebuilding generally requires sufficient safety so that work to address root causes of conflicts nonviolently can take root. As Furnari et al. (2016) writes:

*The local actors involved in these practices are often the same people, who don't differentiate their actions as peacemaking, peacekeeping or peacebuilding. UCP recognises this reality and plays a role in protecting and nurturing these local 'peacebuilding' efforts and local 'peacebuilders'. It doesn't simply create security and when the situation is deemed stable hands over the keys to others. Its approach to security and protection helps peacebuilding interventions be tailored to the context and needs of the people. This makes it an extremely valuable form of peacekeeping and civilian protection, from a peacebuilding perspective.*

While UCP practitioners have entered more deeply into the peacebuilding field, there is growing recognition among traditional peacebuilding actors that UCP can complement and contribute to peacebuilding processes. This applies to both policy development and connecting protection and peacebuilding practice in the field, particularly at the local level. Since the founding of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, the peacebuilding architecture of the UN has influenced the UN and Member States to connect the UN's three founding pillars of peace and security, human rights, and development and to make peacebuilding a fundamental part of every UN entities' terms of reference. The 2016 groundbreaking 'sustaining peace' resolutions, UNSCR 2282 (2016), A/RES/70/262, focus on sustaining peace “at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions” and on the imperative to prevent “the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict”.<sup>38</sup> They further emphasize the imperative of **national ownership and inclusivity** for durable peace, the **importance of civil society** in building and sustaining peace, and call for ‘close strategic and operational **partnerships** between the UN, national governments, and other key stakeholders including regional organizations, international financial institutions (IFIs) and civil society organizations.’ In addition, studies among peacebuilding projects implemented by civil society organizations have shown that insufficient attention has been given to protection work (Paffenholz 2009).<sup>39</sup>

## HUMAN RIGHTS

UCP has been grounded in the field of human rights from the very start. This is in large part the result of the emphasis many international UCP actors have put on the accompaniment of human rights defenders. While the activity (and skills) of accompaniment and human rights advocacy differ in theory, in reality they are more closely interwoven in practice. International UCP actors may not advocate for specific

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37 <https://www.peacebrigades.org>

38 A/RES/70/262: Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture

39 “The project found that ... Overall, protection, monitoring, advocacy and facilitation related activities were of higher effectiveness, whereas socialization and social cohesion related activities were of low effectiveness across all cases. This finding stands in stark contrast to the actual implementation and funding level of these activities.” (Paffenholz, 2009, p.2)



political solutions while they accompany local human rights defenders on foreign soil, but many of them act as human rights defenders in their own countries. Moreover, the issues they advocate for are often closely connected to the issues they bear witness to abroad. As EAPPI states: “Our work doesn’t end here. Central to our mission of accompaniment is to work for concrete change, both here on the ground and back in our home countries. Advocacy is central to our call to accompany our sisters and brothers in humanity who struggle for justice and peace.”

While UCP actors that are more inclined to seek protection by building bridges and de-escalating tensions have moved deeper into the field of peacebuilding (e.g. Nonviolent Peaceforce), those that seek protection by strengthening efforts for social justice have moved deeper into the field of human rights. (e.g. Christian Peacemaker Teams or EAPPI). The former emphasizes the tactic of encouragement and focuses more on the protection of larger (low profile) communities with general risks from conflict, the latter emphasizes the tactic of deterrence and focuses more on the protection of specifically oppressed communities or individual (high profile) human rights defenders (encouragement and deterrence are discussed in more detail in module 2). Of course, these two approaches may co-exist within one organization and be applied depending on the local context and identified needs on the ground.

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As UCP has been developed to respond to immediate threats of direct physical violence against civilians, it is logical that UCP actors have sought to establish a presence at front lines or in the midst of humanitarian emergencies. This has led to increased interaction with humanitarian aid agencies and the need to position UCP within the framework of humanitarian operations. It has also triggered innovative applications of UCP, such as nonviolent crowd control at food distribution points, facilitating access for humanitarians to enter into disputed areas, or unarmed night patrols in refugee camps. UCP actors have also combined their direct physical protection activities with protection activities that are more commonly applied by humanitarian aid agencies, such as reunifying separated children or creating referral pathways for gender-based violence. What connects UCP actors with humanitarian aid agencies is a shared interest in saving lives and finding practical solutions to immediate needs of the most vulnerable civilians.

As UCP actors operating in the context of humanitarian emergencies have adopted some of the frameworks, language and practices of aid agencies, the humanitarian community is moving towards increased centrality of protection within humanitarian action. This remains a work in progress. As InterAction writes in 2020:

*More than ever, humanitarians are working in settings of active, and often protracted, armed conflict and other situations of violence. Amid growing concern for the decline of respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), human rights, international asylum, and other protective norms, civilians are subject to forced displacement, killing, rape, separation from their families, deliberate deprivation of life-sustaining resources and services, forced recruitment, and countless other forms of abuse. Despite this, the humanitarian community has yet to fully embrace concerted collective action to reduce*

*affected people's exposure to these risks. Reducing the risk experienced by people in situations of armed conflict is both essential and possible, but will require some changes in mindset and ways of working.*

The shift humanitarian actors are encouraged to make involves a focus on community-based protection, greater proactivity in responding to threats, more holistic engagement with armed actors (beyond negotiating for humanitarian access), and increased attention to violence prevention. These are all areas that UCP actors consider core aspects of their work. And while some humanitarians see direct physical protection as being outside of their scope of work<sup>40</sup>, others have embraced some of the methods UCP actors have introduced (e.g. patrolling in IDP sites in Iraq). Finally, the frontline protection work of UCP actors has encouraged other humanitarian actors to move their operations closer to the frontlines and in this way contributed to greater access of civilians to lifesaving assistance.

In short, UCP is continuously evolving as it is applied in different fields of practice, adopting aspects of these fields as well as influencing them. UCP actors have been particularly effective where they have brought their experiences from these different fields together.



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- InterAction, (2020) *Embracing the Protection Outcome Mindset: We All have a Role to Play*, p.2, InterAction Washington D.C. <https://protection.interaction.org/embracing-the-protection-outcome-mindset-we-all-have-a-role-to-play/>

40 “As humanitarians we do not physically protect people from harm, but we can help them to stay safe from violence, coercion and abuse” Oxfam, *Protection, What is it anyway?* (2016), p3

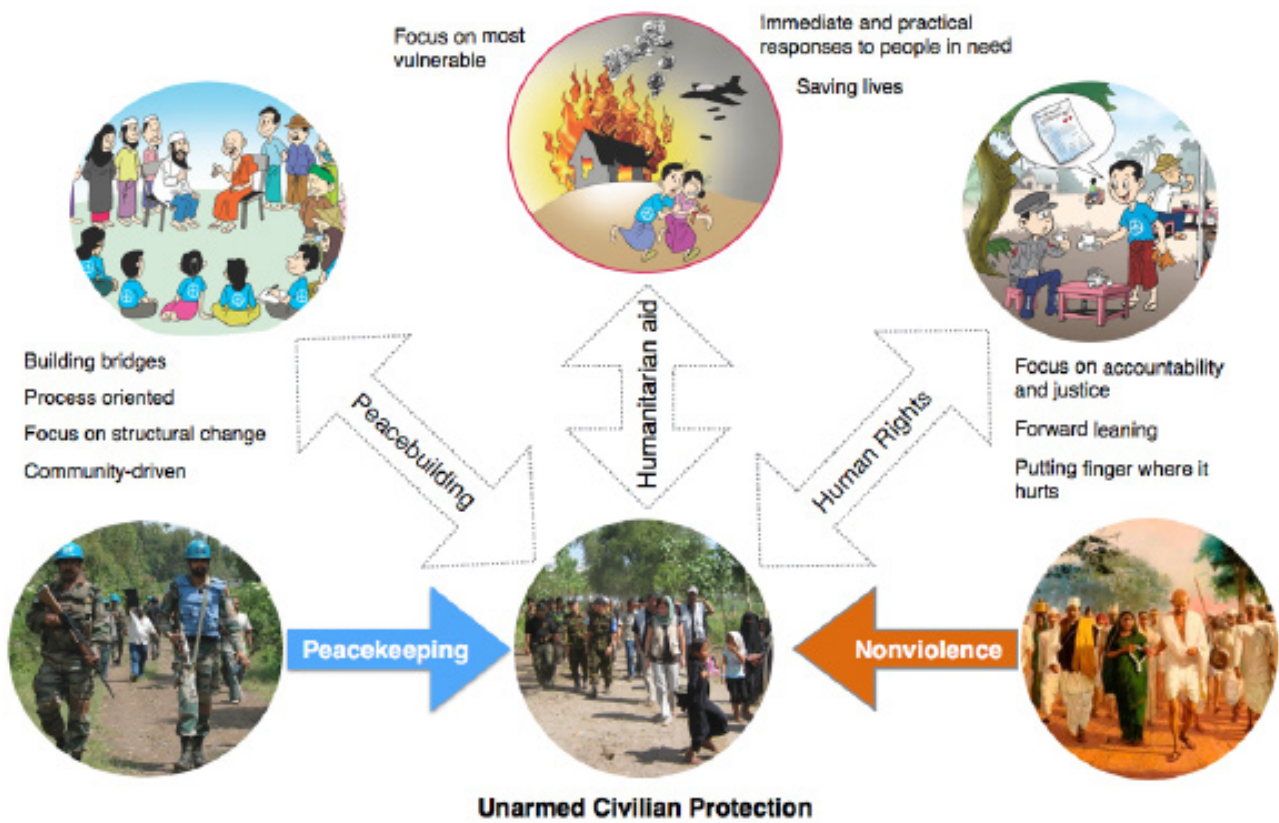


Figure 6 shows that UCP actors draw on different fields of practice and adopt certain qualities that are associated with or characteristic of these fields.



PBI Photo /  
Presence at  
demonstration,  
Guatemala /  
January 2005



# 1.5

## UCP actors

This section describes the main actors involved in the process of UCP. It starts by providing an overview of the most prominent organizations that practice UCP and continues with a description of individuals and populations that benefit from UCP, local partners, and organizations that have invited UCP teams to provide their services.

### 1.5.1

## Practitioners that apply Unarmed Civilian Protection or Accompaniment

UCP practitioners may work on their own, in their own community, drawing on their own knowledge and traditions. In this manual, however, we focus mostly on those working for and with internationally recognized UCP organizations. They are specially trained women and men from all over the world, recruited from backgrounds that are relevant to UCP. They are also local women and men from the areas of violent conflict, who partner with UCP organizations and offer their in-depth knowledge about the context and conflict and their ability to speak local languages. They all undergo intensive training and work together to implement protection programming. They often live together in a shared living space. UCP is a full-time job that requires readiness twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. A large number of the UCP practitioners live in the communities that are affected by violence and are able to respond in the middle of the night. They may be paid or they may be volunteers.

More than 50 nongovernmental organizations currently use UCP in one form or another in 24 areas of the world.<sup>41</sup> Though their methodologies, mandates, and principles differ, all of them use strategic physical presence as a core method for stopping or deterring violence. It is important to note that these organizations may not all describe their methods as ‘UCP’. Other frequently used terms include accompaniment or protective presence. Many other community and ad hoc groups employ UCP methods, as demonstrated by groups providing sanctuary to newly arrived refugees in Germany, Greece, the US, and other places and by communities providing self-protection in the aftermath of police atrocities, demonstrations, and other community upheavals.

Well-known UCP organizations include:

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41 See reports from the Good practices workshops for lists of participants from many of these organizations. [https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/component/pages\\_np/freeform/globalreview](https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/component/pages_np/freeform/globalreview)

**ACOGUATE [<https://acoguate.org/>]**

Acoguate works only in Guatemala. They were founded in the year 2000, and have volunteers sent by its national committees in France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, the US, and Canada. They do both physical and political accompaniment, distribute information, and give workshops on protection for those they accompany.

**CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS [<http://www.cpt.org/>]**

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) is an international NGO established in 1988 to support teams of peace workers in conflict areas around the world. It provides accompaniment to partners working for peace and human rights, nonviolent direct action, human rights documentation, advocacy, and nonviolence training. CPT is committed to undoing oppressions starting with the lives of its staff and volunteers and the internal practices of CPT as an organization. CPT has a corps of over 30 peacemakers who currently work in Colombia, Iraq, the West Bank, the United States-Mexico border, and Ontario, Canada.

**CURE VIOLENCE [<http://cureviolence.org/>]**

Cure Violence (formerly known as Ceasefire) applies a health approach to violence prevention, understanding violence as a learned behaviour that can be prevented using disease control methods. Their model aims to prevent violence through three main approaches: i) interrupting transmission; ii) identifying and changing the thinking of highest potential transmitters; and iii) changing group norms. Starting in the US city of Chicago in 1995 and expanding to other US urban areas, Cure Violence also has projects in Honduras, El Salvador, Trinidad, South Africa, Kenya, and Iraq.

**DC PEACE TEAMS [<https://dcpeaceteam.com>]**

Working primarily in the Washington, DC metro area, they deploy unarmed civilian protection units to demonstrations, provide training in key nonviolent skills, and facilitate dialogue and restorative justice.

**ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAMME IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL [<http://www.eappi.org/>]**

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a project of the World Council of Churches launched in 2002, brings internationals to the West Bank to experience life under occupation. Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses, and support Palestinians and Israelis in working together for peace. When they return home, EAs campaign for a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through an end to the occupation, respect for

international law, and implementation of UN resolutions.

**FOR PEACE PRESENCE USA [<http://forusa.org>]**

Beginning in 2002, FOR Peace Presence volunteers accompanied and provided presence for the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia. They also provided political accompaniment for Colombian partner organizations in Bogotá so that those groups could maintain better contact with government and embassy organizations.

**GUATEMALA ACCOMPANIMENT PROJECT OF THE NETWORK IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF GUATEMALA [<http://www.nisgua.org/>]**

The Guatemala Accompaniment Project participates in the global struggle to ensure the respect of human rights by placing volunteers side-by-side with individuals, communities, and organizations working on sensitive issues ranging from precedent-setting legal cases to indigenous rights and environmental justice. In communities, courtrooms, and public activities, the network's presence in Guatemala has created the space for Guatemalans to organize in defense of their own rights by enabling activists to advance their work more publicly and effectively than they could without accompaniment. They provide accompaniment to human rights defenders and engage in digital organizing, strategic campaigns, and political education. They connect people from the United States and Guatemala through exchange experiences.

**MAMA BEAR CLAN [<https://www.facebook.com/Mama-Bear-Clan-1699671170294271>]**

The Mama Bear Clan of Winnipeg, led by First Nation women, is a group of women and men who patrol Winnipeg's North Point Douglas neighbourhood and Main Street areas on a mission to care for people at risk.

**META PEACE TEAM [<http://www.metapeaceteam.org>]**

Meta Peace Team sends trained volunteers to provide a peaceful presence and interrupt violence in areas experiencing violence or potential violence including political rallies and events. They have worked in Israel/Palestine, the US/Mexico border, the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, the March for Our Lives in Detroit, MI, as well as many other places.

**NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE [<http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/>]**

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an international NGO that promotes protection of civilians through proactive engagement with parties in conflict and by facilitating

dialogue. Founded in 2002, NP has worked in Sri Lanka, Palestine and Israel, Guatemala, the Philippines, South Sudan, Syria, Myanmar, Iraq and the South Caucasus. Their UCP team members are paid professionals who come from throughout the world. NP was formally involved in monitoring the ceasefire in Mindanao between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), beginning in 2009

**OPERAZIONE COLOMBA (Operation Dove) [<http://www.operazionecolomba.it/en/about/history.html>]**

Beginning with the conflict in Yugoslavia in 1992, they have provided voluntary peace presences in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Yugoslavia (1992 – 1997); Albania (1997); Sierra Leone (1997); Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia (1998 – 2000); East Timor, Indonesia (1999); Chiapas, Mexico (1998 – 2002); Chechnya, Russia (2000 – 2001); Democratic Republic of the Congo (2001); Gaza Strip, Palestine (2002 – 2003); and Darfur, Sudan (2008).

**PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL [<http://www.peacebrigades.org/>]**

Peace Brigades International (PBI) is a volunteer-based international NGO that works to create space for peace and to promote human rights. They use physical accompaniment, networking, and monitoring, among other methods. They have been promoting nonviolence and protecting human rights since 1981. PBI has had projects around the world, including Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, Indonesia, Kenya, and Nepal. It is particularly known for its work on protective accompaniment of threatened human rights defenders.

**PRESBYTERIAN PEACE FELLOWSHIP (PPF) [<https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/about/>]**

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) started in the 1940s as a group that provided support to Conscientious Objectors to World War II. It provides protective accompaniment at the border between Mexico and the US and as a partner of the Presbyterian Church in Colombia, since 2004.

**WITNESS FOR PEACE [<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/>]**

Witness for Peace (WFP) is a politically independent, grassroots organization of people committed to nonviolence and led by faith and conscience. WFP was founded in the US in 1983. It supports peace, justice, and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing US policies and corporate practices that contribute to poverty and oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Additionally, Selkirk College has a database of most UCP organizations working between 1990 and 2017 [<https://selkirk.ca/unarmed-civilian-peacekeeping-database>].

Two other relevant organizations that operate within the spectrum of UCP and are directly associated with international humanitarian and human rights law include:

**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS [<http://www.icrc.org/eng/>]**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral, and independent organization. Its exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS [<http://www.ohchr.org>]**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. They have a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights. Over the years the OHCHR has increased its presence in the field, away from its headquarters, to increase the effectiveness of promoting and protecting human rights.

There are many other organizations that are involved in providing protection to civilians, though most of them are not providing direct physical protection.



**Assignment:** Visit websites of 3 UCP actors listed above and assess their differences and similarities.

## 1.5.2

### Populations served

UCP is conducted in areas of protracted conflict, where civilians are continually threatened by violence. It focuses specifically (though not exclusively) on isolated areas with little international presence and areas where protection mechanisms are nonexistent or malfunctioning. It serves populations in vertical conflicts (between the state and civilians) as well as horizontal conflicts (among civilians). More information about the types of conflict and the appropriateness of UCP to operate in these conflicts will be provided in module 4.

Within a target area, UCP serves vulnerable individuals and groups as well as local actors who serve and protect these people. Individuals and groups include:

- Women
- People at risk of physical and sexual violence
- Children (especially separated, unaccompanied, and abducted children, as well as child soldiers)
- The elderly
- LGBTQI+ people
- Physically or mentally challenged people
- Displaced people (internally displaced persons, refugees, and returnees)
- Stateless people
- Human rights defenders and civil society organizations working for social change
- Government officers with a responsibility to protect civilians
- Journalists reporting on conflict, war, and human rights violations
- Voters in contentious elections
- Demonstrators and protesters

## 1.5.3

### Inviting civilians and organizations

When UCP is applied by international actors, it is based upon invitation or request by local actors. The original request to establish a presence in a country may come, for example, from a well-known civil society group from a government department (e.g. a national commission for human rights) and on a few occasions from UN Agencies and Entities. Following a rigorous feasibility appraisal of the proposed project, and after approval by the UCP organization's board of directors or general assembly, a presence in the country may be established. But before establishing a field office in a specific community and ultimately establishing activities with specific target groups, more invitations need to be



secured from sub-national entities. At lower levels, the invitation may come from local governments, traditional chiefs, or community-based organizations. These invitations or requests are also carefully analyzed to determine if UCP can be undertaken usefully and responsibly (i.e. without putting staff members or local people at undue risk).

Some organizations only provide UCP upon formal invitation, while others also provide UCP upon informal invitation or a clear expression of interest and acceptance. Either way, some form of invitation is considered important for a number of reasons. First, it would be disrespectful to establish a UCP presence in a community that has no interest in such a thing. Second, the needs and participation of a community form the foundations for UCP's tailor-made strategies and methods. Third, the security of unarmed peacekeepers depends on the acceptance of the host government and host community. As UCP practitioners do not bear arms, they need to ensure that they are not mistakenly perceived by anyone as a threat. In order to do this, they do not interfere in internal affairs, they are transparent, and they build relationships of trust and acceptance, or at least minimal tolerance by all parties, including armed actors.

Logical as this process of invitation may sound in theory, at the field level it poses certain challenges. Before a request for a UCP presence can be made, UCP organizations often proactively engage with local actors to assess needs and interests. It is important that the concept of UCP be adequately explained and understood in the community. People in isolated and disempowered communities may welcome any type of agency, with the hope of gaining some benefit, but without understanding the nature of their own participation. On the other hand, misunderstandings about the nature or potential of UCP could lead a community to conclude that they do not need unarmed protection even when it could benefit them. Therefore, UCP organizations need to be proactive and ask the right questions to find out if unarmed protection is wanted and needed, and if their presence would be helpful.

## 1.5.4 Local partners

*Since 2002, Israeli peace activists have travelled deep into the West Bank, to areas that most Israelis consider to be dangerous for Jews. Areas where most Israelis are convinced they will be slaughtered by Palestinian gunmen. The peace activists have found partners for peace in the villagers of Yanoun. They have found each other, and, together with voluntary international observers and activists, are carrying out good work where the United Nations and the international community have failed.*

*Thomas Mandal, Ecumenical Accompanier in Yanoun, Palestine, 2011*

The primacy of local actors and nonpartisanship are key principles of UCP. This means



that most UCP practitioners, in most engagements, do not take sides in the local conflict nor advocate for particular solutions to conflicts. Instead they observe, create safer spaces, encourage, connect, and facilitate; and they strengthen the capacity of local partners who are directly involved in peacemaking or human rights work.<sup>42</sup> Some UCP groups, especially those working in asymmetrical conflicts, are partisan.

Local actors are most often organized civil society groups or NGOs, though they can also be government departments (e.g. a national commission on human rights). Many local civil society groups and human rights defenders in situations of violent conflict are keen to associate themselves with an unarmed international third party, especially one that is independent from any particular government. Not only does it give them easier access to international networks, but it also helps them boost their own nonpartisanship or at least the perception thereof. At times they fear that protection with weapons will draw more fire to them, instead of shielding them from violence. Others feel that unarmed protection can help to distance themselves from (armed) state protection actors, whom they may perceive as the main perpetrators of violence.<sup>43</sup> UCP interventions often cooperate with other international protection actors, but are independent of the mandates that govern those other international actors. This independence is important, because those mandates may involve support for or association with governments that may be seen at the local level as significant sources of violence.

Local partners are often the first to trust UCP organizations, and they therefore play an important role in solidifying trust and acceptance within the wider community. Though local partners do not have to adopt all the principles of UCP, agreement on key values and principles needs to be established. Thorough assessment and background checks are made by UCP personnel to ensure that local partners are not linked to armed groups, carry arms, or exercise violence through other means. This might compromise the security of the UCP teams or other partners and beneficiaries. Other challenges include the possibility that local partners may become targets after association with UCP organizations. The question of how to meet these challenges will be explored in module 5

Though local partners are of key importance for UCP, there are places (e.g. South Sudan) where organized civil society is weak or almost non-existent. There may not be any organized local partners in the area and communities may desire and expect UCP organizations to show leadership. In such a case UCP focuses directly on communities. As a consequence,, the leading role of UCP practitioners increases, posing various challenges to the mandate and principles of the organization, especially non-partisanship and primacy of local actors. UCP teams are challenged to find a balance between the dangers of being non-responsive to the felt needs of communities on the one hand, and being seen as overtly directing local processes on the other. This challenge will be

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42 Participants at a 2001 workshop on Practical Protection, organized by the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University and the American Red Cross, concluded that ‘establishing strategic partnerships is among the most effective means by which NGOs can broaden their protection roles in the field, gain access to target populations and increase the resources available for more explicit protection activities...’ (Ferris, 2011, loc.1479).

43 The choice made by local partners to associate themselves with unarmed protection can help UCP organizations to explain and justify their presence to suspicious police or military actors, who may consider protection their responsibility.

explored in more detail together with other challenges and dilemmas in module 5.

Circumstances may be even more complicated where the roles between civilians and combatants are blurred: soldiers on extended leave work for NGOs; the government liaison for international organizations may be based in the military barracks; and the village chief may return to his former post in the police force after the next election. Key methods in facing these challenges are the inclusion of a wide range of actors in programming, the consistent use of transparency, on-going trust building, and capacity enhancement.



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NP Photo / Claire Thomas / Protection Officers meet with residents of Hammam al Alil camp, Iraq / 2018

# 2

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MODULE 2

UNARMED CIVILIAN

PROTECTION:

OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES

AND SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

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# OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*People try nonviolence for a week, and when “it does not work”, they go back to violence which hasn’t worked for centuries.*

*Theodore Roszak*

UCP activities are governed by several key objectives, principles, and sources of guidance. Together these form a frame of reference for UCP theory and practice. Although some combination of the objectives, principles, and sources of guidance as elaborated in this module are common ground among most UCP actors, the language that is chosen to describe them, as well as their application, may differ. Differences depend on the conflict, context, and the mission and mandate of the implementing agency. While this manual is primarily written for understanding UCP as practiced by foreigners in partnership with local actors in a conflict-affected community, we believe the goals and values presented in this module will also be useful for local self-protection actors working independently of international organizations.

This module begins with a description of the key objectives governing UCP activities. It then provides an overview of the key principles that underpin UCP interventions, and concludes with an overview of the sources of guidance in the form of legal frameworks.

## **BOX 1 | LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

Describe the key objectives of UCP

Describe the key principles of UCP

List the sources of guidance of UCP and describe their relevance to UCP





## Summary of Key Messages

- UCP aims to interrupt cycles of violence against civilians, which can be broken down into 3 sub-objectives: To prevent violence against civilians (before violence takes place); To stop violence against civilians (while violence is taking place); To reduce the impact of violence against civilians (after violence has taken place) and to enhance nonviolent responses to conflict.
- Encouragement and deterrence are two tactics or strategies that play important interactive roles in connecting the methods, principles, sources of guidance, and skills to the key objectives. They are often used simultaneously and in any case are not mutually exclusive.
- UCP practitioners apply specific characteristics of nonviolence to achieve key objectives. Characteristics include winning over perpetrators of violence as allies by generating a change of mind; widening the options for response and participation; correlating means and ends; and substituting force with trust, acceptance, and transparency.
- UCP organizations commonly do not adopt partisan interests or take sides, although they demonstrate some variation on this. To be nonpartisan is to say, ‘We will be at your side in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not take sides against those you define as enemies’. This allows UCP practitioners to build relationships with all (or most) parties, to gain their trust and acceptance, and to achieve (on most occasions) a sort of ‘diplomatic immunity’.
- UCP organizations recognize the primacy of local actors. International UCP organizations generally adhere to national laws, refrain from nonviolent noncooperation, and regard local actors at the field level as decision makers in their own communities. This includes the decisions to invite UCP teams to their community for protection and other services.
- UCP practitioners are almost always independent from any special-interest group, political party, ideology, and, in most cases, religion. However, local UCP practitioners may have affiliations with certain agendas or groups, but remain independent in terms of setting their own agendas and are often nonpartisan for specific solutions or political parties. This allows them to focus their attention and resources on the protection needs of all vulnerable civilians, whoever and wherever they are.
- UCP practitioners use sources of key guidance to monitor compliance and to prioritize protection needs. They also use them to raise awareness about internationally accepted standards. Furthermore, they support and encourage government officials, military leaders, and other decision makers to fulfil their obligations and facilitate access to justice for civilians.

# 2.1

## Key objectives, strategies and tactics of UCP

Two key objectives govern UCP activities:

**1. To interrupt cycles of violence against civilians**, which can be broken down into 3 sub-objectives:

- To prevent violence against civilians (before violence takes place)
- To stop violence against civilians (while violence is taking place)
- To reduce the impact of violence against civilians (after violence has taken place)

**2. To enhance nonviolent responses to conflict**

UCP practitioners approach these two objectives using three major strategies. They:

- directly protect civilians from violence;
- influence state, non-state actors and multilateral organizations to protect civilians; and
- enhance the capacities of individuals, communities and populations at risk of harm to protect themselves and others.

These different strategies are often mutually reinforcing (see figure 1) and applied simultaneously by UCP actors.

This section explores the key UCP objectives and strategies. In addition, attention will be given to the notion of encouragement and deterrence, which are two approaches UCP actors apply to influence perpetrators of violence or state and non-state actors with a responsibility to protect civilians.

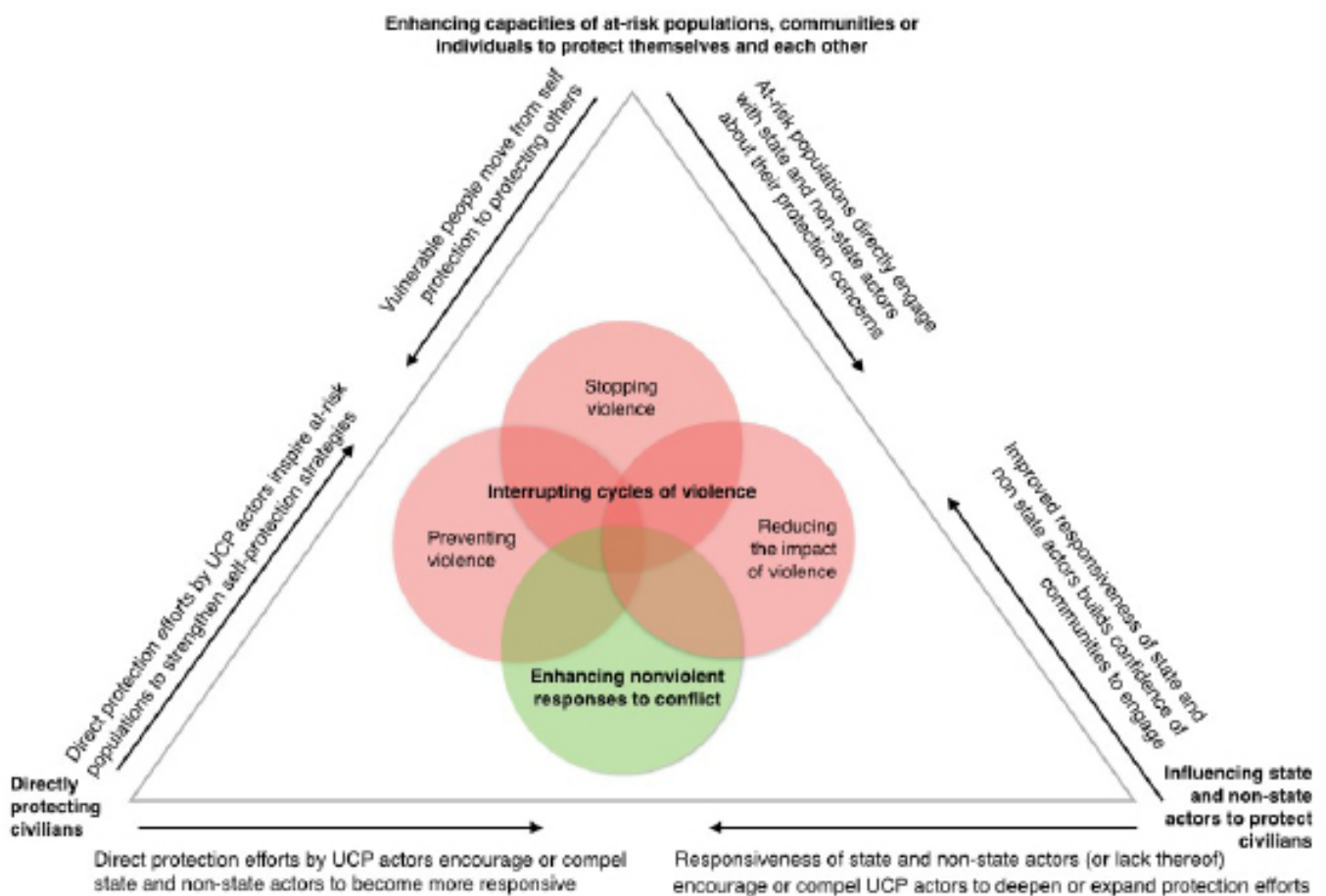


Figure 1: UCP is governed by two core objectives: interrupting cycles of violence and enhancing nonviolent responses to conflict. The former objective is broken down into three parts: preventing violence, stopping it in its tracks and reducing its impact. UCP practitioners approach these core objectives from 3 main angles that are often mutually reinforcing: they directly protect civilians, enhance the capacity of those in need of protection to protect themselves, and/or influence authorities to protect civilians. UCP actors often work from those 3 angles simultaneously or shift back and forth depending on specific circumstances.

## 2.1.1

### Theory of change

UCP actors believe that the application of Unarmed Civilian Protection enables them to interrupt cycles of violence and enhance nonviolent responses to conflict by:

- providing direct protection, saving lives, reducing harm, and preserving dignity;
- being present, expressing empathy, and transparently engaging with all actors regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, or political affiliation;
- rejecting all types of violence without exception, yet engaging with perpetrators and hardliners, appealing to their humanity and their capacity for peace;
- creating spaces for dialogue and opportunities to experience interconnectedness and security with others across conflict fault lines;
- providing a model of inclusive security as a shared responsibility, thus increasing opportunities for civilians, including women and youth, to participate in all stages of peace and security processes;
- preventing or reducing further trauma and other effects of violence that perpetuate the cycle of violence (e.g. revenge culture);
- demonstrating to conflicting parties and affected communities the benefits and effectiveness of using nonviolent means to address conflicts and assisting them in their application;
- strengthening the relative power of people to protect themselves without the use of or reliance on weapons; and
- recognising the capacity of local actors to interrupt the cycle of violence and supporting them in taking responsibility to contribute to positive peace.

Few if any UCP organizations follow all of these strategies but all do some of them.

## 2.1.2

### Objectives

#### **Objective 1. To interrupt cycles of violence against civilians**

The first objective that governs UCP activities is to interrupt cycles of violence against civilians, especially immediate manifestations of direct physical violence. This objective acknowledges the limitations of UCP actors to irreversibly change long-standing cycles of violence, but also emphasizes the need for immediate action. It stresses that UCP practitioners do not pretend to bring these cycles to an end or address all or even some of their underlying root causes, but that they *can* temporarily interrupt them. The emphasis

on ‘cycles’ indicates that UCP actors are not merely responding to individual incidents of violence, as they present themselves. Instead, they identify recurring patterns of violence that have a significant impact on the security and well-being of conflict-affected communities and use their toolbox of UCP methods strategically to interrupt these patterns. Cycles of violence can refer to ongoing warfare between state forces and ethnic armed groups, revenge attacks between clans, or domestic violence within a family unit. It can also refer to a culture of impunity for crimes against journalists and human rights defenders or gender-based violence. While most UCP actors focus their efforts first and foremost on responding to immediate physical violence, they embed these efforts into longer-term strategies that aim to address systemic forms of violence.

Interrupting cycles of violence can be achieved by preventing threats of violence from being actualized, stopping violence in its tracks as it manifests, or reducing the impact of violence through timely responses that prevent prolonged suffering or that provide justice. Furthermore, UCP practitioners may work to eliminate or redirect threats, strengthen the capacity of threatened civilians to respond to threats, or reduce their vulnerability.

**Preventing violence against civilians:** First and foremost, UCP focuses on providing direct physical protection to prevent violence against civilians. Unchecked, violence against civilians often leads to displacement, food insecurity, ill health, etc., as well as death and the destruction of homes and infrastructure. The intimidation can be so extreme that individuals and communities stop struggling for their rights and justice. Once tensions have escalated into violence, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide space for negotiation, dialogue, and listening, or for civil society to organize and/or protest. Thus UCP focuses more on, and is perhaps more effective at, preventing violence than stopping direct violence once it is underway. Most UCP methods, including protective presence, multi-track dialogue, rumour control, and monitoring of ceasefires, are predominantly used to de-escalate tensions and prevent violence. This is difficult to achieve without direct physical presence on the ground and extensive networks of relationships with the parties involved that can be leveraged at the appropriate time and place.

*200 members of an armed group came to town to hold a consultation without informing [the Myanmar armed forces] first. The military already moved into position to encircle them. One of our monitors immediately informed our network, which verified the incident and got in contact with the military and the armed group. It turned out the armed group only had permission from the Border Guard Forces, but not the state government. The armed group withdrew soon after, and a clash was prevented.*

*Member of a local ceasefire monitoring network in Myanmar (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2017)*

**Stopping violence:** There are many situations where efforts to prevent violence are not sufficient, particularly in large-scale conflicts where patterns of violence are already established. In these circumstances, UCP practitioners work to stop or interrupt violence that has already broken out. UCP team members of Nonviolent Peaceforce, for example, provided shuttle diplomacy between the leadership of government forces and non-state

armed actors in Mindanao in 2008, at the height of a crisis. This shuttle diplomacy was carried out to secure the commitments of the two parties for dialogue. It also served to establish confidence-building measures in order to facilitate a ceasefire or at least on-going negotiations. Other methods that UCP practitioners use to stop violence in a time of crisis are interpositioning, proactive presence, and protective accompaniment for local peacemakers, human rights defenders and journalists. These methods will be explored in more detail in module 3.

*NP is seen to be able to influence the actions of GPH (Government of the Philippines) and MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) armed actors, including the capability to cause armed actions to cease and desist through direct access. This is recounted in community narratives of firefights and incursions that are soon quelled after information is forwarded by community monitors to their NP counterparts. Accounts cite mere minutes as the time elapsed between the reporting of the incident solely to NP, and the pull-out of armed actors or the cessation of armed action in a locality.*

*Evaluation of Nonviolent Peaceforce's Project with the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team in Mindanao. (Gunduz & Torralba, 2014)*

**Reducing the impact of violence:** Though UCP practitioners may be able to stop violence in certain circumstances, these are exceptional cases. Most often the best result they can aim for is to reduce the intensity or impact of violence. They may achieve this, for example, by establishing early response mechanisms or facilitating the commitment of aggressing parties not to attack vulnerable groups or places like hospitals and schools. Reducing the impact of violence is an important objective. Many communities have strategies for this such as displacing themselves, cooperating with armed actors, or negotiating directly to prevent further violence. However, this is an objective that is often pursued in a limited way, especially by affected communities in situations of protracted conflict. They may have suffered from violence for a long period of time and consequently feel unable to change the situation. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the conflict, they may ignore the small steps they can take to reduce the number of casualties. Reducing the impact of violence, even on a small scale, often builds confidence and gives people a sense of control over their situation.

UCP strategies for preventing, stopping or reducing the impact of violence are applicable in imminent or full-blown crisis situations, but also in latent or post-conflict situations. Conflicts usually build up over a long period of time with a series of minor confrontations manifesting before a full-blown crisis emerges. At the same time, most peace agreements are followed by recurring cycles of violence that threaten the peace process for years. Therefore, UCP teams apply both short-term crisis interventions as well as long-term violence prevention and reduction strategies. The application of UCP methods in different stages of a conflict will be explored in more detail in module 4.

The capacity of UCP to prevent, stop or reduce the impact of violence has its limits, though these limits will vary from situation to situation, and the practice needs to be grounded in humility. A handful of UCP practitioners will, in most cases, not be able to prevent or stop a large-scale outbreak of violence. At the same time, this capacity



should also not be underestimated. Rarely is preventive action given the attention and resources it deserves. In her book *The Politics of Protection* Elizabeth Ferris states: “Even if the ICRC had had 10,000 staff in Rwanda, it is unlikely that ICRC could have stopped the widespread killing” (Ferris, 2011 loc. 3733). True as this may be, it obscures the fact that smaller nonviolent efforts *can* stop violence. For example, former UN official Mukesh Kapila describes how a handful of “diminutive” nuns of the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Theresa’s order) saved hundreds of Tutsi children. When the Hutu soldiers came for the children, the head sister told them, “You cannot come in—this is a sacred place of God.” The soldiers turned and went away.<sup>1</sup> One should also not ignore the possible impact of long-term preventive action. The international community, skilled in the art of emergency relief, usually reacts only after extraordinary events have taken place. UN peace operations are most often assigned to the emergency relief trajectory and are subsequently criticized for being too little and too late.<sup>2</sup> While the same can be said for many UCP projects, others have been initiated in support of a peace process underway (e.g. NP’s presence in Sri Lanka), or to prevent return to violence (e.g. Witness for Peace and others who accompanied returning Guatemalans after the war in 1990). Because it is difficult to measure violence that was averted, and therefore never occurred, the power of prevention is easily underestimated.

### **Objective 2.: To enhance nonviolent responses to conflict**

Interrupting cycles of violence can save lives, preserve dignity, and create space for dialogue. While this is a perfectly valid objective by itself, it is focused on or framed as stopping the bad rather than bolstering the good. Moreover, left by itself, it can easily turn into a never-ending stream of interruptions of a cycle of violence that continues to spin around. Therefore, UCP is governed by a second objective: ‘to enhance nonviolent responses to conflict’. UCP provides an alternative to armed responses that have often failed to resolve conflicts or offer more than a temporary lull in the cycles of violence. It does this, for example, by presenting a model of inclusive security, increasing opportunities for civilians, including women and youth, to participate in all stages of peace and security processes. Most international interventions meant to improve security are exclusive – that is they rely on military or police or other selected groups. Many international interventions are not only exclusive, but also work to separate people from interactions with armed actors and sometimes even groups within a community that have been fighting. Inclusive security recognizes that everyone in the community knows something important about preventing violence, and that their exclusion may actually undermine violence prevention efforts. When large parts of a community participate in the planning and application of such efforts, they are much more likely to succeed. UCP also strengthens people’s power to protect themselves without reliance on weapons.

UCP actors do not wait until violence has been interrupted to enhance nonviolent responses to conflicts. It is an intrinsic part of their strategy to interrupt cycles of violence. The application of UCP methods to prevent and reduce violence is a direct demonstration of the benefits and effectiveness of using nonviolent means to address

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1 Kapila, Location 2279

2 In the history of UN peacekeeping operations there seems to be only one example of a preventive deployment; the UN Preventive Deployment Force in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

conflicts. While rejecting all types of violence, UCP actors engage with perpetrators and hardliners, appealing to their humanity and their capacity for peace as well as pressuring them to change when necessary. They show that security can be increased by bringing people closer together rather than isolating them from each other. They also recognize the capacity of local actors to interrupt cycles of violence and support them in taking responsibility to contribute to positive peace. At its very best, UCP is applied to transform the destructive energy that fuels cycles of violence into a force for peace. There are various examples of people that put the same passion into building peace as they previously put into supporting war, after UCP actors expressed empathy, listened to their traumas, and helped them identify opportunities to protect people at-risk.

Enhancing nonviolent responses to conflict involves enacting change at different levels: individual, relational and structural. It includes efforts to generate interest among police officers in nonviolent forms of crowd control, to facilitate dialogue between conflicting clan leaders, to advocate with a local, national or international government to change policies, or to infuse UCP methods into ceasefire processes.

## 2.1.2 Strategies

UCP actors apply three protection strategies that contribute to both the objective of interrupting cycles of violence and the objective of enhancing nonviolent responses to violent conflict. They work to enhance the effectiveness of protection efforts undertaken by state and non-state actors who are responsible for the protection of civilians, assist civilians in protecting themselves, and/or protect civilians directly. While not all organizations will do all of these, and any particular intervention may focus primarily on one set of strategies, often these three strategies are interdependent or mutually reinforcing.

### **Strategy 1: To protect civilians directly**

UCP is most often associated with the efforts of civilian third parties that directly protect civilians. While some of the work that civilians do to protect themselves certainly fits within the models of UCP, the conceptualization was originally focused on outsiders coming in, thus termed ‘third parties.’ As noted in module 1, this manual is mainly focused on the UCP interventions by external actors. This is not meant to de-value local self-protection efforts, but rather to better articulate and systematize third party interventions. Effective self-protection remains the most sustainable solution.

UCP has emerged, either as self-protection or external intervention or a combination, as a response to situations of violent conflict in which state and non-state actors are unwilling or unable to protect the civilians within the territories they control and in

which civilians struggle to protect themselves. These civilian third parties may consist of international INGOs as well as national or local civil society groups. The direct protection efforts by external third parties often encourage or inspire local communities to enhance their self-protection capacities or protect individuals or populations at risk of harm in their midst. This is not just an incidental result of providing a visible example on the ground; it is a main objective of UCP and part of what defines it. UCP democratizes the security process, blurring the distinction between those that protect and those that are protected. Direct protection efforts are typically a collaborative effort between UCP actors and threatened individuals or conflict-affected communities. Some protected civilians will eventually become active in larger peace processes.

### **Strategy 2: To influence state and non-state actors to protect civilians**

Direct protection efforts by UCP teams usually influence state and non-state actors in one way or another. Providing protective presence or accompaniment in a conflict affected area undeniably sends a message to the authorities controlling that area. More than sending a message, the engagement with authorities is an essential component of direct protection strategies, especially when it comes to high profile accompaniments of human rights defenders that are threatened by the very state or non-state actors responsible for their protection. In that case engagement with authorities is provided to make sure that threats are not actualized, at least not while the accompaniment is taking place.

Apart from their direct protection efforts, however, UCP teams engage with state and non-state actors to encourage them in their own protection roles. Authorities that appear unwilling or unable to protect civilians can be encouraged or supported to improve their efforts. Authorities that are complicit in acts of violence against civilians can be encouraged or compelled to change their behaviour. Many UCP organizations have advocated for the release of imprisoned human rights defenders, especially those they have previously accompanied. Others have advocated for the inclusion of protection provisions in ceasefire agreements or the adoption of guidelines for the protection of human rights defenders. Some foreign-based organizations undertake education and organizing campaigns to advocate with their home governments (often in donor countries) to pressure particular state actors to protect civilians and cease violence against them. In some cases, direct protection and efforts to influence authorities to protect civilians are undertaken in tandem. In Myanmar and the Philippines, for example, Nonviolent Peaceforce and local communities have frequently negotiated humanitarian corridors for civilians caught in the crossfire between state and non-state actors, allowing them to physically accompany civilians out of harm's way. In places as diverse as Guatemala, Colombia and Indonesia, Peace Brigades International has simultaneously protected activists and asked networks to put pressure on the government to end death threats. In some cases, UCP teams work with communities to create “Peace Zones”: spaces where state and non-state armed actors should enter only without weapons.

As these examples show, deterrence and encouragement—discussed more fully later in this chapter—are the main tactics for influencing state and non-state actors. They are employed as needed in response to specific local incidents, and sometimes take the form of organized advocacy campaigns to influence state actors at various levels and

departments of government. UCP organizations typically use advocacy to build the general understanding and acceptance of UCP as a valuable intervention, but they also may focus on other issues, working to educate the general public or community leaders and to pressure state actors who are actively harming civilians or not assuming their responsibility to protect them.

### **Strategy 3: To enhance the capacities of at-risk individuals, communities and populations to protect themselves and others**

*[W]e heard a few messages again and again. First, the journey from war to sustainable peace is not possible in the absence of stronger civilian capacity. Without this capacity, there may be breaks in the fighting but resilient institutions will not take root and the risk of relapse into violence will remain.*

*Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Chair to the Senior Advisory Group to the UN Secretary General on Civilian Capacities in the Aftermath of Conflict, (Guéhenno, 2011, p.i)*

Communities' self-protection measures are the first line of defence from civil conflict (Ferris 2011, loc. 936). Most communities in situations of violent conflict already have some self-protection and conflict-resolution strategies or mechanisms that existed before UCP organizations established a presence in the area. In some cases these are working well enough and there may be no request for outside support. However, in many cases on-going violence, destruction of infrastructure, and displacement may have overwhelmed or broken down local peace infrastructures. They can often be revitalized or strengthened relatively easily.<sup>3</sup> Strengthening local capacities of at-risk individuals and populations is the most obvious place for international UCP practitioners to start their protection work. In some areas, where authorities restrict or limit access to international agencies, it may be the only entry point international UCP practitioners have.

Enhancing local capacities starts with the recognition of existing capacities among conflict-affected communities to interrupt cycles of violence and enhance nonviolent responses to conflict. In addition to supporting local actors to take further action for the protection of their communities, international UCP actors also recognize that enhanced local capacity and ownership will likely strengthen their own direct protection efforts as these efforts are typically carried out in collaboration with the appropriate local actors. Besides, local actors usually know best which methods are most suitable to the conflict and context. Enhanced capacity and confidence of local actors will also reduce dependence on external support in the long run and make it more likely that they will directly engage with authorities and hold them accountable.

Finally, enhancing local capacities is more sustainable than developing UCP efforts driven by external agencies. The efforts of US based Christian Peacemaker Teams and Meta Peace Teams at the US border with Mexico, for example, are not dependent on visas or

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<sup>3</sup> UNDP defines infrastructures for peace as “mechanisms, resources, and skills through which conflicts can be resolved and peace sustained within a society” (UNDP n.d.)

other government permissions. This provides such organizations with greater freedom of movement and makes it less likely that their operations will be suddenly disrupted. The presence of international UCP personnel is highly dependent on uncertain factors like funding, and the goodwill of the government to grant visas. Moving ownership to local actors ensures that when international organizations leave, UCP efforts will continue.

*In some places, local communities have created their own forms of self-protection, sometimes with weapons as in communities in Guerrero and Chiapas in Mexico, sometimes (like the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó), without weapons. It was pointed out that inviting international accompaniment is itself an element of a strategy of self-protection.*

*Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection and Protective Accompaniment,  
Bogota (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2020)*

NP Photo / Felicity Gray / Joint Nonviolent  
Peaceforce and Women Protection Team patrol.  
Covid awareness raising and engagement with  
joint force. South Sudan / March 2020





## 2.1.3 Encouragement and deterrence

The two approaches of encouragement and deterrence play an important role, not only in achieving the above-mentioned key UCP objectives, but also in connecting the objectives to UCP methods. They also link the UCP principles, sources of guidance, methods, values, and skills to the key objectives. The methods will be further defined in Module 3.

Encouragement relates to positive engagement with all relevant actors. Deterrence relates to the use of negative pressure to discourage certain behaviours. Both encouragement and deterrence are used to interrupt cycles of violence and enhance nonviolent responses to conflict. They are particularly relevant in the efforts of UCP actors to influence the attitudes and behaviours of actors responsible for violence as well as those with the power and responsibility to protect civilians. Most UCP organizations use a mixture of encouragement and deterrence. Some use one or the other as their predominant approach or alternate depending on the situation. Others use deterrence only as a last resort.

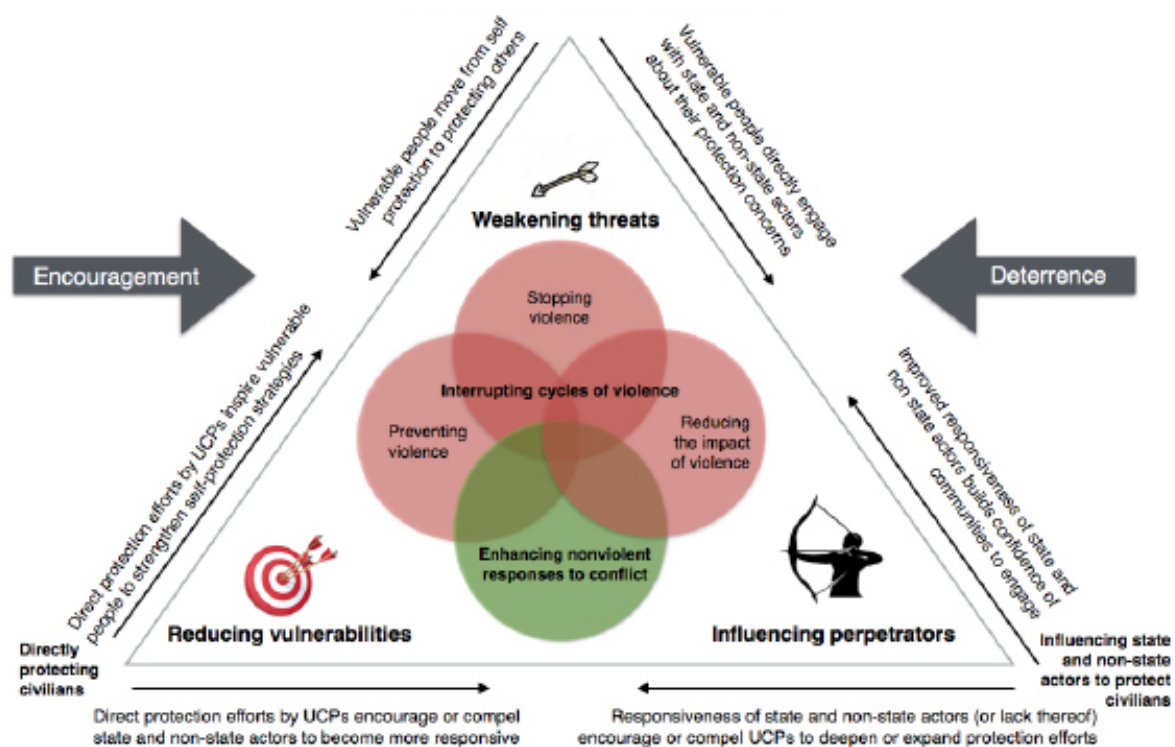


Figure 2: UCP actors may use encouragement or deterrence as specific tactics for each of the strategies. They may for example encourage armed actors to increase their protection efforts or they may exert a certain amount of pressure to deter those actors from harming civilians. The diagram also shows different entry points for reducing violence: UCP actors may focus on influencing perpetrators (e.g. dissuading people from expressing hateful messages), weakening the threat itself (e.g., countering hateful messages with a different narrative) or reducing vulnerabilities (e.g. assisting the target group in deflecting or responding to hate speech).



## ENCOURAGEMENT

Repeated incidents of violence, a culture of war, and a climate of fear can lead in many situations to discouragement and loss of morale. Civil society leaders and communities in isolated conflict areas often need support and encouragement more than protection. Encouragement therefore plays a key role in effective UCP. UCP practitioners can boost morale, sometimes by their mere presence, which shows people that others know and care about them. Practitioners can also encourage local actors by providing new ideas and additional protection tools. This can support local peace infrastructures in generating renewed efforts for peace and security.

Encouragement is often used in the relationships with state duty bearers, replacing the use of pressure when possible. These are the people who have a formal responsibility to protect, and in many cases they respond better to positive engagement than to pressure. In the absence of functioning state structures, they often feel unsupported or unable to make a difference. UCP teams can support and encourage them in carrying out their responsibilities to protect civilians. When state actors, who are the principal duty bearers, increase their protection role, they limit the space for potential perpetrators to act with impunity. This may in turn encourage civilians to increase their efforts for peace and social change, knowing that they will be protected by the state (even though government officials do not always see their role as offering state protection).

Of course, in many situations it is the duty bearers themselves, military and police among them, that are the sources of violence. Even then, encouragement to uphold international humanitarian and human rights laws may have a positive impact. Moreover, the public display of UCP actors to assume good intentions can generate acceptance and build relations that can be leveraged to minimise harm to civilians. In each context, UCP projects need to assess if contact is appropriate, and if so, if encouragement is appropriate. Often it is.

Encouragement may take different forms: rational argument, moral appeal, positive role modelling, increased cooperation, training in IHL and IHR, improved human understanding, and adoption of non-offensive policy. In most situations there are identifiable needs and fears behind acts of violence. By separating the acts of violence from the person or institution committing these acts, UCP practitioners, when appropriate, encourage open communication between local peace actors and perpetrators in the hope they can be persuaded to change their behaviour. Ideally, this engagement reminds the perpetrators of their humanity, and, in turn, they choose not to commit acts of violence. It may also reinforce their natural human tendency against inflicting harm on fellow humans. Though this reasoning may seem idealistic, it is often too quickly assumed that perpetrators are not willing to engage or change their behaviour. As Oliver Kaplan (2013) writes: “What may begin as the normative and moral stances of civilians can later be internalized or interpreted by armed groups in light of their ‘interests’” leading them to accept a more responsible norm for behaviour, though for their own reasons. Fear of working directly with perpetrators can result in a lost opportunity.

## DETERRENCE

When encouragement is not possible or is insufficient, deterrence is applied. In the context of UCP, deterrence means confronting aggressors with sufficient negative consequences to influence them *not* to commit human rights violations or abuse. UCP methods are effective in deterring violence against civilians because they counteract impunity by ensuring that crimes cannot happen in secret. Most aggressors prefer to carry out their abuse in private, without witnesses, to avoid legal, political, and social repercussions. The visible presence and engagement of external persons (such as internationals or nationals from other parts of the country) who would witness these abuses or human rights violations makes would-be perpetrators more reluctant to engage in violent acts. The presence of witnesses greatly increases the chances, or at least the perception, that the potential perpetrators will face negative consequences for their actions. Similarly, potential perpetrators may be unwilling to harm internationals who are in the way of intended harm to civilians.

Examples of negative consequences are:

- **The loss of ‘moral high ground’:** human rights violations or abuse may receive attention in international reports or media, damaging the reputation of perpetrators;
- **The loss of legitimacy among the local support base:** supporters or constituents at the local level do not want to be associated with leaders that are known to have committed violations or abuse;
- **The loss of status within the community, family, social, or religious organizations;**
- **The loss of contracts, aid, debt relief, or tourism** as a result of bad publicity;
- **The loss of opportunities or likelihood to realize future political ambitions:** potential donors may be reluctant to support candidates with a record of violations or abuse;
- **Sanctions or military intervention;**
- **Legal actions:** perpetrators could be prosecuted by a national court, tried in war tribunals or taken to the International Criminal Court.

There is not always a clear distinction between the two approaches of encouragement and deterrence. Often they are used simultaneously according to the specifics and dynamics of conflict and context. Similarly, it is not always clear whether influencing behaviour is the result of deterrence or encouragement. Effective deterrence may reduce the opportunities for potential perpetrators to carry out their threats and this may increase the safe space for civilians to engage in both encouragement and deterrence, at times using UCP methods. It may also encourage civil society leaders and state duty bearers to resume or increase their efforts towards political and social reform. Assuming it leads to structural change, reform may eventually deter human rights abuses in a more sustainable manner. For armed actors, deterrence may prevent episodes of violence against civilians, but encouragement may help change minds and norms.

EXAMPLES ON HOW UCP METHODS <sup>4</sup> INTERSECT WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND DETERRANCE		
	Encouragement	Deterrance
Proactive engagement	Threatened civilians realize there are ways to prevent or reduce abuse. They may feel encouraged to speak out about abuse, confront perpetrators and establish or reinvestigate their own protection activities. Potential perpetrators realize that their needs can be met without the use of violence.	Protective accompaniment and presence block or interrupt a pattern of abuse, or make it more difficult for abusers to threaten or abuse civilians.
Monitoring	Civilians clearly see the presence of and timely response to incidents by UCP monitors in the area and see that their own people (local UCP staff or partners) are actively involved. Armed groups may feel less need to commit violence if they trust a ceasefire or other agreement is being monitored.	Knowing that the international protectors could invoke negative consequences, perpetrators are reluctant to commit violence in the presence of clearly identified protection monitors.
Relationship building	Survivors of violence feel encouraged by the stronger networks of relationships, and the opportunities this gives them to report abuse, connect with relevant service providers, and access services. State actors are reinforced in their responsibility to protect. Non-state actors are encouraged to enhance their image with their local communities and their international image.	Perpetrators are reluctant to commit violence because UCP teams have a relationship with their superiors and other high level actors on which they depend.
Capacity Enhancement	Actors feel inspired and empowered to improve their own security and that of others by applying new methods.	Local actors feel increasingly able to confront patterns of abuse and raise their profile, diminishing the space in which perpetrators can act with impunity.
Advocacy	Perpetrators are provided education on IHL, IIR, and relevant expectations. Along with the education comes advocacy from local communities and international UCP practitioners.	Pressure is put on armed actors through direct advocacy and indirect advocacy from donor countries.

Table 1 provides examples on how encouragement and deterrence are used for each of the UCP methods

When it comes to influencing conflicting state and non-state armed actors to protect against or minimise harms to civilians, some UCP actors have found that the key to finding the right balance between encouragement and deterrence is to distinguish between different types of direct physical violence against civilians (see figure 3).

4 Methods will be further elaborated in Module 3.

A lot of armed clashes that impact civilians are not specifically targeted towards civilians, for example when civilians are caught in crossfires. In these situations, conflicting parties usually do not feel threatened by the interventions of UCP actors, especially if these interventions are narrowly focused on getting civilians out of harm's way. They often welcome such interventions and the UCP actors gain trust and respect as a result. More difficult for UCP actors is to intervene in situations where violence is specifically targeted to civilians, but even on this level, they may have some leverage. Civilians may be arrested for the wrong reasons or military camps may be set up in schools out of ignorance for the security concerns of civilians. More difficult still is to intervene when civilians are deliberately and knowingly subjected to abuse by ground troops, but this may not always be condoned by their superiors, let alone commanded by them. It becomes even more difficult when violence against civilians is not only targeted, but also part of a plan to intimidate civilians or intended to increase military advantage. These are issues that UCP actors may not be able to address through encouragement or negotiation with local commanders. It may require intervention through pressure and advocacy at higher levels.

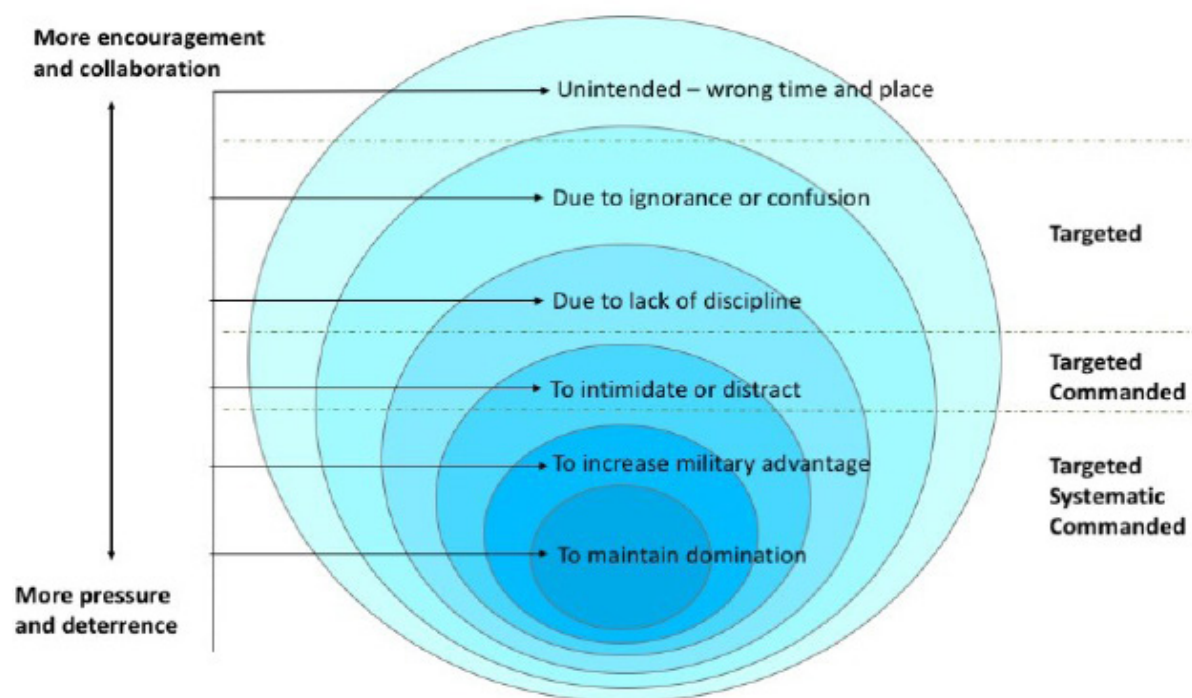


Figure 3: Violence against civilians that is unintended, the result of ignorance or confusion or lack of discipline can often be prevented or reduced through encouragement, collaboration, and coordination. Violence that is targeted, systemic and commanded from the top of the military command structure tends to be harder to address in the same way and may require a certain amount of pressure.

When civil society actors decide to become active in protecting civilians, they are often inclined to focus on violence that lies at the core of the conflict, that is targeted, commanded, and systematic. It is the type of violence that hurts or shocks the most. It is also the violence that is hardest to address. Without proper security management

systems, acceptance, and political clout, civil society actors may bite off more than they can digest. Besides, when pressure is not required, it is often counter-productive. UCP actors can cover a lot of ground with minimal resistance by starting from the outer layers of the onion model depicted in figure 3 and moving inwards. As they move from the layer of unintended harm to the next layer of harm caused by ignorance and confusion, they gradually strengthen their position and increase their acceptance among communities and military actors. In time, they find themselves in a position where they can put their finger where it hurts. Even then, they may decide that other actors are better placed to put pressure on conflicting parties, while they continue to play a mediative role on the ground.



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Mahony, L. and Eguren, E. (1997). *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Mahony, L. (2006). *Protective Presence: Field strategies for civilian protection*. Geneva, Switzerland: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. [http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx\\_news/Proactive-Presence.pdf](http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/Proactive-Presence.pdf)

EAPPI Photo /  
G. Sheppard /  
EAs speaking  
with Palestinian  
farmer. Khirbet  
Tana / December  
2018



# 2.2

## Key principles of UCP

UCP methods and activities are governed by the application of a specific set of principles. There are six such principles: nonviolence, nonpartisanship, the primacy of local actors, independence, and civilian leadership. It is important to note that UCP organizations view these principles differently. Nonpartisanship in particular is not embraced by all UCP organizations. This section describes each of these six UCP principles. It also clarifies how the principles are applied by UCP practitioners to achieve the two key objectives. Principles become practice by putting them into action.

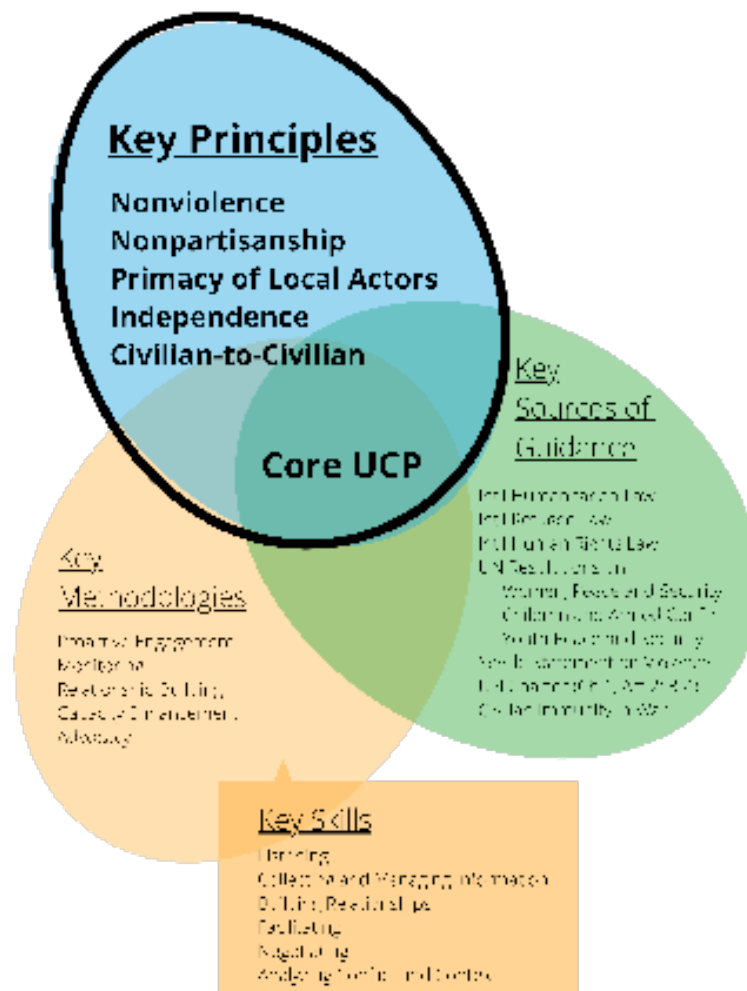


Figure 4: Focus on Key Principles of Unarmed Civilian Protection



## 2.2.1

### Nonviolence

*Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon ... which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals.*

*Martin Luther King. (1964). Why We Can't Wait, New York, NY: Harper and Row.*

In Module 1, nonviolence was explained as the use of peaceful means or a kind of energy to bring about social and political change, maintain the status quo, and/or transform oneself. Module 1 also showed that there is a long worldwide tradition of nonviolence and that nonviolent struggle has been more effective in bringing about social and political change than violent struggle. Finally, UCP was presented as a fusion between nonviolence and peacekeeping. It includes and discards some aspects of both traditions from which it originates.

Not relying on the use of armed or physical force, UCP practitioners need alternative means to prevent violence and protect civilians. Without such means, UCP would not be able to achieve much. It finds alternative means in nonviolence. Some peaceful means to bring about social and political change, such as negotiation, are so widely used, even by militaries, that they are hardly thought of as 'nonviolent'. Unlike militaries, however, UCP practitioners cannot pick and choose between force and nonviolence. If they were to use force, even momentarily, they would fundamentally change their role in the conflict and risk losing their reputation as well as the acceptance and trust they had built with conflict parties, thereby weakening their ability to protect themselves and others. They would also pose a different threat to armed actors and be more at risk for attracting attacks. Understanding the rules and the worldview in which nonviolence is grounded allows UCP practitioners to make optimal use of the methods and tactics that are available to them.

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF NONVIOLENCE — STRATEGY, PRINCIPLES, PARTICIPANTS, AND TACTICS**

This section provides an overview of some characteristics of nonviolence that are relevant for UCP. It clarifies the approach to protection and security on which UCP theory and practice are built. The identified characteristics will be explored in comparison to some of the characteristics of violent struggle. This comparison is relevant as UCP applies a nonviolent approach within a context of violent conflict and a culture of war. Rather than merely presenting an unarmed alternative that operates within the same paradigm of violent struggle, reinforcing the culture of militarization and war, UCP presents a different paradigm, one rooted in nonviolence. By operating within this paradigm UCP can become an invitation to actively support a shift towards a culture working with conflict in nonviolent and peaceful ways. This shift represents the most sustainable form of peace.

Adopting this paradigm requires a completely different mindset that is the opposite of seeking containment, punishment, and/or defeat. Instead, it seeks to win over enemies as allies, broadening options to meet their needs in less violent ways and not separating the means from the end goals. It also accepts the risks and suffering that is inherent in this work, while refraining from inflicting suffering on others. This is often a choice based on principles or ethics, but it is also a strategic choice. Those UCP actors that adopt nonviolence primarily as a tactical choice, may not seek to win over enemies as allies nor to broaden their response options. Yet in most ways they still function within the paradigm and principles of nonviolence.<sup>5</sup>

UCP practitioners aim first and foremost to prevent violence and protect threatened civilians. Winning over a perpetrator of violence or abuse as an ally is perhaps the most sustainable way of preventing violence and increasing the safety and security of threatened civilians. This requires a belief in the humanity and potential for good in those perpetrating violence. Transforming a relationship of opposition to one of cooperation has many potential benefits beyond the immediate goal of security, but while this would be an ideal outcome, it is often not possible. The fact that UCP practitioners do use pressure does not mean that they lose sight of the humanity of the perpetrators of violence. If violence can only be prevented through the use of pressure, they will not hesitate to use it, but will always strive to do so without weapons, hatred or ill-intent.

**Principle: *Whereas in violent struggle the ends justify the means, in nonviolent struggle there is no contradiction between the means and ends.***

*The instrumentalist defense of violence depends quite crucially on being able to show that violence can be restricted to the status of a tool, a means, without becoming an end itself. The use of the tool to realize such purposes presupposes that the tool is guided by a clear intention and remains so guided throughout the course of the action. It also depends on knowing when the course of a violent action will come to an end. What if violence is precisely the kind of phenomenon that is constantly “getting out of hand”?*

*Judith Butler. The Force of Nonviolence (2020, pp. 13-14).*

Gandhi often said that means and ends were two sides of the same coin, meaning that they could not be separated from one another. When any of us commit acts of violence, we are, in and through those acts, building a more violent world. Furthermore, by using violent means for nonviolent ends, we project our ideals of peace onto an imaginary point in a future that is not subjected to change. Nonviolence pulls us back to the present moment and invites us to be the change we wish to see in the world. For this reason, many UCP actors see protection as a process rather than an end result.

When UCP is effective in preventing violence, it can have a powerful impact. It demonstrates that a nonviolent approach to conflict and violence is more than just

<sup>5</sup> There is ongoing debate within UCP organizations about the use of principled nonviolence versus tactical nonviolence. The presentation in this section draws heavily on concepts that characterize principled nonviolence, because it shows a clearer contrast between the paradigm of UCP practitioners and that of force protection actor and how they think differently about security. It also shows UCP's potential for cultural change.

an ideal. It challenges the assertion that violence may be needed to bring peace. This message is most effective when individual UCP practitioners demonstrate the values of nonviolence at all times, in interactions with state and non-state armed groups, local government, humanitarian agencies, people in the community, in their own teams and within themselves. Practitioners who are not living in their own community typically live within communities they are protecting, where their attitudes and behaviour are closely observed. Even the perception of ‘violent’ attitudes or behaviour can have a negative impact on the work of UCP. When UCP actors embody the values of nonviolence in an environment of violence and mistrust, their presence can become a beacon of inspiration.

**Strategy:** *Whereas the strategy of violent struggle is to threaten or actually inflict suffering to force the opponent to accede, the strategy of nonviolent struggle is to change the mind of the opponent, who then changes behaviour.*

Too often dismissed without being attempted, the strategy of changing the opponent’s mind is based on the belief that both victim and perpetrator share a common humanity. It does not depend on the assumption that people are inherently ‘good’. In fact, it recognizes the potential for both ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in all people, including the extremes of altruism and cruelty. Writer and activist Barbara Deming used to speak of the two hands of nonviolence. One hand, upraised with palm facing forward, says, “I will not put up with your injustice.” The other, extended with palm facing upward in a gesture of welcome, says “but I’m open to you as a human being.” To do that, you must believe that behind all of your opponent’s hostility is a human being (Nagler, 2019, p.7). In order to speak to the humanity of another, especially one that has been buried by traumas of war or shielded by armour, the UCP actor needs to be in touch with their own humanity and open up first. Being physically unarmed is a first step, mental disarmament a second. Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck explains how this works:

*Let’s imagine for a moment that humans are large ice cubes... Often we hit each other hard enough to shatter our edges. Out of fear, we freeze as hard as we can to protect ourselves; and, hope that when we collide with others, they will shatter before we do. Our fear makes us hard and rigid. Any obstacle or unexpected difficulty is likely to shatter us... But, a lucky few, may meet an ice cube that has actually melted and become a puddle. What happens if an ice cube meets a puddle? The warmer water in the puddle begins to melt the ice cube, making it a little mushy. Even if we only melt slightly, others around us soften too. It’s a fascinating process... The ice cube begins to realize that it does not have to be hard, rigid and cold... The more melting that occurs, the more we attract others and allow a safe space for them to melt too.*

*Charlotte Joko Beck, Nothing Special: Living Zen (1993)*

While it may appear idealistic to transform a hardened human rights abuser into an ally, there is a whole spectrum of possible relations between the extremes of enmity and alliance that UCP actors can explore. Even a superficial relationship can make it harder for the abuser to maintain their aggression, in the same way that it is more difficult to be rude to another driver on the road once you’ve established eye contact. Such relationships can also open up communication. In these ways UCP actors have found that security can be obtained not just through separation and distancing but also through connection

and proximity.

It is important for UCP actors to regularly check their own biases and stereotypes and resist simplifying complex social relations into good or bad entities, especially when they live among marginalized and oppressed populations. Women are often assumed to be pro-peace, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) filled with altruistic people, and soldiers supportive of war. In reality, such assumptions may not be true. Appealing to the humanity of all actors is integral to building relationships of trust and acceptance with them, including— whenever possible and appropriate—with perpetrators and other actors who are difficult to reach. The greater their ability to acknowledge the intrinsic humanity of these actors, the more likely UCP practitioners will gain trust and acceptance from these actors. This trust and acceptance may then provide them with the necessary leverage to protect civilians in times of need.

**Participants:** *Whereas violent struggle demands participants who are willing and able to injure and kill other humans, nonviolent actions inherently require and invite a much broader and more diverse base of participation.*

UCP requires a broad and diverse base, and actively promotes the involvement of local actors as peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peacebuilders, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or physical abilities. One could even say that UCP democratizes security by viewing everyone as a potential protector and reduces the division between protector and protected. Many UCP teams not only include national or local staff, they also strengthen the capacity of local peace infrastructures. Furthermore, they create platforms for at-risk groups to express their needs and concerns, and connect peacemakers at the grassroots level with relevant actors at the middle-range and top level. UCP personnel, whether local or international, have inspired local actors to embrace nonviolent action in the midst of surrounding conflict. People learn that, contrary to popular perception, they do not have to be pacifists or saints nor have a particular educational degree or intellectual background to practice nonviolence.

**Tactics:** *Whereas secrecy and force are commonly used to limit options for response in violent struggles, transparency, trust, and acceptance are commonly used to open opportunities for response in nonviolent struggles.*

In order to build trust and acceptance, UCP practitioners generally ensure that their actions are transparent and are perceived as such by all relevant actors.<sup>6</sup> UCP actors usually make sure that their movements are known to security actors and potential perpetrators, especially when it comes to high profile accompaniments. They may even ask state security forces to support them in carrying out accompaniments, even though they suspect that those same forces are the source of threats. They use transparency as a way to dissuade those actors from carrying out these threats and deny them the option of putting up a smokescreen around potential attacks. Moreover, transparency provides protection to UCP actors. It may prevent them from stumbling into a dangerous situation that they might have otherwise been warned about. If encouragement does not yield any result and deterrence is unlikely to have an effect, rather than resorting to secrecy or deception, a different strategy needs to be found. When local actors at-risk want

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<sup>6</sup> There are cases when the safety of a civilian requires secrecy, for example, in helping someone under threat to go to a safe location.

their movements to be kept secret, UCP actors may identify different ways to support them, such as providing regular phone calls, connecting them to influential actors, or enhancing capacity in self-protection.

Even the perception of secrecy is generally avoided so that UCP teams do not appear to pose a threat to anyone. In case pressure is applied to confront potential perpetrators with the consequences of their actions, UCP practitioners work to illuminate any possible paths for positive responses.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, they need to be willing to remove the pressure when a positive response is forthcoming, and, when appropriate, to provide positive feedback for actions that respect the rights of civilians. Understanding the logic of violence and promoting the search for alternatives are important components of nonviolent action.

Finally, UCPs need to balance transparency with confidentiality. As a rule of thumb, UCP personnel are advised to be transparent about their actions and movements, while maintaining confidentiality when it comes to the details of (sensitive) protection cases.

*Gandhi would always offer full details of his plans and movements to the police, thereby saving them a great deal of trouble. One police inspector who availed himself of Gandhi's courtesy in this matter is said to have been severely reprimanded by his chief. 'Don't you know,' he told the inspector, 'that everyone who comes into close contact with that man goes over to his side?'*

*Reginald Reynolds, in A Quest for Gandhi, Doubleday (1952)*



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Michael Nagler. (2013). Degrees of Nonviolence, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oo2x44L72GU>

### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Chenoweth, E & Stephan, M. (2011). Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict. Chapter 1. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Ensuring that options are available is not always under the control of UCP personnel—for example, in the case where consequences of a perpetrator's actions include arrest by the International Criminal Court.



## 2.2.2

# Nonpartisanship

### WHAT IS NONPARTISANSHIP?

Being nonpartisan means not choosing or taking sides in a conflict. Nonpartisanship does not mean indifference or passivity; nor is it the same as neutrality. Neutrality means not taking sides *and* not helping or supporting any party in a conflict. Nonpartisan actors proactively engage in a conflict. They may work against injustice and the violations of human rights, or for personal dignity and individual freedom, as means for establishing an enduring peace. Nonpartisanship is not about pro- or anti-government. To be nonpartisan is to say, 'We will be at your side in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not take sides against those you define as enemies' (Mahony & Eguren, (1997) p.236).

### HOW DOES NONPARTISANSHIP RELATE TO UCP?

Most international humanitarian organizations are either nonpartisan or neutral. This enables them to prioritize humanitarian rather than political considerations and gives them (on most occasions) a sort of 'diplomatic immunity'. They are allowed access to 'war theaters' from which they would be prohibited were they perceived as 'working for' one side or another in a conflict. UCP practitioners, in particular, are usually nonpartisan, though there is a spectrum of implementation of this principle (see below). They are committed to the dignity, security, and wellbeing of all and to the struggle against violence. And while there is some variation of degree on this, they generally avoid partisan interests or taking the side of any party. This approach allows them to build relationships with all parties, wherever possible, and gain their trust and acceptance. UCP practitioners are not considered to be neutral, as they openly and clearly support and promote human rights, security for all, and the peaceful transformation of conflicts.

In practice, fully embracing nonpartisanship implies that UCP practitioners:

- Deal with all parties, whenever possible, with an open mind;
- Report as objectively as possible;
- Refrain from judgmental responses, despite possible emotional identification with the oppressed or with a victim;
- Voice concerns to those responsible without being accusatory;
- Do not become involved in the work of the groups or individuals they assist or

- protect;<sup>8</sup>
- Share the tools of protection and conflict resolution they have at their disposal, without intervening or imposing their own opinions.

Not all organizations that apply UCP define themselves as ‘nonpartisan’ and among those who do, nonpartisanship is interpreted and applied differently from one organization or project to another. The ICRC defines itself as ‘neutral’, even though they are proactively engaged in a conflict and do help and support parties in conflict to some extent. Peace Brigades International (PBI) and Nonviolent Peaceforce both define themselves as nonpartisan, but apply the principle in different ways. Christian Peacemaker Teams, on the other hand, do not define themselves as nonpartisan. Expressing the principle of supporting those who are confronting systems of violence and oppression and drawing on the traditions of civil disobedience, they figuratively and literally ‘get in the way’ of oppression, injustice, and violations of human rights. Local organizations doing self-protection work are often seen as partisan simply based on their ethnicity or other identity markers. This may or may not be accurate. Many local efforts are, in fact, partisan for particular issues, even while practicing UCP. See figure 5, below, for a spectrum of nonpartisanship within UCP.

*After one cross-organisation unarmed civilian protection workshop I attended, a representative from CPT [Christian Peacemaker Teams] reflected that “the thing that I found scary was the way that neutrality was thrown around. Personally, I don’t understand neutrality or non-partisanship if you understand what racism and privilege look like on a large scale. If CPT was more neutral we would be more well known, but I’d rather be part of a team that is proud to align ourselves with justice.”*

*Felicity Gray, (2020), A different kind of weapon: Ethical landscapes of nonviolent civilian protection p.10*

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8 The level of noninvolvement is an issue of debate and interpretation among UCP implementing organizations. Some projects, for example, insist on only conducting ‘workshops’ instead of ‘training’ to emphasize the role of UCP personnel as catalysts or facilitators of dialogue and learning between local actors rather than as trainers who transfer external knowledge, ideas, and skills to local actors. Other projects are more flexible, but most of them make sure they don’t impose their own ideas onto local actors or tell them what to do. Such essential details are often dealt with in the basic agreements or terms of reference between the UCP organization and the conflict parties that have invited it.



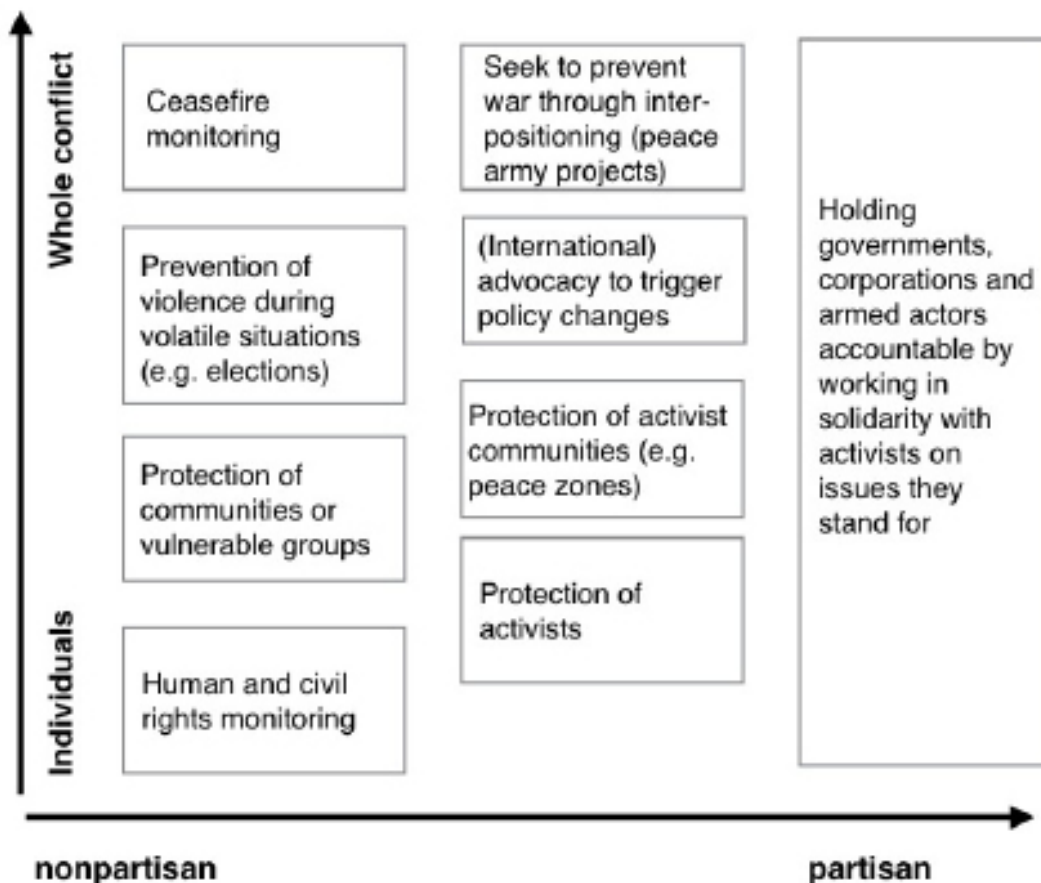


Figure 5 the spectrum of nonpartisanship within UCP, adapted from Schweitzer, (2010 p.13): Not all organizations that apply UCP define themselves as nonpartisan. Though it is difficult to draw clear lines between a nonpartisan and partisan approach to UCP, those who stand in solidarity with at-risk populations and individuals and the issues they fight for are generally not considered to be nonpartisan. Nonetheless, they find many of the UCP strategies to be effective.

## CHALLENGES OF NONPARTISANSHIP<sup>9</sup>

Nonpartisanship is perhaps the most challenging principle of UCP, especially at the field level. Many UCP practitioners are personally committed to justice and human rights. In the face of overt injustice, when no action is taken to address the injustice, they find it challenging to refrain from taking a stand.

Challenges to adhering to nonpartisanship include:

- Dealing with all parties with an open mind, and with open eyes and ears (internal conflicts might be hidden);
- Putting aside one's biases and prejudices as best as possible when reporting;
- Voicing concerns to those responsible for abuse without being accusatory. This is where the difference between nonpartisan and neutrality may become problematic;
- Separating acts of violence from the people who commit those acts or the institutions to which they belong. In the beginning, when they are still new in the area, this may

<sup>9</sup> Some of these challenges mentioned in this section will be explored in more detail in module 5.

be easier for UCP team members, but after witnessing on-going acts of violence from a specific group or institution, it becomes much more difficult;

- Maintaining transparency (key stakeholders must know what UCP teams are doing—suspicion means increased security risks), while at the same time maintaining the confidentiality and trust of vulnerable individuals and groups, who may suffer abuse from the same key stakeholders;<sup>10</sup>
- Maintaining relationships and acceptance from key stakeholders (especially national governments, non-state actors) that tolerate or propagate violence and abuse, while adhering to mandate and principles (protecting human rights), which challenge these stakeholders. Operating with a lower profile (behind the scenes, but not secret) is an option, but it can lead to a perception of legitimizing violence and abuse;
- Acknowledging that no matter what UCP actors do to dispel perceptions of impartiality, one or more conflicting parties is likely to keep seeing them as partisan (for a long time), especially if the UCP practitioners are local actors.
- Responding to pressure from international groups to name and shame.

Nonpartisanship can be especially challenging for local UCP actors. Not only do they need to navigate their prejudices, identities, and perceived social roles in their own communities, but conflicting parties will more likely see them as either on their side or against them. Often times they overcome this hurdle to some extent by joining a collective that displays a more balanced representation of identities and interests. Ultimately, nonpartisanship needs to be proven on the ground, through balanced relationship building and effective action.

Though challenging, the presence of a nonpartisan third party has been a missing link in many societies struggling to emerge from violent conflict. The realization that it is possible to build a relationship with military actors and even gain their support in protecting civilians, (particularly at the local level), often brings about a major shift in attitude and behaviour among local UCP actors. As this relationship grows, they may find themselves approached from all sides of the community with requests for assistance. A similar shift has occurred in regard to police or military actors. They have often accustomed themselves to the idea that communities fear or despise them and may welcome the opportunity to change this perception.

*I came very armored and defended. I was ready for people to hate me because I was a police officer. That happens a lot, even among people who share my progressive politics. They'd see the uniform and immediately make a decision about who I was. That's the attitude I came there with, and what happened? Imagine a red dot on a whiteboard. That's where I was living, in the red dot... police officers need your support. They need your understanding. I've seen what happens when they get it. They need to hear from you, they need to understand you.*

*Cheri Maples, Mindfulness and the Police, True Peace Work, 2016, kindle edition pp. 274-275 and 288*

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10 See International Committee of the Red Cross Professional Standards 2013)

## 2.2.3

### Primacy of local actors

*I made a conclusion after my three missions. We can't solve the problems in these countries by being there. We are not the only answer, there is so much more answer to solving that problem, and that is the people themselves. But we can give them some peace and stability, so they can develop it themselves, that is the only way.*

*Former UN peacekeeper quoted in Furnari, 2014 p. 167.*

#### **WHAT IS THE PRIMACY OF LOCAL ACTORS?**

The phrase ‘primacy of local actors’ refers to the principle that local actors have the right and responsibility to determine their own futures, govern their own country or community, and solve their own problems. In the context of violent conflict this means that third parties can support, protect, and/or collaborate with local actors, while recognizing that the local actors remain the drivers of peace processes, development, and socio-political change. The principle of the primacy of local actors is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21/3: “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government” as well as UN peacekeeping guidelines and numerous humanitarian agency reports (Paffenholz, 2015).

Though ‘local actor’ can be defined as an inhabitant of a particular area or neighbourhood, it is not always clear who is considered a local actor and who is not. In situations of violent conflict it is not uncommon for people to spend extensive periods of time in refugee camps, IDP camps, or among diaspora groups before returning to their place of origin. International organizations may count IDPs among local actors, but their host communities may view them as outsiders. Even when there is consensus about who is a local actor and who is not, the issue of primacy remains difficult as different groups of local actors may have opposing views about ‘the will of the people’. Additionally, some local actors are more accessible, due to language, location, leadership positions, etc., and their views tend to be understood as ‘the will of the people’. It may take consistent outreach efforts to engage with those less accessible, less included in a community, or with less of a public voice. Most UCP organizations give primacy to one or some combination of the groups that have invited them, the actors who are most harmfully impacted by the violence, or those that are the focus of protection activities.

#### **HOW DOES THE PRIMACY OF LOCAL ACTORS RELATE TO UCP?**

Firstly, recognizing the primacy of local actors means that international UCP personnel respect the rights of local partners, state duty bearers, at-risk groups, and other actors to make decisions for themselves as individuals. Secondly, this means that UCP teams, with very few exceptions, adhere to the laws, rules, and regulations of the national government. When operating outside their own countries, they generally, though not

always, refrain from protests, boycotts, civil disobedience, or other forms of nonviolent non-cooperation. At the same time, UCP practitioners may provide protection to local actors engaging in nonviolent action. Thirdly, the primacy of local actors means that civilians of a community experiencing violent conflict are regarded as the decision makers on matters regarding their community. This includes the decision to invite UCP teams to live and work in their neighbourhoods and to remain there, as well as the decision to receive particular protection services.

Adhering to the primacy of local actors is not only a matter of respect; it is also a matter of strategy. The effectiveness of UCP, as well as the security of its peacekeepers and beneficiaries, depends on the acceptance and trust of UCP personnel from most community members, and at least bare tolerance from all community members and an absence of credible direct threats. Moreover, UCP assumes that local people best understand their own conditions, contexts, and potential solutions. If, on the other hand, primacy would lie with UCP teams, they would be held responsible for important decisions and solutions affecting the community. Acceptance by all parties would become increasingly difficult and nonpartisanship impossible. Furthermore, it is essential to the objective of capacity enhancement that all local actors recognize and assert their own agency in creating the context for security.

While the primacy of local actors is primarily intended for international UCP actors, it is also relevant for national and even local UCP actors to reflect on. Ethnic minority communities in conflict-affected peripheries often regard national NGOs based in capital cities as outsiders, or even affiliated with the national government and security forces. Even UCP actors that consider themselves part of the community may be considered as outsiders by village people or religious minority groups that they are trying to protect. Ultimately the principle of primacy aims to support the leadership of, or provide ownership to, immediate participants in protection processes.<sup>11</sup>

An important consideration in recognizing the primacy of local actors is to avoid negative impacts of UCP. Most negative impacts of third-party intervention in situations of conflict are caused by failure to recognize the primacy of local actors. Ignorance, arrogance, or lack of capacity, ability, or urgency to respond to an emergency situation are all factors that may play a role in generating negative impacts (see box 2).

### **BOX 2 | NEGATIVE IMPACTS THAT UCP AIMS TO AVOID BY MAINTAINING THE PRIMACY OF LOCAL ACTORS**

Increasing threat to civilians: Agencies' actions or 'aura of expertise' may cause a false sense of security leading people to take risks they would not otherwise take; agencies may put people in dangerous situations; participation in an agency programme or affiliation makes people become targets; agencies may not explicitly analyze and discuss with local partners the differences in risk each faces in a particular context.

<sup>11</sup> The expression 'beneficiaries of protection services' is increasingly being substituted for the word 'participants in protection processes', to emphasize the participatory and non-transactional nature of protection processes within the context of UCP.

**Worsening divisions between conflicting groups:** Agencies may underestimate the depth of divisions and not be prepared to deal with problems, or may not have the skills or experience to manage a tension-filled situation, or may claim to be playing a neutral role but openly become advocates for one side.

**Reinforcing structural or overt violence:** Agencies may accept partisan conditions placed by the more powerful side in a conflict, or influential outside states, in order to conduct a programme; agencies may tolerate or fail to challenge behaviour that affirms the perceptions of superiority and inferiority of people in conflict.

**Diverting human and material resources from local initiatives and mechanisms:** Agencies may come in with preset ideas and models, and not listen to what local people want or need; agencies may focus too much on ‘talking about the past conflict’ rather than on actions that can be taken to change the situation; foreign agencies may hire local activists, pulling their energies away from promising local initiatives.

**Increasing cynicism:** Agencies may create unrealistic expectations within communities; agencies may not be transparent about their activities with communities so that rumours and suspicions promote cynicism.

**Disempowering local people:** Agencies may teach people things they already know, conveying the message that expatriates know best; agencies may give the impression that they are ‘taking care of the situation’; agencies may implement programmes in a way that fosters dependency on outside ‘experts’ and at times undermines local expertise and organizations; foreign agencies may work exclusively with the NGO sector and avoid engagement with government structures, fostering resentment and competition; agencies from the outside may not know when to leave.

Excerpted from: *Confronting War. Critical Lessons For Peace Practitioners*, Mary B. Anderson, Lara Olson with Kristin Doughty, The Collaborative for Development Action Inc, Cambridge MA, 2003, p. 21-26



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Anderson, M. B. (Ed.) *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - Or War*.  
[http://www.medicalpeacework.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/videos/Mary\\_B\\_Anderson.wmv](http://www.medicalpeacework.org/fileadmin/user_upload/videos/Mary_B_Anderson.wmv)

## 2.2.4 Independence

In a series of good practices workshops conducted in 2017 and 2018<sup>12</sup>, it became clear that independence is understood differently and valued differently among UCP organizations. UCP organizations are virtually all independent in the sense that they set their own agendas. Many are independent from the agendas of large international institutions such as the UN, and any interest group or political party. Many international UCP organizations are independent of ideology, though some are affiliated with religious organizations or creeds<sup>13</sup>. Some, especially local organizations, are connected to elements of the community and may not identify as independent, though they set their own programmes. For almost all, their strategies and programmes are not an extension of the policy of governments, private companies, political parties or religious groups. This allows them to focus their attention and resources on the protection needs of at-risk groups wherever they are located, whatever they stand for.

There are a few international and local UCP groups that see themselves not only in the service of the people they protect, but also working under their direction. In that sense they do not see themselves as fully independent. Being independent, however, does not contradict the primacy of local actors. While all organizations work to understand and support local capacities and address locally articulated needs, UCP organizations have the responsibility to decide which local views they give primacy to in any given context and based on their missions.

Being independent, as almost all groups are, also reinforces the principle of nonpartisanship. In order to strengthen the perception of independence, most UCP agencies make a conscious effort to obtain funding from multiple sources. They may decide not to accept funds from parties to the conflict or from beneficiaries of the conflict or the project. Some UCP organizations apply other social responsibility screens to their donors such as not accepting money from weapons manufacturers. Most also rely on substantial contributions from individuals. In the interests of transparency and trust building, it is important that the source of funds is disclosed to local actors. The perceived independence of UCP agencies can be a contributing factor in the decision of conflict parties to invite them for roles such as official ceasefire monitors of a peace process.

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12 <https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/developing-and-expanding-the-field>

13 Some are affiliated with a specific religion (e.g., Christian Peacemaker Teams) from which they derive their humanitarian philosophy or funding, but their aim is universal civilian protection, not to proselytize.



NP Photo / Rocelyn Ello /  
Awareness session with former  
military group in Bentiu, South  
Sudan / March 2021





## 2.2.5

### Civilian-led<sup>14</sup>

‘Civilian-led’ interventions in the context of UCP refer to the partnership (whether formal or informal cooperation) between (international or national) UCP organizations and local civil society actors. While ‘civilian-led’ is described by some as ‘community-led’—contrasting a “bottom-up response to the traditional top-down monitoring conducted by INGOs and UN experts” (Puttick 2017)—it refers here to the notion that the UCP organization itself and the local people most engaged with it are civilians, not operating as part of a military organization. This distinguishes it from government-driven efforts as well as UN peacekeeping operations, in which military actors play a leading role.

The relationship between UCP organizations and communities usually starts with the invitation from local actors for UCP organizations to establish a legal, physical presence in their country, and in specific communities within that country. It is the opposite of traditional international interventions that start with high level agreements and plans developed elsewhere. It is a deliberate attempt to move away from armed groups as the sole actors involved in providing protection and managing security. It is also a way to build the confidence of civil society to increase its role as peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peacebuilders. In many contexts civilian-led efforts strengthen ‘bottom up’ peace processes or help to shift attention to the needs and experiences of local communities.

Though the principle may be clear in theory, it sometimes creates confusion for UCP agencies at the field level. In areas of protracted conflict, a disproportionately large segment of society has been, or still is, affiliated with armed forces. They may not be bearing arms, but still aid armed forces or groups. This makes it hard to distinguish who is a civilian and who is not. Civilians are often compelled to align themselves with one side or another for their own safety. The presence of UCP teams opens a space for civilians to assume a more non-aligned position. As partners of an unarmed, nonpartisan, independent, and civilian protection agency, civil society organizations can send a clear message that they are not affiliated with either side in the conflict.

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<sup>14</sup> While UCP organizations are civilian led, some military operations do adapt UCP methodology e.g. the Australian army in Bougainville.

# 2.3

## Key sources of guidance for UCP

UCP relies on international laws and conventions as key sources of guidance for monitoring compliance to human rights standards and for prioritizing protection needs. UCP organizations also work to raise awareness of these laws and conventions wherever their teams are active. Furthermore, they support and encourage state duty bearers and decision makers to fulfil their obligations and facilitate access to justice for civilians. These sources guide UCP practitioners whether or not the country where they are working is a signatory.

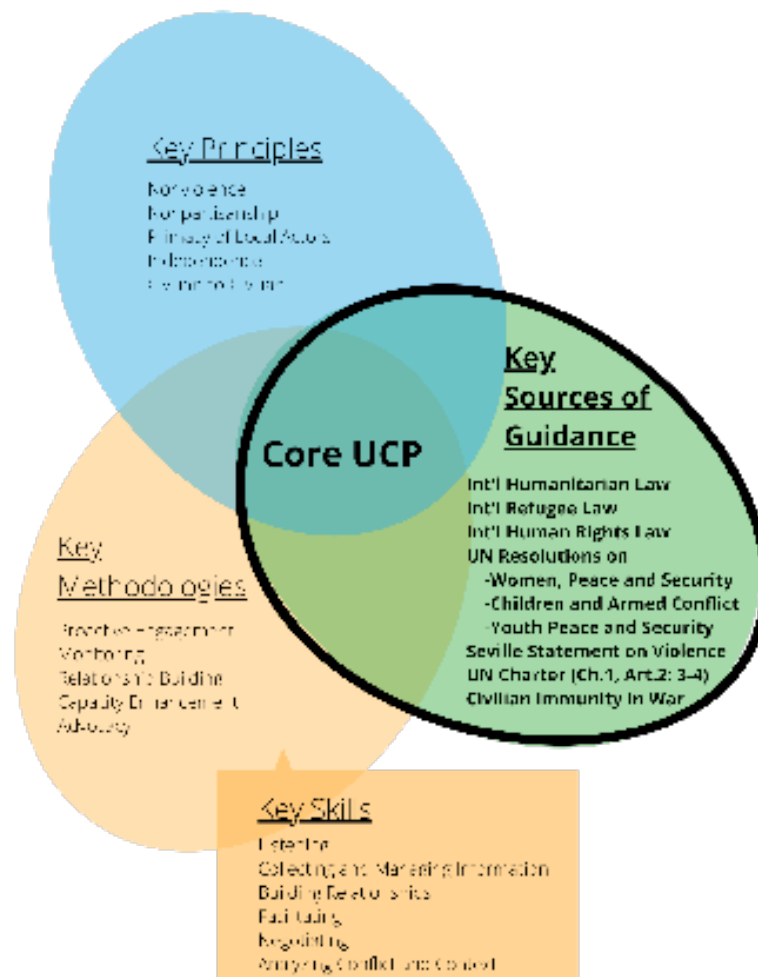


Figure 6: Focus on Key Sources of Guidance for Unarmed Civilian Protection



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Ferris, E. (2011). *The Politics of Protection: the Limits of Humanitarian Action*. Chapters 1 & 2. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

## 2.3.1

### International Humanitarian Law

UCP organizations use International Humanitarian Law as the internationally accepted standard for the protection of civilians. They monitor adherence to this set of laws and identify instances where these laws have been breached. The laws also help them in prioritizing protection needs.

#### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW?

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) aims to protect human life and dignity within the context of armed conflict. IHL emerged in the 19th century to protect soldiers (in Global North countries) who were no longer active participants in combat. Over the past 150 years or so, IHL has expanded its original focus on protecting prisoners of war and wounded soldiers into a broad range of activities designed to protect all civilians who are affected by, but are not direct participants in conflicts (Ferris loc. 135). IHL establishes the responsibilities of armed actors and restricts the use of certain methods and means of warfare. It also strikes a balance between military necessity and the principle of humanity (the protection of persons affected by armed conflict). All parties to conflict—including government forces, rebels, and other armed groups—are bound by IHL. The International Committee of the Red Cross is the guardian of IHL.

Most of IHL is contained in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (International Committee of the Red Cross 1949) and the Additional Protocols of 1977 (International Committee of the Red Cross 1977a; International Committee of the Red Cross 1977b) relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts. Many parts of IHL have now acquired the status of customary law. Customary law is a set of general rules by which all states are bound independent of the ratification of the actual treaties or conventions. Serious violations of IHL are called war crimes. War crimes may be committed by a country's regular armed forces, such as its army, navy, or air force. They may also be committed by irregular armed forces, such as guerrillas and insurgents.

IHL applies both to international and non-international armed conflicts. Non-international armed conflicts involve either regular armed forces fighting groups

of armed dissidents, or armed groups fighting each other. IHL does not cover internal tensions or disturbances such as isolated acts of violence. IHL applies only once a conflict has begun, and then equally to all sides, regardless of which side started the fighting.

### HOW IS INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW RELEVANT TO UCP?

IHL helps provide justification for the response of UCP teams in the field when they recognize actions that are considered a breach of IHL. It is a reference point for UCP personnel as they communicate with armed actors and state officials about the need for civilian protection. Raising awareness about IHL is an important part of the work of UCP practitioners, especially in the absence of ceasefire agreements that might spell out these standards. Soldiers and combatants are often not fully aware of these laws, especially at the grassroots level. Workshops and dialogue about IHL can encourage participants to implement these laws or act as a reminder to all parties of their commitments and responsibilities.

*After visiting two times before, a group of us finally got a meeting with the military. As the soldiers knew almost nothing about the NCA [Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement] we gave them a copy and told them about it. When we mentioned that the NCA includes 17 civilian protection points, the troops asked us if they had done anything wrong. We assured them that they had not, and just wanted to raise their awareness. The troops then gave us their phone numbers and asked them to call them if there is ever any problem in their village. We requested them to make sure to protect civilians if there is ever future fighting.*

*Member of a local ceasefire monitoring network in Myanmar (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2018)*



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- International Humanitarian Law: A Universal Code, International Committee of the Red Cross, (International Committee of the Red Cross n.d.) <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/audiovisuals/video/00981-humanitarian-law-universal-code-video-2009.htm>

## 2.3.2

### International Refugee Law

*...the capacity of the international community to address the root causes of people on the move and respond to related problems will be one of the key elements in the development of international relations in the 21st century.*

*UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres*

As with IHL, UCP organizations use International Refugee Law (IRL) to identify internationally accepted standards for the protection of civilians. They monitor the adherence to this set of laws and identify instances where these laws have been breached. The laws also help UCP practitioners in prioritizing protection needs.

#### **WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW?**

International Refugee Law (IRL) is a set of rules that aims to protect: i) persons seeking asylum from persecution; and, ii) those recognized as refugees under relevant legal instruments. It was developed in the middle of the 20th century to protect people who had left their countries because of fear of persecution and whose governments were unable or unwilling to protect them. Still later, the growing recognition that people who were displaced from their communities but remained within their countries also needed protection led to the development of international norms for protecting internally displaced people (Ferris 2011 loc. 139, 184). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the custodian of IRL.

IRL's legal framework provides a distinct set of guarantees for these specific groups of persons. The main sources of IRL are treaty law, notably the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Optional Protocol. In particular, the 1951 Convention consolidates previous international instruments relating to refugees and establishes the legal definition of refugees and minimum standards for their treatment (UNITAR advanced course, protection of civilians in peace operations, module 2: International legal dimension of the protection of civilians, p. 5-6). Unlike IHL, which applies only once a conflict has begun, International Refugee Law applies at all times, during peace and during armed conflicts.

#### **HOW IS INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW RELEVANT TO UCP?**

Understanding IRL can help UCP practitioners in prioritizing protection needs and in providing protection to civilians. UCP personnel may observe, for example, that refugees in a certain place are forcefully returned to a country where they risk persecution. As this is prohibited under IRL (article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention), they may engage with government officials and decision makers in an effort to stop the forced return or, alternatively, accompany the return of refugees to augment their safety. For example, a

number of UCP organizations based in the US are working at the US/Mexico border to protect refugees waiting to cross into the US, and to work to ensure they are treated appropriately according to US and international laws once in the US. If this effort is not successful, UCP organizations may quietly use international networks to advocate for diplomatic pressure towards the government that is in breach of the 1951 Convention. Or they may use more visible advocacy. At the same time, they can engage with the refugee community to understand their needs and explore different response strategies, or to connect refugee leaders with representatives from the diplomatic community to further strengthen the advocacy efforts.<sup>15</sup> IRL and other agreements have definitions that leave out some displaced people, whose conditions and status might not easily fit. Although UCP uses IRL as part of decision making, UCP actors are not bound by its definitions and may deliberately look out for people who might otherwise fall through the cracks of the IRL framework to address their protection needs.

Further discussion concerning refugees and other displaced people in situations of violent conflict will be provided in module 4.

### 2.3.3

## International Human Rights Law

UCP practitioners use International Human Rights Law (IHRL) as the foundation for protection strategies and are expected to understand how the implementation of their tasks intersects with human rights.

### **WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW?**

After World War II, as part of a new world order articulated through the United Nations, IHRL was developed to limit abuses by governments. It is made up of an accumulated body of international instruments including treaties, declarations, and standards that aim to establish the basic rights of all people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN in 1948, includes the right to be treated equally, to life, liberty, and

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<sup>15</sup> UCP practitioners primarily deal with IDPs, who are not subject to International Refugee Law. Nevertheless, they can use the standards of IRL as a reference for the protection of IDPs. Moreover, actions described in this paragraph, such as engaging with the refugee community and connecting leaders to the diplomatic community, equally apply to IDPs.



the security of person, and to freedom of movement.<sup>16</sup> The UN Human Rights Council oversees the implementation of human rights legal instruments.

IHRL applies in peacetime and in situations of armed conflict. It assumes that human rights are inherent to the human being and are inalienable. IHRL imposes a three-fold obligation upon states: to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that states must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires states to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that states must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights.

Some treaties permit governments to derogate from, or partially and temporarily suspend, particular rights in situations of public emergency threatening the life of the nation. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that the following rights may never be derogated: right to life; prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; prohibition of slavery; prohibition of imprisonment because of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation; prohibition of retroactive application of criminal law; right to recognition as a person before law; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. In addition, certain provisions of IHRL constitute customary law—i.e. they bind all states, regardless of whether they have explicitly consented to it (UNITAR advanced course, protection of civilians in peace operations, module 2: International legal dimension of the protection of civilians, p. 3-4).

Over 100 countries have national human rights institutions with mandates that may include monitoring domestic human rights and acting on complaints or petitions from citizens. These institutions can be institutionally weak, and rarely have they taken the lead in considering the human rights implications of violent conflict (Ferris 2011). Yet, local human rights defenders and other individuals and groups might choose to access these bodies and may require protection.

## HOW IS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW RELEVANT TO UCP?

UCP agencies use International Human Rights Law (IHRL) as the foundations for protection strategies. Firstly, UCP personnel monitor compliance with IHRL to identify civilians, whose rights, as stipulated by IHRL, have been violated (by state actors) or abused (by non-state actors). Secondly, they support and encourage state duty bearers

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16 The full list of human rights currently includes: Freedom from discrimination; right to life, liberty, personal security; freedom from slavery; freedom from torture and degrading treatment; right to recognition as a person before the law; right to equality before the law; right to remedy by competent tribunal; freedom from arbitrary arrest and exile; right to fair public hearing; right to be considered innocent until proven guilty; freedom from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence; right to free movement in and out of the country; right to asylum in other countries from persecution; right to a nationality and the freedom to change it; right to marriage and family; right to own property; freedom of belief and religion; freedom of opinion and information; right of peaceful assembly and association; right to participate in government and in free elections; right to social security; right to desirable work and to join trade unions; right to rest and leisure; right to adequate living standard; right to education; right to participate in the cultural life of community; right to a social order that articulates this document; community duties essential to free and full development; freedom from state or personal interference in the above rights.

and decision makers to fulfil their obligation in protecting the human rights of civilians. Thirdly, they facilitate access to justice for civilian survivors of violence. Finally, UCP teams raise awareness among civilians and state actors about human rights, especially the rights of populations with vulnerabilities, such as women, children, disabled and displaced people.

Individual UCP team members are expected to understand how the implementation of their tasks intersects with human rights. They need to be able to recognize human rights violations or abuse and be prepared to respond appropriately within the limits of their mandate and their competence. Moreover, UCP personnel are also bound to act in accordance with international human rights law, and should ensure that they do not become perpetrators of human rights abuses.

## 2.3.4 Women, peace, and security

*Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians and violence reduction that has grown in practice and recognition. In the last few years, it has especially proven its effectiveness to protect women and girls.*

*Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2015), page 153*

International laws on women, peace, and security relate to UCP in a way similar to IHL and IRL. UCP uses UN resolutions and international conventions related to women as internationally accepted standards for the protection of the rights of women, as well as their equal participation at all levels of peace processes.

### **WHAT ARE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATING TO WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY?**

Key legal frameworks relating to women, peace, and security include United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, and 2122 (UNSCR 1325, 1820 and 2122).<sup>17</sup> UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2000) marks the first time the UN Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. It also recognized the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security. This Resolution has been greeted as a milestone due to its recognition of and commitment to address women's experiences of armed conflict.

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<sup>17</sup> Additional resolutions on Women Peace and Security include 1888 (2009), 1189 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2242 (2015)

UNSCR 1325:

- Condemns the increased targeting of girls and women during armed conflict and the negative impact of armed conflict on women and girls;
- Recognizes the need for better data, institutional arrangements, and training focused on meeting women's special protection needs and fulfilling their human rights;
- Reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and in post-conflict reconstruction;
- Calls on all conflict parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict;
- Urges all actors to increase the participation of women in and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts;
- Specifies that gender-based violence should be prosecuted; it should be excluded from amnesty during peace negotiations and during post-conflict negotiations on constitutional and legal reforms.

Resolution 1820 (2008) links sexual violence as a tactic of war with the maintenance of international peace and security. It also demands a comprehensive report from the UN Secretary General on implementation and strategies for improving information flow to the Security Council; and adoption of concrete protection and prevention measures to end sexual violence.

Although the recognition of rape as a weapon of war and its classification as war crime (UNSCR 1820), has been hailed as a milestone achievement, scholars and practitioners have been vocal in their critiques of the reduction of the Women Peace and Security agenda to a single-issue focus on sexualized violence.<sup>18</sup> Not only does it risk excluding other forms of violence, but also prioritizing the protective principle (read: male-driven, militarized institutions deciding over women's physical bodies) over the rights of women, while ignoring their agency to protect themselves. This (perceived) tension between protection and rights, instrumentalisation and participation, has been particularly pronounced in the discourses on Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).

*Almost 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325, we don't just need to be at the peace table. It's time to redesign the table.*

*Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Chair of Board of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (UN Women 2019)*

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18 Research conducted by Dara Kay Cohen, Amelia Hoover Green, and Elisabeth Jean Wood concludes that wartime rape is neither omnipresent nor inevitable. Furthermore, it differs significantly across countries and armed groups, but is not specific to certain types of conflicts or regions. It is more frequently tolerated than ordered. State forces are more likely to be reported as perpetrators of sexual violence than rebels, but may also be more susceptible than rebels to naming and shaming campaigns around sexual violence. Finally, those who perpetrate sexual violence are often not armed actors but civilians. Perpetrators also are not exclusively male, nor are victims exclusively female.

Another important document, though not specifically focused on women in situation of armed conflict, is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 1992). Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, it is often referred to as an international bill of rights for women. Reporting on Women Peace and Security through CEDAW can help ensure stronger implementation, as CEDAW is more binding and has a more robust and wider application.

The Women, Peace, and Security framework is not just about women. At its core, it sees conflict through the lens of power relations, the result of gender norms and institutions that underpin violence and militarism. It calls on actors to address the root causes and drivers of conflict, gender inequality among them. Some scholars have argued for a shift from ‘Women, Peace, and Security’ (WPS) to ‘Gender, Peace, and Security’.

*Resisting the backlash against gender in peace and security is a project that will benefit from long-term, collaborative work between WPS and LGBTI organizations to better understand the ways their agendas overlap and how to respond to the anti-gender politics both groups face on the international stage.*

Jamie J. Hagen (2019)

## HOW ARE THESE INTERNATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO UCP?

UCP uses UN resolutions and other international agreements on women, peace, and security, such as resolution 1325, 1820, and 2122, as internationally accepted standards for the protection of the rights of women, as well as for their participation at all levels of peace processes. This has particular importance to UCP because, like refugees, women face significant and specific risks of harm in times of armed conflict and post-conflict. Women face heightened risk of rape, sexual humiliation, prostitution, early marriage, and other forms of gender-based violence and domination. These abuses are often downplayed as an unfortunate but inevitable side effect of war.<sup>19</sup>

Addressing the protection needs of women in situations of violent conflict requires a specific set of skills and tactics. It requires a great deal of trust building, deep listening skills, and confidentiality. UCP practitioners, living among at-risk communities and dealing with individual protection needs, are often in a good position to address these needs. More information about women in situations of violent conflict will be provided in module 4.

The international laws on women, peace, and security are also relevant to UCP as they promote the participation of women. They direct UCP interventions to pay particular attention to supporting women leaders in community processes to address conflicts. They also encourage UCP organizations to include women in equal numbers and status as UCP personnel and to promote and support their leadership throughout the operation. In places where UCP teams play an official role in ceasefire monitoring, they may help to

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that such abuses are also inflicted on boys, men and people who are non-binary. This is increasingly incorporated under the WPS framework.

establish mechanisms and structures to implement protocols such as UNSCR 1325. And UCP practitioners may support women's direct participation in multi-track diplomacy situations encouraging women, especially from the grassroots, to bring their experiences directly to Track 1 negotiations.

The 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 has recognized the contribution of UCP methods to the protection of women and girls. The study also recommends that the UN in collaboration with Member States should “Promote women’s empowerment and non-violent means of protection, and taking into account the whole range of women’s protection issues and the interventions to address them—including women’s leadership and women’s empowerment—in mission planning, implementation, and reporting, as well as in policy discussions on the protection of civilians in the context of peace operations.” Furthermore, it recommends to Member States to “Scale up their support to unarmed civilian protection (UCP) in conflict-affected countries, including working alongside peace operations”.

While the UN Security Council and Secretariat focus much attention on women’s participation, the make-up of UN peacekeeping missions will continue to be dependent on troop-contributing countries where women’s involvement in the military is low. In addition, research shows that women in peacekeeping missions are much more likely to be deployed to observer or political missions than to the situations of significant conflict that are arguably most in need of gender expertise (Karim and Beardsley, pp. 469–85). UCP, on the other hand, can draw from the general population, attracting women from many different areas of expertise.

*[W]omen are in a marginalized position and often are not part of relevant human rights discussions. Female PBI volunteers can be an example for women working for human rights. The role of male PBI volunteers is no less crucial, as they can be role models as men who respect women as equal counterparts by meeting with local women eye to eye, listening to them and treating them as subjects rather than as objects, as is common in Papua. This kind of approach by males can be an important experience for both women and men in the local context and can open the window for alternative interactions between genders.*

*PBI volunteer, Indonesia (IFOR-WWP, 2010, p. 85)*



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- IFOR-WPP. (2010). *Engendering Peace: Incorporating a Gender Perspective in Civilian Peace Teams*. [http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/reconpb\\_engenderedpeac\\_iforwpp\\_2010.pdf](http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/reconpb_engenderedpeac_iforwpp_2010.pdf)

#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- UNITAR. (2010). *Women, Peace and Security: From Resolution to Action* [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kITqQcWmOxE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kITqQcWmOxE)



## 2.3.5 Children and armed conflict

*It is time for a change of approach in how we promote child rights. If we want to make child rights a reality, we should limit the use of top-down approaches at grassroots level and emphasize internally guided processes of social influence and social change. Making this change in our own behavior offers us the best chance of fulfilling our collective obligation to protection the rights and well-being of every child.”*

*Wessells and Kostelny (2016)*

International laws on children and armed conflict relate to UCP in a similar way as those on women, peace, and security. UCP uses UN resolutions and international conventions related to children and armed conflict as internationally accepted standards for the protection of children.

### **WHAT ARE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATING TO CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT?**

In 1998 the UN General Assembly proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (resolution 53/25). Resolution 53/25 recognizes the enormous harm and suffering caused to children by different forms of violence at every level of society throughout the world. The resolution also promotes the fostering of a culture of peace and nonviolence. The resolution invites member states to take the necessary steps to ensure that the practice of peace and nonviolence is taught at all levels in their respective societies. It also invites non-governmental organizations and other groups to actively support the implementation of the Decade for the benefit of every child of the world. The implementation of resolution 53/25 includes enabling people at all levels to develop skills of dialogue, negotiation, consensus-building, and peaceful resolution of differences. Even though the Decade has passed, implementation under the original resolution is annually reviewed and recorded.

Other UCP sources of guidance regarding children are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), especially articles 34-38; related Optional Protocols, e.g., on child soldiers and on the sale of children; and UN Security Council Resolutions 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009) and 1888 (2009).<sup>20</sup> UNSCR 1612 includes six types of grave child right violations: killing and maiming; recruitment of children in armed forces or groups (CAAFG)<sup>21</sup>;

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20 For more information see: [https://www.unicef.org/tdad/index\\_56373.html](https://www.unicef.org/tdad/index_56373.html)

21 The issue of child soldiers was later elaborated in the Paris Principles (2007) into the concept of Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (CAAFAG), which has a broader scope than Grave Child Rights Violations on recruitment as it also focuses on the reintegration into communities and enables girls recruited for sexual purposes to be included.



rape and sexual violence; abduction; and denial of humanitarian access. Since 2009, all of the six grave violations can be a cause for a country to be added to the “list of shame”. While the 1612 agenda has yielded many positive results, it is implemented in a limited number of conflict areas of concern. Direct access to information in high-risk areas has been a major challenge.

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict issued a Guidance Note on UNSCR 1998, The Protection of Schools and Hospitals highlighting the impact of attacks on schools and hospitals on children and calling for greater action to ensure that hospitals and schools have no part in warfare. A Safe Schools Declaration was issued in 2015, expressing political commitments to protect students, teachers and schools in times of armed conflict. UNESCO’s annual Education Under Attack – now compiled by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), 2010 – has called significant attention to attacks against education and furthered the international community’s ability to effectively monitor and respond to them.

### **HOW ARE THESE INTERNATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO UCP?**

By dint of their vulnerability, children in general are in need of, and entitled to, special protection. But children living in armed conflict should be able to count on protection services on a priority basis. UCP is well placed to provide some of those services to children at the grassroots level, especially direct physical protection of children *and* child rights defenders<sup>22</sup>. UCP strategies specifically aim to identify grave child rights violations and address the protection needs of children that are subjected to these violations. UCP practitioners provide protective presence to schools and hospitals. They also work with local civil society organizations in support of states, encouraging them to take the necessary steps to ensure that peace and nonviolence practices are utilized to settle conflicts for the benefit of all, but especially children. UCP practitioners sometimes help disseminate and teach those practices. They have also worked for the release of children abducted by armed groups, reminding armed groups that it is illegal for them to have child soldiers, and have accompanied mothers to military camps to retrieve their abducted children. UCP organizations have also accompanied released or escaped child soldiers to safer spaces at times. More information about children in situations of violent conflict will be provided in module 4.

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22 This includes children who themselves are child rights defenders.



### CASE STUDY: PROTECTIVE PRESENCE AT SCHOOLS IN THE PHILIPPINES

When a graduation ceremony in Maguindanao, Philippines, was interrupted by a fire fight of rivalling clans, many community members were fearful of sending their children back to school. In response, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) provided a regular protective presence in the area for the course of a year and maintained relationships with all relevant stakeholders, including security forces, school principals, teachers and community leaders. At the next graduation ceremony NP held a visible presence and supported initiatives for a 'No Firearm Policy'. NP also systematically raised the profile of preservation of schools as 'zones of peace' and monitored instances where armed actors occupied or operated in close proximity to schools. It would raise these 'proximity concerns' immediately with the relevant parties and encourage them to reposition themselves. NP found that, in most cases, armed actors indeed shifted their location. Oftentimes, local stakeholders are not comfortable to raise these issues directly so NP is requested to facilitate the communication and is in a position, given the established relationships and mandate, to directly address these issues.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines

## 2.3.6 Youth Peace and Security

*This view of youth as equivalent to young men, and the perceived relationship between young men and violence, have led to the increased use of hard security approaches, the victimization of young women and SGMs [Sexual and Gender Minorities], and making issues related to masculinities invisible.*

*Graeme Simpson, Independent progress study on youth peace and security 2018 requested by resolution 2250, Page 96*

The protection of youth as a concept and practice is a relatively new development. Youth, like childhood, is a transitional phase of life. It is a cross-cutting lens, for which an integrated approach needs to be taken. UCP uses UN resolutions and international conventions related to Youth Peace and Security as internationally accepted standards for the protection of youth.

### **WHAT ARE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATING TO YOUTH AND ARMED CONFLICT?**

On 9 December 2015 the United Nations Security Council adopted its first ever resolution

on Youth, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2250).<sup>23</sup> The resolution defines youth as aged 18-29 years old, but it recognizes and accepts the diverse socio-cultural definitions of youth across different countries and institutions. As the 2018 independent progress study on youth peace and security writes, “In an increasingly globalized world shaped by pervasive concerns about terrorism and extremist violence, perspectives on youth are distorted by contagious stereotypes that associate young people with violence” (UNFPA and PBSO, 2018, p.x). At the same time, “Young people over 18 years of age are not shielded by the umbrella of the rights regime that lends special status and protections to children under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.” This means that there is often a gap between the formal civil, political and economic rights they should enjoy as adults and the entitlements that, in practice, they often do not have access to, because they are still regarded as ‘children’ by the people around them. This gap is particularly felt by young refugees who may first be victimized in their home countries, then forced to take greater risks of death or injury during their flight before being subjected to discrimination, xenophobia, or anti-immigrant populist violence in their “new homes”.

### HOW ARE THESE INTERNATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO UCP?

The Youth Peace and Security framework can assist UCP practitioners in increasing their awareness of the specific protection needs of youth and intensifying their efforts to strengthen their participation in protection and peacebuilding efforts. The resolution’s five pillars (i.e. Participation, Partnerships, Prevention, Protection and Disengagement, and Re-integration) are very much in line with the framework of UCP. Young people are often at the forefront of campaigns for human rights or nonviolent resistance movements and specifically targeted by security forces. They are often the ones risking their lives to gather information about human rights violations at the front lines, but at the same time struggle to gain access to decision making processes, even within their own communities. Young women peace workers often face additional layers of exclusion for being a youth and female. Youth leaders have also pointed out that the pigeonholing of youth issues is often associated with trivialized assumptions about sports, arts, leisure or technology as the primary, and possibly only, vehicles of young people’s participation and expression. UCP practitioners can play a role in strengthening both the protection of youth and the participation of youth in protection efforts including serving as protection officers, connecting youth to political networks, and creating opportunities for dialogue and learning.

*As youth, we are discriminated but also as [ceasefire] monitors. In village meetings, youth are excluded altogether. As monitors, if we want to be involved, we have to tell them in advance and then we can come. Adult monitors are able to attend because they are adults. We cannot do our trainings and get information.*

*Ceasefire monitor from Kayin State, Myanmar (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2018)*

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23 See Youth4Peace for an introduction to UNSCR 2250 <https://www.youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction>

## 2.3.7

### Seville Statement on Violence

A fundamental premise of UCP work is that violence is not inherent in the human condition. The Seville Statement on Violence confirms this premise and suggests that peace and nonviolence can be learned.

#### WHAT IS THE SEVILLE STATEMENT?

The UNESCO study resulting in the Seville Statement on Violence (UNESCO 1986) consulted biologists and social scientists on the question if humans have a biological tendency toward violent behaviour. More specifically they asked: ‘Does modern biology and social science know of any biological factors, including those concerned with the biology of violent behaviour of individuals, that constitute an insurmountable or serious obstacle to the goal of world peace based upon the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and including an ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament through the United Nations?’

Drafted and signed by 20 scientists from around the world, the statement concludes that it is scientifically *incorrect*:

1. It is incorrect to say that humankind has inherited a tendency from our animal ancestors to make war
2. It is incorrect to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature
3. It is incorrect to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour
4. It is incorrect to say that humans have a 'violent brain'
5. It is incorrect to say that war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation.

The statement concludes as follows: ‘Just as “wars begin in the minds of men,” peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us’ (UNESCO 1986).

#### HOW IS THE SEVILLE STATEMENT RELEVANT TO UCP?

The Seville Statement on Violence shows that the UN operates under the belief that violence is not inherent in the human condition, and therefore, peace is possible. It

further indicates that this conclusion is supported by scientific research.<sup>24</sup> This validates the nonviolent approach of UCP and strengthens its role as a catalyst for change in situations of violent conflict. As the quote from Theodore Roszak at the beginning of this module suggests, while skepticism exists about the effectiveness of nonviolence, the concept has been given very little opportunity to prove itself. Though violence may not be inherent in the human condition, violence has frequently been selected as an approach to resolving conflict.<sup>25</sup> UCP provides a viable alternative approach to building security without use of coercion or violence.

## 2.3.8

### UN Charter (Chapter 1, article 2: 3 and 4; Chapter 6, article 33)

The Preamble of the UN Charter states that one reason for the establishment of the UN is “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

Articles 2, 3, and 4 of chapter 1 and article 33 of chapter 6 of the UN Charter are key sources of guidance for UCP because they lie at the foundation of UCP theory and practice; they promote the use of peaceful means to settle disputes. UCP also reinforces these articles, showing Member States that the peaceful means articulated by the UN Charter can also be applied by unarmed civilians in providing protection to other civilians.

#### WHAT IS THE UN CHARTER?

Chapter 1 of the UN Charter states the purpose of the United Nations, and article 2 describes key principles:

3: All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

4: All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use

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24 As with many complex topics associated with psychology and human evolution, the study of violence is a vigorously contested field. There is no absolute consensus on whether or not humans have inherent tendencies to violence, and new studies are continually adding evidence to the discussion. While it is true that war and violent conflict is apparent as far back as we can investigate in human history, it is not correct to conclude that it is necessarily a part of the human condition. As Gandhi wrote, “If the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive today. . . . The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not the force of arms but on the force of truth or love.” (Gandhi, M, (1997). *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. by Anthony J. Parel, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

25 See *Peace Ethology*, edited by Verbeek and Peters (2018) for a collection of research articles demonstrating the tendency to resolve conflicts peacefully in humans and other mammals.

of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

Chapter 6 of the UN Charter deals with the peaceful settlement of disputes:

Article 33: The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

### HOW IS THE UN CHARTER RELEVANT TO UCP?

UCP in and of itself helps to create a context in which disputes can be resolved in a nonviolent fashion. UCP in its current systematized form is a relatively new field of practice, though of course civilians have been protecting themselves and others nonviolently forever. UCP, organized by civil society, is a process that may be used to support peacemaking and peacebuilding without resorting to the use of armed force and without infringement on the sovereignty of the state. Its purpose is to enable all parties to the conflict to seek peace by peaceful means. In doing so, UCP helps to protect vulnerable civilians under threat and to develop local peace infrastructures. UCP can also be seen as a form of intercultural cooperation to help deter violence and to keep the window of opportunity open for all parties to the conflict to address the deeper roots of the conflict. And while much of the UN charter addresses interstate conflict, it is also relevant for intrastate conflicts.

International UCP teams from around the world support state duty bearers as well as civil society groups in situations of armed conflict to encourage respect for human rights. This includes socio-economic rights, cultural rights, legal rights, and access to humanitarian aid. Finally, UCP contributes to dispute resolution by creating a safe space for local parties to meet and build their protection capacity. Furthermore, UCP practitioners strengthen local peace infrastructures, provide confidence building, and engage in multi-track dialogues with armed and non-armed actors. UCP has also been used by local groups to protect civilians in demonstrations and other peaceful expressions of resistance or demands in their communities.

*While it is a challenge to bring about a peace agreement, it is an even bigger challenge to implement. When cattle keepers and farmers in Yirol West and Mvolo clashed with each other in the beginning of 2011, it took Nonviolent Peaceforce 110 separate interventions over the course of 8 months before peace agreements were successfully implemented by the affected communities and 76,000 IDPs returned.*

*Tiffany Easthom, Country Director, Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan,  
2014*



## 2.3.9

### Civilian immunity in war

Civilian immunity is to be understood as “an almost absolute principle that spells out one of the central and most stringent requirements of justice as it applies to war, and recognizes an almost absolute right of the vast majority of civilians—namely, all those who cannot be considered ‘currently engaged in the business of war’—not to be targets of deadly violence. This right and principle trumps other moral considerations with which they may come into conflict, with one exception: that of a (narrowly understood) moral disaster”<sup>26</sup> (Primoratz 2010, pp.39-40).

In the late nineteenth century, European and American governments upheld an ideal of limited war, that did not target civilians but only armed combatants, when fighting other countries considered to be “civilized”. It was seen as a civilizational achievement and codified in The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. However, it was never applied to civilians of other so-called races – black, brown or yellow. In places around the world, imperialist forces slaughtered civilians without considering it uncivilized, as these peoples were themselves considered uncivilized. And with the start of the First World War, and throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, the idea of civilian immunity in war was largely forgotten or ignored in all wars. Only with the UN Secretary-General’s 1999 report on the protection of civilians, and subsequent UN Security Council resolution mandating UN peacekeeping missions with the task of protecting civilians, did the international community return more resolutely to this idea and refocus on the topic of civilian immunity, this time extending it to ALL civilians and exactly one hundred years after the first Hague Convention.

The concept of civilian immunity in war is central to UCP as it aims to protect civilians who are not currently engaged in the business of war from being targets of deadly violence. Due to the shift from inter-state to intra-state wars, which has brought violence directly into communities, the protection needs of such civilians have increased significantly.



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Primoratz, I. (ed.) (2010). *Civilian Immunity in War*. Introduction & Chapter 1. Cambridge, UK: Oxford University Press.

<sup>26</sup> The exception referred to may occur when the only way to avert a large moral disaster (for example, facing the sure prospect of genocide like the Nazi death camps or the Rwandan ethnic cleansing) is to act in breach of the principle of civilian immunity and attack enemy civilians. But this exceptional justification may become a slippery slope.



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Mama Bear  
Clan Photo /  
Community  
foot patrol in  
Winnipeg, Canada  
/ February 2021





# 3

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MODULE 3  
UNARMED CIVILIAN  
PROTECTION:  
KEY METHODS

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## OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This module introduces the main methods employed by UCP practitioners in the field. It is worth noting upfront that while we categorize them into five main approaches, the individual methods are rarely used in isolation, and they function interdependently in practice. And as UCP is constantly evolving and adapting, this may not describe every method used by UCP actors. UCP at its most basic revolves around the notion of being physically present and using that presence strategically to protect civilians. Some UCP organizations may use advocacy as a method, but these efforts will be based on what has been learned by being present in communities. Others may focus their efforts primarily on training local civil society networks, but they will do that with the aim of helping those networks in using their physical presence to protect civilians. Thus, whether UCP is applied by local actors in their communities or by international UCP organizations in foreign countries, the assumption of direct physical presence is woven into all UCP methods. Likewise, while relationship building is identified as one of the methods, good working relationships with relevant stakeholders are an essential component for all methods.

We have categorized UCP methods into five main groupings in order to better clarify the theory and practice of UCP. These include: proactive engagement, monitoring, relationship building, advocacy, and capacity enhancement. Each of these methods has a number of different applications:

- **Proactive engagement:** protective presence, protective accompaniment, and interpositioning
- **Monitoring:** ceasefire monitoring, rumour control and early warning early response
- **Relationship building:** confidence enhancement and multi-track dialogue
- **Capacity enhancement:** Enhancing self-protection capacities and strengthening local protection infrastructures
- **Advocacy:** Educating and organizing

These methods are shown in Figure 1 and explained in the text of module 3 that follows. Both diagrams and explanations are meant to provide a general introduction to the

range of UCP methods used by different UCP actors. As has been mentioned before, different contexts, interests and opportunities have led to creative applications of UCP methods, not all of which are captured here (in their entirety). In addition to the UCP wheel (figure 1) that shows a categorization of UCP methods, a second UCP model (figure 2) has been added that emphasizes the relationship between methods, principles and objectives.

UCP is more than the methods listed here. Military actors, human rights organizations, and national governments all engage in some form of relationship building, early warning or monitoring. What makes these methods uniquely UCP is that they are grounded in specific principles (see Module 2), contribute to interrupting cycles of violence and enhancing nonviolent responses to conflict (see Module 2), and are applied with specific skills (see Module 4). UCP is a complex, systemic, and flexible process for protecting people and responding to conflict.

At their core, UCP methods and skills are focused on creating productive relationships with actors across different levels of society (grassroots, middle-range, and top level), as well as across dividing lines of conflict. These relationships may at times rely on calculated pressure, but building and maintaining cooperative relationships is generally more effective over time than applying pressure.

Module 3 first introduces and describes UCP methods. It then discusses how, when, and where these methods are used. Practical case studies illustrate different strategic applications of methods in a conflict context.

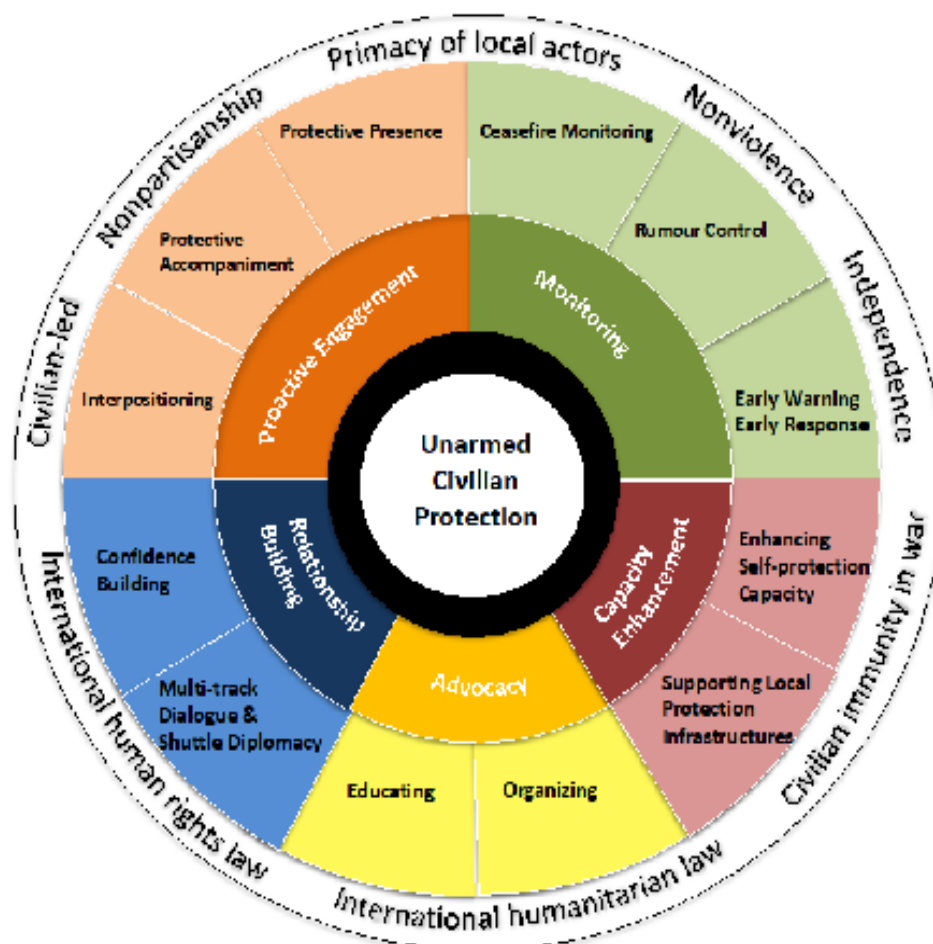


Figure 1 (previous page) shows the spectrum of UCP methods that is used in this module as a road map or table of contents of the various sections. It is the surrounding tire of principles and sources of guidance that brings the methods together, making them uniquely UCP.

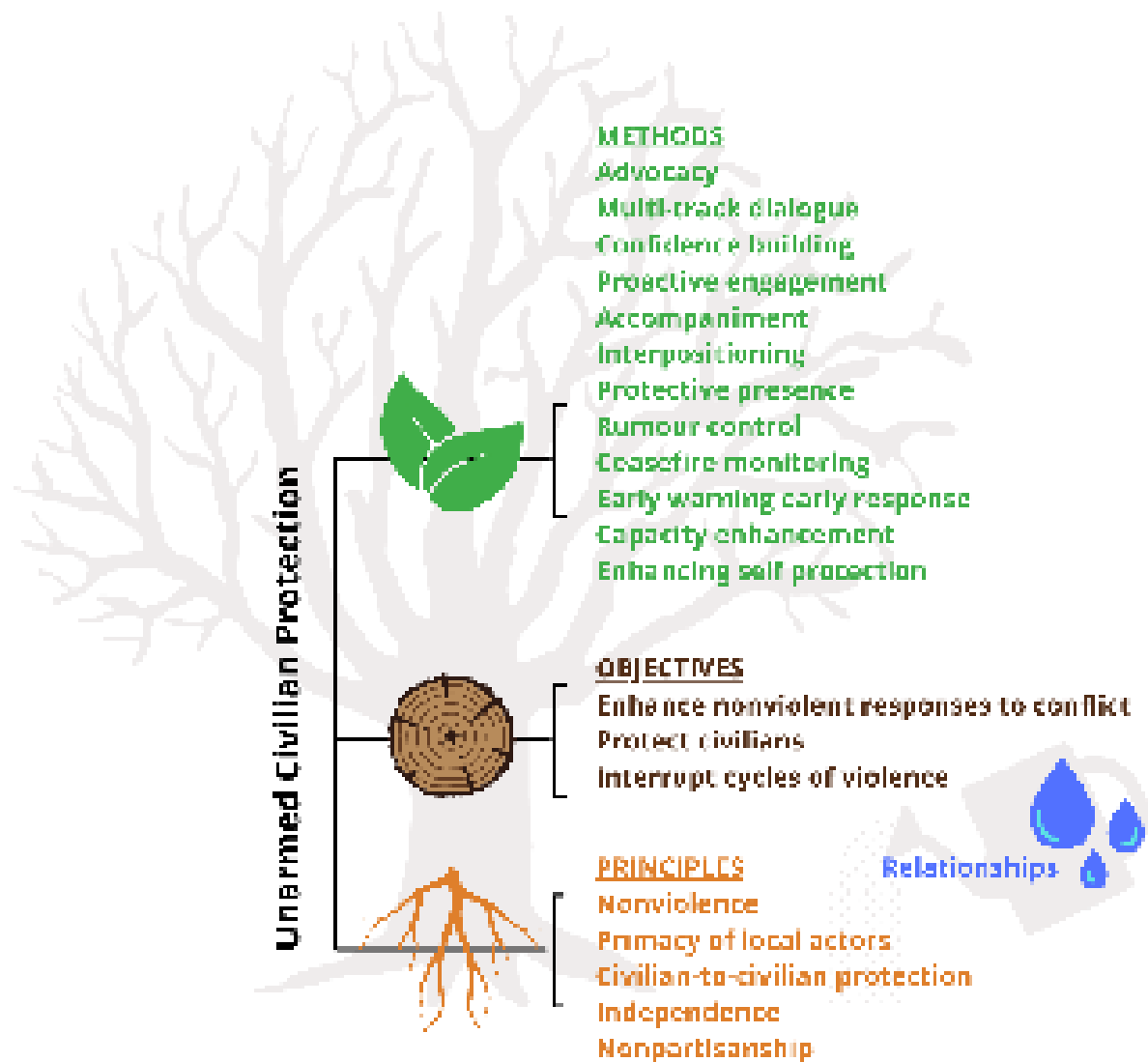


Figure 2: UCP tree model shows the UCP principles as roots of a tree, grounding all UCP activities. The UCP methods are displayed as branches of the tree and the objectives as the center of the tree. Relationship building is illustrated as a watering can, continuously nurturing the entire tree.

**BOX 1 | LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Explain basic methods of UCP
- Apply these in practical exercises



## Summary of Key Messages

- International field presence strengthens the international response against attacks on civilians by targeting the entire chain of command, revealing responsibilities, and strengthening international commitment.
- UCP practitioners may at times use relationships with armed actors for pressure and coercion, but cooperative and collaborative relationships are more effective over the long term of an intervention. Knowing when to emphasize pressure and when to work for collaboration is complex and depends on careful analysis.
- Protective accompaniment is a preventive, not a defensive, strategy. It uses physical presence and visibility to deter violence. For local actors it means stepping out of the shadows, showing that with the international community on their side, there may be significant consequences for the aggressor if threats are realized.
- Interpositioning owes its effectiveness to the conflicting parties' unwillingness to harm an innocent bystander and to sustained communication by the UCP teams with all of the armed actors. When nonviolent interveners interposition themselves, they are, in effect, saying, 'I put myself at risk to protect this human being's life.'
- Monitoring serves as a way to collect and report information about compliance to agreed standards by all parties involved, but it also serves as a method to create confidence, provide a protective presence, and encourage conflict parties to adhere to agreed standards (including armistice arrangements or peace deals).
- Rumour control refers to the verification of (mis-)information about imminent threats. It also includes the timely sharing of factual information with various parties within and across conflict lines in order to prevent escalation of violence and unnecessary displacement.
- Early Warning systems aim to prevent grass-root conflicts, reduce the impact of violence, and manage conflict escalation. Early response action aims to protect civilians from violence as well as to reduce the impact of violence on civilians and to empower them to proactively engage in reducing their exposure to violence.
- Effective confidence building is a matter of generating inner strength, rather than changing external conditions or increasing skills. With increased confidence, civilians are more likely to resist abuse or speak out against abuse.



- Multi-track dialogue includes dialogue on multiple levels with a variety of actors, including military commanders, leaders of non-state armed groups, government officials, diplomats, and representatives of IDP communities. Dialogue is used to build support networks, influence actors, understand protection needs, and mitigate conflicts.
- UCP training means working together with people in a dynamic process of discovery, analysis, and skill building so that their capabilities are enhanced and they are better prepared to solve their problems and increase their own security and the security of vulnerable individuals and groups.
- When UCP is conducted by local people, community members witness the efficacy of nonviolent conflict prevention strategies first-hand. As a result, their conceptualization of security shifts from one that is necessarily coercive and externally imposed, to one that can be community-based and nonviolent. With this shift, they become less dependent on outsiders for their own wellbeing.
- Advocacy, in the context of UCP, leverages education and organizing to promote changes in one of two areas of focus. One of these is to shape specific policies or improve certain conditions in order to increase security and reduce violence in communities where they work. The other is to expand the field and use of UCP more broadly by raising awareness in government institutions and in the general public of its potential and implementation. Education is generally meant to reach larger audiences, while organizing is premised around mobilizing smaller groups of people to take strategic action to effect change.



NP Photo / Social cohesion and local peace process work. Al-Ayadiyah, Iraq / April 2020

# 3.1

## Proactive engagement

Proactive engagement is the defining method of UCP. It asserts that while the physical presence of UCP practitioners can be helpful in providing protection, real security usually comes through engaging proactively with all appropriate stakeholders, including those who target civilians. Though the term “proactive engagement” is frequently used to describe UCP methodology in general, in this course – and in this section in particular - it is used as a distinct UCP method. As such, it has three different, but closely related, applications: protective presence, protective accompaniment and interpositioning. This section describes these three applications.



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Schirch, L. (2006). *Civilian Peacekeeping: Preventing Violence and Making Space for Democracy*. Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute.

### 3.1.1

## Protective Presence

*Presence has also been important in preventing demolitions. Because demolitions are highly visible, with negative publicity reaching the wider public, Israeli authorities are often deterred from pursuing demolition orders when international or Israeli activists are simply visibly present. Recently Israeli and international UCP groups protected the village of Susiya from demolition thanks in part to coordination from the UN Protection Cluster. UCP groups coordinated a 24/7 schedule of presence in Susiya. Despite standing demolition orders against it, the village of Susiya remains intact as of this writing.*

*Eli McCarthy and Jonathan Pinckney in ‘Unarmed Civilian Protection in the Israeli and Palestinian Conflict’ in *Wielding Nonviolence* (2016), p. 97.*

### WHAT IS PROTECTIVE PRESENCE?

There are two basic types or levels of protective presence (also called accompaniment by some organizations). The first type refers to the long-term presence of international

humanitarian actors in an area of violent conflict. Although many humanitarian agencies are present in such contexts and may provide some protective effect, this is not UCP. Studies show that protection by mere presence, while important, has its limits. In reviewing field-based protection in Darfur, Sorcha O’Callaghan and Sara Pantuliano found that it can even create a false sense of security within communities that feel that the international community has made a commitment to protect them (as referenced in Ferris loc.1518). Mahony (field presence, 2006) notes that human rights staff of the UN and others may provide little protection simply by being present but need to specifically consider how to increase their protective impact. Conscious attention to maximizing the protective presence of UCP teams in a community, and addressing the potential negative impacts, can, however, provide meaningful protection. Thus, the second type of protective presence refers to a specific method by which UCP personnel are strategically placed in locations where civilians face imminent threats. This type of presence is often provided for shorter periods of time, from a few hours up to a few months, but can also be provided for longer periods when the threat level is persistently high. In Central and South America, this is often referred to as accompanying a village or community. This type of protective presence, with its more conscious attention to maximizing protection, represents more accurately the concept of proactive engagement.

*There are always people on the street corners spying on us to watch our movements. When they see that internationals are entering our offices, this helps us tremendously.*

*Farfan, A.E. (n.d.) Families of the Disappeared. Guatemala: Peace Brigades International*

Protective presence is perhaps the most basic application of UCP methods. Although in some cases it is used on its own, it is frequently used alongside other methods. When, for example, monitoring or capacity enhancement is applied in a situation of violent conflict, the physical presence of UCP personnel during monitoring or capacity development activities can be used strategically to increase the feeling of safety among direct beneficiaries or civilians nearby. Of course, people living in their own communities are generally ‘present’. Presence becomes UCP when local people position themselves strategically in places to protect themselves and others in their communities.

## **HOW DOES PROTECTIVE PRESENCE WORK?<sup>1</sup>**

In times of relative peace, most perpetrators carry out acts of violence in private to avoid legal and social repercussions. However, in many situations of protracted conflict, legal systems break down and acts of violence become an everyday occurrence, committed in broad daylight. Efforts to influence decision makers to stop violence are important, but often insufficient. Systemic abuses are the product of collaboration between actors at many levels, all of which need to be influenced. Words spoken at the UN Security Council are unlikely, therefore, to effect change in a conflict zone until they are translated into direct action on the ground by missions, peacekeepers, diplomats, embassies, donor

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws on the work of Liam Mahony; see *Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection*

agencies, and others. External encouragement or pressure reaching a state or armed group has to go down the chain of command (Mahony, 2006).

Unfortunately, the transmission of top-level international encouragement or pressure is highly uncertain. States and armed groups can ignore encouragement and have developed nimble countermeasures to side-step pressure. Decision makers deflect and undermine pressure, using propaganda to destroy the legitimacy of accusing organizations. They may also isolate and stigmatize targeted civilian groups, or shift attention to the actions of their enemies. Decision makers, to avoid overt denials, often develop buffer mechanisms to absorb and co-opt international pressure. For example, state agencies are created specifically to deal with international concerns and they may employ lobbyists and public relations firms. This ploy allows the state to claim that it is taking all possible measures to protect people. Non-state armed groups also create such buffers: their political wings absorb international pressure, while their abusing military and intelligence wings remain offstage (ibid. p.14).

States and armed groups can also create smokescreens to evade responsibility for abuses, even while admitting that they occur. A common and devastatingly effective smokescreen is the use of paramilitary or death-squad operations. These are often either secretly under military control, or allowed to act with impunity when their agendas are convenient to the state. In other cases, explanations such as ‘lack of discipline’ or ‘loose cannons’ distance the high-level decision makers from the abuses. Banditry and ‘accidents’ also commonly camouflage political attacks. Smokescreens give both the abusing party and its international allies a level of plausible deniability when faced with accusations. In the face of such countermeasures, international response strategies need to be complemented by more targeted and effective protective action (ibid. p.15). In some conflicts, there has been little or no attention from the UN or other international organizations, so armed actors experience no pressure.

*One of the WASH [Water Sanitation and Hygiene] partners had discovered an old ISIS tunnel [at a displacement site in Iraq]. Security forces were called in to ensure people’s safety in the event any ISIS members or explosive remnants of war remained in the tunnel. We maintained a protective presence throughout the investigation of the military forces in order to monitor any attempts by the security forces to use this situation as a cover to arbitrarily detain IDPs or use excessive force.*

*Staff member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Iraq (February 2018)*

The presence of international observers—particularly if they are trained UCP practitioners—strengthens the international response to stop attacks on civilians in three important ways:

1. **Targeting the entire chain of command:** International presence projects the visible concern of the international community to the entire chain of command of abuser groups. UCP personnel (whether national or international staff) interact with all ranks of the military and civilian hierarchy, national and local, ensuring an awareness of international consequences for abuse of civilians. No other international effort can match the effectiveness of having trained observers present in the field,

providing direct international visibility of ground-level perpetrators and building relationships locally and regionally. These relationships provide opportunities to build cooperative interactions, so that protection does not rely solely on coercion or pressure. This is particularly relevant because the chain of command is never a unified entity. Building close relationships with amenable individuals within abuser groups allows UCP teams to generate the necessary level of support to maintain their presence. Moreover, UCP personnel can encourage these supportive individuals to reform the group's organizational structure and reduce violence.

2. **Revealing responsibilities:** Monitoring and verification at different levels of society can help reveal relationships of responsibility among armed actors—for instance, between a state and paramilitaries. This increases accountability and, to some extent, combats countermeasures such as smokescreens.
3. **Strengthening international commitment:** When an act of violence occurs despite international presence, the international community is likely to react more quickly than if there had been no such presence. Embassies and home governments usually will engage more forcefully in protection when their own citizens are present in a mission and at risk. This increases pressure on top-level decision makers to take action (ibid. p.16). This does not automatically result in increased protection, but it greatly increases international attention to a situation.

Of course, local people also provide protective presence to each other, without the involvement of external UCP actors. People choose to travel in groups, or have a local respected leader present, or interact with armed actors in a way to let them know they are being watched. Sometimes people from one part of a country or from an ethnic majority group provide protective presence, bringing credibility and helpful attention to marginalized or oppressed groups. For instance, Christian Peacemaker Teams in Canada provided presence as well as advocacy for a First Nations leader who was fasting to protest government actions. International presence may under certain circumstances be more effective at protecting civilians than local or national efforts, but it may also undermine local efforts, exacerbate tensions, or simply be less effective than local or national protection efforts.



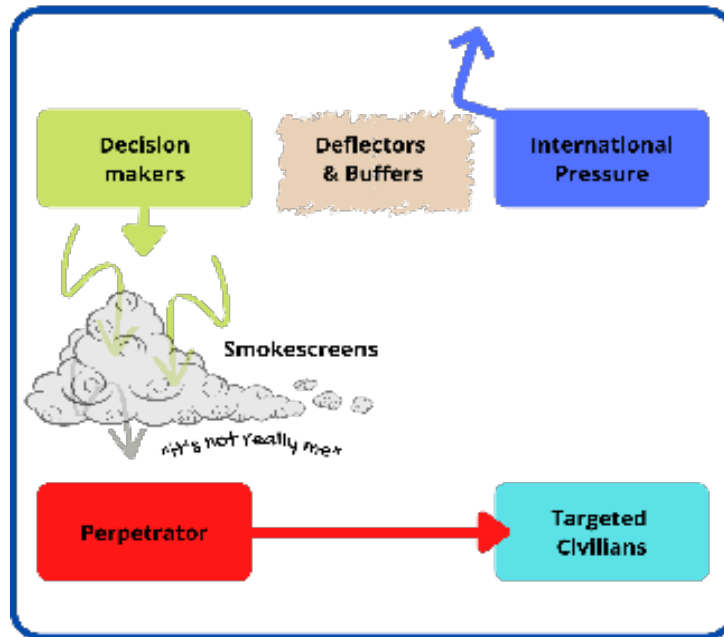


Figure 3: Decision makers evade responsibilities and obscure accountability. Source: Liam Mahoney, Proactive Presence (2006), page 14.

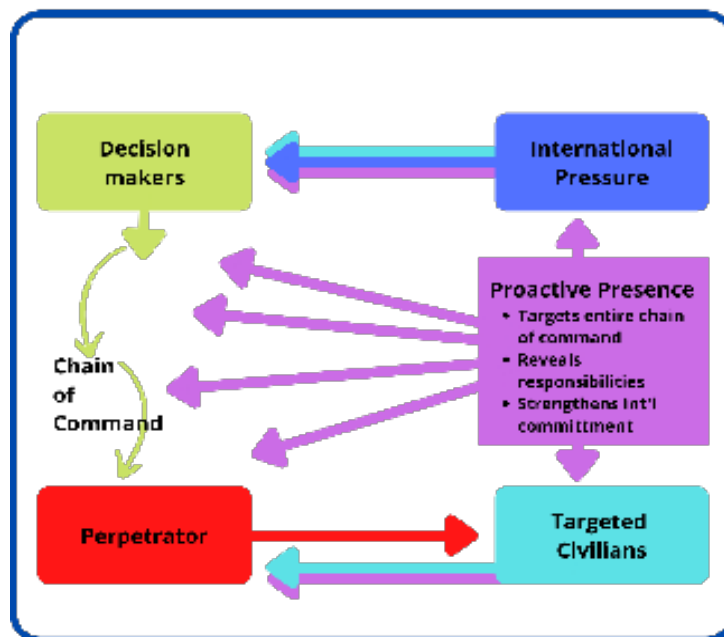


Figure 4: Proactive engagement and presence strengthen pressure at all levels of the chain of command. International pressure is further amplified by bringing firsthand information from UCP actors and targeted civilians on the ground into international advocacy efforts, combining the strengths of targeted civilians, UCP actors and international advocates. Furthermore, UCP actors on the ground support and accompany targeted civilians to proactively engage directly with perpetrators and representatives of the chain of command. The overlapping arrows represent the integration of the voices or sometimes even the presence of different actors, strengthening the message or engagement. Source: Adapted from Liam Mahoney, Proactive Presence (2006), page 16.

## PROTECTIVE PRESENCE IN ACTION

Protective presence is employed in different forms, depending on the nature of the conflict, the context, and the mandate of the organization that provides the presence. UCP practitioners around the world provide protective presence in refugee sites, at offices and homes of human rights defenders, at schools, hospitals and marketplaces, for workshop venues, in weapon-free zones, and in peace communities. Protective presence is also provided alongside the monitoring of demonstrations, trials or tribunals, celebrations, and parades. Finally, protective presence can be provided through patrolling (see box 2, module 1). Although UCP practitioners are active and strategic in their presence, the simple fact of their living in a threatened community may have an impact.

In some cases, protective presence is provided to individuals (e.g. human rights lawyers, journalists), and in other cases to large groups (e.g. refugees, groups of farmers or communities under threat). In high-risk situations the presence of UCP personnel can be sustained twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with UCP team members working in shifts. In low-risk situations UCP presence does not need to be continuous. UCP teams typically range from two to twelve members, depending on the context.

Though UCP agencies do not all operate in the same way, there are many similarities in the ways they provide protective presence. Conscious visibility is one commonly shared tactic among international UCP interventions. Among local actors there is more variability, again depending on the context. Many UCP agencies use clearly identifiable uniforms, cars, flags and other markers to strengthen their visibility and increase their security.<sup>2</sup> Uniforms are especially important for local staff members, who could easily be mistaken for bystanders without their distinctive uniform.

*If we surprise armed actors in the field we have not done our job.*

*Tiffany Easthom, Former Head of Mission, Nonviolent Peaceforce, South Sudan.*

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR PROTECTIVE PRESENCE?

Challenges in providing protective presence include the following:

- Effectiveness is based on the acceptance of UCP personnel by conflict actors—relationships and lines of communication need to be established with conflict actors before the presence can be used to provide protection;
- Being present and being visible is the foundation of this technique, but does not provide protection in and of itself unless it is used strategically. If acceptance of UCP presence fails, protection strategies need to be backed up by credible pressures

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<sup>2</sup> Some argue that UCP practitioners should strive for a minimum amount of visibility necessary to get the job done. Over-exposure may provide the opportunity for a political attack or a slide into dependency. Under-exposure nullifies the benefits of UCP presence to a conflict and may decrease its credibility (Schirch, 2006, p. 93)

from other international actors and institutions;

- There must be real (soft) power and influence behind the pressure for it to be credible: i.e. political, economic, legal, religious, cultural or social pressure such as disruption to tourism, indictment by a court or tribunal, imposition of economic sanctions, or cancellation of contracts, investments, or aid packages;
- Protection strategies must be based on careful research. It is important to identify which actors are causing the threat and what kinds of pressure they may be susceptible to, who will be supportive, what influence they have, and to what extent will they use their influence to support the protection of civilians. Research must also clarify the likelihood that intervention will not increase risks to individuals and communities;
- It is usually helpful to have direct lines of open communication to the perpetrators somewhere along their chain of command in order for influence to be effectively applied; moreover, not all abuser groups have clear chains of command; and there are groups which it is hardly possible to influence;
- Even if UCP presence is accepted by the major parties involved in the conflict, armed splinter groups or criminal groups can target UCP personnel and take actions against UCP teams working against their interest.



#### CASE STUDY: PROTECTIVE PRESENCE AT A HOSPITAL AMIDST TRIBAL VIOLENCE IN JONGLEI

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 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 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, 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 Nonviolent Peaceforce 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.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (View)

- Mahony, L. (2006.) Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping: Part 1. Geneva: Switzerland: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. [http://www.fieldviewsolutions.org/fv-publications/Proactive\\_Presence.pdf](http://www.fieldviewsolutions.org/fv-publications/Proactive_Presence.pdf)

## 3.1.2 Protective accompaniment

*It was thanks to these foreign nationals, so concerned for our situation, who worked with dedication and deep respect. I was fully aware that without their presence the threats might turn from words into actions. They stayed with us one night in November when we had to move urgently because a man telephoned to inform me that my daughter would be raped, mutilated and tortured using unimaginable means because I had got involved with the wrong person. [Forced into our second exile] PBI accompanied us in the sad walk towards Immigration and went with us as far as the door of the plane. One of its members had to literally push me onto the plane whilst I cried uncontrollably.*

*Claudia Julieta Duque, Colombian journalist for Radio Nizkor. Peace Brigades International (2009).*

### WHAT IS PROTECTIVE ACCOMPANIMENT?

Protective accompaniment is protective presence in motion. It is the best-known application of UCP methods. Protective accompaniment is practiced by almost all UCP agencies in nearly all types of contexts. UCP practitioners have been described as ‘unarmed bodyguards’ because they are frequently walking at the side of threatened

human rights defenders in areas of violent conflict. Protective accompaniment is provided to civilians because they perceive a threat either during their journey from one place to another, or upon arrival at their destination. It can be undertaken by outsider ‘third parties’ or undertaken as a self-protection strategy where certain people in a community protectively accompany each other.

Next to protective accompaniment UCP practitioners also provide other forms of accompaniment. These are referred to by some as ‘strategic accompaniment’ or ‘physical accompaniment’, though protective accompaniment is both strategic and physical. They have also been further defined as ‘political, psycho-social, legal and medical accompaniments. Political accompaniment will be discussed later in this module under the section of advocacy. Legal accompaniment refers primarily to the presence at courts and prisons or the accompaniment of survivors to report human rights abuses. Psycho-social accompaniment usually refers to the provision of moral support to actors that may not be at immediate risk of violence, but feel unsafe due to past trauma. Medical accompaniments connect survivors of violence to designated service providers. Some organizations, particularly in Latin America, say they ‘accompany a process’, not just people or communities. In this sense it is an understanding that there is a whole process, such as refugees returning to Guatemala, that need to be accompanied.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas protective accompaniment is used for the purpose of providing protection, other forms of accompaniment are used as a way to build confidence and connect vulnerable civilians to designated service providers. While fear may play a role, there may not be an immediate identified threat or a potential perpetrator to be deterred. In these cases there is usually little or no need for elaborate protection strategies, conscious visibility, or the establishment of a support network of influential actors. Blending protective accompaniment and other forms of accompaniment together has led to a watered-down understanding of protective accompaniment. This strips the concept of protective accompaniment of its power and may create security risks. When UCP practitioners confuse the accompaniment of traumatized refugees to humanitarian aid agencies with ‘protective accompaniment’ they will more likely abandon the preparatory work and security strategies that protective accompaniments require. When these practitioners then take on the accompaniment of a threatened refugee leader or a human rights defender in a similar manner, they could easily put themselves and the people they accompany in danger. In this section ‘accompaniment’ is understood narrowly as protective accompaniment.

Bearing this in mind, clear distinctions between protective accompaniment and other forms of accompaniment can rarely be made. The various forms of accompaniment exist on a spectrum ranging from medical accompaniments to the accompaniment of, for example, high profile lawyers under death threats for investigating claims of genocide. In Sri Lanka, UCP actors accompanied farmers to local government offices after the tsunami of 2004 to be a supportive presence. As land records had been washed away, people needed to re-establish land ownership, but were afraid to approach the appropriate officials. More than merely building confidence, however some of these

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3 Some of these actors describe protection as a smaller activity of a broader accompaniment process that includes advocacy and relationship building among others. Following this line of thinking UCP is a part of accompaniment instead of the other way around.

accompaniments prevented farmers from being turned away or denied their land. Thus what started off as moral support gradually transformed into protection.

*We can not make the soldiers leave, but we can stand for something else. By accompanying these children to school we deter soldiers and settlers from harassing them and make the children feel safer. In addition our team's presence – giving a “high five”, a handshake or a smile – acts as a counterbalance to the stress that these children face on daily, living under military occupation. We hope that our presence allows the kids to focus on us more than on the rifle butts.*

*Josefin, EAPPI in Nablus (2016)*

## **HOW DOES PROTECTIVE ACCOMPANIMENT WORK?**

Protective accompaniment works in a way similar to protective presence. However, accompaniment often means travelling through, or to, an area of violent conflict. This means that extra precautionary measures have to be taken. There may be roadblocks or mines on the way, or the road may pass through territory controlled by opposing military forces. Just as UCP practitioners build relationships vertically (up and down the chain of command) to provide protective presence, relationships also need to be built horizontally when they travel through different areas. In different areas there may also be different chains of command.

Protective accompaniment is a preventive, not a defensive strategy. UCP personnel use their physical presence, visibility, and relationships to prevent threats from being realized. In case threats *are* realized and the accompanied individual or group is attacked during the accompaniment, UCP personnel will not use their presence to engage in physical struggle. However, they will try to stay with the individual or group as long as possible, even if they are taken away or arrested. UCP practitioners in such situations can spend days on end going to police stations, jails, or government offices, trying to obtain information about the whereabouts and wellbeing of their local partners. They may also use their local, national, and/or international response network to advocate for the release or return of the arrested or abducted individuals.

Local actors that request protective accompaniment sometimes misperceive this as nothing more than an extra safety net. When threatened, these actors often keep a low profile and continue their activities underground. They sometimes believe that they can continue to keep a low profile, while adding international accompaniment as a precautionary measure. Protective accompaniment, however, like any other UCP method, generally cannot be carried out secretly. In fact, abandoning transparency and visibility opens the door to suspicion, mistrust and the perception of partisanship. It undermines the entire system of proactive engagement. Accepting accompaniment means raising visibility. It means that local actors step out of the shadows, showing that with the international community on their side, there are going to be serious consequences for the perpetrators if threats are realized. Therefore, in accepting accompaniment, local actors accept that potential perpetrators will be informed about their whereabouts, at least during the time



of accompaniment.

In cases where threatened civilians do not wish to raise their profile, but still wish to benefit from the presence of UCP personnel, patrolling is sometimes applied instead of accompaniment. UCP teams may move around in a specific area where threatened civilians are travelling, without the responsibility of providing direct physical protection to these civilians. If accompaniment is a close perimeter presence, patrolling is a wide perimeter presence. Patrolling is also used by UCP practitioners as an alternative to accompaniment in situations where threatened groups are very large or specific agreements about conduct and values are difficult. Large groups of IDPs may, for example, travel through hostile areas and some of them may insist on carrying weapons. Direct accompaniment of the entire group may compromise UCP's principles of nonpartisanship and nonviolence or may result in unwanted consequences. Therefore, UCP teams may decide to accompany the IDP leaders and through them provide protection to the large group, or choose to patrol the area instead.

### **PROTECTIVE ACCOMPANIMENT IN ACTION**

Protective accompaniment is provided to both individuals and groups. Individuals in most cases are human rights defenders, journalists, environmentalists, and leaders from targeted minority groups as well as their relatives. Groups may include IDPs, youth at risk of forced recruitment, or humanitarians delivering aid.

Many international UCP organizations have stressed the importance of including international UCP personnel on high-risk missions, based on the notion that national security forces would be less likely to target foreigners. These missions often consist exclusively of internationals. Gender, nationality, race, and ethnicity, as well as personal skills, are important factors to be considered while identifying the most effective accompaniment team for a specific mission (perception is key). Low-risk missions often include national or local UCP personnel. They may even consist exclusively of national and/or local staff. A national actor from another part of the country may be perceived very differently from a local actor from the affected community. The strategic use of (white) privilege or any other identity as a means for protection remains a contentious topic for many UCP actors. While using such identities saves lives they also may reinforce colonial, racist or other systems of oppression. Thus, practitioners must be well trained and aware of the dynamics they are reinforcing (see module 5 for more information). Like with every aspect of UCP, context analysis is of the utmost importance - determining the makeup of accompaniment teams is no exception.

International UCP organizations have become increasingly aware of existing capacities or track records among local communities to provide accompaniment to each other. Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan, for example, encouraged women threatened by sexual violence to accompany each other or move in groups when fetching water or cutting grass. This proved effective. Some human rights defenders in Indonesia already applied proactive engagement methods, but felt that the international accompaniment of Peace Brigades International volunteers further enhanced their deterrence effect.

Before any accompaniment mission, UCP teams will assess the threat: where does the

threat come from, why does the threat exist, and is there an identifiable pattern? UCP personnel also assess the risks that the threat poses to the targeted individual or group. Some threats are very serious, but because the individual or group is capable of dealing with them, the risk they run may not be high. Conversely, a threat may appear to be rather insignificant, but the targeted individual or group is extremely vulnerable and has no capacity whatsoever to deal with the threat. UCP practitioners will also assess if accompaniment is the appropriate methodology and agree with local actors on the form and intensity of the accompaniment. Furthermore, they will inform the appropriate authorities and other actors about the accompaniment. Ultimately, the decision-making on all these matters lies with those who request the accompaniment. They may decide that keeping a low profile will be more effective or safer in a particular situation. Dealing with these dilemmas requires sensitivity and creativity.

During an accompaniment mission UCP team members usually use a strict check-in call system to keep their home base updated about their progress and safety. They may also bring a list of telephone numbers and official support letters from high-ranking government officials or military commanders who are supportive of the accompaniment. These actors can be contacted in case there are complications. Though protective accompaniment involves close physical presence and visibility, UCP practitioners make sure that they are not perceived as involved in the activities of those whom they accompany. Especially in sensitive cases like the accompaniment of lawyers who are investigating human rights violations, UCP personnel make sure to maintain a safe distance for the duration of the investigation. By doing this they send a clear message of nonpartisanship; they are present to protect the lawyer, but they are not involved in the actual investigation.

*In Catatumbo, we did a visit accompanied by Peace Brigades International. We were stopped at a paramilitary roadblock. PBI made phone calls and the paramilitaries made phone calls and they let us through. The paramilitaries respect international presence ... they are trying to institutionalise themselves legally. The collaboration with the state is very clear... The paramilitaries are steadily occupying government positions, and this makes the situation more delicate for them.*

*Colombian human-rights lawyer quoted by Mahony, 2006*



#### Recommended resources for further study (View)

- The work of Peace Brigades International: <http://www.peacebrigades.org/publications/dvds-and-videos/?L=0> (choose one of the 6 available videos)
- Mahony L. *Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping Part 2: Accompanying the return of child soldiers*, 00-1:51 <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/unarmed-civilian-peacekeeping-pt-2>

- Geleta, A. (2013) *Kidnapped Boy Reunites with Family*, Brussels, Belgium: Nonviolent Peaceforce. <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/kidnapped-boy-reunites-family-0> (Geleta 2013a)

Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- Ridd, K. *El Salvador: You know what it's like to be separated from a comrade*. Turning-the-Tide, [http://www.turning-the-tide.org/files/3%20NV%20power%20stories%2016\\_oct.pdf](http://www.turning-the-tide.org/files/3%20NV%20power%20stories%2016_oct.pdf)

### 3.1.3 Interpositioning

*Across Africa, there are stories of unarmed women interpositioning themselves as peacekeepers between warring tribes. In many traditional African communities, it was prohibited to kill women. Only other warriors were allowed as targets. In some societies women would walk between armed groups to prevent them from fighting each other.*

*Schirch, L. (2006), p. 17*

#### **WHAT IS INTERPOSITIONING?**

In 1931 Gandhi spoke of the possibility of overcoming violent conflicts with ‘a living wall of men and women’ who would interpose themselves between conflicting parties, without any weapons but only their bodies (Weber 1988). Interpositioning is the act of physically placing oneself between conflicting parties in order to prevent them from using violence against one another. Of all UCP methods interpositioning comes perhaps closest to the traditional notion of peacekeeping.

#### **HOW DOES INTERPOSITIONING WORK?**

Interpositioning works in a similar way to protective presence and accompaniment, although it often requires mobilizing a larger number of UCP team members for just one activity. It also requires a more prominent involvement and greater risk-taking by UCP practitioners than other UCP methods. Many UCP agencies refrain from using this method or make limited use of it, because they consider the security risks to be too high. Interpositioning is sometimes misperceived as a spontaneous action of jumping in between already fighting parties. Though this is part of interpositioning and can be done in certain situations, interpositioning is in most cases a calculated and strategically planned intervention. In order to use interpositioning it is vital to have well-established

contacts with all the relevant stakeholders, especially the leaders involved in that specific intervention and communicate with them before and during the intervention. Moreover, it is important to gain recognition by key stakeholders and to have in-depth knowledge of the context and conflict.

Commonly, it is assumed that interpositioning owes its effectiveness to the conflicting parties' unwillingness to harm an innocent bystander, or internationals from a particular region (typically the Global North). However, there is also a more subtle and compelling effect of interpositioning: violence against another human being depends on the ability of the perpetrator to dehumanize the intended recipient of the violent act. This means that the perpetrator has to numb him or herself to the targeted person's humanity. When UCP practitioners interposition themselves, they are, in effect, saying: 'I put myself at risk to protect this human being's life.' It has the effect of awakening the potential perpetrator to the humanity of the intended target, and, momentarily, to their own humanity. This makes proceeding with violence much more difficult (Metta Center for Nonviolence, 2013).

Analysis of different cases of nonviolent interpositioning shows that the presence of international, but also at times, national staff, trained in nonviolence and willing to risk their lives, can be of great help in scaling down a conflict. It can also increase the visibility of local nonviolent groups of activists who strive for justice and human rights.<sup>4</sup> However, it seems to be most effective when people related to the fighting groups (wives, parents, children) carry out interpositioning. When such people put themselves between two fighting groups, the latter tend to interrupt the violence, fearing that they may accidentally kill their own relatives (L'Abate 1997).

Eli McCarthy and Jonathan Pinckney describe in *Wielding Nonviolence* (Furnari 2016) how UCP organizations operating in Israel and Palestine differ in their views and practices of interpositioning. "Some UCP respondents strongly encouraged pure monitoring or presence, and, while not condemning intervention, explicitly discouraged it in most circumstances. Some organizations only allow verbal intervention, such as verbally de-escalating when a child is in danger. Other groups that allow interposition do not require it of their members but will support them if they make such a choice. Several respondents reported that interposition has helped prevent the arrest of Palestinians. Even UCP practitioners whose interpositions did not prevent arrests often secured less serious consequences for the Palestinians they were supporting, when they were arrested too. Others indicated that interposition has helped prevent checkpoint harassment, house demolition, violation of sacred sites, and both settler and Palestinian violence."

*One prominent example of interposition came early in CPT's [Christian Peacemaker Teams] time in Hebron, when several CPT activists interposed themselves between a Palestinian youth demonstration and a line of Israeli soldiers with their guns raised to fire. Following the interposition the soldiers lowered their weapons and did not violently suppress the demonstration...*

*Eli McCarthy and Jonathan Pinckney in 'Unarmed Civilian Protection in the Israeli and Palestinian Conflict' in Wielding Nonviolence (Furnari 2016), p.98.*

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<sup>4</sup> Environmental groups are increasingly using interpositioning to protect the environment, putting themselves between whales and hunters or between trees and loggers (Schirch, 2006, p.37)

# 3.2

## Monitoring

*The decision to go to Bougainville unarmed caused some angst in the Australian Defence Force at the time, but it was the right one. At least two occasions I encountered may have gone differently if we had been armed. Perhaps more fundamentally, the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) experience reaffirmed for me that the role of peacekeepers is to not only stand between the warring sides to prevent more suffering but also to encourage the coming together of divided people.*

*Rice, A. Australian Department of Defence (in Schweitzer 2010, p.7)*

Monitoring is essentially the practice of observing compliance to a standard. The purpose of monitoring is to help all those involved to make appropriate and timely judgments and decisions that will improve the quality of the work, ensure accountability, and encourage implementation according to plan. Within the context of UCP there are three main applications of monitoring: ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, and early warning early response (EWER). This section describes these three different applications.

Besides ceasefire agreements, UCP teams may monitor many other events and proceedings, such as disarmament processes, political events (e.g. demonstrations, elections), local peace agreements between communities, legal proceedings (e.g. trials, tribunals) and social events (e.g. holidays, celebrations, parades). An example of such monitoring is the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal. At key moments of public unrest between 2005 and the April 2008 elections the OHCHR-Nepal office mobilized all its resources to have a prominent preventive presence at demonstrations. OHCHR officers would have advance discussions and trainings with the police about the use of force and would be visibly present at the demonstrations with jackets, radios, and maps, ready to feed information down the chain of command. Their monitoring presence is widely credited with reducing the risk of massive violence (Mahony et al. 2012, p.30). Meta Peace Teams and Christian Peace Teams have frequently monitored and provided presence at political demonstrations in their home countries and abroad to prevent violence.

As mentioned in module 1, the monitoring of events and proceedings such as demonstrations and tribunals often includes aspects of proactive engagement.

EAPPI Photo  
/ Britta  
Schweighöfer /  
Documenting  
discussion with  
soldiers. Susiya,  
South Hebron  
Hills / 2018





## 3.2.1 Ceasefire monitoring

*NP's work as part of CPC [Civilian Protection Component] has served to strengthen the IMT [International Monitoring Team in Mindanao] mechanism overall, including its information gathering capacity, its field-level visibility, and by extension, its legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders.*

Gunduz, C. & Torralba, R. (2014) p.47

### WHAT IS CEASEFIRE MONITORING?

A ceasefire is understood as a period of truce between two or more parties, especially one that is temporary and is often a preliminary step to the establishment of a more permanent peace on agreed terms. Ceasefire monitoring is used to observe compliance with the terms of implementation of the ceasefire agreements by the ceasefire parties, verify alleged ceasefire violations, and raise awareness among communities (and sometimes the parties to the ceasefire<sup>5</sup>). Ceasefire monitoring is perhaps the most complex application of monitoring. Like peacekeeping, it is largely aimed at the cessation of hostilities, separation of forces, and the creation of a secure environment that is conducive to political dialogue. As civilians are frequently affected by ceasefire violations, caught in crossfires, or purposefully targeted during the hostilities, provisions for the protection of civilians from direct physical violence are increasingly included into ceasefire agreements. Monitoring that helps to sustain ceasefires or similar agreements, can be a critical contribution to protecting civilians. Ceasefire processes provide UCP actors with a unique opportunity to further strengthen their efforts to protect civilians, hold ceasefire parties accountable or support them in the implementation of their own agreements.

### HOW DOES CEASEFIRE MONITORING WORK?

Once a ceasefire is declared, the parties to the ceasefire usually agree to establish a ceasefire monitoring mechanism to observe their mutual compliance to the ceasefire agreement. This mechanism may consist of representatives of the ceasefire parties and/or third-party monitors, who may be local actors or foreign nationals, civilian or military. The parties to the ceasefire will have to decide on the exact composition of the monitoring mechanism as well as its mandate. Through methodical observation and timely identification, verification, and reporting of violations, the monitoring mechanism plays an important role in building confidence of the parties in the peace process, so that negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement continue. The process of ceasefire monitoring can also serve to create confidence among affected communities, because a protective presence is provided and this encourages the conflict parties to adhere to

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5 The soldiers on the ground themselves may not be aware about the agreements or their meaning as these may not have been formulated very clearly or detailed enough.

the agreements. Though monitors may play a role in facilitating dialogue between the ceasefire parties about violations and emerging disagreements, especially if those parties are part of the mechanism, ultimately it is the responsibility of the parties to address violations and resolve disputes.

Ceasefire monitoring is usually military-led. Civilians (often with military backgrounds or ties) may be included, but legitimacy and public support are rarely achieved by merely adding a few (hand-picked) representatives of civil society to a military driven mechanism. Military-led ceasefire monitoring also focuses predominantly on military-to-military matters and major breaches of the agreement by the ceasefire parties, less on their impact on communities. UCP practitioners are well positioned to address some of these concerns and play an official monitoring role. They are an independent, nonpartisan third party, usually unaffiliated with any specific government, political group, or ideology. This makes it easier for all parties, including non-state armed groups, to perceive them as non-threatening and objective. The fact that UCP practitioners are unarmed is crucial to their non-threatening stature. Finally UCP teams usually live within impacted communities and focus their protection efforts on civilians most at risk for being harmed. This helps them to gain trust among conflicting parties as well as within the wider community.

UCP actors have not merely participated in ceasefire mechanisms and processes, but actively modelled a unique approach to monitoring that is grounded in UCP methods and principles. This model is characterized first of all by a distinct focus on the impact of ceasefire violations on civilian populations, rather than on military matters. It puts communities at the centre of ceasefire processes. Secondly, it promotes a proactive approach to monitoring, proactively engaging with all parties in ceasefire territories to control rumours, de-escalate tensions, and prevent violence against civilians. Thirdly, it combines monitoring with direct protection efforts, using the physical presence of monitors to provide direct protection. Their ability to immediately address protection concerns helps monitors to gain trust among communities and allows them to gather more relevant information. Finally, it provides a peacebuilding approach to ceasefire monitoring, building trust, and facilitating dialogue between ceasefire parties and communities. In this way, UCP actors draw the voices of civil society, including women and youth, into discussions about peace and security in the early stages of peace processes.

*This activity allows us to reflect on what is powerful about civilian protection monitors – while other agencies would still be asking for reports on what is going on, civilian protection monitors were able to go and negotiate for her release. Civilian protection monitors are on the ground they know the people who are involved in these activities, and this is where the power of civilian protection monitors comes from.*

*Nan Mya Thida, founder and director of Research institute for Society and Ecology (RISE) in Myanmar (2015)*

UCP actors have contributed to ceasefire processes by participating in official ceasefire monitoring processes or by independently monitoring ceasefires. UCP teams have also trained local civil society groups in ceasefire monitoring and supported them in establishing civilian monitoring networks, which extend the reach of the monitoring

more widely, while at the same time building confidence in the ceasefire agreement at the local level.

The formal ceasefire monitoring mechanism may (initially) not include (appropriate) civilian representation and may not extend its coverage to the grassroots level, even though many ceasefire violations occur at the grassroots level and directly impact civilians. It may also be held back by a limited mandate or political deadlock in the peace process. Local civilian monitors are well positioned to respond quickly to a wide variety of incidents and can feed information about incidents and community concerns into the formal monitoring mechanism or broader peace process. Minor violations, committed by ill-informed foot soldiers that misinterpret ambiguous or confusing agreements, can easily escalate tensions and lead to retaliation or punishment of civilians.

Civilian-led ceasefire monitoring modelled on UCP methods and principles is easily misunderstood for the more widely known efforts of human rights advocacy groups that monitor ceasefire violations. While both are primarily concerned with violence against civilians, human rights groups usually focus more on holding ceasefire parties accountable and influencing public opinion and decision-makers. One approach is not better than the other. In fact, local ceasefire monitoring groups in Mindanao and Myanmar have shifted back and forth between a peacebuilding or UCP-based approach and a human rights approach to ceasefire monitoring as their peace processes progressed or regressed. Likewise monitors in Mindanao have moved back and forth between participating in a formal mechanism and acting independently (see figure 5 for an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to civilian participation in ceasefire monitoring). Ultimately these choices come down to the basic question: ‘how can we make the biggest impact in reducing violence against civilians?’

*Some local ceasefire monitors NP trained in Myanmar saw formal endorsement as the solution to all their problems and as a precondition for starting their monitoring efforts. They regarded the formal endorsement of civilian monitors in the Philippines as the example to follow, not realising that those monitors had operated independently for almost 10 years, before they were asked to join the formal system. In fact, they probably would never have been asked to join, had they not operated independently for all those years and proven themselves to the parties through their actions on the ground. Now we start to see the same thing in Myanmar.*

*Staff member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Myanmar (2017)*



Figure 5 shows three different approaches to civilian participation in ceasefire monitoring that each have their own advantages and disadvantages. These are not fixed positions. Civil society groups may shift back and forth between these three approaches or fix their position somewhere in between the 3 extreme points of the triangle. The key message of the diagram is to make monitors aware that their positioning within the spectrum comes with a set of advantages and disadvantages.

## CEASEFIRE MONITORING IN ACTION

When UCP teams assume an official role in monitoring a ceasefire, they will mainly monitor compliance and non-compliance to the civilian protection aspects of the ceasefire. Before actual ceasefire monitoring work can begin, it is important to understand the key principles of ceasefire monitoring.

Basic functions of a civilian ceasefire monitor that is part of an official mechanism are as follows:

- Perform tasks as may be directed by the ceasefire monitoring mechanism;
- Conduct regular area visits to the communities and troops on both or all sides of the ceasefire agreement;
- Coordinate monitoring activities with all sides;
- Conduct verification of any alleged ceasefire violation and submit a report on the result of verification;
- Provide regular updates of the developments on the ground; for example, during actual incidents of armed hostilities, or the occurrence of unusual or suspicious events that may affect the ceasefire (including specific criminal or illegal activities that both sides agreed to eradicate);
- Monitor and report about the situation of affected civilians and IDPs during and after actual incidents of armed hostilities; ensure that their rights are protected and proper assistance is provided;
- Develop or support capacities of local civil society to monitor;
- Raise awareness about and generate support for the peace process among affected communities.

Detailed verification of violent incidents is of great importance because a violation of the ceasefire agreement may have enormous consequences. It can trigger retaliation and counter-retaliation. This may derail the entire peace process and result in large-scale displacement, killings, and destruction of property.<sup>6</sup> Next to the verification of incidents, confidence building also plays an important role in the monitoring process. Most communities in conflict and post-conflict areas hold deep feelings of mistrust and suspicion. A simple rumour of resumed fighting can spark panic and displacement. The (protective) presence and visibility of a UCP monitoring team in areas where incidents have taken place can help to restore confidence in the functioning of the peace process.

Independent civilian ceasefire monitors may carry out some of the same functions as described above. As they do not have a formal mandate and may (initially) not be recognized by the ceasefire parties, it may be harder for them to document and report ceasefire violations. Moreover, they may have decided to monitor the ceasefire because

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<sup>6</sup> A complicating feature in many situations is the existence of ordinary criminals and of armed groups deliberately undermining a peace process. Their actions may create the false impression that the parties to the ceasefire have breached their agreements, which, in turn, can lead to panic and displacement. A further complicating feature is that these criminals and armed groups outside the peace process may be affiliated to one of the parties to the ceasefire through complex networks of family, political and criminal alliances. In verifying an incident of violence it is therefore imperative for a monitoring team to determine the affiliations and alliances of the perpetrators.



official monitoring mechanisms are inexistent, dysfunctional, or not covering the areas most affected by armed conflict. In response they may de-prioritize reporting and focus primarily on direct protection efforts, including protective accompaniment, patrols or negotiating humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians from cross-fires. Efforts also may include raising awareness among communities and ground troops about civilian protection provisions of the ceasefire agreement, facilitating dialogue between ceasefire parties and communities, or encouraging official monitoring bodies to visit or patrol specific areas of tension. Independent civilian monitors may simply use the ceasefire agreement as a source of guidance or an entry point for engagement. They may strengthen the legitimacy of their efforts by focusing their direct protection efforts on incidents of violence that are prohibited under the ceasefire agreement.



#### Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- Nonviolent Peaceforce, *Civilians protecting civilians through ceasefire monitoring. Civilian Ceasefire Monitoring in Myanmar: 2012-2016*, [https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/16.11.01.\\_NP\\_Paper\\_on\\_Civilian\\_Ceasefire\\_Monitoring\\_.pdf](https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/16.11.01._NP_Paper_on_Civilian_Ceasefire_Monitoring_.pdf)



#### CASE STUDY: MONITORING CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS AND CULTIVATING CONFIDENCE IN WESTERN MINDANAO

In the Philippines, Nonviolent Peaceforce 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, Nonviolent Peaceforce'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 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 two-year ceasefire has led to a peace framework agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce

## 3.2.2 Rumour control

*One of the ingredients of civil disorders always ... is that misinformation is going around. There's a lot of fear; there's a lot of people picking up bits and pieces of information and spreading it. Rumors come out, and most of the time they're very destructive.*

*Martin Walsh, Civil Rights Mediation Oral History Project (Conflict Management Initiatives, 2001)*

### WHAT IS RUMOUR CONTROL?

Rumour control refers to the verification of rumours about imminent threats. It includes the timely sharing of factual information with various parties within and across conflict lines in order to prevent escalation of conflict and displacement. Breaches of ceasefire agreements can be instigated by rumours, misinformation, or miscommunication. Helping to clarify what is actually happening (or has not happened) can be essential in preventing flare-ups of violence. Rumour control is always intended to de-escalate tensions. It is mainly used in situations of large-scale community attacks, for example by one group against another, or in areas where communities live amidst fighting between armed groups. It also addresses rumours of community violence that can lead to rioting, retaliation, and displacement.

### HOW DOES RUMOUR CONTROL WORK?

Rumours cost lives in violent situations. A simple rumour of an imminent attack on a community has the potential to create panic among civilians. This panic may lead to

mass evacuation or to a counterattack even before the rumoured attack has happened. Verifying information and sharing factual information with conflicting parties or wider communities about threats and violent incidents in the area can help to ease tensions, de-escalate the conflict, and prevent unnecessary (and usually very costly) displacement. Clarifying the likelihood of violence, on the other hand, can help people displace in a safer, more timely and orderly manner or, at least, make more informed decisions about fleeing or staying.

Rumour control is a method that is most useful in protracted conflicts, where levels of mistrust have skyrocketed and previous channels of communication between groups have disintegrated or disappeared. For example, in various areas in Sub-Saharan Africa communities are locked into longstanding conflicts between tribes and clans. Cattle raiding, abductions of children, and community attacks are common. Clashes often come in waves, depending on the season. Modes of communication and infrastructure are limited. Suspicions and mistrust towards other tribes are fuelled by rounds of failed peace conferences and collapsed disarmament processes. In this type of environment, 'rumour control' can be an effective method to prevent or reduce violence and protect civilians.

UCP practitioners are in a good position to identify rumours and provide rumour control. They live together with vulnerable communities for long periods of time, have a deep understanding of the local context, and enjoy the trust of the people they work with. Third-party monitors or peacekeepers who suddenly arrive in threatened areas and engage with a number of high level actors for a limited amount of time may not get the same information as those who live within communities and (in some cases) speak the local language. Local authorities and army commanders in some places are reluctant to reveal detailed information about violent incidents in the area. They fear outside interference, decreased business activity, or damage to their reputation for not being able to manage the conflict. Even if they are willing to share information, they may only have one version of the story. In a climate of suspicion, prejudice, mistrust, and fear most rumours will have at least three or four different versions.

Another advantage of UCP practitioners in identifying rumours and providing rumour control is that they may be able to have access to areas where other actors cannot go. Their extensive networks of relations allow them, in some places, to move through areas controlled by paramilitaries. Furthermore, their relatively low security threshold simplifies the logistics of transportation, allowing them, for example, to walk in terrain where motorized transport is not possible or is temporarily suspended (e.g. during the rainy season).

## **RUMOUR CONTROL IN ACTION**

Rumour control starts with extensive context and conflict analysis. A lack of understanding of context and conflict may lead to misinterpretation of developments and incidents. Very important rumours may not be identified if monitors find themselves in the wrong place or at the wrong time (in rural areas, patterns of violence often change with the seasons). Alternatively, UCP personnel may find themselves in the right place at the right time, but fail to understand the urgency of the threat that lies behind the rumours.

Efforts to de-escalate tensions in this situation may create a false sense of security among community members and increase security risks if they are not accompanied by Early Warning and Early Response efforts (see section 3.2.3). Whether UCP is provided by local community members, internationals, or a mix of international and local, information about rumours need to be presented in the clearest way. Moreover, it is up to local people to decide if and how they want to respond.

UCP practitioners engaged in rumour control often identify local observers in designated areas who regularly inform them about recent developments and incidents. Incoming rumours will be documented and verified with other observers in the area. UCP teams will also try to visit the place of a rumoured incident to get first-hand information. They will collect as many details as possible about the numbers, age, gender, and dress code (uniforms) of people involved in reported incidents, its exact time and place, the response of civilians and local authorities, etc. They will then analyse the rumours, discern patterns, assess the ratio of rumours to actual incidents, and share information with relevant actors. In some cases, UCP teams will use the information to engage in shuttle diplomacy and clarify perceptions and intentions of conflicting parties about (and to) each other in order to de-escalate tensions and avoid violent confrontation (see also section 3.3.1 on multi-track dialogue).

*We have encouraged communities to tell us about any rumours or tensions and the communities now know that they should do that because it can lead to fighting. Recently there was a rumour that one of the armed groups and the military would fight, but we were able to confirm that it was not true. We shared this back to the community, who trusted our information and relaxed. In fact, people had already packed up and were ready to flee.*

*Member of a local ceasefire monitoring network in Myanmar (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2017)*

Sometimes however it is important to act quickly on rumours. In a city with mixed ethnicity in Sri Lanka, a rumour circulated that a person of one ethnicity had been killed by someone from another. Quickly people began dragging riders from buses when not in their own area, and beating them up. UCP practitioners rapidly learned that this was a false rumour and mobilized community leaders to broadcast the truth and call for calm and reconciliation for the damage already done. Violence flared in a matter of hours, and calm took days to re-establish, while a number of people displaced to places of worship for safety. Rapid action prevented further violence.



#### Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- ICRC. (2012). *Enhancing protection for civilians in armed conflict and other situations of violence*. <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc-002-0956.pdf>

## 3.2.3

# Early Warning Early Response

### WHAT IS EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE?

Early Warning Early Response (EWER) is a systematic application of monitoring for the sake of preventing violence, reducing the impact of violence, and increasing the safety and security of civilians in tense situations of violent conflict. It is based on the awareness that conflicts generally progress through well-recognized stages. By monitoring the progression of a conflict, it may be possible to predict the development of a crisis or at least be aware of signs of imminent violence. Timely awareness of an imminent crisis may help civilians to prepare themselves to face the crisis or to evacuate the area. A timely response may prevent the crisis from developing or at least reduce its impact.

Early Warning can be defined as the collection and communication of information about a crisis, the analysis of that information, and the initial consideration of potential response options to the crisis. Conflict Early Warning requires (near real-time) assessment of events that, in a high-risk environment, are likely to trigger the rapid escalation of violence.

Early Response (Action) is often used in conjunction with early warning. It refers to the actions that are taken to prevent violence or the escalation of violence and to resolve violent conflict. Early response can also include timely displacement or the implementation of contingency plans, based on identified early warning indicators. In addition to direct UCP intervention, actions to prevent or de-escalate violence can be diplomatic, military, humanitarian, and/or economic. They may be as simple as getting armed parties to agree to wait until all civilians are removed from the area before resuming fighting, or as complicated as organized civilian displacement to safe places. Response options need to reflect a combination of ground realities, response capacities, and scenarios. Ground realities describe a particular situation, marked by a specific emergency context. Response capacities refer to the (in)ability of certain actors to deliver a timely, inclusive, and targeted intervention. Scenarios refer to the potential outcomes of the respective interventions.

UCP personnel may only be involved in Early Warning and leave Early Response to other actors, or vice versa. In most cases, however, they will be involved in both Early Warning and Early Response. When it comes to Early Response following a crisis situation, UCP agencies may team up with other humanitarian agencies and focus specifically on the physical security concerns and protection issues of civilians in the crisis area. Other agencies typically provide, for example, food and medical aid.

Early Response actions are selected from UCP methods described separately in this module, according to what best suits the situation. This section will mainly focus on Early Warning and the process that leads from Early Warning to Early Response.

## HOW DOES EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE WORK?

EWER as applied by UCP actors involves more than the activity of UCP teams monitoring the progression of a conflict and responding to a crisis situation. It is primarily a tool for local communities to more effectively protect themselves. It is not unlike EWER mechanisms focused on dealing with natural disasters that include earthquake drills in which people rehearse where to take cover or where to go. It involves the establishment or strengthening of community-based mechanisms of analysis, communication and response. These mechanisms need to ensure that information about incidents and developments in the area is correctly identified and shared in a timely way with relevant actors, especially those in a position to respond to an approaching crisis. In addition to information sharing, EWER mechanisms address the issue of coordination, preparation, and division of responsibilities. Preparation may include entire communities. Children need to know what to do or where to go in an emergency situation. They may be at school, on the road, or alone at home. Disabled or otherwise mentally or physically challenged persons may need the support of others in the case of a sudden evacuation. Families may need to have a 'go' bag ready or a plan for taking critical papers and supplies. Specific early warning alarm systems may be developed, but unless the entire community understands how to respond, they will not be effective.

EWER mechanisms are multi-layered, horizontally as well as vertically. They may connect actors at the grassroots level with actors at the middle range and top levels. They may also connect actors at the grassroots level on different sides of the conflict with each other. Women from one community may, for example, inform women from another community that tensions in their community are increasing. Proactive engagement, protective presence or rumour control may all be used as part of early response strategies.

Effective EWER requires input from a wide range of perspectives, including the perspectives of marginalized groups, women, and the elderly, who are often excluded from official peace processes. Mechanisms need to include actors who are able to recognize and categorize early indicators or signs of imminent violence. Mechanisms also need to include actors who are able to respond to these indicators to prevent the violence from occurring or prevent its escalation. Those who live in communities affected by violence are usually in the best position to recognize such indicators. These could be typical community members, members of grassroots organizations, or community leaders. Those able to facilitate a positive response to prevent violence are not necessarily top-level leaders, but they should have the necessary influence to stop violence or de-escalate tensions. They could be religious leaders, local politicians, representatives from the business sector, local military or police, as well as regional government officials or the leadership of armed groups.

For example, Jana Krause discusses the way in which a community in Jos, Nigeria was able to prevent attacks, burning and looting, through a combination of self-protection efforts. Respected male religious leaders and elders, as well as women's groups, were able to define 'being a respected man' (p. 18, Krause, 2019) as being nonviolent and taking leadership to protect the community nonviolently. Thus even when communities around them suffered significant violence, this particular community was able to prevent attackers from entering and prevent their own youth from participating in violence. While various NGOs were able to support this work after a period of violence, it was a



grassroots, community initiative that was credited with the initial prevention work.

The high security threshold and long-term grassroots presence of UCP actors often allows them to establish or strengthen EWER mechanisms in remote areas, where international access is limited. In areas where international access is blocked, UCP actors may bring local community leaders out of the area to build their capacity and assist them remotely in the establishment of such mechanisms. EWER efforts have been particularly relevant for communities that have been displaced or those that for some other reason can no longer rely on customary EWER mechanisms that may exist in communities. In some places UCP actors have trained refugees that were likely to be sent back into areas of insecurity they had escaped. These self-protection strategies may not keep people safe from harm, but they may be able to prevent one more child from being killed, injured, or separated. They can also strengthen people's resilience, as it helps people to re-discover internal resources of ownership and creativity.

It is imperative that UCP teams do not establish new EWER mechanisms without assessing the existence and functioning of existing mechanisms. In some areas existing mechanisms are geared to natural disasters. UCP practitioners can play a role in refining these mechanisms to include a conflict prevention and response component.<sup>7</sup> Another concern is making sure that the EWER mechanisms stay purely non-political; otherwise this could create security risks for those involved.

## **EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE IN ACTION**

The establishment of EWER mechanisms starts with the identification of crisis areas. UCP teams will focus their assessment on areas with regular clashes, bases for hard-line politicians, mixed communities as well as areas rich in natural resources, close to forward defence lines, and base camps of armed forces. After identification of a particular crisis area, UCP personnel and community actors collect baseline information and identify indicators of potential conflict:

Conflict indicators may be:

- Political (e.g. legislation favouring one group over another or hate speech);
- Economic (e.g. disruption of food distribution or uneven economic development along group lines);
- Environmental (e.g. extended droughts or bad harvests);
- Socio-cultural (e.g. destruction or desecration of religious sites);
- Technological (provocations and hate speech on radio or in the social media);
- Migrations (e.g. people leaving certain areas or cattle arriving);
- Security-related (e.g. incidents of kidnapping or appearance of new armed groups, bombings and attacks).

Following the collection of baseline information and conflict indicators, UCP personnel

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<sup>7</sup> Some of these systems are primarily focused on early warning of a disaster and then getting services to people afterwards. They are not focused on preventing the crisis per se, as it isn't possible to prevent a hurricane in the same way that people might prevent resumption of fighting.



and local actors jointly analyse data, put it into context and attach meaning to it. They will also formulate plausible scenarios and create action plans for each scenario. The entire process of information gathering and analysis may be undertaken within the framework of a community meeting or a workshop. This allows for capacity development about protection strategies and contingency plans.

In a context where communities suffer from aerial bombings, UCP teams may, for example, conduct a workshop with community leaders on EWER. The participants can describe and analyse what happened the last time the community was hit by aerial bombing; e.g. children lost their lives because they ran away in panic, instead of seeking cover in foxholes (holes in the ground used as shelter against enemy fire); physically challenged people had no foxholes as they did not have the strength to dig them. The community leaders may acknowledge that they cannot prevent aerial bombardments from happening, but that they can reduce their impact in a number of ways. Women and teachers could be tasked to instruct children on what to do next time there is a bombing. Youth could be tasked to dig foxholes for physically challenged people. Children could be asked to reflect on their own roles to support their communities and each other. Community leaders could identify specific warning signs to ensure rapid response. They could even establish a phone tree communication system that includes UCP personnel and other actors to ensure timely response from service providers following a bombing.



#### Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- *The Small Girl and the Big Men.* (Duncan n.d.). <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/blog/small-girl-and-big-men>

# 3.3

## Relationship building

*You need fluid channels of communication with your state counterparts. You have to know who to talk to. Maybe you can't resolve everything, but you should at least go to the right place, know who will pay attention and who is going to waste your time ... With a good relationship, you can call directly— "What's up with this case?" Without a relationship, you can't.*

*Head of sub-office, OHCHR, Colombia (Mahony, 2006, p.52)*

Relationships are an important aspect of all UCP methods. Having credible relationships with people in local communities, key actors and other stakeholders helps to open up channels of communication between conflict parties. It also helps to address rumours and support interventions to prevent an escalating violent situation. Finally, it enhances safety and security of UCP personnel deployed in violent conflict areas. One significant factor in the effectiveness of UCP comes from establishing and improving relationships with government representatives, armed actors (state and non-state), local religious and community leaders, and others who may have the power to influence potential perpetrators of violence or parties in conflict. While establishing relationships inherently provides some protection, if and when threats do occur, these influential persons can be called upon to reduce the risk of violence. Knowing when to emphasize positive engagement and when to use pressure in these relationships is complex and depends on careful analysis.

In Module 2 deterrence and encouragement were presented as guiding tactics for UCP. While conceptually different tactics, in practice the interactions with government, armed actors, and others usually move back and forth between the two. They may even be applied both at the same time. This has significant implications for building relationships. It is a complex practice to build and maintain relationships with individuals in organizations that are both encouraged to respect the rights of civilians and pressured to refrain from violating those rights. At times, it will not be possible to build relationships directly with certain actors when governments make those interactions illegal or when the group itself rejects overtures for contact, for example, armed groups that have been labelled 'terrorists' or enemies of the state. In these cases it is important for UCP teams to consider how these groups can be made aware of their presence and activities and who may have direct lines of communication or relationships with these actors. In other contexts, trying to build a relationship with some people will undermine the trust of the community or people being protected. For instance, in many communities, police are viewed with suspicion and fear. Trying to build a relationship with the police, in that context, might undermine protection work. Nonetheless some form of communication is likely to be needed. As relationships are critical for all the other UCP methods, UCP actors regularly review the status of their relationships and constantly nurture them.

Though relationship building is an important component of all UCP methods and permeates all efforts of UCP actors, confidence building and multi-track dialogue are presented in this module as two specific applications of relationship building. Both applications will be described in this section.

*I think one of the lessons I've learned from the Marawi response is that every relationship counts. Every relationship you build, whether a high ranking official or a normal civilian in the community, it counts. It really counts. .... Some of the relationships we relied on were 10 years in the making. Continuously nurture relationships because you never know when or where you can use that relationship.*

*Staff Member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines, reflecting on the Marawi Siege of 2017.*

### 3.3.1 Confidence building

*Some “consumers” of civilian accompaniment have noted that in hindsight they do not think the ... accompaniment and presence saved their lives, because they realized later that they were not in as much danger as they had originally believed. However, they did note that the solidarity they felt allowed them to continue their work, regardless of whether or not they were truly at risk.*

*Lisa Schirch, 2006, p.60*

#### **WHAT IS CONFIDENCE BUILDING?**

Protracted conflicts are usually marked by cycles of violence, killings, abuse, discrimination, and a lack of or unequal access to justice, education, and basic resources. The fabric of the community has often frayed, with traditional leaders and others with resources moving out, leaving behind those with fewer resources. Displaced people are often automatically suspected of being politically responsible for their misfortune, while human rights defenders are routinely labelled ‘guerrillas’ or ‘terrorists’. While there are almost always some civilians still active, working for change, many other civilians will have become fearful, mistrustful, silenced, and disempowered. Some will have lost hope in a better future, others have run out of ideas about how to change their situation, or lost the will and the courage to try. Additionally, in many communities with prolonged violent conflict, those with the resources to do so move away, further draining resources from and disrupting the fabric of the community. In such a climate UCP practitioners can try to build or renew the confidence of civilians in themselves and in others, including state actors.

Building confidence is a matter of supporting inner strength rather than changing external conditions or increasing skills. It is part of most UCP methods. Ceasefire monitoring aims to build confidence and trust between armed actors. Protective presence may enhance the confidence of local actors to increase their engagements with local government officials or police officers. Developing early warning and early response plans often strengthen a community's belief in their own capacity for self-protection.

Confidence is an application of relationship building because increased confidence tends to take people out of their isolation. It leads to more engagement, initiatives, creativity, and confrontation. That confrontation may also lead to conflict and even violence is a dilemma that will be explored in module 5. This section focuses on the role of confidence in preventing or reducing violence, increasing safety and security, and strengthening local peace infrastructures.

### **HOW DOES CONFIDENCE BUILDING WORK?**

Confidence building can contribute to UCP key objectives in different ways. With increased confidence, civilians are more likely to resist abuse or speak out against abuse. In isolated areas vulnerable populations may not be aware of their rights. They are also not connected to support networks nor have they access to support services. They may fear to approach community leaders, police officers, or international service providers. As a result they may continue to suffer from ongoing violence. Once they are aware of their rights, feel connected, and know how to access support services, they may feel sufficiently confident to interrupt the pattern of violence or ask assistance from others to do so. The same logic applies for human rights defenders or state duty bearers who feel compelled to address abuse on behalf of survivors. Although they do not suffer directly from the abuse themselves, they may lack the confidence to confront perpetrators. Once they feel protected and supported, they may find the confidence to address the issue.

Just as increased confidence can prevent violence or reduce violence, it can also increase the safety and security of civilians and strengthen local peace infrastructures. Increased confidence may, for example, encourage civilians to initiate their own activities for peace or protect high-risk people in their community. Lack of education or the use of top-down education systems often leads civilians to believe that they do not have enough qualifications or skills to contribute to peace and security. UCP practitioners can play a role in convincing them otherwise. The case study in Module 1 (box 2, page 17) showed that UCP team members encouraged women in providing protective presence and accompaniment to each other in order to protect themselves from sexual violence at water access points. These women realized there were actions that they themselves could undertake to make a difference, and in turn they encouraged other women.

Finally, increased confidence can increase the relationships between civilians and state actors or decision makers. In many situations of violent conflict, civilians are reluctant or fearful to approach state actors for a variety of reasons. Increased confidence can help to bridge the divide and support civilians in approaching state actors to report abuses and request for additional protection measures. UCP practitioners can lead by example, as they visibly engage with security forces, police officers, and government officials and build relations with supportive individuals. At the same time, they can support the

functioning of state institutions that provide protection services to civilians, such as local human rights commissions. This can help to increase the confidence of civilians in the protection capacity of the state.

### CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN ACTION

Confidence can be built in many different ways. UCP practitioners may:

- Accompany survivors of violence to state duty bearers to report abuse or violations;
- Encourage local ownership of shared activities and increase the participation and leadership of local partners or stakeholders (confidence may be prioritized over efficiency);
- Promote horizontal learning by creating dialogue among local actors—local actors may perceive UCP personnel as experts and disregard the wisdom of ‘uneducated’ local actors;
- Encourage discussions where local people recognize their own expertise;
- Explore and appreciate local mechanisms or tools before introducing external mechanisms and tools;
- Seek consultation and dialogue with a wide range of local actors, including vulnerable groups, and publicly show appreciation for the knowledge and perspective they provide;
- Make connections between emerging local peacemakers and authorities or religious leaders if needed, perhaps initially lead, but gradually remove yourself from the spotlight and support direct relationships between the local actors.
- Use active listening skills and affirmation to show that the input of local actors is valuable;
- ‘Speak’ the local language—use examples and symbols that reflect and relate to the local context;
- Share case studies that show how people just like them have played important roles in protection;
- Offer skills-building support on security and protection, international law, or monitoring.



#### CASE STUDY: LOCAL VILLAGERS IN MYANMAR GAIN CONFIDENCE TO PUSH BACK AGAINST GOLD MINING

In Myanmar, unregulated gold mining activities led to the pollution of water sources. A group of women that received training about human rights, civilian protection, and ceasefire monitoring from different organizations decided to proactively engage with influential actors and mobilize community members to jointly respond to the issue. They engaged first with local armed group leaders in the area. This was a big risk for them, as in years past they would not have dared to confront anyone from an armed group. But with the training and support, they decided to speak up. They did not make much progress at first. When they became aware that the issue could not be resolved at the local level, they drafted complaint letters to government and armed group leaders at the

district level as well as the State-level ceasefire committee. When the issue was taken up by the ceasefire parties, armed group leaders became aware that their own people were involved in mining activities and decided to act. A month later the community received a letter, acknowledging their complaint. The letter also declared measures being taken to regulate mining activities in order to stop the pollution of the water sources. This was a big win for the community, and helped to build their confidence further.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce Myanmar 2018

### 3.3.2 Multi-track dialogue and shuttle diplomacy

*NP is seen to be able to influence the actions of the GPH (government of the Philippines) and the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) armed actors, including the capability to cause armed actions to cease and desist through direct access... Accounts cite mere minutes as the time elapsed between the reporting of the incident to NP, and the pull-out of armed actors or the cessation of armed action in a locality.*

*C. Gunduz and R. Torralba (Gunduz et.al. 2014, Evaluation of Nonviolent Peaceforce's Project with the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team)*

#### **WHAT IS MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY?<sup>8</sup>**

UCP teams engage in diplomatic intervention in daily situations and constantly interact with key actors at the grassroots, middle-range, and top levels of society. Each contact encourages a change in behaviour. The more long-term and constant the presence, and the more relationships that have been constructed with these actors, the more this is possible. The opportunities to influence key actors are everywhere, every day. When UCP personnel are out in public, travelling to remote rural areas, talking to the local mayor or priest or commander, everyone is paying attention and calculating the consequences. And that changes the situation (Mahony 2006, p.49). When representatives of civil society, especially women, are involved in dialogue, the results recognize a broader range of needs and are more sustainable than when only official parties and armed actors are involved.

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<sup>8</sup> This section draws on the work of Liam Mahony, *Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection*



Dialogue can be defined as deliberate, arranged conversations organized, and often facilitated by, organizations or individuals. Multi-track dialogue is a term for dialogue processes operating on several tracks simultaneously. This section explores three tracks. (Diamond and McDonald, 1993):

- Track 1 usually refers to official dialogue between high-level political and military leaders, focusing on ceasefires, treaties, and post-conflict political processes;
- Track 2 refers to unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships and encouraging new thinking that can inform the official process. It typically involves influential academic, religious, and NGO leaders and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials;
- Track 3 refers to people-to-people dialogue undertaken by individuals and private groups at the grass roots to encourage interaction and understanding among hostile communities. This involves awareness-raising and confidence building within these communities (United States Institute of Peace, 2011).

Shuttle diplomacy is the use of a third party to convey information back and forth between conflicting parties. The intermediary serves not only as a relay for questions and answers, but can also provide suggestions for moving the conflict toward resolution and does so in private (Brahm and Burgess 2003). Shuttle diplomacy can be considered as a separate UCP method and is particularly applied in horizontal conflicts between communities, clans or ceasefire parties. It is included here within the section on multi-track dialogue, which emphasizes both vertical as well as horizontal dialogue and bridge building efforts.

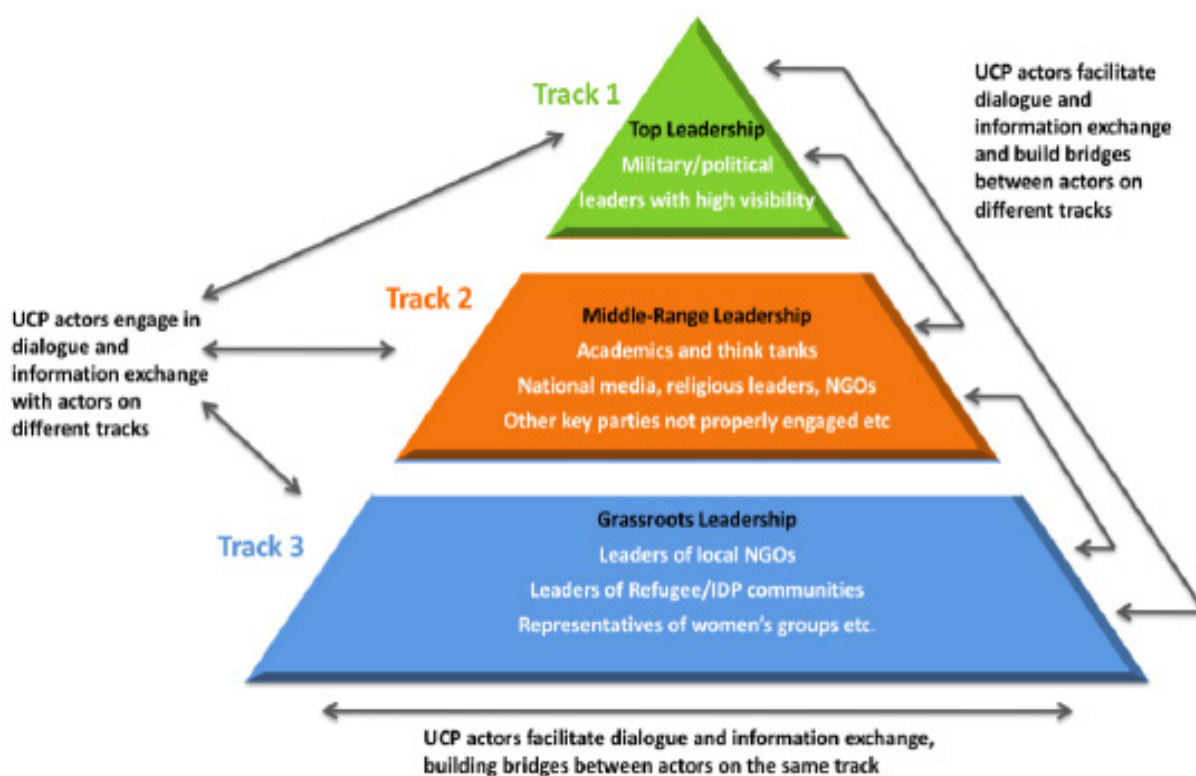


Figure 6: Multi-track dialogue (adapted from John Paul Lederach [Lederach, 1997, p.39])

## HOW DOES MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY WORK?

UCP agencies may operate within all three tracks and aim to promote dialogue between actors from all three tracks. This will depend in large part on the particular focus of the UCP organization, the specific context, and the interests of local communities and partner organizations. Some will focus only on tracks three and two—in some cases, dealing with track one could create a perception of partisanship. Others focus significant efforts on all three. And some see it as their work to support grassroots people to connect with track 2 and 1, rather than do that work themselves. In some contexts, it is important for UCP practitioners to only talk with local people, and then only in a specific community. For instance, some of the organizations that work in Palestine have noted that they will lose community trust and connection if they are seen or known to talk with Israelis.<sup>9</sup> In contexts like this, UCP may focus on protection and not engage at all in larger dialogues.

In some contexts, where there are groups advocating for human rights, some UCP groups will cooperate in a division of tasks, with some more focused on protection itself and others on using the knowledge from the field to influence people in track 2 and 1. For example, by connecting women peacemakers at the grassroots level (Track 3) with NGO leaders or academics at the middle-range level (Track 2), UCP practitioners not only build relationships between the actors at the two levels, but also enhance the roles of both parties. These women peacemakers may feel supported by the more influential actors at the Track 2 level and have the possibility to learn from their expertise. At the same time, the NGO leaders and academics have received first-hand information about the situation at the field level from the perspective of women. This may have given them new insights, which they can use in their dialogues with political leaders at the top level (Track 1). Furthermore, both parties have received an additional perspective on the peace process. UCP team members may also introduce the same women peacemakers directly to actors at the Track 1 level—for example, high-level UN officials—and support their continued presence at Track 1 functions.

These relationships between actors from different tracks have the potential to increase the confidence of all actors involved. They are more fully aware of what is happening and how to respond to a certain situation. As UCP practitioners almost always have grassroots involvement, they often have access to important, verified information which most of the time does not reach the higher track 2 and 1 levels. UCPs that do connect with these other tracks can utilize that information in a skillful way to enhance levels of connectivity between all the three tracks and enhance grass roots participation in higher-level peace or ceasefire mechanisms. Many peace talks do not advance, because the interactions at the track 1 level are not connected efficiently to the track 2 and track 3 levels. UCP practitioners can play a role in bringing concerns up and down the chain and using their connections at higher levels to protect civilians. This is always done, however, with care to the specific context. As noted above in the example of Palestine, not all contexts or organizational mandates support this kind of work.

As state actors and non-state armed groups usually have the biggest influence on the

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<sup>9</sup> See [https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good\\_Practices/UCP-in-the-Middle-East-Documentation\\_Final.pdf](https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good_Practices/UCP-in-the-Middle-East-Documentation_Final.pdf)

security situation, their involvement is key, especially when it comes to the protection of civilians. Therefore, UCP practitioners prioritize the building of relationships with these actors and try to connect them to key actors at the different track levels.

Where there is the political will within a state or armed group to listen, and workable relationships have been built, an important communication mechanism can be the use of confidential dialogue and cooperation towards reform. This can exert influence not only at higher policy-making levels but also further down the chain: at the low or middle level a commander may be afraid of being accountable to his hierarchy, and may prefer to resolve an issue quietly at his own level (Mahony 2006, p.50). Even in situations where the state may be the chief obstacle to protection, and perhaps the primary perpetrator of abuse, UCP teams will still benefit from close local and diplomatic relationships with governmental and military decision makers at national and local levels, if this is possible and does not undermine relationships at the grassroots. These relationships must be developed carefully to assure maximum access and influence, and yet not allow the host state to manipulate or curtail the organization's independence (ibid. p.52), or even create a perception of partisanship.

Communication with armed groups can be a very delicate matter in the eyes of the dominant state and its military, and security concerns must therefore be considered in such contacts. However, concern for security should not categorically rule out such communication. Security must be dealt with strategically at the operational level, considering also that lack of contact with an armed group may also pose a security risk to UCP personnel (ibid. p.53). At the same time, as previously mentioned, the fact that some groups have been labelled illegal actors or terrorists means direct communication may not be possible. Nonetheless indirect communication may be possible through supporters or family members of these groups or through leadership in exile or among the diaspora of that particular group.

UCP practitioners also facilitate relationship building and dialogue between threatened civilians and international peace and security networks. They may, for example, collect and share the stories of threatened civilians to raise awareness about their conditions and protection needs. They may facilitate meetings between local CSOs such as the culture and literature groups in Myanmar, or groups of Sri Lankan women from isolated areas of violent conflict and representatives of the diplomatic community at the capital city, or invite human rights defenders to speak at international conferences or meetings in places like New York or Geneva. These exchanges often build the confidence of affected civilians, raise their profile, and strengthen their support networks. At the same time, it allows members of international support networks to engage directly with the affected civilians and get first-hand information, which often inspires them to intensify their advocacy and response efforts (see figure 6).

*When we asked what had contributed to women's increased willingness and ability to engage in peace activism, especially during the second war, we received several variations on the response that they had become connected to broader peace networks and sources of information.*

*Levine, D. (2012 p 12), speaking about women in Liberia*

Shuttle diplomacy is applied primarily within a specific track, for UCP actors, primarily within track 3. They may move back and forth between field commanders or community leaders of conflicting parties to control rumours of imminent attacks or negotiate humanitarian corridors for civilians caught in cross fires, as has been explained in previous sections. Shuttle diplomacy has proven to be a valuable tool for many local communities that wish to engage with conflicts nonviolently, but feel they lack the ‘necessary’ mediation skills or are reluctant to interfere. It has showed them that they do not need these skills and that as ‘mere messengers’, acting on behalf of frightened communities, they have an opportunity to de-escalate tensions and prevent violence.

### **MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY IN ACTION**

Effective dialogue requires analytical, political, and diplomatic skills. Diplomacy can involve a wide variety of techniques, including direct pressure, indirect pressure (‘hinting’), humour, politeness, subordination or humility, praise, stressing mutual objectives, and developing solutions together. For effective dialogue, individual UCP practitioners must be able to:

- Engage and build trust with a wide range of actors, including abusers, survivors of violence, national and local governments, security forces, non-state armed actors, local community leaders, women, and children;
- Develop clear messages for each of these actors that relate to their situation and trigger their interest;
- Create parallel dialogue processes with vulnerable or threatened groups where appropriate. Women may not want to speak out in front of men, especially when it concerns sexual and gender based violence;
- Create a culture of respect, transparency (while protecting confidentiality), mutual consultation, and open handling of accusations—avoid making promises that cannot be kept;
- Respect existing hierarchy and traditional structures, be aware of internal divisions;
- Maintain accuracy in communicating information about incidents;
- Keep in mind the safety of conversation partners—especially when exchanging sensitive information;
- Be persistent and patient. Some actors may be ready to share information in a third or fourth meeting after their trust has been gained.

# 3.4

## Capacity enhancement

*The training, advisory and financing roles of international NGOs, combined with the local knowledge and reach of local NGOs and other grassroots actors to mobilise and support citizens, were clearly a hallmark of the Bantay Ceasefire's success.*

*Nat. J., Colletta (2006, p. 30).*

In many situations of violent conflict there is a lack of formal and even informal education. If schools are functioning at all, classes are frequently interrupted and many students, as well as teachers, have been displaced, injured, or killed. Students may have been pulled out from school for safety reasons, to support their families, or to join armed forces. Survival will have become the priority for many civilians. Many communities are cut off from most of the wider world, and may not have heard about ways people can protect themselves. As a result, there is often limited capacity and/or confidence among communities in areas of violent conflict to engage in peace and security efforts. However informal though, every community has its knowledge, skills and traditions related to conflict causes and conditions and are therefore often best positioned to identify potential opportunities for prevention and protection. The presence of UCP personnel or other actors may have increased the space for local peace work to operate and grow, but the lack of opportunities and tools for shared reflection and learning may hinder that growth. Capacity enhancement can provide local actors in situations of violent conflict with opportunities to come together, reflect on their own efforts and that of others, and build on what they already know. It can also provide tools for learning and increase confidence in people's ability to transform conflicts. Capacity enhancement is always a shared process: people learning from each other.

Capacity enhancement in the context of UCP is understood as the strengthening of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the purpose of violence prevention and civilian protection. Capacity enhancement includes training courses or workshops on topics such as UCP and human rights. It also includes the coaching and supporting of key individuals and/or existing or newly established local protection mechanisms.

Capacity enhancement can also be understood as a form of supporting community resilience. There has been a recent focus on community resilience in many fields, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Juncos and Joseph 2020). Given the setbacks and failures of many international and national interventions that attempt to support sustainable peace, there is a renewed focus on community owned, grassroots efforts that recognize and build on existing local capacities. These efforts are intended to be community owned and led, reflecting the priorities of a local community, rather than an agenda imposed from afar. They are based on specific context analysis which is systemic, considering the complex array of factors that contribute to violence and peace. Capacity enhancement in UCP has always shared these elements, particularly when supporting and building local protection infrastructures. UCP can thus be understood



as contributing to community resilience.

This section first describes UCP efforts to strengthen local self-protection and peacebuilding capacities, as this is the most widely used application of capacity development. The second part of the section describes the establishment of self-sustaining local protection infrastructures. These efforts include the strengthening of local civil society networks to apply UCP methods, but also formal peace or ceasefire mechanisms and protection policies.

### 3.4.1

## Enhancing self-protection capacities

*Countries emerging from conflict are not blank pages, and their people are not projects...Internal actors at all levels of society are the main agents of peace... Our efforts to help sustain peace should be motivated by the humility to learn from what still works in countries emerging from conflict and to respect that every society, however broken it may appear, has capacities and assets, not just needs and vulnerabilities.*

*Youssef Mahmoud, member of HIPPO Panel and 1325 Review briefing the UN Security Council, 29 Aug. 2017*

### WHAT IS ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITIES?

Enhancing self-protection capacities is an organized activity for the sharing, exploring, and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies that local actors can apply to increase their own protection and that of others around them. In this section it refers to activities of training, mentoring, or the development of resources that aim to enhance capability, capacity, productivity, and performance. Self-protection takes a central place among other topics of capacity enhancement, because the immediate safety and security of threatened civilians lies at the heart of UCP. Besides, if local actors feel confident and able to protect themselves, UCP actors can direct their attention elsewhere. In the context of UCP, capacity enhancement means working together with people in a dynamic process of reflection, analysis, skill building, and action.

### HOW DOES ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITIES WORK?

Enhancing self-protection capacities begins with “capacity recognition” of what already exists. Through deep listening UCP teams learn from the community about their current approaches to handling conflict. The listening includes seeking out those people, often women, who are not necessarily identified as official leaders but who carry out security



work on the ground. The goal is to help the community return to the place where it can protect itself without external support. In their study of 13 communities who opted out of war, Mary B. Anderson and Marshall Wallace found that the overarching key to success is “one of existing capacities” (Anderson et al., 2013, p.8).

Enhancing self-protection capacities is provided as a direct response to identified needs and interests of a specific group in a particular situation of violent conflict. Leaders of a refugee community may, for example, wish to increase their capacity to protect children, as a result of the recruitment of unaccompanied refugee children by armed militias. Before a specific training is conducted, UCP teams, together with the refugee leaders, will assess the specific protection needs of the unaccompanied children, and analyse the protection strategies that have been tried so far. Local leaders will be included as trainers as much as possible. The curriculum may include basic principles of child protection, as well as specific UCP protection methods and skills. These methods and skills will be practiced during the training to test their applicability. During or after the training, UCP personnel may support the participants in formulating and implementing specific protection strategies. A follow-up training may be conducted with the same group to reflect on and assess the effectiveness of the implementation process, identify challenges, and further increase the capacity of the participants to overcome these challenges.

UCP training is more effective when it is tailored to the context, needs, and interests of local actors, and when it is participatory in approach. Participants may have little or no formal education and be illiterate, but will have in-depth knowledge about the dynamics of security and violence in their community, though they may not be able to articulate and conceptualize that knowledge at first. By using participatory education techniques, an effective trainer draws out local wisdom from participants and uses this knowledge to explore with the participants the most effective protection strategies for a specific context. She may for example encourage participants to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of existing protection strategies in their own communities before introducing UCP methods. Instead of presenting UCP methods as superior, the trainer then encourages participants to explore how some UCP methods could address existing weaknesses and shows that ‘ordinary’ people in their own communities or elsewhere have already applied UCP methods in some name or form. The trainer works primarily as a catalyst, helping participants believe in themselves and encouraging them to take an active role in reducing violence and protecting others. Though the trainer introduces skills and methods, he or she draws out skills and experience that already exists within the local context.

UCP training and mentoring also tends to be more effective when it is part of a wider UCP strategy or mixed with other UCP methods. The case study in box 5 illustrates this point. Though in essence a capacity enhancement activity, a workshop is also a safe space for local actors to meet when it is held within a wider environment of fear and intimidation. While local actors discuss protection strategies inside the workshop, UCP personnel provide a protective presence to the workshop participants. Moreover, it is not just a transfer of skills from international UCP staff to local actors. Local actors design and facilitate their own sessions, share their experiences, and learn from each other. This clearly increases their confidence, as the following example from Papua, Indonesia shows through the conclusion of the local facilitator as well as the initiatives that were introduced after the workshop.



### CASE STUDY: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, CONFIDENCE BUILDING, DIALOGUE, AND PROTECTION COMPLEMENTING AND REINFORCING EACH OTHER IN PAPUA

In 2007, Peace Brigades International conducted a workshop together 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 starting human rights defender it was an opportunity to connect to other local defenders and learn from their experiences—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, 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.

While the starting 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.

SOURCE: Peace Brigades International

### ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITY IN ACTION

UCP training and coaching varies in form, content, and approach, depending on the context, conflict, protection mechanisms already in place, mandate of the implementing organization, and the personal capacity of individual trainers and facilitators. In general, UCP training is not a one-off event, but part of a longer-term capacity enhancement strategy that may involve a series of trainings, or a workshop followed up with ongoing interaction and support.

**Context:** Training is most relevant in areas subject to protracted conflict, especially among disempowered and vulnerable communities or emerging civil society groups.

In a context of high-intensity violence, UCP teams may invite a target group to a safe location to participate in a training or workshop.

**Participants:** UCP training participants include, first of all, local actors who are already working for peace and security. Often these local actors have informal roles in the community. Training is an opportunity to further develop their capacity and allow them to exchange ideas, share their expertise, evaluate their work and refine their strategies together in a safer space. Peace Brigades International, for example, has trained many of the Human Rights Defenders it accompanies in strengthening their own security management systems. Second, participants include actors who are in a position of power and influence. These actors will be in the best position to reach out to more people, and their behaviour and actions may influence the people around them. Third, participants include representatives of high-risk groups (women, displaced people, minority groups) as well as local service providers. Providing a space for them to share their expertise with one another builds confidence and connections. Enhancing their capacity may have a direct impact on the vulnerable people with whom they are associated. Fourth, participants include actors who are difficult to reach. This could include representatives of conflicting parties, armed forces, or armed groups. UCP teams may occasionally include people in training activities that do not fit any of these categories if that fits their strategic objectives or creates opportunities to expand their networks or operations.

*There was a group of soldiers in the area that a lot of people were afraid of. We decided to engage with them and they were very interested in our work to support peace in South Sudan. When we invited them for a training on civilian protection, they were very happy. No one had ever asked them to join any event and many of them never had had any opportunities to get educated. These soldiers were the best participants we have ever had. What's more they often came to our aid whenever we faced any troubles in the area.*

*Staff member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan (2016)*

Research on peace trainings around the world shows that many participants particularly value the exposure to other participants' hands-on experiences as well as concrete examples from other places where they recognize familiar dynamics. Learning what others have done in different situations and cultures helps participants develop new strategies and ideas for their own contexts (Anderson et al. 2003, p.79).

*Prominent activists from several countries, when asked about the most useful contribution from the outside to their protracted conflicts, pointed to training conducted by international NGOs many years earlier. They claim these were critical in giving them new ideas, new interactive methodologies for working with people, and fresh energy to undertake efforts.*

*Anderson, M. et al. (2003, p 77)*



### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- UNICEF. (2012). *Women Taking the Lead in South Sudan*. [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southsudan\\_65502.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southsudan_65502.html)
- Nonviolent Peaceforce. (2013). *Georgian Youth Negotiate Alternatives to Violence*. Brussels, Belgium: Nonviolent Peaceforce.

## 3.4.2 Supporting local protection infrastructures

*Our men thought they were powerful. We prove to them that women have more power than guns.*

*Member of local Women Protection Team in South Sudan (2019)*

### WHAT ARE LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES?

Local protection infrastructures are understood as self-sustaining systems, processes, resources, and skills applied by unarmed local actors to prevent or reduce violence and protect civilians. These are processes quite separate from aid or other governance reform initiated by other international organizations. The words *local*, *self-sustaining*, and *infrastructure*, are key:

- **Local:** It is carried out, implemented and maintained by local actors;
- **Self-sustaining:** It can continue independent of resources or support from external actors;
- **Infrastructure:** It is not dependent on the personal efforts of one person, but has become part of the structure of the community and, where appropriate, includes local government participation (but not control).

Local protection infrastructures often must be created or strengthened to make possible ongoing productive peace processes at the local level. This is the level where ceasefires and peace agreements most commonly break down, leading to a resumption of hostilities and a relapse into violence. UCP plays its part in this empowerment process by focusing on enhancing the direct physical protection of people under threat (the local protection infrastructure). These protection infrastructures are designed, however, to fulfil the multiple purposes of making, keeping, and building peace as a self-sustaining process, ultimately without external UCP support. When people have sufficient safety, many will engage in more long-term peacebuilding activities and processes. This is in line with the new UN approach to enhance civilian capacities in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict.

In many places communities already have some self-protection strategies or mechanisms that existed long before UCP organizations established a presence in the area. Revitalizing or establishing local civilian peace infrastructures is the most obvious place for UCP practitioners to start, as well as finishing their work. It is perhaps the purest application of the primacy of local actors. UCP actors may also strengthen protection infrastructures led by state or non-state actors, training police in nonviolent methods, including crowd control, or supporting government officials in drafting appropriate protection policies or ceasefire provisions.

The existing capacity of local communities for self-protection should be respected, and at the same time there is increasing recognition that the physical presence and knowledge of international UCP staff can make a significant contribution to local protection infrastructures. Evaluations of UCP work have indicated appreciation and support for several different kinds of protection systems and structures. When military actors and armed groups in Myanmar initiated a ceasefire process in 2014, some civil society groups transformed existing human rights networks into ceasefire mechanisms. Nonviolent Peaceforce then assisted these groups by training and supporting their members in ceasefire monitoring and other applications of UCP. The organization simultaneously trained members of armed groups who were to become official ceasefire monitors and facilitated dialogue between the two groups about the protection of civilians. In the Philippines, as Colleta points out in the opening quote of section 3.4., a combination of training, advisory, and financial roles of international organizations on the one hand, and local knowledge and reach on the other, brought success to local ceasefire monitoring efforts.

### **WHY ARE LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES IMPORTANT?**

Self-sustaining local UCP mechanisms are important for several reasons:

- Local actors know their cultural and social context better than outsiders can;
- Local ownership of community development activities highlights the capabilities of local actors and further increases their capacity and confidence;
- Local ownership avoids dependence on foreign aid/assistance;
- Local capacities are an overarching key to success;
- External actors will not be present forever. In fact, their presence is dependent on uncertain factors such as funding, visas, etc., but local protection infrastructures are one concrete system they plan to leave behind.

Acknowledging the importance of self-sustaining local structures, the UN recognized in 2010 the need for peacekeeping operations to understand the capacity of the local population to protect itself when implementing their protection mandates. (“Framework for Drafting Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Strategies in UN Peacekeeping Operations,” 2010, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support)

### **HOW DO LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES WORK?**

Some form of local capacity or initiative by local actors is a prerequisite for the



establishment of local protection infrastructures. In highly disempowered and isolated communities it can be difficult to do this. Without intensive support and coaching, premature establishment of locally-driven mechanisms risks further disempowerment. Donors often push humanitarian agencies to establish such mechanisms as soon as possible, and under all circumstances. However, sometimes it is more appropriate to find alternative ways or extend preparatory efforts. UCP may, for example, provide a series of capacity development activities, followed by the inclusion of promising individuals into various UCP activities, before considering the establishment of locally-driven mechanisms. In any case, the objective is to stimulate a successful, independent, local infrastructure.

Trust building, participation, confidence building, and capacity enhancement are important contributors towards strengthening or building self-sustaining local protection infrastructures.

- **Trust building:** When there is trust, people are willing to engage, share, listen, participate, and learn. Trust is built through authentic presence (‘being with’ instead of ‘being for’), active listening, dialogue, transparency, consistency, respect, nonpartisanship, cultural sensitivity, kindness, fairness, patience, and persistence, among others.
- **Participation:** When people are participating and their expertise is honoured, they learn by doing, feel included, and develop a sense of ownership.
- **Confidence building:** When people feel and believe in their own power to affect their circumstances, they are confident about their own capacity and capability, and are inspired to make a difference.
- **Capacity enhancement:** When people strengthen their capacity, they increase their knowledge and skills. It increases their ability and confidence to act independently and creatively.

Other important factors that contribute to success include: mobilizing people around an issue that is of importance to them, reflection and shared analysis, identifying practical steps and long-term objectives, connecting infrastructures to relevant people and processes, and creating learning opportunities.

## **SELF-SUSTAINING LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES IN ACTION**

The development of self-sustaining local protection infrastructures usually starts by analysing the ways local people protect themselves when international actors are not present (see box 6 for a typology of self-protection strategies). Jose and Medie (2015) theorize that civilians protect themselves through three kinds of strategies—non-engagement, nonviolent engagement, and violent engagement. UCP strategies and actions clearly fall within nonviolent engagement, as well as occasionally falling within non-engagement, such as when preparing to flee or connecting displaced people to humanitarian services. The ways communities choose to protect themselves may be violent or otherwise not correspond with the humanitarian principles and values in which UCP is grounded. A particular community in a situation of violent conflict may consider bribery to be the most effective protection strategy. An outright dismissal of such strategies may contribute to insecurity in the community.



## BOX 2| OVERVIEW OF SELF-PROTECTION STRATEGIES TYPICALLY USED BY COMMUNITIES

- **Local defence groups and community patrols** (e.g., groups of local youth who perform citizen arrests; armed or unarmed local defence groups who patrol to deter or confront perpetrators)
- **Popular justice and vengeance** (e.g., disorganized or ad hoc acts of violence in retaliation against specific offenders)
- Assertive actions of local leaders (e.g., local leaders that mobilize and refuse to allow violence to take place in their communities, whether from outsiders, or from within)
- **Accompaniment and grouping** (e.g., men accompanying their wives to the fields, people traveling together in groups)
- **Community security meetings and information sharing** (e.g., regular security meetings with local officials to discuss security priorities and plan protection strategies; sharing information on threats within the community; exchanging security information with other communities)
- **Denunciation and testifying** (e.g., ensuring that specific offenders are brought to the attention of the police; publicly accusing and shaming specific offenders; testifying against perpetrators in a criminal trial)
- **Advocacy and protests** (e.g., civil society organizations writing and sending reports to political authorities; refusing to open shops in protest against violence)
- **Conflict resolution and reconciliation** (e.g., dialogue between armed actors and civilians to reduce aggression; mediation of conflicts between civilians)
- **Fleeing and resettlement** (e.g., fleeing a village during an attack; resettling in another town for the long term; moving from the outskirts to the centre of a town)
- **Alert system** (e.g., blowing whistles to warn of imminent attack)
- **Avoidance and hiding** (e.g., sleeping outdoors at night; avoiding areas where threats are commonly perpetrated; hiding in the bush during a raid)
- **Submission and cooperation** (e.g., providing an armed group with food or paying illegal “taxes” so as not to incur violence)
- **Prayer & faith** (e.g., praying for protection)

**SOURCE:** Gorur, A. (2013). Community Self Protection Strategies: How Peacekeepers Can Help or Harm. p.4

Another challenge in strengthening local self-protection strategies, and especially in transforming strategies into systems, lies in the multiple roles that people in situations of violent conflict may play: as victims, as perpetrators, as witnesses, as enablers, and as protectors. Systems need to be flexible enough to deal with these multiple roles. Moreover, as conflict dynamics change over time, strategies and systems intended to protect may eventually create threats. Non-state armed groups, for example, may originate as a way for community members to combat abuses, but may over time become a significant perpetrator of abuses against civilians (Gorur, 2013, p.4). Without local ownership of self-protection strategies and systems, as well as ongoing monitoring and analysis, UCP practitioners may find themselves responsible for the creation and support of abusive

strategies or structures.

There are many shapes and forms of local self-protection efforts including community-based early warning systems, protection desks, security manuals, peace villages, and weapon-free zones. The outlook and application of these infrastructures are different from place to place. At times these self-protectors have protected external UCP teams thus contributing to a sense of mutuality. What works well in one context may not be useful or appropriate in another. Two examples are presented in this section: community security meetings and protection teams.

## **COMMUNITY SECURITY MEETINGS**

In isolated areas of armed conflict, communities often lack information about security issues. Armed clashes in the area or rumours of an imminent attack on the community easily cause panic and displacement. At the same time the protection needs of civilians are many. However, official and informal contact between civilians and protection actors (government, police, military, UN peacekeepers, INGO security officers) is often limited. Under these circumstances, UCP teams can organize community security meetings to bring protection actors and the community together in a safe space to exchange information and address concerns. Though these meetings may be initiated by UCP personnel, ownership of the meetings is gradually moved towards local actors.

For civilians, community security meetings can be an opportunity to obtain information about the security situation from various security actors, express security concerns, and find solutions to issues related to safety and security. For protection actors it is an opportunity to engage in rumour control, increase community awareness of specific issues, and assess the perceptions of the community about security. For UCP practitioners it is also an opportunity to strengthen the relationships between civilians and protection actors, giving civilians the confidence and knowledge necessary to approach the military, police, government officials, and UN peacekeepers when future threats arise. Conversely, such relationships also have the potential to increase duty bearers' understanding of needs and the impetus to fulfil their responsibilities. Since international UCP personnel will eventually leave, the relationships among those who will remain are ultimately the most important ones.

In certain areas UCP teams have organized separate security meetings for women only. Women are often not included when it comes to security matters. And even if they are, they often will not voice specific security concerns (or raise their voice at all). UCP practitioners in Pibor, South Sudan, for example were told that in a previous attack on the community many women and children ran into a river and drowned. UCP team members then noticed that husbands told their wives to stay at home to watch their children during the community security meeting that was organized, so that the men could attend the meeting. The UCP teams responded by organizing separate security meetings at different times to give the women an opportunity to engage directly and more freely with security actors. For that particular group of women, it was the first time anyone had ever engaged them in such a way.

## **PROTECTION TEAMS**

*When a group of military came to one village to get info about an armed splinter group, they wanted to stay at the local school, but we told them not to stay there or at the monastery because the community would be uncomfortable and it is a violation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. We didn't know where to put the soldiers and the community put them in a training hall for the night. Then we went to collect firewood with the community for the soldiers because it was an area controlled by an armed group and we were afraid that the soldiers would go wandering around to find wood themselves.*

*Member of a community protection team in Myanmar, 2017*

Communities often create some form of local protection teams (though they may not use that term), in times of armed conflict. It may involve community leaders who meet with armed groups and negotiate safe passage or a local militia group that patrols unsafe neighbourhoods (see box 6 above). Protection teams initiated by UCP projects often start out as a network formed by training participants, especially when this network has been implemented as a result of UCP action plans, created in or after the training. Protection teams are also established as a response to local initiatives to prevent violence. For example, a group of women may have successfully intervened in a community conflict. The success of the intervention has led them to believe there is more they can do to prevent violence and protect vulnerable groups. In another situation, rural and isolated local communities' land was on a de facto border, which led to erratic arrests and the need to get family members freed from the 'other side'. In response to a needs assessment, UCP teams worked with local community leaders to develop protection teams to both try to prevent these arrests and to respond quickly and effectively when they did occur.

UCP practitioners can support such protection teams in different ways. They may provide (further) capacity development on protection issues that are of particular relevance to the protection team. They may then connect the team to representatives of formal peace process bodies and service providers as well as other protection teams in different areas. UCP practitioners may also include the protection team in other UCP activities, support the team in its organization and management, coach them in report writing, and introduce them to funding agencies. Sometimes local protection teams simply need basic support to get access to transportation or using a phone.

The functioning of local protection teams can be very similar to the functioning of international UCP teams, though they are often less structured. They may focus on a particular issue such as gender-based violence or draw on a broader range of nonviolent tactics, such as boycotts or sit-ins to reduce violence, as is shown in the case study on the Women Protection Teams from South Sudan (see box 7). Teams may include community leaders such as religious leaders or village administrators. If they are not included, it is important that they know about the team's existence and goals. Protection teams may consist of women only. In traditional societies women are often a more constant presence within communities, where men frequently travel for livelihood reasons (for example, as cattle keepers or to larger cities to find employment). Men, especially younger men, also are at greater risk for forced recruitment and abduction. This too results in men working elsewhere and supporting their families from afar, visiting rarely. Women also experience the impact of violence and insecurity in communities, including in their own

homes. Sexual and gender-based violence is often not addressed appropriately by state mechanisms, especially in conflict or post-conflict areas.

The effectiveness of local protection teams is often enhanced when they consist of actors from different parts of society, especially across conflict divides. A protection team consisting of representatives from discriminated groups or conflicting parties can help the team in recognizing common humanity and in building relationships across ethnic or group lines. Subsequently, these cooperative relationships can be powerful engines for community and structural change. They build confidence and show the wider community that reconciliation and collaboration are possible.

### **CASE STUDY: WOMEN PROTECTION TEAMS IN SOUTH SUDAN STAGE NONVIOLENT BOYCOT TO PREVENT THEIR HUSBANDS AND SONS FROM FIGHTING**



During the month of July 2019, Rumbek East county experienced a spike of violence between youths from Mathiang and Pa. When cattle raids increased in the area that summer, so did tension between the Gony and Thuyic leading to violence that spread quickly throughout bordering districts. The fierce clash between the two groups in the last two weeks of July 2019 resulted in the death of fifteen people and injury of nineteen more. When the youth of Mathiang heard about the fighting in Pa, they decided to intervene to support fellow Thuyic clan members. Alarmed by such intention of the youth, the Women's Protection Team (WPT) in Mathiang, established with the support of Nonviolent Peaceforce, were motivated to intervene to stop the violence or decrease the impact of violence in the community. Women Protection Team members promptly mobilized all women in their community to discuss how they can prevent their husbands and sons from joining the fighting. They agreed to temporarily leave their homes when the men would be getting ready for the battle. This collective move from the women's side was intended to discourage men from fighting, and it worked. Being left alone to run a household, the men felt overwhelmed and lost their enthusiasm to fight. Almost unanimously, the men of Mathiang decided the fighting was altogether unnecessary. One of the men said: "It was unbearable to stay home alone." Another man acknowledged that the women taught them a valuable lesson that if they intend to engage in fighting again, the women will leave them and consequently, they should begin listening more to their wives. One man stated: "It's been a rough couple of days without my wife at home." Finding strength as a collective force, the women felt proud to show their men that having power is not equal to violence.

**SOURCE:** Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan 2019

# 3.5

## Advocacy

Advocacy is a form of persuasive communication and refers to efforts that use information, research, analysis, organizing and argument to work for change in a larger context or policy, to meet the interests of those doing the advocacy. There are many ways to engage in advocacy, and many reasons to do so. Most UCP organizations will advocate with local or national officials for actions such as humanitarian access or temporary ceasefires. Relationship building prior to the advocacy encounter is a key to success. Ideally, this local advocacy is carried out by local people, such as described above by Women's Protection Teams, sometimes with training or accompaniment by UCP organizations. When it is too dangerous for local people or when a show of international support is required, international civilian protectors will take on this role with the consent of their local partners. Some organizations, especially those working in Latin America, will provide accompaniment to large local groups when they organize and demonstrate for policy change.

Among UCP actors there are generally two main methods to implement advocacy and within each method, two main foci or targets. The two main methods are educating and organizing, and the targets are either to change specific policies and behaviour concerning an area experiencing violence, or to build the field and use of UCP more broadly. When advocating for changes to a specific policy or behaviour, efforts are made to augment and support the work of local actors, being careful not to set a different agenda or replace local work. The exact boundary between educating and organizing is not always clear. Educating requires organizing and good organizing requires educating.

### 3.5.1

## Educating

### WHAT IS EDUCATING?

Unlike training, education for the purpose of advocacy is provided to reach a specific audience, with a focus on providing information to change behaviour or policy rather than building skills. Education can be provided one-on-one, but generally is oriented toward wider dissemination, through presentations, published materials, websites, and social media. Its focus is to provide sufficient information and analysis to broaden people's perspectives or to motivate people to take action. Focused audiences vary from local government officials in the countries where UCP work is done to the UN and to multi-national corporations. Examples of ways to take action are sometimes included in education as well.



## HOW DOES EDUCATING WORK?

Many UCP organizations focus significant effort on educating people about the contexts in which they work. There may be little to no media attention paid to the violence the organization tries to reduce. And even when there is, the media usually relies on the narratives of ‘experts’ who often are not even from the country in question, leading to an incomplete picture of the situation. Education helps to make local struggles for peace and its leadership more visible and to humanize them in a way that responsibly represents the situation through the eyes of local actors. It can help raise the profile of these local peace and human rights activists and protect the leaders while also raising awareness and concern about that violence. This is sometimes referred to as international political accompaniment. As a representative from one organization working in Palestine put the relationship between accompaniment and advocacy: "Accompaniment may deter violence at a school or help individuals to pass check-points. But we need a change of policy – that there is no military at the entrance of schools and no more checkpoints. For the second, advocacy is needed" (Schweitzer, 2018 p.24).

Many NGOs link their education work directly to their fundraising activities focusing on individual donors, potential donor nations and/or multi-laterals like the EU and UN. This has to be done with great care in order to not exploit the people the organization is purporting to protect. Several international organizations have developed standards and guidelines for these practices. InterAction, the largest alliance of international NGOs in the US, for example, requires that its members’ marketing and fundraising materials “respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of its staff and the people served by the programmes. They shall neither minimize nor overstate the human and material needs of those whom it assists”.<sup>10</sup>

Another focus of education for a number of organizations is to increase the understanding and use of UCP by building the field of practice. The concept of unarmed civilian protection seems counterintuitive to many people, because they believe that some form of military or armed intervention is needed to counter violence, using violence to counter violence. Many people also want ‘proof’ that UCP works, though they may not ask for similar proof that violence or the use of force works (when, in fact, it often does not). There is a slowly emerging body of work (e.g. Julian and Gasser 2018, Furnari 2016) that explores how and where UCP works, what the challenges are in its application, and how it can be best implemented in different situations. This work has recently been linked with relatively new research on how people self-protect and specifically how outside interventions can augment and support, rather than undermine, local self-protection efforts (Hamilton 2019). Additionally, some organizations make their evaluations public, which is very useful for demonstrating the effectiveness and pitfalls of the practice. A few organizations devote their efforts to educating international organizations such as the UN, AU, ASEAN or EU, as well as potential donor governments about the impact and potential of UCP. This has led to UCP being recognized and recommended in numerous UN reports, policies and Security Council resolutions. Groups also use their websites and other materials as a public forum for educating about the places where they work and about UCP and its methods, such as accompaniment and protective presence. All

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10 NGO Standards, p. 8 #5.2, InterAction, 2018 Washington DC



these efforts slowly add up to spreading the knowledge and understanding of UCP and its appropriate uses. Indeed, this course is part of such efforts.

### **EDUCATING IN ACTION**

Organizations may ask their staff or volunteers to engage in education when they return to their home countries. For example, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Project of Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a project of the World Council of Churches, asks all its volunteers to share their experiences with churches, policy makers, the media and business leaders in their region when they return home. The purpose of these educational efforts is not only to interest additional people in volunteering, but also to share information about the experiences and actual context of violence and oppression in Palestine and Israel. These educational presentations often include information about actions people in the audience can take to impact their own governments' policies, as well as the Israeli government's policies. Other UCP organizations undertake similar actions with regards to Mexico, Iraq, Guatemala, Kenya, the US-Mexico border, Colombia or Nepal. Some UCP organizations also sponsor international speaking tours by particular leaders of human rights, environmental, or Indigenous movements. These are often the very people the UCP organization is protecting in their own home countries. Other groups organize field visits for policy makers or donors. As the media do not provide any coverage of many of the world's struggles, or provide limited and biased coverage, this is an opportunity for local actors to reach people directly with information about the role of foreign governments and corporations in the violence their communities are experiencing.

## 3.5.2

### Organizing

#### WHAT IS ORGANIZING?

Organizing often builds on educating. It is a more focused method of advocacy. While educating is often used to share information with suggestions for action, organizing involves mobilizing people to take strategic action in order to effect change. As with educating, the change may be focused on a specific situation, context, or place. It may also be related to building the field of UCP through recognition in specific documents, increased funding for UCP projects, or the practices within specific institutions. In their efforts to mobilize people, UCP advocates may use the materials developed for more general educational purposes, or develop materials for a very specific audience.

#### ORGANIZING IN ACTION

UCP organizations like Peace Brigades International have lists of people who agreed to participate in a rapid response network. In figure 7 you can see how the activation of this network is part of a multitude of strategies protecting the human rights defender in the field. When a person being accompanied is detained, or a corporation tries to evict people from their land, this network is mobilized with information on whom to contact to put pressure for the release of the person or the corporation to refrain from evictions. Other organizations might schedule small meetings with key legislators or other policy makers, or when a local leader is in a foreign country. This is a focused and strategic use of these leaders' time, and is planned to educate legislators and others so that their actions are supportive of rather than harmful to local struggles.

Some accompaniment groups join in solidarity with local partners to advocate against exploitation or human rights abuses by multi-national companies. In addition to providing protective accompaniment with local leaders working on these issues, they sometimes organize support networks, for example of labour and environmental groups in the global north. These networks can advocate directly at corporate headquarters or organize protests and boycotts. For example, a strategic coalition of trade union groups in Colombia and the U.S. worked to influence the GM automaker that had laid off workers in Colombia (Schweizer, 2020 p.62).

Nonviolent Peaceforce has focused a lot of its advocacy efforts on increasing the understanding of UCP and advancing policy and funding support for UCP work at the UN.<sup>11</sup> In this role NP staff meets with missions of the member states to advance policy

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11 NP has a permanent presence at the UN in New York in order to conduct policy advocacy. Toward that end, it has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This Council, made up of 54 member states, elected by the General Assembly, is the central platform for fostering debate, innovative thinking, forging consensus, and advancing internationally agreed upon goals. They focus on the three dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals: economic, social and environmental. <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>

support. They especially aim to influence member states sitting on the Security Council (UNSC), who make decisions on matters of peace and security, including the formation, continuation and content of peacekeeping missions. As a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, which holds regular meetings with ambassadors sitting on the Council, NP organizes policy forums on UCP.<sup>12</sup>

NP also advocates with member states who sit on the peacekeeping committee (C34), the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and other UN agencies and entities. This work has resulted in UCP being included in several influential UN reports and in UNSC resolutions renewing mandates of peace operations and special political missions. Finally, NP engages with various NGO networks and working groups at the UN on peacekeeping, protection of civilians (POC), and peacebuilding. This permits more outreach to and education of NGOs working at the UN in related fields, many of whom have different views on intervention and militarism. There is a growing recognition of the value and effectiveness of nonviolence and unarmed approaches in the UN arena, which is leading to more opportunities for joint advocacy and partnerships.

After years of advocating and educating, the breakthrough for UCP came in 2015 when the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) recommended that: “Unarmed strategies must be at the forefront of UN efforts to protect civilians”. The report went on to specifically reference UCP.<sup>13</sup> The support was amplified when the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 found that “Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians and violence reduction that has grown in practice and recognition. In the last few years, it has especially proven its effectiveness to protect women and girls”.<sup>14</sup>

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12 These forums are co-hosted by one or more of the members to share information on the UCP work in specific countries or related to specific themes (e.g. protection of civilians in transition settings)

13 *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, Politics, Partnership and People*, Report of the High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, p. 23, 2015, New York.

14 *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325* (2015), pp. 153 & 157, UN Women, New York.

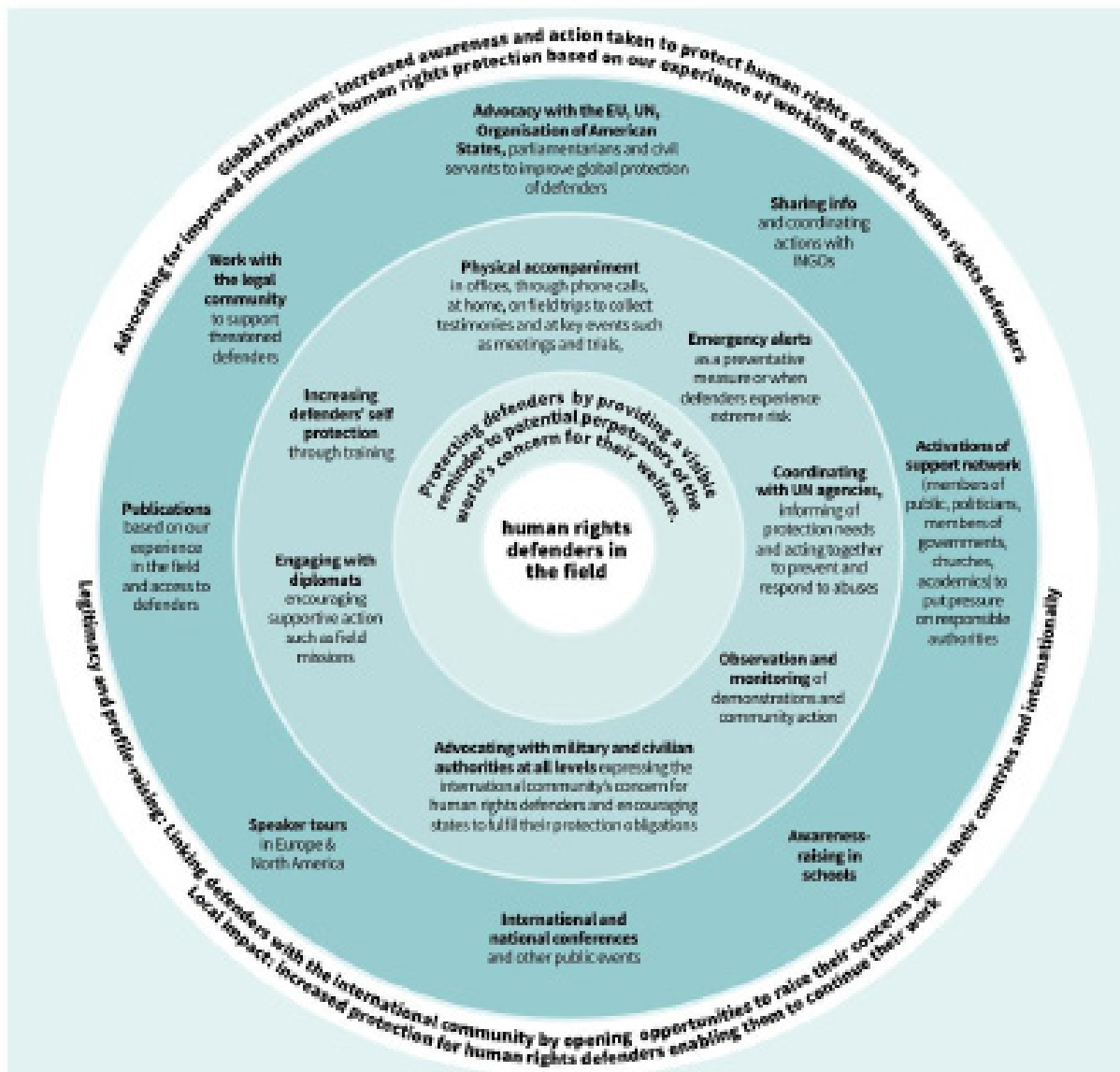


Figure 7: Connecting human rights defenders with the international community: The diagram, created by Peace Brigades International, shows how human rights defenders at the field level, positioned at the centre of the model, are supported and protected by networks of relationships both in-country and abroad. In-country UCP personnel provide engagement with local authorities, UN agencies, and foreign diplomats to generate support for the protection of threatened defenders. Abroad, UCP networks engage with parliamentarians, civil servants, and decision makers at international human rights forums to advocate for the protection of those defenders (PBI, 2012, p. 3)





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NP Photo / NP Staff along with community researchers meeting with local actors to conduct the research on resilience. Myanmar / 2019



EAPPI Photo / Hugh Golden / Border Police photographing passports of EAs. Old City, East Jerusalem / April 2018

# 4

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MODULE 4  
UNARMED CIVILIAN  
PROTECTION IN PRACTICE:  
KEY COMPETENCIES  
NEEDED WHEN ENTERING  
THE COMMUNITY



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## OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Intensive preparation is required before Unarmed Civilian Protection practitioners can provide protective accompaniment, monitor ceasefires, or in the case of non-local actors, even enter an area of conflict. Certain conflict situations may not be suitable for UCP, affected communities may not need or want any assistance from UCP practitioners, and people most affected by violence may prioritize other needs over protection needs. Even if a specific situation appears to be suitable for UCP, affected communities *do* request assistance, and vulnerable people *do* prioritize protection needs, UCP agencies cannot just move into an area and start working. They need to recruit and train the right people, raise funds, thoroughly analyse the conflict, and assess if UCP can effectively address the needs of affected populations.

Module 4 describes the first steps external UCP agencies take in preparing to enter and when entering the community. Local organizations that apply UCP may engage in some of these processes in either more formal or informal ways. It begins with a description of the core competencies of UCP practitioners, which guide the recruitment, training, and deployment process. It then moves to the issue of conflict analysis, which supports UCP teams in understanding conflict dynamics and lays the foundation for strategic planning. The section on conflict analysis is followed by a description of different types and stages of conflict. This is an important part of conflict analysis because UCP practitioners tailor their strategies, methods, and applications to the types and stages of a particular conflict. The module concludes with a description of a UCP needs assessment process, the different types of populations that UCP agencies most frequently protect, and how they address their needs.

**BOX 1 | LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Describe the core competencies of a UCP practitioner
- Describe how conflict is analyzed within UCP
- Describe how UCP is applied in different types and stages of conflict
- Describe how violent conflict impacts various vulnerable populations and their particular protection needs  
and how UCP addresses these



## Summary of Key Messages

- Key skills of UCP practitioners include listening, engaging in dialogue, analysing conflicts, managing information, facilitating, and negotiating. Key knowledge of UCP includes UCP theory, security protocols, the political situation, and local customs. Key characteristics of UCP practitioners include resilience, intercultural competence, courage, and empathy.
- Conflict analysis is a tool that helps UCP teams to understand a particular conflict, in order to design appropriate protection strategies. Misinterpretation of the conflict may not only lead to ineffective or inappropriate programming, but also risks endangering UCP personnel and local actors.
- UCP has been conducted in various types of conflict situations, including horizontal and vertical conflicts, inter-state and intra-state conflicts, and conflicts over natural resources, political power, ethnic identity, and self-determination. UCP practitioners tailor their methods to the different types of conflict.
- Complex as conflicts may be, they generally pass through well-recognized stages. Recognizing these stages can help UCP teams at the field level to better understand conflict dynamics and developments, formulate appropriate scenarios, and develop timely responses.
- A needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and addressing gaps between current conditions and desired conditions. It allows UCP teams to assess if there are vulnerable populations that need to be protected from violence and if affected communities will accept UCP personnel to live and work in the area.
- Vulnerable groups include children, women, displaced people, and human rights defenders. UCP practitioners aim to decrease the vulnerability of these groups, increase their capacity to respond to and diminish threats. Most of all they encourage vulnerable populations to find their own strengths and become actors in their own protection.

# 4.1

## Core competencies of UCP practitioners

At the beginning of module 1 it was mentioned that UCP, when implemented by international organizations, is applied by specially trained and organized civilians. Module 1 then presented a number of key skills that these civilians use to apply different methods and principles. This section takes a closer look at the key skills of UCP as well as key knowledge and key personal qualities. These three areas constitute the core competencies of UCP practitioners. They are central to the recruitment and training of UCP personnel as well as to the composition of UCP field teams. Individual UCP team members may not possess all of the key skills, knowledge, and personal qualities at the time of their recruitment or even after an initial mission-preparedness training. However, teams are usually composed in such ways that the weakness of one individual in a specific area is compensated by the strength of a fellow team member in that same area.<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1.1 Key skills

Key skills of UCP include, but are not limited to the following:

- Listening
- Collecting and managing information
- Building relationships with actors involved in a conflict
- Facilitating
- Negotiating
- Analysing conflict and context

Some projects require specific language skills, so that UCP personnel are able to communicate directly with local actors and beneficiaries, while other projects rely on national staff members or translators. Still others take place in an organization's home

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<sup>1</sup> Various UCP theorists and practitioners have also stressed the importance of diversity in age, sex, ethnicity, race, class, nationality, and religion in the composition of UCP field teams. Particular identities may or may not be suitable for a particular violent conflict (Schirch, 2006, p.53-54). Many UCP organizations recognize they are using power and privilege rooted in racism and neo-colonialism that values some people over others, but say they try to do this consciously to protect people while looking for ways to break them down at the same time. See [https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good\\_Practices/Paynesville\\_2019-10\\_final.pdf](https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good_Practices/Paynesville_2019-10_final.pdf)

country or practitioners' own community.

## LISTENING

UCP practitioners may be skilled in initiating dialogue, but in order to generate acceptance and gain the trust of all parties they must be able to listen actively. Authentic presence comes through deep listening to oneself and others, quietly leaning into uncomfortable moments of silence or turmoil, and letting go of the impulse to fix things. Local actors may appear hostile, articulate violent ideas, or present strategies that are at odds with international law. Fellow team members as well as local and international partner organizations may have different ideas on how to approach difficult actors or implement programmes. If UCP practitioners are to reduce tensions and create safer space—a more conducive context for local actors to resolve their differences—they must be able to go beyond providing the opportunity for people to say what they want. They must be able to listen for the interests, needs, and fears that lie beneath the spoken words.

## COLLECTING AND MANAGING INFORMATION

Though many UCP practitioners imagine themselves to spend most of their time providing accompaniment to threatened civilians or patrolling unsafe areas, in reality they spend as much time—sometimes more—in managing information. In order to provide effective protection to civilians in the right place, at the right time, they have to gather, process, and share a lot of information. They have to gather information about protection needs, security risks, rumours, armed actors in the area, and road conditions, among many other issues. They have to decide what information is reliable and most urgent, what information should be shared, how it should be shared, and with whom it should be shared. They also have to establish or contribute to information systems that can store data for necessary analysis while at the same time maintain security. Finally, they need to productively participate in the ongoing team meetings and processes for sharing and analysing information.

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ACTORS INVOLVED IN A CONFLICT

*I went to their house. There were maybe 13 guys and 15 guns. I took off my shirt, we ordered pizza. We talked for about four hours...Now, whenever I see them, they'll pull up their shirts, and be like, 'Hey, we don't got no guns! We're about to go play basketball.'...Our job is to connect and build relationships, whether they're the person being shot or the person doing the shooting...At the end of the day, they're both victims of something.*

*Sam Castro, Nonviolence Chicago (Graceffo, 2020)*

Building relationships with as many different actors as is desirable and possible in a situation of violent conflict lies at the core of UCP theory and practice. Therefore, individual UCP practitioners need to be able to engage in dialogue with a wide variety of

actors, including men, women, children, survivors of violence, perpetrators of violence, high-level government officials, military commanders, and grassroots community leaders. The initial relationships are often built with those who have requested protection and those who are assessed as being at high-risk. While it may seem easy, these are actually complicated relationships. If the organization is from outside the community, it is critical to quickly meet with people from different parts of the community, so as not to be seen as allied with only one sector. Even when the focus of UCP activities is on protecting a specific person or organization, it is important to meet with key people such as the chief of police or a battalion commander in the area, to let them know of the intervention, its purpose and limitations, etc. Relationships with actors who are known for or suspected of committing violence against civilians will be used to encourage respect for civilians' human rights and also to deter threatened violence. As such, these relationships often have elements both of cooperation and of coercion. Other skills such as listening, facilitating, and negotiation are useful in building relationships.

Given the challenges, practitioners are trained to tailor their communication strategies, messages, and vocabulary to different audiences. A large part of UCP mission preparedness trainings is dedicated to honing conversational skills, often by exposing newly recruited UCP practitioners to a series of role-plays in which they have to interact with some of the above-mentioned actors. Among the 750 local ceasefire monitors in Myanmar trained by Nonviolent Peaceforce between 2014 and 2018, role plays about meeting authorities were consistently mentioned as the most useful part of their training.

*Before the training, we did not know how to engage actors, especially like the Myanmar Army and the Kachin Independence Organization. But the training from NP [Nonviolent Peaceforce] helped us learn the ways to engage them and build our confidence. It is because of the skills and confidence we got from the trainings; we can now intervene and respond to cases of violence in our communities.*

*Township Coordinator of civilian ceasefire monitoring network in Myanmar  
(2016)*

Another important consideration is maintaining relationships once they are initiated. A relationship that starts out appearing to be cooperative may become fragile based on rumours, UCP activities, or other real or perceived threats to the relationship. As practitioner safety heavily depends on these relationships, maintaining contact and at least a level of cooperation is critical.

There are many challenges to building and maintaining relationships. As discussed in the previous module, in some contexts it is not desirable to be in close contact with certain actors, as doing so would undermine the trust of those being protected. In others, certain actors have been declared terrorists or in other ways 'off-limits'. In some places some actors will refuse to meet at all or more than once. The beliefs and preferences of UCP practitioners can also overtly or subtly influence which relationships are cultivated and how they are maintained. UCP practitioners may dislike certain actors, seeing them as responsible for some (or all) of the violence. This can adversely influence efforts to maintain relationships unless carefully monitored and discussed in the team.



## **FACILITATING**

As nonpartisan third parties that give primacy to local actors, UCP personnel often take on a facilitating role. Facilitation is not limited to specific meetings or events. It also involves facilitating longer-term processes. Whether they provide shuttle diplomacy, create space for local negotiations, build the capacity of local peacemakers, or build relationships among communities and protection actors, UCP actors try to make sure that peace and security processes are owned and driven by local actors, even if these actors urge non-local team members to assume a leadership role. At the same time, UCP practitioners need to make sure that the process towards peace and security moves ahead, despite the high levels of mistrust and conflict that may exist between different parties. Therefore, they need to be firm and decisive in creating space for the process to unfold without getting personally involved in the content and decision-making. This is a balancing act that requires strong facilitation skills. The facilitation of processes may involve a wide range of activities, some of which appear rather commonplace but are essential to move these processes forward. It may involve driving a village leader to an important meeting or making sure that the decisions of a community security meeting are recorded and shared. Lack of time, communication challenges, power dynamics, and personal conflicts can all become bottlenecks that prevent important processes from moving forward.

## **NEGOTIATING**

While UCP personnel are not normally part of high-level negotiations, they often find themselves in situations that require negotiations. Civilians that they accompany may be arrested, soldiers at a checkpoint may refuse to let them pass despite official clearance, or government officials may suddenly refuse to give them permission to enter a specific conflict area. Excellent negotiation skills may well result in the release of the arrested civilians, a passage through that checkpoint, or the permission to start operations in that conflict area after all.

## **ANALYZING CONFLICT AND CONTEXT**

Effective information management requires analysis skills. Most conflict situations are highly complex and dynamic. Ethnicity, economy, geography, class, gender, religion, and lifestyle may all be part of a web of causes or conditions that fuel a particular conflict or are used to divide and rule. Underlying many conflicts that appear to be about identity, land, or other markers, is often a struggle over power. Particular causes are used to mobilize people. Collective or individual traumas (conscious or unconscious) may further complicate the situation. Addressing one issue at the expense of another issue or not being aware of recent changes and underlying power dynamics may cause unexpected outcomes and worsen the situation. In order to navigate through this web of conflict dynamics, ongoing and in-depth conflict and context analysis is required. More information about conflict analysis will be provided later in this module, while context analysis will be addressed in module 5.

*In certain situations, such as before, during and after elections, the threat of violence is especially high and more accompaniment may be needed. The*

*same is true after HRDs [Human Rights Defenders] have published reports or have returned from an international speaking tour, and when courts deal with political cases.*

*Schweitzer, Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection and Protective Accompaniment, Bogota (2020)*

## 4.1.2

### Key knowledge

In order to start working for a UCP implementing agency in a particular context, UCP practitioners are encouraged or required to have knowledge about some or all of the following:

- The objectives and key principles of the implementing agency
- UCP values, methods, and skills
- The local context (i.e., conflict, political situation, security situation, history)
- Local customs and religious and cultural practices
- Roles of various actors in the protection of civilians
- Security protocols of the implementing agency
- Conflict and context analysis theory or tools
- Key sources of guidance (e.g., International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law)
- Key lessons from the field

Implementing agencies may consider candidates' initial knowledge on these topics when recruiting suitable team members and then plan to supplement this knowledge in mission preparedness training and in the field.

## 4.1.3

### Key personal qualities

UCP work has an important personal dimension. With relationships at the core of UCP methods and without weapons or material aid 'to hide behind', the personal qualities of individual UCP practitioners are a fundamental tool in the application of UCP. Despite intensive preparation, UCP practitioners may be confronted with difficult situations, which can be demanding in a personal way. UCP is not a job that one leaves behind at the end of the day or at the weekend. UCP personnel need to be alert and prepared at all times to respond to emergency situations. Their behaviour will be closely watched by those who live and work in the local communities where they serve, and in some cases by a broader national or international community. Skills and knowledge are often rated

higher than personal qualities, but within the context of UCP, it is often the personal qualities that make a practitioner most effective. Though they are more difficult to acquire than knowledge and skills, these qualities too can be trained and developed. Field work is usually the best teacher of personal qualities. Few if any practitioners have developed all of these qualities, but all have developed some.

Key personal qualities include:

- Resilience
- Intercultural competence
- Proactivity, taking initiative
- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Empathy
- Creativity
- Humility
- Discipline
- Flexibility
- Maturity
- Equanimity

In this section, four personal qualities are described in more detail: resilience, intercultural competence, courage, and empathy.

## **RESILIENCE<sup>2</sup>**

UCP requires a lot of resilience, elasticity, and quick recovery from adversity both physical and emotional. Individual UCP practitioners often mentally prepare themselves to face violence and destruction, but on the ground mundane obstacles tend to be the biggest challenge. Away from home and their usual comforts, they often live and work together with fellow UCP team members from different cultures in isolated areas, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. They will work with others who have differing approaches to work and understandings of gender roles. In rural areas UCP personnel may even live in tents or other minimal accommodations with little space for privacy. Curfews may apply in areas of insecurity. Visitors may appear at the most irregular times, making a range of requests that UCP teams are not able to address. Well-designed action plans may have to be abandoned as current developments abruptly change priorities. Sudden crisis situations may require UCP personnel to work day and night for days on end. The opposite situation is equally possible: an area that has been subjected to extreme violence all of a sudden remains calm and stable for a very long time. This can lead UCP practitioners to question the purpose of their ongoing presence.

Though for many UCP practitioners their time in the field is the experience of a lifetime, it always takes deep resilience to face the above-mentioned circumstances and

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2 See UNITAR e-learning course *Confronting Trauma: A Primer for Global Action* (the first course in this series is especially aimed at peace operations personnel and humanitarian aid workers). <http://www.unitar.org/ptp/>

to maintain morale, equanimity, and motivation. Individual UCP practitioners have different techniques for maintaining morale and building resilience. They may:

- Ensure rest and relaxation, including taking regular leave, as well as regular exercise.
- Re-establish focus on key priorities: violence prevention and protection of threatened civilians;
- Remind themselves of the reasons they joined UCP;
- Celebrate successes, even when they may seem insignificant;
- Maintain a spiritual practice such as prayer or meditation;
- Obtain trauma counselling;
- Ask for help;
- Forgive oneself and others often;
- Build team relations and maintain communication (share concerns);
- Make use of individual talents and skills within a team: synergize energies;

Organizations may also have their plans to strengthen the resilience of its teams and staff, including Rest and Recuperation, sexual harassment policies, good working practices meetings, staff retreats, etc. Some organizations ask practitioners to develop their own personal resilience plan as they start to work.

## **INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

Intercultural competence is a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interactions in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett 2008). It enables people to perform their duties outside their own national and organizational culture, no matter what their educational or ethnic background, or what functional area their job description represents, or what organization they come from.

In the context of UCP, intercultural competence is important because the effectiveness of UCP depends on acceptance by local actors. UCP strategies and methods may be appropriate to the context, but if the behaviour of individual UCP practitioners is inappropriate, local actors may be reluctant to accept UCP. Recurring issues include sexual relations with local people or public displays of intimacy between staff; wearing revealing or locally inappropriate clothes; display of luxury lifestyles; and use of gestures, gender roles, language, or actions that offend religious or cultural beliefs and practices. In some cases inappropriate behaviour of individual UCP team members is simply unprofessional or mildly offensive. It may not have any severe negative consequences. In other cases however, culturally inappropriate behaviour has the potential to endanger the individual UCP, fellow team members, or even local actors.

Intercultural competence is also critical within the UCP team itself. Often UCP team members coming from a variety of cultures find themselves working closely together in unfamiliar environs, relying on second or third languages and under great stress. This can lead to misunderstanding and conflict over matters such as differing views on gender roles.

Intercultural competence is not about right and wrong behaviour. It is not just about

what not to do. It is the ability to know—or to inquire at appropriate times—what is considered appropriate in a specific context and act upon it. UCP practitioners are expected to make an effort to ensure the appropriateness of their behaviour for the sake of the civilians they are trying to protect. This could mean that they have to refrain from certain behaviour that is considered appropriate in their own culture. This does not mean giving up who they are but rather growing or expanding their capacities. The display of cultural differences is also an opportunity for local actors to learn and to exercise tolerance, but UCP practitioners should generally respect local customs to the extent that they do not contradict the core objectives of preventing violence and increasing security (see dilemmas in Module 5 for more on this).

Intercultural competence is more than learning the do's and don'ts. It also includes less obvious differences, for example, differences in decision-making styles or communication styles. As relationships are key within a team, knowing when to listen, when to leave space for others to speak, or when to push yourself to speak up if you tend to be quiet, are important qualities to cultivate. Of specific relevance to UCP situations are values such as dealing with authority:

- Acknowledging the authority of others, and recognizing that authority may come from sources that you yourself may not consider legitimate (e.g. the elders of the community, or faith healers);
- Choosing not to react to or defend against a certain level of intimidation or bullying, if necessary, and knowing how to reconcile yourself to that;
- Assuming an authoritative role even though your personal preferred leadership style is participatory or even consensus-based. In fact, different leadership styles must be pragmatically adopted, depending on many circumstances.

Specific intercultural skills include:

- Suspending assumptions and value judgments;
- Enhancing perception skills;
- Practicing cultural humility;
- Increasing tolerance for ambiguity;
- Listening;
- Recognizing multiple perspectives;
- Developing multiple interpretations;
- Learning to use multiple communication styles;
- Meeting people where they are, rather than expecting them to meet you in your ways of doing things.

## **COURAGE**

Courage is the ability and willingness to confront fear, pain, danger, uncertainty, or intimidation. It is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear. Physical courage is courage in the face of physical pain, hardship, or death. Moral courage, on the other hand, is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal, personal impulse, discouragement, or exhaustion. Moral courage expresses itself in values-driven action, moving in alignment

with our highest humanitarian aspirations and our deepest sense of who we want to be. Physical courage and moral courage are both ideal characteristics needed in UCP, though moral courage is most important. While courage is the ideal, wisdom in knowing when the threat is too great is critical. As with all personal qualities, UCP practitioners vary in the degree to which courage is developed.

UCP actors may find themselves in situations that are frightening, though not as frequently as people often imagine. Assaults, intimidation, and attacks on UCP personnel have happened, but serious incidents have been rare. UCP teams continually make risk assessments to prevent situations of sudden danger, and personnel will be evacuated from the area if risks are deemed too high. Of course, unexpected things may occur and therefore UCP practitioners have to be prepared to face their fears. Though fear is not a pleasant sensation, it is a natural and essential survival response. Fear can be debilitating, but it can be managed in the same way that stress is managed. At the same time, courage can be developed with practice.

One way to develop courage is to believe that, by acting, you can have a positive impact. For many people, the most powerful courage enabler is the recognition of what is truly at stake. Another way to develop courage is to know that inaction is untenable. By believing that the alternative is unbearable, people find the courage to act in desperate conditions and against overwhelming odds. Courage is something that people need to develop in order to act courageously. At the same time, people learn to be courageous by doing courageous acts. Fortunately, acting courageously can be practiced in pre-deployment trainings through low-stakes role-playing exercises that simulate dangerous situations. These kinds of simulations may not be an accurate representation of reality, but they are designed to be as close as can reasonably be achieved. Moreover, it gives people a safe space to experiment with different responses to dangerous situations.

When fear overwhelms courage, there are ways to manage fears. Techniques to manage fear include:

- **Breathing:** focus on the breath, slowing down the breath, counting the breath;
- **Communication:** eye contact, reassuring others, humour, sharing the fact that you are scared;
- **Touch:** clasping your own or someone else's hands, holding an object;
- **Grounding:** touching the ground or earth, holding onto a tree, a leaf, something alive or natural;
- **Body:** washing your face, quick body shake, vigorous exercise, a quick run, stretching;
- **Visualization:** closing eyes and visualizing an image of a safe place;
- **Voice:** humming or singing a song softly;
- **Prayer:** connecting to a higher power;
- **Meditation:** meditation, calming and centring techniques (Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group Inc. 2005).

## EMPATHY

*In a genuine relationship, there is an outward flow of open, alert attention*



*toward the other person in which there is no wanting whatsoever. That alert attention is presence. It is the prerequisite of any authentic relationship.*

*Eckhart Tolle, A New Earth (2005, p.84)*

The core of empathy is to understand another's feelings and the source of those feelings. Empathy involves verifying that one has understood correctly. As the opposite of apathy or indifference, empathy emphasizes the ability to identify oneself with the suffering or the happiness of others and respond to the emotions of others, especially to alleviate their distress. Four steps can be identified in the process of expressing empathy: taking perspective, staying out of judgment, recognizing other people's emotions, and communicating our understanding of other people's emotions (Wiseman 1996). Like courage, empathy can be developed.

Empathy is a very important characteristic of UCP. The entire UCP system is in some way built around developing positive relationships with multiple actors for multiple purposes. In dealing with survivors of violence or natural disasters there is a natural impulse to make things better, to say or do the right thing. However, rarely can a prescribed response make something better. What makes things better is a sense of connection between a UCP actor and those they work with (Brown n.d.). This requires empathy or true presence—not merely physical presence, but presence of body, mind and spirit. Through connection, survivors of violence will feel understood and listened to, and as a result they will be more likely to share their stories.

*Everyone was so busy reacting to my situation that nobody was there with me.*

*Elisabeth Kubler-Ross on her experience with metastatic cancer, Ram Dass, Be love Now (2001, p. 180)*

Empathy should not be limited to victims and the oppressed. It should be used in all interactions, including or perhaps especially in the interactions with actors who are more difficult to reach. An army commander who does not seem to have a lot of empathy for UCP methods may be more open to engagement if UCP practitioners make an effort to imagine themselves in his situation. They may try to let him know that they understand the concerns he may have over the safety of UCP teams in an area under his command. Sometimes a simple question about a photo of a child on a commander's desk will do more to build a working relationship than a concise list of programme outcomes will.

When UCP practitioners act in empathic ways, it can make a big difference in interactions with perpetrators of violence. To use the words of Pablo Casals: "Each person has inside a basic decency and goodness. If he listens to it and acts on it, he is giving a great deal of what it is the world needs most. It is not complicated but it takes courage. It takes courage for a person to listen to his own goodness and act on it." When UCP practitioners build relationships with perpetrators, they need to step into their shoes and listen for the pain, frustration and fear that may lie behind the apparent indifference or hatred, even if they disagree with the behaviour; then there is a real chance that violence can be prevented. Many perpetrators have been abused, traumatized, and abandoned, and feel trapped, often not seeing other options than to repeat the pattern of abuse. Empathy may not

be what they expect, but it may be what they need most. It has the power to disarm an aggressor.

### **STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Experienced UCP practitioners strike a natural balance between hard skills (e.g. conflict analysis or information management skills) and soft skills or personal qualities (e.g. patience, empathy or creativity). They also integrate qualities associated with the right and the left side of the brain or the heart, with yin and yang, respectively. On the one hand they resort to qualities such as courage and assertiveness by approaching threats of violence against civilians head-on and engaging directly with perpetrators. They rely on logical thinking to assess risks of entering into hostile areas and are meticulous in their analysis of early warning signs around them (yang). At the same time, they are not afraid to embrace qualities such as softening to disarm aggressors or opening up to verbal abuse, in order to redirect aggression away from more vulnerable civilians. Aware of their own potential for violence, they may make a connection with the potential for peace in abusers, using the affront as an opportunity to draw them into the peace process, assess their needs and fears, and transform them into allies (yin). See figure 1 for further examples.

There is an important gender dimension to this discourse. In patriarchal societies, so called left-brain qualities as assertiveness, action, and logical thinking are often valued and nurtured more in men and used as the building blocks for systems and structures that govern these societies. Right-brain qualities such as creativity, softness, and compassion are more valued in women. They tend to have peripheral value within governing systems and are easily dismissed as weak or irrelevant. The celebration of left-brain qualities and masculinity is particularly strong within the security sector. In the absence of their counterbalancing right brain qualities, left-brain qualities tend to become ossified or become toxic versions of themselves, laying the foundation for a culture of violence. Certainty turns into rigidity, assertiveness into forcing, and initiating into dominating. The notion that security can be obtained through empathy or by bringing people together is beyond imagination within such a paradigm. But it is exactly what UCP actors set out to do. They do not dismiss hardness and are firm in their rejection of all forms of violence. At the same time, they know when to be soft and empathetic, relying on their intuition in the midst of turmoil and quietly creating space for local actors to lead. The less UCP actors are locked into designated gender roles the easier it is for them and their teams to realize their full potential and draw on the widest possible scope of personal qualities in order to protect civilians.

Relentless pro-activity to find entry points for protection	<b>Active</b>	<b>Quiet</b>	Quiet presence; creating space for local actors to lead
Continuous observation of context to maintain safety and security	<b>Extrospection</b>	<b>Introspection</b>	Strategic use of one's own power and privilege to protect others
Moving towards threats and engaging with abusers head on	<b>Valor</b>	<b>Compassion</b>	Seeing the humanity in abusers and transforming them into allies
Not letting oneself be intimidated or side-tracked by those in power	<b>Assertive</b>	<b>Yielding</b>	Opening up to intimidation to move aggression away from others
Knocking on doors that appear firmly shut (try again, fail better)	<b>Initiating</b>	<b>Nurturing</b>	Building confidence among the vulnerable to protect themselves
Understanding tactics and pressure points of perpetrators	<b>Logical</b>	<b>Intuitive</b>	Listening to the 'heart's core' in the midst of crisis and confusion
Impeccable ethical conduct to maintain trust and nonpartisanship	<b>Conscientious</b>	<b>Creative</b>	Identifying options for less-harmful ways abusers meet their needs
Verified data to control rumours & strategise protection responses	<b>Certainty</b>	<b>Ambivalence</b>	Navigating the complexity of security priorities of survivors
Gaining critical mass to influence decisions and challenge power	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Quality</b>	Connecting immediate protection to structural change
Understanding recurring patterns of violence	<b>Cause and effect</b>	<b>Synchronicity</b>	Dropping plans when opportunities spontaneously arise
Firm in the rejection of all forms of violence	<b>Hard</b>	<b>Soft</b>	Softening to disarm opponents or fluidly circumventing threat

Figure 1: UCP actors rely on qualities associated with the right side (yin) as well as with qualities associated with the left side of the brain or the heart (yang). Effective application of UCP often constitutes of skilful weaving of qualities from both sides for the purpose of protecting civilians.

## 4.2 Conflict analysis

*Protection analysis often does not start from the perspective of the affected population despite the fact that they are the ones who best understand the specific risks they face. Grounding analysis in affected people's perspectives requires enough trust for community members to share sensitive information about their safety and security with humanitarian staff.*

*InterAction, Embracing The Protection Outcome Mindset: We all have a role to play (2020)*

The UCP programming cycle usually begins with conflict analysis. A UCP implementing agency may have received requests or recommendations to establish a presence in a specific conflict situation, but if initial conflict analysis indicates that the application of UCP in that situation is likely to be ineffective, inappropriate, or not feasible, the requests

may have to be turned down. The UCP agency may be able to support the requesting actors in different ways, without establishing a presence, or refer the request to other actors that may be in a better position to respond. In situations where UCP agencies *are* in a good position to respond, they must first understand the people involved in the conflict, their positions, attitudes, and behaviours, in order to formulate appropriate protection strategies.

UCP practitioners are particularly keen to understand the role of violence in any conflict. After all, their main objectives are to prevent or reduce violence and to protect civilians from violence. UCP itself is not focused on transforming conflict, but contributes to a safer environment in which local people can work to transform their contexts.

The difference between conflict and violence is important. Conflict refers to the tensions between people over specific needs or wants they try to fulfil. It is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving their respective goals (Galtung, 2003 p.3). Conflict is a part of life and cannot be avoided. Violence on the other hand, is a particular response to conflict and can be avoided. It is behaviour that involves the use of force intended to dominate, hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

Violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional. These types of violence are usually called *direct violence*. This is violence inflicted directly on one person by another. Violence can also be *indirect*, such as cultural violence or structural violence. These structures harm people and prevent them from meeting their basic needs while simultaneously communicating that some people are less valued, even less human, than others. The dehumanization of a community of people by attacking their way of life is a form of cultural violence. Structural violence refers to violence that is built into social, political, or economic structures. Unjust or violent structures are often an underlying cause for secondary violence (e.g. oppressed minority groups may resort to physical violence as a response to unequal access to economic resources). UCP practitioners mostly focus on preventing or protecting civilians from direct violence, though they may support or protect civilians that are working to address cultural or structural violence.

Violence is one particular response to conflict and it involves choice. It can be prevented, reduced, or stopped. Conflict, on the other hand, is inevitable, and while it cannot be eliminated, it can be resolved or transformed so that it does not lead to violence. “Conflict prevention, to prevent conflicts, is meaningless. But ‘violence prevention,’ to prevent violence, is extremely meaningful and beneficial.” (Galtung 2004, p.3) Conflict can even be used as an opportunity for positive change. This is exactly what peacebuilders aim for. They try to find solutions to a conflict that transcend the differences between the conflicting parties and promote reconciliation. Peacekeepers and UCP practitioners, on the other hand, aim to stop violence and support stability sufficient to allow peacebuilding to occur. They help to create a platform from which peacebuilders can address the root causes of a conflict. Whereas peacebuilders aim to realize the best possible future, UCP practitioners aim to prevent worst-case scenarios. It is with this objective in mind that they conduct conflict analysis.

## WHAT IS CONFLICT ANALYSIS?

Conflict analysis refers to the detailed examination of the elements, structures, and dynamics of a conflict. It facilitates understanding of a particular conflict, in order to prevent violence and protect civilians.

## HOW DOES CONFLICT ANALYSIS WORK?

In order to prevent violence, it is first necessary to understand who commits acts of violence, why they do it, and how. The same understanding is required in order to strengthen the safety and security of civilians and to strengthen local peace infrastructures. In order to achieve these objectives, UCP practitioners must know what local security mechanisms and peace infrastructures are already in place and if and why they are not working effectively. Conflict analysis is best carried out in close collaboration with local groups. The purpose of conflict analysis is not to come up with the most authoritative overall analysis, but to deepen understanding of the conflict for the sake of providing protection. Misinterpretation of the conflict may not only lead to ineffective or inappropriate programming, but also risks endangering UCP personnel and local actors. Because conflicts are not static, conflict analysis is repeated frequently to ensure that programming is in line with changing developments and dynamics. Analysis tends to deepen the longer an intervention continues, as more is learned and understood.

Protracted conflicts are often complex, and the motivations of involved actors vary considerably. Some actors may have good intentions, but their presence, affiliation, or behaviour has a negative impact on the conflict dynamics. Other actors overtly support peace, but secretly work to prolong the conflict, using other parties to carry out acts of violence. Some actors benefit from the conflict and are deeply invested in its continuation. Others perceive that they can only achieve their desired outcomes through violent conflict. In order to influence the key actors up and down the chain of command, UCP practitioners must know (as best they can) the overt and hidden alliances, vulnerability points, and affiliations of different actors in the conflict. To understand the complexity and subtleties of these power dynamics, conflict analysis needs to be undertaken from different perspectives.

Conflict analysis may take into consideration culture, social relationships, history, economics, politics, gender, geography, and demography:

- **Culture:** a cultural analysis of conflict considers traditional modes of conflict resolution and how the use of customs, language, symbols, and local beliefs influences the conflict;
- **Religion:** analysis of how the application of religious beliefs fuels the conflict and/or contributes to reconciliation and peace;
- **Social relationships:** analysis of social relationships looks at the forms and patterns of relationships. This includes the relationships between the actual conflicting parties as well as their relationships with allies, neutral parties, followers, communities, families, provocateurs, and victims;
- **History:** a historical analysis identifies how events from the past and remembrances of those events underlie a conflict situation, and reveals their contribution to the conflict situation;



- **Economics:** an economic analysis addresses the aspects of access, control, distribution, and management of economic resources that play an important role in the conflict;
- **Politics:** a political analysis is used to identify the patterns of power relationships that exist within and between the communities in conflict. It describes aspects of political life in relation to authority, decision-making processes, and the use of or role of the media;
- **Gender:** a gender analysis considers the existing hierarchical relationships and differentiated roles in a community, based on perceived sexual identity (e.g., structures of patriarchal culture, gender-based task divisions, and different points of view on and experiences of conflict between men and women) as well as the different impacts of the conflict based on these relationships and roles;
- **Geography:** a geographical analysis addresses the roles that the natural environment and its meanings and uses play in a conflict (proximity to mountains and water, desertification, seasons, natural resources, land ownership, and land status);
- **Demography:** a demographic analysis explores how size, structure, and distribution of populations are affected by or affect conflict (e.g., relative size and distribution of ethnic communities in a region, migration patterns of people as a result of displacement).

While this multidisciplinary approach provides many perspectives from which to analyse the context of a conflict, other methods achieve results through a more focused investigation. For example, one can examine the attitudes and behaviour of specific groups, or link cross-cutting issues (e.g., the interplay of economic, cultural, and political factors in the emergence of a particular rebel group). The Do No Harm method focuses on connectors (local capacities for peace) and dividers (sources of tension) and is particularly relevant for UCP (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects n.d.).<sup>3</sup> This method begins by assessing several elements that play a role in a conflict: systems and institutions; attitudes and actions; values and interests; symbols and occasions; and the experiences of conflicting parties. It then determines for each conflict the elements that connect communities to each other as well as the elements that divide them apart. Since UCP aims to prevent violence and, at the same time, to strengthen local peace infrastructures, this type of analysis is particularly helpful because the dividers it identifies often constitute a threat to be reduced and the connectors are a means to strengthen local peace infrastructures.

## CONFLICT ANALYSIS IN ACTION

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, conflict analysis is usually conducted at the beginning of the UCP programming cycle, before entry, to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of UCP in a specific conflict situation. However, conflict analysis is also conducted regularly after entry. UCP personnel on the ground are in direct contact with conflicting parties and will have access to additional information, which allows them to strengthen their initial pre-entry analysis. Moreover, as conflict dynamics continuously change, regular conflict analysis supports UCP practitioners in assessing whether their strategies and activities are still relevant and appropriate.

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3 The Do No Harm Method was developed by the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA).



Whatever approach is used for conflict analysis, asking the right questions to the right people is key. Box 2 provides an overview of key questions that can be used for conflict analysis. These questions follow a basic linear approach to conflict analysis—while recognizing that conflicts themselves are not a linear process—that starts with the facts relating to the surface layer of events. The following step concentrates on the various actors involved in the conflict, their motivations, and their intentions. The third step takes a closer look at the aims and purposes in the conflict, and the final step explores the causes and the dynamics of conflict.

Conflict analysis is ideally undertaken through an inclusive process involving a broad array of community members (women, religious leaders, youth, etc.). This ensures that different perspectives on the conflict are taken into account, especially the perspectives of women and minority groups. Conflict analysis can be done through conflict mapping exercises, interviews, storytelling, or focus group discussions. In many cases this turns out to be a win-win situation for UCP practitioners and local actors involved in the process. Whereas local actors have in-depth knowledge about the conflict, they often gain new insights by reflecting together through the lens of different models. Moreover, in certain conflict areas there are few spaces safe enough for local actors to come together and talk about conflict and violence. Mapping, drawing or other visual representations of the conflict analysis tends to be particularly effective.

## **BOX 2 | QUESTIONS FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

### **Facts or the surface layer of events:**

- When did violence break out? Between whom? What triggered it?
- What have been the subsequent political and military events?
- How has the conflict shifted geographically?
- Are there people displaced? From what groups? Areas? How many? Where are they?
- Have there been cessations of hostilities, ceasefires or peace talks? Who participated, who was absent, who organized them?
- Are there more parties to the conflict now than in the beginning? Why? Who are they?
- Are civilians being targeted?
- Are certain groups disproportionately incurring casualties?
- What role have international actors played in the history of the conflict?
- What role, if any, does the media play in the conflict?

### **Actors involved in a conflict:**

- What are the relationships between the different parties in the conflict?
- How do the different parties portray each other? How do they define themselves?
- What internal opposition is there to the violence? How is it working?
- What traditional methods of conflict resolution exist? How are they working?
- Which international actors are visibly or discreetly involved in the conflict?

- What is the internal structure of the respective warring parties?
- What do warring parties claim is their power base? What is their real power base?
- How are they funded?
- Are children being forced to fight?
- Where do the parties get their weapons?
- How do warring parties portray groups opposed to violence and international interveners?

#### **Aims and purposes in a conflict:**

- Why do the warring parties say they have to fight? What are their claims?
- Who supports the warring parties?
- What resources are fuelling the conflict?
- What are the stated claims and purposes of the civil opposition to the violence?
- What are the stated claims and purposes of the outside interveners in a conflict?
- What humanitarian pretensions do the warring parties claim?
- How credible do you and others find the stated claims and purposes?

#### **Causes and the dynamics of conflict:**

- What are the older, historical, and deep structural factors that have contributed to the conflict?
- What are the major factors that contributed to historical tensions leading to violence?
- What is the current dynamic of conflict, why does the conflict appear to continue?
- Is the conflict currently in a phase where it is susceptible to influence or not?
- What may be the stabilizing points in the situation?

### **CHALLENGES FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

Though precise conflict analysis will in most cases lead to the identification of appropriate steps to undertake, there are certain challenges:

- Conflicts are dynamic processes: analyses need to be done again and again, which takes time;
- Conflicts can be unpredictable: effective conflict analysis may create the false impression that everything is understood, which in turn may weaken alertness;
- Pure objectivity is impossible, and personal biases may be hard to detect; moreover, UCP practitioners do not always have equal access to all conflicting parties;
- Some cultures encourage analytical thinking more than others: lack of analytical thinking does not mean lack of capability;
- There are always different ways to approach organizing an analysis, which can be confusing as these may lead to different conclusions;
- Undertaking analysis without pre-determined objectives can hinder the process, as there are no clear demarcations of what constitutes success and failure.

# 4.3

## Types of conflict and their relevance for UCP

One reason for the existence of various conflict analysis approaches and models is that there are many different types of conflicts. The type of conflict has serious implications for UCP programming. In a situation where armed groups specifically target internationals, protective accompaniment is in most cases not an effective or appropriate method to increase the safety and security of civilians. In fact, public affiliation with internationals may make civilians a target in such a situation. In less extreme situations UCP methods may simply need to be modified to fit a particular conflict situation.

UCP has been conducted in situations of horizontal and vertical conflicts (see 3.1), inter-state and intra-state conflicts, as well as conflicts over natural resources, political power, ethnic identity, self-determination, and territory. Most of the violent conflicts nowadays take place within the borders of a state (intra-state) and are fought over issues like identity, territory, power, or natural resources. At the same time, many of these intra-state conflicts are highly internationalized. The ongoing conflict in Syria that began in 2011 is a case in point; Russia, Iran, USA, the EU, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Israel as well as non-state actors like Hezbollah, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS), and al Qaeda were at some point all taking active roles.

The following sections provide some examples of different types of conflict and their relevance for UCP programming.

### 4.3.1

#### Vertical and horizontal conflict

##### **VERTICAL CONFLICT**

UCP has been predominantly used in situations of vertical conflict, where UCP practitioners have protected civilians caught in conflicts between the state and non-state combatants. A prominent example is the armed conflict between the government of Guatemala and various leftist rebel groups, mainly supported by Mayan indigenous people and Ladino peasants. In this situation the UCP organizations involved include Witness for Peace, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Brigades International (PBI), and the Guatemala Accompaniment Project. In the armed conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, both PBI and Nonviolent Peaceforce were involved. The latter also engages in the conflict

between Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Building international networks, providing proactive engagement, providing protective accompaniment, early warning/early response, confidence building, and using multi-track dialogue are typical UCP strategies and methods used in situations of vertical conflict.

International actors have more frequently undertaken UCP in conflicts that are primarily vertical because state actors have a responsibility to protect civilians and can be held accountable. Moreover, most of them care about their reputation as duty bearers. Therefore, they tend to be more responsive to concerns raised by international third parties than, for example, religious extremists or hard liners within community conflicts. This is not necessarily the case for local UCP actors. Though the presence of both international and national observers limits the space of state actors to use excessive force, allowing their presence may also improve state actors' reputations both domestically and internationally. It shows the world that they have nothing to hide.

Many non-state armed actors who are politically motivated and challenge or aim to replace their government also care about their reputation. As a Colombian human rights lawyer accompanied by PBI mentioned, "The paramilitaries respect international presence ... they are trying to institutionalise themselves legally. The collaboration with the state is very clear ... The paramilitaries are steadily occupying government positions, and this makes the situation more delicate for them" (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA 1998b). In some situations, however, the repercussions for state or non-state actors will not affect the perception of their legitimacy, their reputation, or cause them to lose support in some important way. For these reasons and others, reputation is not always a sensitive pressure point. UCP then becomes increasingly challenging, though not impossible.

## **HORIZONTAL CONFLICT**

Horizontal conflicts refer to conflicts between non-state actors. This includes tribal conflicts and conflicts between religious or ethnic groups. Conflicts between indigenous communities and multinationals are also referred to as 'horizontal', though multinationals are usually backed by state power. An example of UCP in a horizontal conflict is the work of NP in the midst of tribal violence in Jonglei, South Sudan (see case study in box 2 of module 3). Providing UCP in a situation of horizontal conflict often implies a shift of methods. Conflict mitigation, building relationships at the grassroots level, rumour control, and EWER tend to become more prominent in these situations than building international networks, conducting systemic nonviolent advocacy, and providing protective accompaniment.

Foreign observers may not easily deter religious or ethnic groups in violent conflict with each other. Moreover, these conflicts are predominantly played out at the grassroots level, and large numbers of civilians are actively and openly involved. This implies a different strategy for violence prevention. Providing shuttle diplomacy or conflict mitigation between the two communities is usually a key method for preventing violence in such conflicts. At the same time, it may be that in these types of conflict, armed actors are moved by the courage and humanity of UCP practitioners, and recalled to their own

cultural ethics. If the state is party to the conflict, however, even these methods may need to be scaled back or applied in a less prominent way, because state actors may view the participation of UCP organizations in conflict mitigation or shuttle diplomacy as interference in internal affairs.

Although, in theory, horizontal and vertical conflicts appear to be two distinct types of conflict, in reality they are not. Most vertical conflicts have horizontal components and vice versa. Ethnic conflicts may be instigated by state actors to legitimize increased military presence in a specific area or create distractions around sensitive political decisions; mining companies locked in conflict with indigenous communities may be supported and protected by national security forces; clans fighting each other at the grassroots level may receive financial support from political elites in return for votes or land rights; conflicts between national governments and freedom fighters may create tensions between ethnic groups; and peace agreements may create conflict within armed groups and between the constituencies of different factions over political influence, development aid, and even peace support efforts. For example, in Mindanao, there are *rido*, which are local conflicts between clans or groups of extended family and their allies. These *rido* are related to the vertical conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Philippines government, though on the surface they may appear simply horizontal, with only local implications. This reality underscores the importance of careful and continual conflict analysis. UCP practitioners must be flexible and adept at using all of the methods available to them as they engage with a particular conflict situation.

## 4.3.2

### Power, identity, and natural resources

*Today's dictators and authoritarians are far more sophisticated, savvy, and nimble than they once were. Faced with growing pressures, the smartest among them neither hardened their regimes into police states nor closed themselves off from the world; instead they learned and adapted. Modern authoritarians have successfully honed new techniques, methods, and formulas for preserving power, refashioning dictatorship for the modern age.*

William J. Dobson. *The Dictator's Learning Curve* (2013, p.4.)

Issues of power and identity are complex and the following sections are a brief mention of aspects of these concepts specifically related to UCP conflict analysis and work. Most horizontal and vertical conflicts are fuelled by the struggle for power, identity, and/or natural resources. Just as conflicts are rarely purely horizontal or purely vertical, they are rarely only about one issue. The conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian government (1976 – 2005), for example, appeared to be a conflict about self-determination. However, the existence of large amounts of oil and gas, the economic and political power linked to these resources, as well as the identity of the Acehnese people played important roles in the conflict. Another example would be Autessere's



(2012) work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which describes the complex interrelationship of factors that contribute to the ongoing conflicts there. Her work contradicts the mainstream explanation that the conflicts are primarily over resources. Many similar examples could be cited, including the well-known case of the so-called blood diamonds.

For UCP practitioners to prevent violence and increase the safety and security of civilians, it is crucial that the different aspects of a conflict and their interaction are understood. Many conflicts that appear to be about ethnic or religious identity have deeper/other roots related to political power, social justice, and equal access to natural resources. In order to be most effective, UCP interventions must take into account these root causes.

## POWER

Most conflicts are about power in one way or another, usually about political and economic power. Power is the ability to get what you want or, as scholar Kenneth Boulding put it, ‘the ability to change the future’ (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA 1998b). Significant power inequities become occasions for the abuse of power. Over time, these inequities are destructive to people and relationships.

There are different forms of power. One way to categorize these forms is as visible, hidden, and invisible power (Gaventa, 2006). **Visible power** includes formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions, and procedures of decision-making; **hidden power** relates to influential people and institutions maintaining their influence and determining the agenda; and **invisible power** involves the shaping of psychological and ideological boundaries of participation. One example of this invisible power is the profound influence that racism has on people’s self perception and the limits of what is possible. Another example is the impact of traumas (suffered by all conflict parties, including their leadership) have on a negotiator’s ability to represent the best interests of their respective sides during peace negotiations. Unless they have had the opportunity for trauma recovery, their emotions may be too easily reactivated based on the years of animosities, and be limited in their mental and emotional bandwidth by anger, jealousy, fear, paranoia and sorrow—psychological states that may not serve them, or their peoples, well. Defensiveness and indoctrination may have the same negative effect. Understanding how the different forms of power are at work in conflicts creates opportunities for UCP practitioners to influence appropriate decision makers and strengthen relevant peace infrastructures.

Scholars commonly speak of power as something that is contested or negotiated. We recognize power structures in our world—leaders of states and military commanders at the top, villagers and footsoldiers at the bottom—but if power is the ability to get what you want, to change the future, or just to get things done, then some potential power always resides in those at the bottom of the power structure. Their commanders have power only to the extent that they can get others to do for them what they want, and if a soldier is able to use his position far from the influence of the commander to get what he wants, then he has power, too. As anthropologist Carolyn Nordstrom wrote, “Once we put human actors into the power equation, we find that power is constantly being reformulated as it moves from command to action. Where, then, does the power



of war lie?“ Individual armed actors may be part of a militia or army, but each has their own motivations, and this presents both challenges and opportunities for UCP actors. If the command structure is weak, then individual soldiers may behave unpredictably. When analysing a conflict, it is important to consider the motivations of those who claim to have power or authority as parties to a conflict, but also to recognize the limits of that power in reality. At the same time, one should not ignore the motivations of the individual armed actor at the local and the individual level.

*The logic of power is turned upside down. Perhaps my favorite example of this is the response of an underage soldier on a battlefield when I asked him why he was fighting. With a profound seriousness, he looked at me and replied: "I forgot."*

*Carolyn Nordstrom, Shadows of War (2004, p. 75)*

If a young soldier can forget why he is fighting, that is an opportunity for him to consider that he may choose not to fight—that he has the power to follow an alternative path. For the UCP practitioners it provides an opportunity to empower an armed actor to respond non-violently. This may contribute to short-term protection, but also to a longer-term relationship that would increase security more broadly.

UCP practitioners must also be aware of the power imbalances in their relationships with others. Being a foreigner, with access to many different goods and services, as well as the power to leave if an area becomes too dangerous, creates powerful imbalances. Similarly, many foreigners from the Global North arrive in the Global South with all the history of colonial and neo-colonialism built into how they are perceived and responded to, as well as shaping their own perceptions and assumptions about people and communities. There is a tension within the practice of UCP regarding how to leverage racial, national, and gendered privilege. On the one hand, the presence of an "outside" companion, especially one from the Global North, has been acknowledged as a tool that can be a powerful deterrent in the right situations. On the other hand, by choosing to leverage racial, national, and gender privileges, a UCP practitioner risks perpetuating harmful neocolonial structures. As UCP scholar Lisa Schirch states, “The dilemma to peacekeepers is whether the use of racist attitudes, which may protect their lives, may also indirectly serve to maintain racist attitudes and dependency upon outsiders.” (Schirch 2006)

One of the ways UCP practitioners mitigate this risk is through affirming the primacy of local actors in their work (See Module 2.2). This is not only a practice of anticolonialism; local actors' knowledge of the context, relationships, warning signs, and other critical information is incredibly powerful in identifying effective and sustainable UCP strategies that fit the local context. Thus, it is critical to avoid simplistic analysis of power structures, recognizing that power relationships are to some extent co-created and influenced by perceptions as well as knowledge, resources and other sources of power.

## IDENTITY

Identity is a prominent factor in conflicts worldwide but is often used intentionally or unintentionally to obscure other root causes, or set different groups against each other.

Identity issues include religion, race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and culture. Conflicts over identity occur when a specific group feels that their sense of self or distinctiveness is threatened or denied legitimacy. This sense of self is fundamental to their interpretation of the world, as well as to the self-esteem of the group. A threat to the identity of the group is likely to produce a strong response. Typically, this response is both aggressive and defensive, and can escalate quickly into an intractable conflict. Identity plays a role in many religious and ethnic conflicts. It is also a key issue in many gender and family conflicts, when men and women disagree on the proper role or 'place' of the other (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, USA, 1998a). National identity or the lack thereof plays an important role in many of today's struggles for independence. Many of these struggles are the result of colonial boundaries that forced a national identity upon groups that did not share a sense of self.

Identity can be divisive and a source of tension, but it can also bring people together. Ethnic identity may divide two groups and lead to conflict, but their shared religious identity or economic interests may unite them. UCP interventions can address the tensions and make use of the connecting opportunities, as they work to prevent or reduce violence. Moreover, for international (nonpartisan) UCP actors it is often much easier to gain access to actors on both sides of a conflict divide than it is for local peace workers.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Natural resources (e.g. oil, water, gas, timber, rubber, coltan, diamonds) are increasingly the subject of competition and conflict. In many places local communities have been forced to leave their ancestral lands or witness degradation of the environment due to large-scale operations by multinational corporations. These multinationals often operate with the support of the national government as well as other governments. Sometimes security forces are used to forcibly relocate local people off their land, as well as protect employees and assets of these multinationals. Conversely some non-state armed groups may draw financial strength from controlling certain natural resources.

For UCP teams, the involvement of multinational corporations poses new challenges. An international mining company responsible for environmental damage and displacement of indigenous people may not be deterred by international presence at the grassroots level. However, their operations are based on the consent of the national government, and multinationals almost certainly care about their reputation among consumers or investors in global markets. Moreover, their managers may be part of the small international community in the area. This gives UCP practitioners the necessary entry points to act. They need to be aware of the multi-national corporate sector and its contributions to conflicts. For this reason, many UCP actors that have a presence on the ground also engage in advocacy at the international level to educate law makers, diplomats, or public opinion and influence policies.

# 4.4

## Stages of conflict

*I conclude ... that—as with many instruments that can help make the difference between war and peace—an unarmed civilian presence can sometimes be useful in different phases: in a conflict prevention mode; during the mediation of active conflict, when popular voices of moderation risk being extinguished by the forces of violence; and in the post-conflict phase, in support of the implementation of peace agreements and the consolidation of peace.*

*Christopher Coleman, Director of Civilian Capacities Project at the UN  
(2012, p.15)*

Complex as conflicts may be, they generally pass through well-recognized stages. Recognizing these stages can help UCP practitioners at the field level to understand better the conflict dynamics and developments, and to formulate appropriate scenarios and timely responses. Stages of conflict include latent conflict, confrontation, crisis, outcome, and post crisis (figure 2, below based on: Galtung 2000, p.2). Though most conflicts go through these different stages, they often jump back and forth, as unresolved issues may lead to additional confrontations and crises. Protracted conflict in particular may not easily fit a linear model, nor will conflict in urban areas, in many cases. Additionally, conflict may manifest differently in specific local areas, so that nearby communities appear to be in different stages at the same time. UCP is applied in all stages of a conflict (see figure 3 for an example). Different methods can be applied simultaneously and are not confined to one particular stage.

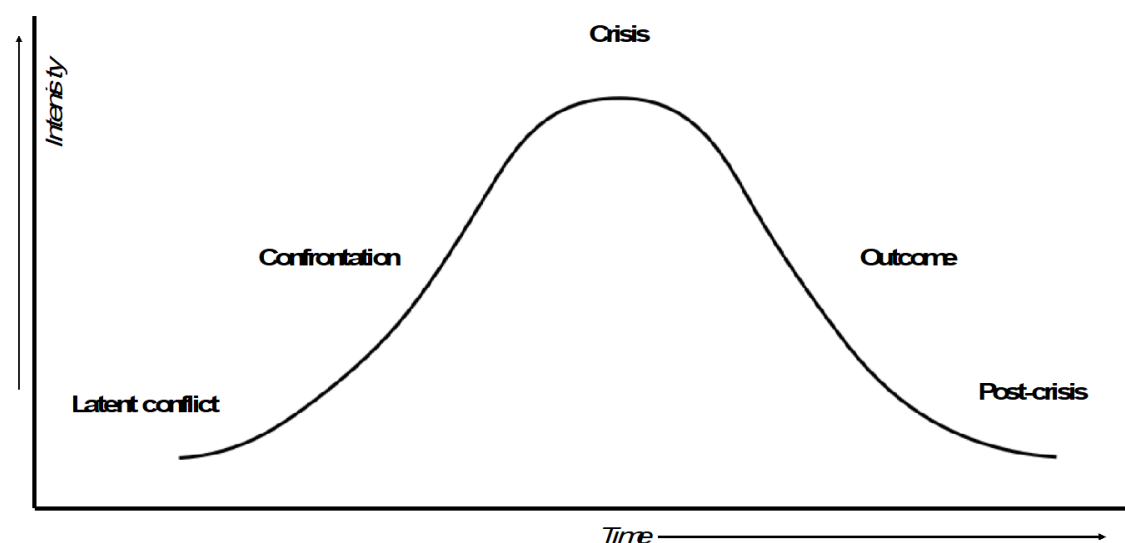


Figure 2: Linear model on stages of conflict

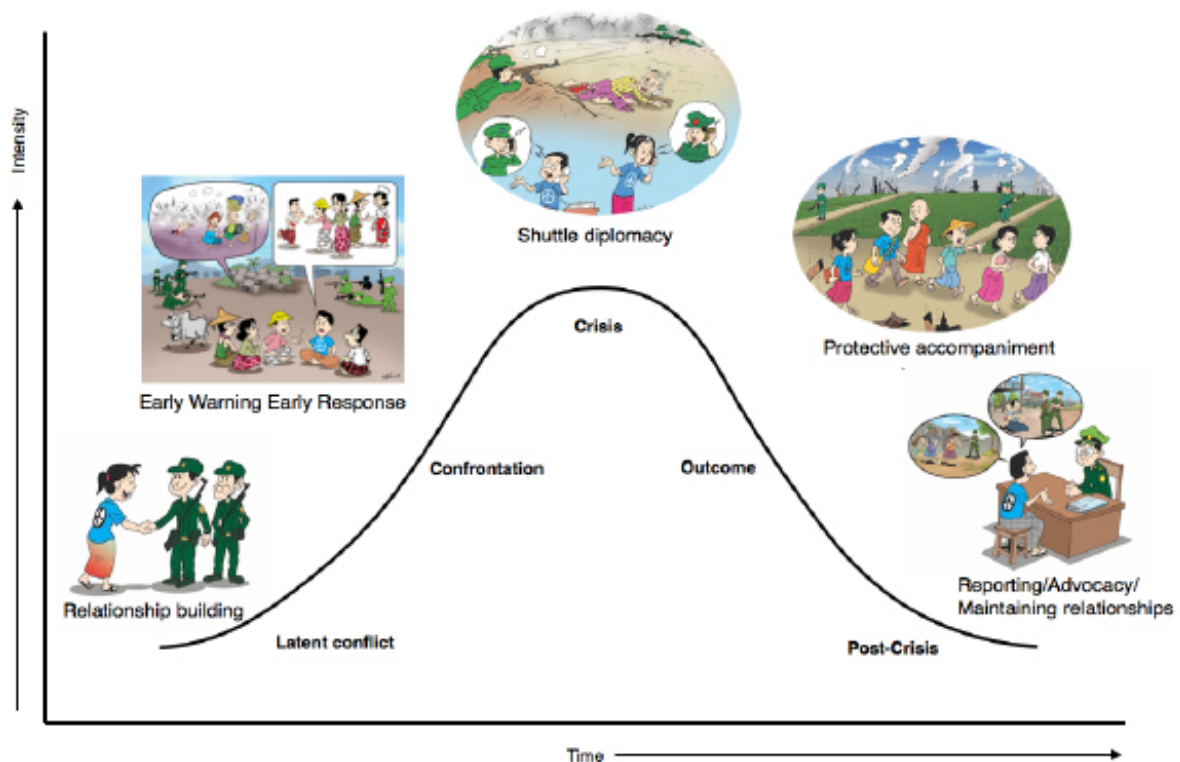


Figure 3: UCP methods are applied in all stages of a conflict cycle. Multiple methods can be applied simultaneously. Methods are not confined to one particular stage. In the example above, the relationship with the military actors is further built during the shuttle diplomacy effort at the crisis stage. The early warning plans of communities may be reviewed and refined at the post-crisis stage.

## LATENT CONFLICT

Latent conflict is the stage when there is an incompatibility of goals between two or more parties, which could lead to open conflict. The conflict is hidden from general view, although one or more of the parties are likely to be aware of the potential for confrontation. There may be tension in the relationships between the parties and/or a desire to avoid contact with each other at this stage (Fisher, 2000).

As UCP is ideally applied in a preventive capacity, the early stages of a conflict are particularly important. A wide variety of methods can be used. Latent conflict is the ideal place to establish EWER systems together with communities, and to build relationships and engage in dialogue, especially in a situation with recurring cycles of violence. It is also a good time for capacity enhancement. Though tensions are relatively low, local actors are often aware that there is a potential for conflict and are willing to explore options for early response.

## CONFRONTATION

At the stage of confrontation, the conflict has become more open. If only one side feels there is a problem, its supporters may begin to engage in demonstrations or other confrontational behaviour. Occasional fighting or other low levels of violence may break

out between sides. Each side may be gathering its resources and perhaps finding allies, in the expectation of increasing confrontation and violence. Relationships between the two sides become strained, leading to polarization between the supporters of each side (Fisher, 2000).

At this stage UCP teams may intensify their monitoring and may engage in rumour control to de-escalate tensions. Intensified efforts of UCP personnel are often a direct result of intensified efforts undertaken by local actors to protect human rights or resolve conflicts. UCP practitioners may be needed to create safer spaces for dialogue to take place and to provide protective accompaniment to local conflict negotiators and at demonstrations.

Furthermore, UCP teams may engage with government officials, security forces, and UN peacekeepers to ensure the protection of vulnerable communities in case violence occurs. Finally, they may use their relationships to negotiate and facilitate mutual commitment from aggressing parties to not attack specific places (e.g., hospitals, schools) or people (e.g., civilians, women, children, foreigners).

## **CRISIS**

The crisis is the peak of the conflict, when direct physical violence is most intense. In a large-scale conflict, this is the time when people on all sides are being killed. Normal communication between the sides has probably ceased. Public statements tend to be in the form of accusations made against the other side(s) (Fisher, 2000). There may be mini-cycles within a longer overarching cycle of conflict that leads to a return to crisis stages periodically within the larger cycle. In protracted conflict, it may be that the conflict is stuck in crisis or some combination of crisis and confrontation. It may also be useful to think of smaller cycles of conflict lasting a day or a few days happening within these long-term conflicts, and break specific incidents down in different stages in order to identify opportunities for response.

In crisis situations UCP practitioners may use protective presence, accompaniment, and interpositioning to stop violence and provide protection to vulnerable groups. If they are not able to provide sufficient direct protection, they may use advocacy and multi-track dialogue to encourage other actors to stop violence or provide protection. In Mindanao, for example, UCP personnel, together with a large number of civil society organizations, on one occasion managed to negotiate a temporary ceasefire for a human corridor. Because of the close relationships built up over a long period of time, the leadership of both parties agreed to hold their fire for a short while, just long enough to evacuate a number of vulnerable civilians.

Though external UCP teams may try to stay as long as possible in crisis areas to protect civilians, there are high-intensity crisis situations in which they have to evacuate from the area. When UCP practitioners are no longer able to protect themselves, they cannot protect others. UCP security protocols (see module 5 for more) identify good relationships and mutual protection between UCP teams and local people as essential for security. This allows UCP personnel often to be the last international civilian actors to evacuate a crisis area. Moreover, they will return to the area as soon as possible.



While there have been instances where UCP organizations have had to evacuate from a particular site, in most cases they have been able to return. That said, local staff of international UCP agencies generally stay in their own communities when international staff evacuate. If there is reason to believe that local staff will be particularly targeted, they may be evacuated too. This is a difficult situation that must be prepared for ahead of time if at all possible.

## **OUTCOME**

One way or another, direct physical violence subsides and the crisis leads to outcomes of various sorts. One side may defeat the other(s), or perhaps call a ceasefire. One party may surrender or give in to the demands of the other party. The parties may agree to negotiations, either with or without the help of a mediator. An authority or other more powerful party may impose an end to the fighting. In any case, at this stage the levels of tension, confrontation, and violence decrease somewhat with the possibility of a settlement. If there is no clear victor and neither party is destroyed, the groups may develop a 'cost-consciousness' of the losses each side is incurring. In this period groups may be more likely to welcome UCP and begin earnestly looking for a negotiated solution to the conflict and for help maintaining any agreements (Schirch, 2006, p.68).

In the outcome stage, UCP practitioners may organize an emergency response assessment and accompany vulnerable people to safer places or to designated service providers. They may also provide protective presence to threatened survivors in hospitals, conflict negotiators or human rights defenders who visit crisis areas to investigate violations and abuse. UCP practitioners have played critical roles in monitoring ceasefires during this stage of the conflict. Through the verification of incidents, reporting and rumour control, they can help to stabilize the situation and create a space in which local actors can transform these ceasefires into peace agreements.

## **POST- CRISIS**

Finally, at the stage of post-crisis, direct violence has significantly decreased. This also leads to a decrease in tensions and to more normal relationships between the different parties in the conflict, which allows for nonviolent political contestation. However, if the issues and problems arising from their incompatible goals are not adequately addressed, this stage could eventually lead back into another cycle of escalating conflict, leading to another crisis. In fact, many peace agreements have collapsed within five years.

At this post-crisis stage, UCP practitioners can help facilitate the transition from crisis to peacebuilding. They may be involved in evaluating the crisis with local communities. They may support communities in redesigning protection strategies and strengthening the capacity of local peace infrastructures to respond to current needs and in anticipation of possible future cycles of violence. In light of their exit strategy, external UCP teams will make an effort to further move the ownership of UCP activities to local peace committees, NGOs and CSOs, and community protection teams. These protection strategies are important as they provide the space and stability in which peacebuilding activities can unfold and set the stage for reconciliation.



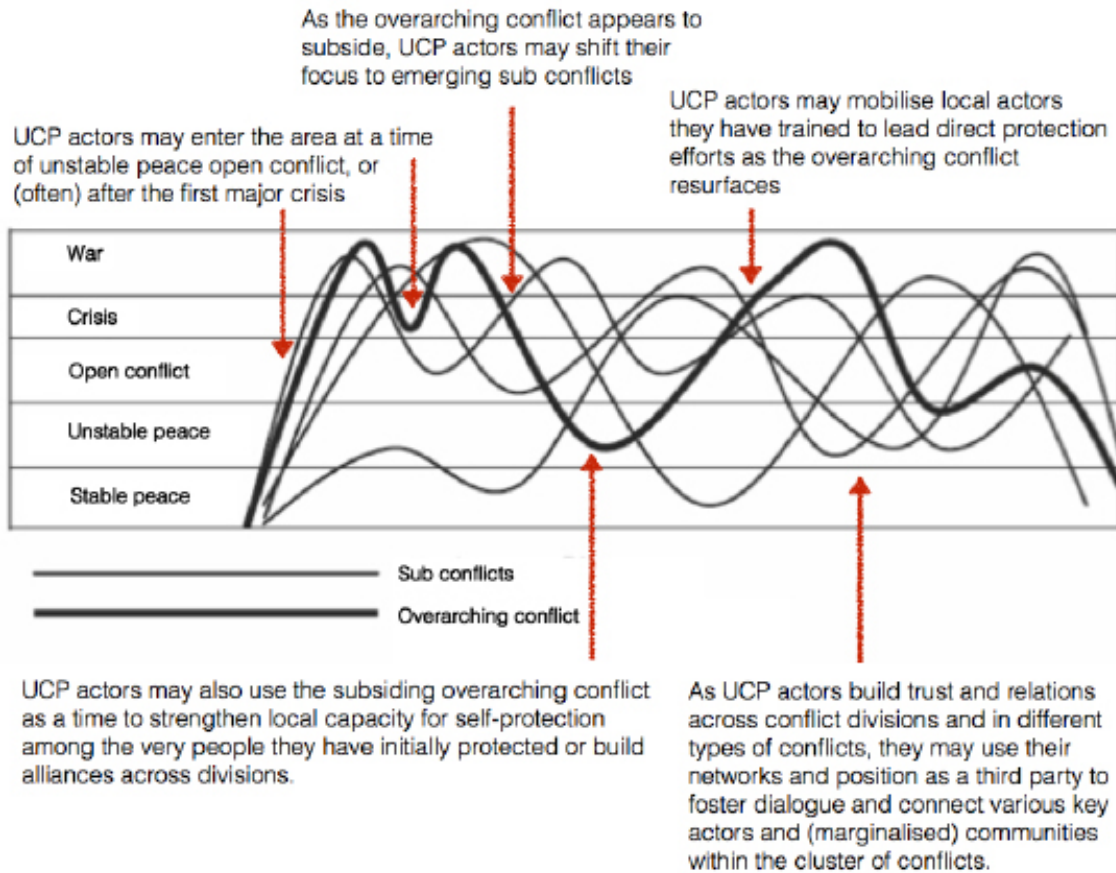


Figure 4 (Adapted from unknown source) shows a more complex, though still linear, cycle of conflict and how UCP actors not only operate on different stages of one particular conflict, but may also jump from a crisis of one conflict to a crisis of another (often related) conflict, weaving a complex protection response by connecting various processes and people.

## 4.5 Needs assessment

Needs assessments are usually carried out in conjunction with conflict analysis, before initiating operations or establishing a presence in a country or a specific area of violent conflict.<sup>4</sup> Conflict analysis allows UCP agencies to determine if there is a role for UCP to play in a particular type and stage of conflict. Though the answer may be affirmative, it does not mean that UCP can be implemented immediately. First, UCP teams need to

4 Conflict analysis often precedes and follows a needs assessment. UCP teams may conduct a preliminary conflict analysis before carrying out a needs assessment at the field level. The needs assessment will provide them with more detailed information about the conflict that allows them to finalize the conflict analysis.

determine if there are vulnerable populations in that conflict and if these populations need and want to be protected from violence. In case there are no vulnerable populations, or they do not want protection or support in violence prevention, there is no reason for UCP practitioners to be present. Second, they need to find out if affected communities will accept non-local UCP personnel to live and work in the area. UCP practitioners need the acceptance and consent of local actors to conduct their operations effectively. Needs assessments are conducted to answer these questions. While local efforts and organizations do not need to consider if they can live and work in their own area, they do need to understand the needs and risks and what, if anything, they can do to address these needs, especially if they aim to protect civilians outside of their village or ethnic group. Some groups and organizations will do this intuitively and informally, while others will use more formal and articulated processes. What follows is more oriented to an international organization entering a community, but has elements that may be helpful to local organizations as well.

### **WHAT IS NEEDS ASSESSMENT?**

A needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and addressing needs, or gaps between current conditions and desired conditions. In the context of UCP, a needs assessment usually determines the safety and security needs of civilians in situations of violent conflict. UCP teams aim to measure the discrepancy between current conditions and wanted conditions, and to measure their ability to appropriately address the gaps. Other needs, such as food or healthcare, may occasionally be assessed by UCP personnel in isolated areas with a lack of other service providers. These needs will then be shared with appropriate service providers in areas nearby who may be able to address them.

### **HOW DOES NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORK?**

Needs assessments are conducted to answer the following basic questions:

- What are the most vulnerable areas?
- Who are the populations and individuals most at risk in those areas?
- What are the (most urgent) protection needs of those at-risk populations and individuals?
- Why have these needs not been addressed (yet)?
- What are the existing local structures and mechanisms that address safety and security needs?
- How can UCP teams enhance these structures and mechanisms?
- Are others trying to address these needs? Who are they? What have they achieved?
- Can UCP organizations safely address (some of) these needs? Do they have the capacity?
- Are UCP practitioners the right people to address these needs? Can others do it better?
- Do local actors want UCP organizations to address these needs?
- What could be the negative impacts of the presence and involvement of UCP practitioners?

It is important that UCP teams conduct their own needs assessments, rather than solely relying on the outcomes and recommendations of third parties (national and international). Conflict situations continually change. The outcomes and recommendations of other actors may be outdated. More importantly, the needs assessments of third parties are driven by their own objectives and mandates. They will most likely exclude elements that are crucial to UCP. Furthermore, adhering to the primacy of local actors, UCP practitioners will engage directly with local communities in order to assess their acceptance of UCP. This consultation process includes the direct involvement of the populations and individuals at risk. The views of government officials or community leaders do not automatically reflect the views of the people they represent. These representatives may say that there is no need for UCP because they themselves sustain patterns of abuse, because they are out of touch with the reality of life in distant areas, or simply because they consider international presence to be a nuisance. Finally, conducting needs assessments is an important opportunity for UCP practitioners to start the process of building relationships, demonstrate nonpartisanship, and to show local actors that UCP interventions will be based on local needs and views. This underscores the need to engage with people from many different sectors during the needs assessment process.

UCP practitioners conduct needs assessments in the following situations:

- Before establishing a presence in a country that is experiencing violent conflict
- Before establishing an additional field site in a part of the country where UCP teams have infrequent or no presence
- After a crisis situation in a particular area of violent conflict (rapid response assessment)
- Before a UCP agency expands its programming to include an additional area of work (e.g. child protection or prevention of sexual and gender-based violence)

Needs assessments may also be carried out within the context of a particular activity. A training-needs assessment, for example, assesses the needs of participants to develop their capacity for addressing a specific issue. This type of needs assessment is not included in this section. Although each of the above-mentioned needs assessments will have different objectives, their basic outline is similar. This section focuses on the first three types of needs assessment, though it will be relevant for the fourth type as well.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN ACTION**

Most assessments go through three basic stages: pre-assessment, assessment, and action planning. Pre-assessments are carried out before moving to a particular target area and are guided by the overarching mission purpose or mandate. This stage is basically about data collection through online research, as well as conversations with relevant actors in the area. In capital cities there are usually multiple sources of information about the situation in the target area. These sources include NGOs, think tanks, diplomats, and displaced communities from the target area. The action planning focuses on the basic question, “How are we going to translate what we have into what they need?” It includes the formulation of recommendations, (security) concerns, and outstanding issues, oriented toward meeting the overall mission goals.

The most important and difficult part of a needs assessment is the interaction with the community at the field level. UCP personnel are not there just to collect information. It is the start of a process to build relationships of trust and acceptance. It is also an opportunity to manage expectations about what UCP can and cannot do. Communities in areas of violent conflict usually expect international organizations to provide material aid and may not understand the concept of UCP at first. Additionally there may be a history of feeling disappointed or harmed by previous or current international interventions, and the related mistrust must be addressed.<sup>5</sup> Providing concrete examples about the functioning of UCP in other communities tends to be an effective way of explaining UCP. Answers to questions, such as “What makes you feel (un)safe in this community?”, may further provide UCP practitioners with context specific examples that they can use to explain UCP in a way that communities will understand (see Box 3). Thus, relying on the research of other agencies, no matter how thorough and informative they may be, is missing an important aspect of the needs assessment.

Initial community entry meetings usually prioritize senior leaders in the community followed by other relevant actors. UCP practitioners need to be sensitive to hierarchical structures and local customs, although they also need to make an effort to engage directly with groups that are at the bottom of a hierarchy. It is often necessary to speak with women separately, as they may not wish to articulate their needs in front of men.

### **BOX 3 | SAMPLE NEEDS-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS TAILORED TO SPECIFIC ACTORS (addressed directly to local actors)**

#### **Civilians**

- Do you feel safe in this community or your community? If not, why?
- What makes you feel unsafe in this community?
- Are you ever afraid to send your children to school?
- Do you or family members ever miss work because of fear of violence?
- Are the hours shops stay open reducing?
- Are there certain hours of the day when you are afraid to walk on the streets? Are the number of hours changing?
- Are there areas in you community where you will no longer go?
- Is it safe for you to travel outside of town? Is it safe for you to move anywhere in town? If not, why?
- What would have to change to make you feel safe? What does that mean?
- Are the authorities involved in improving your safety?
- If you did witness an incident of violence – where would you go? Who would you tell? Why?
- Who helps you when there is violence?
- Have you seen lots of other people moving in and out of town recently? If yes, where

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<sup>5</sup> Particularly people who have been asked to take part in surveys or questionnaires and have never seen any value come from it.

- are they coming from, where are they going to, and why are they moving like that?
- Has someone from your family or community suffered a conflict related injury? (e.g. bullet wound, unexploded ordnance, landmine). If so, did they receive treatment?

### Government

- Which are the most vulnerable groups or areas in the community?
- Which are the least vulnerable groups or areas in the community?
- What threats are there from outside the community?
- What threats are there from inside the community?
- What services are available in the community for people who are victims of violence?

### Police

- Do you see much violence inside the community? What kind of violence?
- What is your response when a violent incident occurs?
- Do all groups in society report cases to you?
- Do you see a change in the number of reported incidents of violence?
- Do you see a change in the types of violent incidents you are responding to?
- What contributes to these changes?

The rapid-response needs assessment is a type of needs assessment that UCP practitioners carry out frequently. Following incidents of violence, a bombing or an attack, UCP personnel may visit the area to assess the protection needs of the affected population. They may also provide a protective presence at the place of the incident or use other UCP methods to prevent additional incidents or revenge attacks from happening. In isolated areas UCP personnel may be the only international actors present and will play an important role in coordinating service provision with service providers in areas nearby.

UCP practitioners have to be careful, transparent, and creative in their approach to affected communities, because they may be expected to provide material aid. Moreover, community members may not ask for protection or respond positively to an offer of unarmed protection if the process and its implications have not been clearly explained. Sometimes, it is simply a matter of giving practical examples or asking the right questions (“what are you worried about?” and “why do you worry?” instead of “what can we do?” or “do you want protection?”).

When UCP teams provide a rapid response needs assessment they often engage with survivors or witnesses of violence. This is a delicate matter that requires refined listening skill and empathy as described in section 1 of this module. UCP personnel need to ensure that there is a safe space for survivors and witnesses to talk. They may take great risks in sharing their stories. Interviewers need to be careful in using the information from these stories and should communicate clearly at the start of the interview how the information will be used and that information will only be shared anonymously. They also need to allow survivors and witnesses to share their stories without interruption and not force them to talk about things they do not wish to talk about. Recounting



violent incidents may deepen the trauma people are suffering. At the same time, UCP personnel need to collect as many pertinent details as possible. Some questions that may be relevant include the time and place of the incident, clothing style, numbers, age, and behaviour of perpetrators etc. Questions about sensitive issues may have to be phrased carefully (“was there any sexual violence?” rather than, “did you get raped?”). Though care and subtlety are crucial, obtaining needed details of incidents is equally important, as decision makers may not act without specific details. At the same time, it is important NOT to press for details that will not be used, or that the asking itself will raise unrealistic expectations of results from the sharing. This is especially the case for UCP agencies that are not involved in advocacy, but use data collection to strengthen their own protection responses.

Information can be gathered in many different ways. Sometimes the least obvious sources can provide the best information. Taxi drivers or local caretakers at the UCP compound may have in-depth knowledge about the security situation in the area. Humanitarian aid agencies may have conducted extensive needs assessments in a particular area and be willing to share their conclusions and recommendations. In divided communities it is important to collect information from all sides of the divide. Information can be sensitive and needs to be managed confidentially. The imperative of “do no harm” requires utter meticulousness. The safety of the people providing information has the highest priority. Leaving a notebook containing details about human rights violations behind in a public taxi may endanger the life of the human rights defender or informant whose name has been written down in that notebook. Projects must consider email security and other technology security concerns. As the technology changes all the time, it is critical to try to stay up to date on what communication platforms are most strongly encrypted, etc. At the same time, transparency must be maintained about the fact and purpose of information gathering. Even a perceived lack of transparency can create suspicion among authorities or other actors that UCP personnel are spying. This can undermine the trust that has been carefully built up.

*There is a tension between helping [local ceasefire] monitors carry out their work in more safe and effective ways, and the generation and sharing of more timely, granular, and highly-sensitive crisis data with other actors. If we want to hold both objectives in view, we will need to do so carefully. More information about mass atrocity situations do not lead intrinsically to better outcomes for affected people. In reality, it is likely that the opposite is the case: digital technologies are often a causal vector for harm. In the context of Kachin, for example, reporting or sharing highly-sensitive information may actually undermine community protection and efforts to sustain the peace process.*

*Joseph Guay, Lisa Rudnick and Leor Levy, Navigating Innovation & Risk in the Digital Age (2018, p. 8)*



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- ACAPS. (2013). Compared to what: *Analytical thinking and needs assessment*. Available at <http://www.acaps.org/resources/technical-briefs>
- ICRC. (2013) *Professional Standards for Protection Work*, Chapter 6. Geneva, Switzerland: ICRC



# 4.6

## Populations, individuals, or groups particularly impacted by violence

UCP practitioners conduct conflict analyses and needs assessments for the sake of preventing violence and protecting civilians. However, not all civilians threatened by violence need to be protected. Some civilians may be threatened, but feel confident in dealing with these threats on their own. They may have sufficient security measures in place or consider the threat not to be a high risk. Therefore, UCP practitioners provide protection services to civilians who request protection or to those who are highly susceptible to loss, damage, suffering, and death. These civilians are often referred to as ‘vulnerable’. Vulnerability however is a relative concept. Everyone is vulnerable in some way or another, but some more than others. The level of vulnerability depends on specific circumstances, some of which are more fixed than others. A threatened human rights defender can, for example, change his or her profession in order to reduce his or her vulnerability. A member of an oppressed ethnic minority does not have this option. However, this person may be able to leave the area or the country and by doing so, reduce his or her vulnerability. In this example, location determines the relative degree of vulnerability, despite the individual’s unalterable ethnicity. No matter how high the risk groups and individuals face, they are never ‘simply victims’ but must always be understood and respected as people with agency.

When people that are subject to violence in systemic ways are categorised as “the vulnerable”, there is a risk of removing their agency or power. It may resurface as the power of paternalistic care, in the form of aid agencies or UCP actors, feeling obligated to help or protect the “powerless”. Philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler suggests to see the situation of people deemed vulnerable as “a constellation of vulnerability, rage, persistence, and resistance” rather than seeing vulnerability as an identity of a particular population or individual. Butler adds that “persistence in a condition of vulnerability proves to be its own kind of strength, distinguished from one that champions strength as the achievement of invulnerability.” (Butler (2020, p 184).

Vulnerability can derive from a number of different factors. Children, youth, and the elderly may experience vulnerability because of their stage of life and dependence on others. Those with physical or mental disabilities or who are injured, ill, or pregnant may experience vulnerability due to their physical or mental condition. Others experience vulnerability because of their identity, whether that be religious, ethnic, national, tribal, or related to sexual orientation or gender identity (Knight, 2014). Finally, there are those who experience vulnerability due to their economic condition (poverty), residential dislocation, social isolation, occupation (journalists, defence lawyers), or political activity

(activists or human rights defenders). While vulnerability varies considerably in most communities, and some profiles are clearly more likely to be vulnerable than others, in reality it can be difficult to assess an individual's security from a quick glance. In many conflicts, young men are particularly at risk for forcible recruitment and abduction by one or all of the armed actors.

Generally speaking, UCP practitioners approach the protection of threatened populations from three different angles. They aim to:

- **Decrease the levels of vulnerability of threatened civilians:** a lone journalist who publishes articles about human rights violations may be vulnerable to violence, but when the journalist is connected to a support network of influential people she becomes less vulnerable;
- **Increase the capacity of these civilians to deal with threats:** the same journalist may join a workshop on security, where she learns additional ways of self-protection and increases his or her confidence;
- **Remove the threat, or at least deter potential aggressors from realizing the threat:** UCP personnel may engage with government officials and police who have the capacity to influence the potential perpetrator, or they may provide protective accompaniment to the journalist to deter violence, sometimes on a 24/7 basis, or provide proactive presence at the media office.

In the following sections, four different types of populations or frequently threatened groups will be explored in more detail: children, women, displaced people, and human rights defenders.

## 4.6.1 Children

*Throughout the years, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) has offered protection to Palestinian children who must pass through military checkpoints, or face the risk of harassment and/or violence from Israeli settlers and soldiers while trying to exercise their right to education. EAPPI has helped these children to deal with and expectantly conquer fear; a fear that would prevent them from enjoying this fundamental right.*

*Manuel Quintero Perez EAPPI International Coordinator Geneva (2013)*

The year 2018 was marked by the highest levels of children killed or maimed in armed conflict since the United Nations started monitoring and reporting this grave violation, according to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict that was released in July 2019. More than 24,000 violations were verified in 2018 in the 20 conflict situations on the Children and Armed Conflict agenda. Sexual

violence against boys and girls and the recruitment and use of children has also continued unabated with more than 7,000 children drawn into frontline fighting and support roles globally. Children living in the midst of armed conflict face unprecedented threats. These include the six types of grave child-right violations mentioned in UN Security Council Resolution 1612: killing and maiming; attacks on schools and hospitals; recruitment of children in armed forces or groups; rape and sexual violence; abduction; and denial of humanitarian access.

The protection of children is a recurring theme in the UCP sources of key guidance, described in module 2, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (especially art. 34-38). UCP personnel work in different ways to protect children from violence, frequently in partnership or coordination with other organizations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, and ICRC, and through protection clusters when they exist. Among others, they:

- Provide protective accompaniment to children, school teachers and child rights defenders;
- Provide protective presence at schools or at child friendly spaces in displacement sites;
- Monitor and report abuse and (grave) child rights violations
- Encourage armed actors to avoid the occupation of schools or move military posts away from schools;
- Monitor and manage the preservation of schools as ‘zones of peace’ in militarised environments
- Provide family tracing and reunification for separated, unaccompanied, and abducted children;
- Negotiate the release of child soldiers or accompany the return and reintegration of ex-child soldiers;
- Support campaigns against the recruitment of child soldiers
- Establish or strengthen local child protection committees in conflict affected areas;
- Strengthen the agency of children to participate in Early Warning / Early Response mechanisms or community self-protection strategies
- Advocate for child protection policies, the establishment of juvenile detention centres, or the integration of child protection provisions into ceasefire agreements

A unique contribution that UCP actors provide to the field of child protection is the direct protection of children and child rights defenders. These efforts are particularly relevant in places where traditional child protection systems are non-existent or dysfunctional. They can complement efforts to monitor and report grave child rights violations through UN resolution 1612 and have at times been welcomed by local child protection actors who are not in a position to openly challenge child rights violators in their villages. They may prefer to solve issues of concern quietly within families and communities rather than adding perpetrators to an international “list of shame”. Sometimes UCP actors have integrated monitoring and reporting of grave child rights violations into broader protection strategies that include ceasefire monitoring or community-based Early Warning / Early Response. They have also utilized their relationships with armed actors or ceasefire parties to promote international child protection norms and discuss urgent child protection needs. Finally, UCP actors have supported children to become actors in their own protection and encouraged the representation of youth in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding efforts.

Particularly vulnerable groups among children include:

- Unaccompanied and separated children;
- Child soldiers, ex-child soldiers;
- Children that suffer from sexual and gender-based violence;
- Children with disabilities or injuries;
- Displaced children;
- LGBTI children;
- Children whose families are (perceived to be) affiliated with extremist groups
- Children in conflict with the law;
- Abducted children;
- HIV/AIDS orphans or victims
- Children Human Rights Defenders (CHRDs)

The following paragraphs will provide a brief description of the protection needs of the first two groups of vulnerable children. It also describes how UCP is applied to address some of these needs.

### **UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN**

In areas of violent conflict many children have been separated from their parents or primary care takers. Parents may have died, disappeared, become critically injured, or kidnapped. Children may have been abducted or separated from their parents during their flight. They may have escaped from armed forces or brothels. Many of these children do not know where their families are or if they are still alive. They wander around alone, or in groups of other children, or they may have found an adult who is taking care of them.

Living amidst communities in areas of violent conflict, UCP personnel are in a good position to identify separated and unaccompanied children and identify their needs. They may be able to address some of these (protection) needs directly, while connecting these children with other service providers in the area. UCP teams have especially played a role in family tracing and reunification.



#### **CASE STUDY: REUNIFICATION OF SEPARATED CHILDREN IN MOSUL**

In Mosul, Iraq, Nonviolent Peaceforce supported the reunifications for seven children who had become separated from their parents. The relationships that NP developed with the local security forces were leveraged to support in the immediate tracing of relatives. In two instances, soldiers at checkpoints were able to alert relatives to where their children had been found. On another occasion NP was able to elicit information from the military regarding two children who were being held in abusive conditions by security actors and subsequently worked alongside UN Civil-Military Coordination and the Child Protection Sub Cluster to negotiate their release. This information, reported by junior officers concerned with the conduct of their superiors, was obtained

through sustained relationship building and placed those soldiers at risk of reprimand or retaliation. It was testament to the discretion and sensitivity of all involved that the children were rescued without repercussions for the sources of the information.

**SOURCE:** Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2018

## CHILD SOLDIERS AND EX-CHILD SOLDIERS

Over the past decade, the global spotlight has, above all, fallen on child soldiers. The “presence of an estimated 300,000 child soldiers has created substantially more attention than millions of civilian children killed and affected by war” (Brocklehurst 2010). In its fight against the use of children in armed conflict, the international community has implemented three kinds of measures: the ‘naming and shaming’ of perpetrators, the sanctioning of violators, and the use of juridical instruments to punish offenders. These measures have increasingly been criticised, as, despite increased policy awareness and legal protection mechanisms, the use of child soldiers has not diminished. Currently, there is renewed interest, with the aim of prevention, in understanding the underlying causes that prompt youth to join armed groups as well as links related to recruitment.<sup>6</sup>

Children participate as child soldiers for a variety of reasons. They are:

- Forcibly recruited;
- Manipulated by adults;
- Encouraged by their parents to become soldiers;
- Sent by their parents in times of economic distress, in exchange for payment or other economic assistance;
- Drawn to armed groups willingly, by ideals of manhood, because they support the goals of the group, or as an opportunity to avenge the death of relatives;
- Drawn to armed groups as a way of survival: they are from impoverished backgrounds or separated from their families;
- Drawn to armed groups as a surrogate/substitute family.

Whether recruitment is forced or “voluntary”, it exposes children to extreme risks, such as death, physical injury, psychological damage, drug addiction, and sexual abuse. A return to civilian life also often poses many challenges for both children and their communities.

UCP agencies work to prevent forced recruitment of children in vulnerable areas, such as refugee camps that border conflict zones. In Sri Lanka, Nonviolent Peaceforce accompanied mothers to military training camps where their children had been taken

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6 Various studies have pointed out that the recruitment of roughly two out of every three child soldiers involves some form of voluntary enlistment. Furthermore, there have been calls for more attention to the consequences of child soldiering and the role of girls—in various African conflicts, girls have comprised 30-40% of child combatants and are considered to be fundamental to the war machine. They are often used as “wives” (i.e. sex slaves) of the male combatants. However, it is important to note that girls are not simply silent victims, but active agents and resisters during conflict.

and gained the release of the children. The organization also supported mothers when they demanded a cessation of child abductions and provided a visible protective presence at Hindu Temple festivals where children were routinely abducted. At times, when child soldiers escaped or were released, NP provided accompaniment as they travelled to safer places than their own homes. They also provided accompaniment to mothers who began reporting incidents to the human rights commission.

Often local governments, in collaboration with international agencies such as UNICEF and Save the Children, are the drivers of child protection processes, especially when it comes to child soldiers. In those cases, UCP teams may play a supporting role, using their presence in isolated areas to monitor the protection needs of ex-child soldiers following their reunification. Reunification and reintegration of ex-child soldiers can pose a range of challenges that the child or the community is not able to deal with. In some cases, the child may have been encouraged by their families to join armed forces and is now perceived as a burden. In other cases, the child goes voluntarily back to the same armed forces. In yet other cases, the child is not accepted by the community and is threatened or stigmatised as a “killer” or a “prostitute”.



#### **CASE STUDY: LOCAL CEASEFIRE MONITORS IN MYANMAR NEGOTIATE RELEASE OF CHILD SOLDIERS**

13 children (all boys), aged 10 – 16 years, who were working in a stone crusher plant, were forcefully recruited by one of the armed groups. The owners of the plant contacted us to report about the incident. Our network decided to proceed on the case with precaution as the tension was high, before we decided to visit the armed group post in the village. During these 10 days, the parents of the children had visited the post but returned without success. In a meeting that lasted for two hours, we explained the bilateral agreement and civilian protection to the post commander. Two weeks later the armed group contacted us and asked to come to the place where the children were undergoing training. A few days later we returned to the Township with all 13 children and reunited them with their families.



## 4.6.2

### Women

*Everyone, the community members and the soldiers, respect us when we are in the Women's Protection Team uniforms, because they know that we were trained to bring peace.*

*Grace, member of Women Protection Team in South Sudan, 2020*

Among women aged between 15 and 44, worldwide, targeted acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war casualties combined. Up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime—the majority by husbands, intimate partners or someone they know. As of 2018, in situations on the Security Council's agenda over 50 parties to conflict are credibly suspected of having committed or instigated patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence. In some situations, rape is used as a weapon of war, a deliberate strategy to hurt or humiliate the opponent. In some cultures, women are exchanged as part of peace agreements. Violence against women not only devastates their own lives and that of their children, but also fractures communities and stalls development. The presence of gender-based violence against women is a substantial obstacle against reaching gender equality, one of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. As the Council on Foreign Relations notes, "a substantial body of research now suggests that gender equity and the achievement of other development goals, such as health, education, social and economic rights fulfilment, and even growth, are inseparable." (Terra Lawson-Remer, CFR, 2012).

Sexual and gender-based violence is the most common threat to women in situations of violent conflict. It refers to violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty (UN General Assembly, 1993; Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1992). The majority of victims are women and girls. In many areas of violence, it is downplayed as an unfortunate but inevitable side effect of conflict. If laws exist that protect women from sexual and gender-based violence, they are seldom implemented. Women are often unsure what their rights are and what supporting mechanisms and legal processes are available to them. Women in rural areas may be illiterate and unable to navigate the legal system on their own. Family structures in traditional cultures often encourage women to accept gender-based violence as a part of life.

There is little if any recognition that men may also be victims of gender-based violence and there are currently no protections written into international standards. Men suffer from sexual assaults: castration and other genital mutilation, as well as rape in prisons and IDP camps, according to Laura Stemple (2006). Men suffer summary execution in wartime, their assailants assuming that men are enemy combatants; they suffer from the gender-based violation of conscription and abduction (Carpenter, 2009). The more women are typecast as a 'vulnerable group', the more men are typecast as 'perpetrator', rendering the notion of male vulnerability unimaginable. The assumption that certain

men may be or have been militarised and violent can increase their vulnerability. ‘Able-bodied, military-aged’ civilian men are seen as potential combatants and somehow assumed to be less worthy of protection by international and national legal norms. Motorcycle taxi drivers in Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, have been assumed wholesale to be ex-combatants, which can lead to them becoming targets of ‘revenge’ violence by community members.

Though women in situations of violent conflict are particularly susceptible to violence, they should not be considered as passive victims of violence. Violent conflict can create large numbers of female-headed households when men are detained, displaced, have disappeared, or are dead. This can heighten insecurity and danger for the women left behind, since traditional protection and support mechanisms may no longer be operating. But women often take on leadership roles in these circumstances, whether as a matter of opportunity or of necessity. They are often at the forefront of peacebuilding and human rights defence. Women may also be forced to take over responsibilities and activities traditionally carried out by men. This often requires the development of new skills and confidence as they become involved in rebuilding the lives of their own families, as well as their communities. Moreover, women often play an important role in the prevention of and resolution of conflicts (Forced Migration Online, n.d.).

*Although many male respondents prioritised women at first when describing groups that they considered ‘vulnerable’, through discussion they often modified their thoughts, conceding that women were often better able to cope than men. And all Nuba men interviewed admitted without exception the crucial role of women in caring for the family as well as their wider contribution to protection...*

*Justin Corbett Learning from the Nuba (2011, p.21)*

In spite of the important roles that they play in enabling communities to survive times of crisis, women are often excluded from decision-making processes regarding peace and security. According to UN Women, of all participants involved in major peace processes between 1990 and 2017, only 2% of mediators, 5% witnesses and signatories, and 8% negotiators were women. Protection and security are widely considered to be responsibilities of men. Women often have different views and priorities regarding safety and security, including the needs of children and other vulnerable groups. Moreover, they have frequently learned more than men to find sources of power other than physical strength. Therefore, if women are not included in analysis, decision-making processes, and coordination mechanisms, many of their protection needs remain unaddressed, while their insights are not shared. These are missed opportunities for the development of appropriate protection strategies.

UCP organizations have recognized the often-unaddressed protection needs of women, their lack of access to support structures and decision-making processes, and their potential for playing an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Therefore, women are an important target group for UCP, as recipients of protection services and as drivers of local peace infrastructures. Furthermore, the protection of women is a key tenet of the UCP sources of guidance, described in module 2, including UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.

In order to protect and support women affected by violent conflict UCP teams:

- Provide direct physical protection to women threatened by violence;
- Provide direct physical protection to civil society networks (men or women) that promote gender equality and the rights of women or sexual and gender minorities;
- Enhance the capacity of women's groups to undertake their own initiatives for peace;
- Enhance the capacity of law enforcement and local leadership in responding to gender-based violence;
- Support the establishment of women protection teams or promote the leadership of women by hiring and promoting local women as well as employing them as facilitators, trainers, or volunteers in UCP activities;
- Connect women networks across conflict divisions or fault lines
- Facilitate dialogue and information exchange between women's networks at the track 3 level and women leaders or negotiators at the track 2 and 1 levels;
- Accompany women to access services, especially survivors of sexual and gender-based violence;
- Raise awareness and develop capacity of local actors (men and women) about the rights of women, especially through the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW];
- Support and encourage state actors and other duty bearers to protect the rights of women;
- Strengthen and advocate for the inclusion of women in community security meetings, trainings, UCP teams, local protection teams, as well as formal peace process institutions;
- Develop early warning systems in areas where women are particularly vulnerable to violence;
- Formulate gender-sensitive ceasefire provisions.

Many UCP actors adopt a holistic approach to the protection of women that takes aim at gender inequality as a contributing factor to violent conflict. This includes drawing women into (formal) peace and decision-making processes and mobilizing women as peacemakers, ceasefire monitors, and protectors of civilians (women *and* men). By involving women in their own protection and presenting protection as a collaborative effort between protector and protected, UCP actors reconcile the above-mentioned tension between protection and participation and rebalance power within security processes. Furthermore, by promoting factors that improve the bargaining power of women and girls, they are better able to advocate for improved access to relief services or justice, and improve security within their communities. UCP actors also draw the attention of security actors and decision-makers to the informal spaces at the grassroots level where women make essential contributions to human security. By making these spaces more visible, UCP actors validate women's informal contributions to security and broaden the scope of the discourse on peace and security. In this way they contribute to remaking the tables instead of adding more women to tables that are made and held by men.

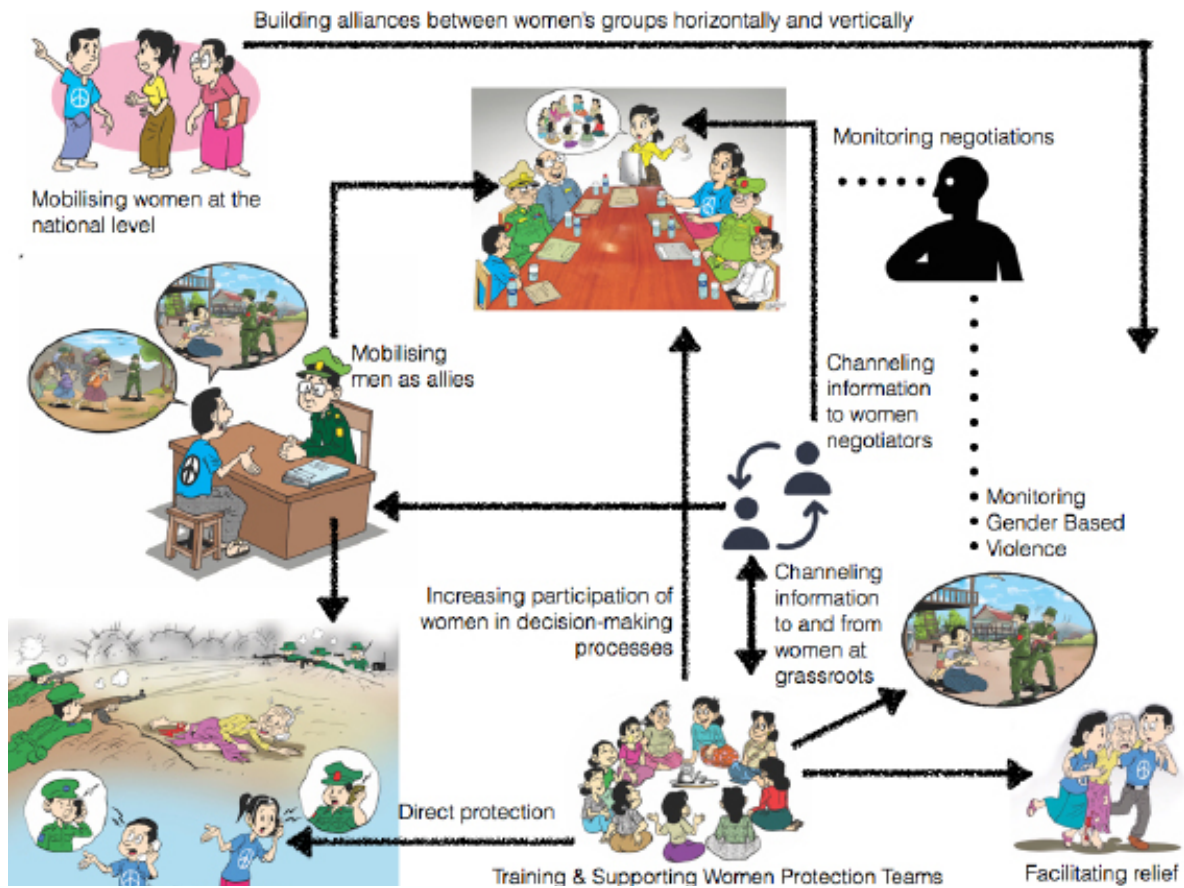


Figure 5: UCP actors may apply a holistic approach to women, peace, and security that includes all four pillars of the global Women, Peace, and Security agenda (Participation, Protection, Prevention, and Relief & Recovery)



## CASE STUDY: WOMAN PROTECTION TEAM MEMBER IN SOUTH SUDAN STANDS UP TO ARMED ATTACKERS

Charity joined the Mundri Women's Protection Team in 2017 and is an active peacemaker in her community. She has helped people resolve their disputes nonviolently, prevented instances of sexual and gender-based violence, and taught community members how to protect themselves in the case of a sudden attack. Charity is proud of her work, "I have skills now that nobody can take away from me. If anything happens in the community, they call me first to solve the problem because people trust me."

One night, Charity heard a noise close to her neighbor's house and ran to see what was happening. When she approached, she found her neighbor in distress as two armed men were forcing their way inside the house. "I cried out 'Oh, my dear sons!' and I spoke to them as neighbors." The armed men said to Charity, "Leave! We will kill all of you now." But Charity persisted. "Before, when I was not trained, I was afraid. But now that I'm trained on how to handle these situations, I'm not afraid." Charity said, "I know you are suffering. You have no money. Your relatives are not here. That is why you are attacking people during the night or during the day. We know very well. Even if we have something we can contribute to you because you are suffering. If you are not here,



we can not help you.” Charity invited them to come eat with her. “We shared food—we made a connection and they did not kill anyone.” Charity was able to convince them to leave without harming anyone. Sometimes people aren’t even aware of the trauma they are experiencing or causing.

This confidence to respond to violence is carried over into confidence in leadership. Charity hopes to help women in other communities form their own protection teams to improve the safety of civilians and increase women's leadership. As Charity noted, “In the past, women didn’t play any role in the community and didn’t have a voice in their own home. Now they play an important role, even in the government.”

**SOURCE:** Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2020, <https://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/blog/south-sudan-news/847-npss3rdannual>

## 4.6.3 Displaced people

Displaced people, including refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and returnees constitute a third population UCP actors often protect. Refugees and IDPs are people who have left behind their homes and communities because they have suffered (or fear) persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion or because they flee from conflict or natural disaster. Whereas refugees are outside their country of origin or habitual residence, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find a safe haven. Returnees are people that voluntarily or involuntarily return to their country of origin after a long absence.

The number of people forcibly displaced within and across borders because of conflict or persecution exceeded 70 million in 2019, the largest number since WWII according to UNHCR. Some 41.3 million people (58%) are internally displaced due to armed conflict, generalised violence, or human rights violations. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), thirty-nine per cent (39%) of 30.6 million new internal displacements recorded in 2017 were triggered by conflict and 61% by disasters.<sup>7</sup> The number of new displacements associated with violent conflict almost doubled in 2017, from 6.9 million in 2016 to 11.8 million.<sup>8</sup>

Natural disaster-related displacement is likely to rise in the coming decades. The 2014 Intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) report predicts that in the near

7 Across 143 countries among 200 countries and territories monitored by IDMC, 2018 Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

8 Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Iraq together accounted for more than half of the figure.

future millions of individuals will be forced to leave their homes due to climate change (IPCC, 2014). According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, there were 18.8 million new disaster-related internal displacements recorded in 2017.

During their flight from areas of conflict displaced people continue to be exposed to multiple physical dangers, including sudden attacks and landmines, shortage of food and water, and lack of medical care. Moreover, refugee sites are not always set up in ways that promote the protection of and assistance to vulnerable groups. Old power struggles among displaced groups are often reproduced and traditional systems of social protection may come under strain or break down completely. High levels of violence, substance abuse, sexual harassment and rape, forced and early marriage, and forcible recruitment also play a role. The large influxes of refugees over short periods of time often lead to tensions with and within host communities, as they put a strain on local infrastructures and lead to competition over natural resources. In a similar way, the reintegration of returnees into their former communities can increase tension and open old grievances.

UCP personnel living within or near communities of displaced people are in a good position to identify and understand the different needs of displaced people. Special attention is given to the protection needs of women, children, and the elderly within displaced communities. In line with IHL and IRL, UCP organizations work in different ways and in coordination with UN and other humanitarian organizations to protect displaced people. They have provided protection to civilians within displacement sites, but also to communities at risk of being displaced, people on the move, people returning to their homes, and people reintegrating in their own communities or resettling elsewhere. They may:

- Provide protective presence in communities close to front lines to prevent forced displacement or assist communities in timely and safer displacement;
- Provide protective presence at transit sites to prevent exploitation, harassment, or trafficking;
- Provide protective presence and nonviolent crowd control at food distribution points;
- Patrol insecure areas in and around refugee or IDP sites;
- Provide protective accompaniment to people on the move, including people on their way to an IDP camp, people emerging from the bush, registered IDPs checking in on their properties or harvest, people on their way to and from aid distribution points, or returnees fearful of re-settling in hostile communities;
- Support IDPs and refugees in their efforts to resist forced returns;
- Establish local protection teams among displaced and/or host communities
- Negotiate humanitarian corridors for displaced people passing through insecure areas or permission for the provision of life-saving aid to displaced people, residing in areas that are off limits for humanitarian aid operations;
- Interposition between factions of displaced people in conflict with each other
- Mitigate conflicts between displaced and host communities and within displaced communities;
- Facilitate access to services (protection, aid, medicine, legal services) for displaced people;
- Monitor safe distribution of humanitarian aid and mitigate conflicts between



- humanitarian aid agencies and IDP leadership;
- Develop capacity and raise awareness of UCP with leaders of displaced communities about the protection needs of vulnerable groups;



### CASE STUDY: ACCOMPANIMENT OF RETURNEES TO GUATEMALA

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. Many 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 international accompaniers 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 UCP accompaniers, departed from Mexico to Guatemala. As one of the UCP team members 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 UCP presence and accompaniment.

**SOURCE:** Witness for Peace and Lisa Schirch, p22.

As displacement has increasingly become protracted, there is a need for more integrated responses to humanitarian emergencies that address the needs of a continuum of people affected by displacement, not just registered refugees or IDPs. This includes victims of

trafficking and smuggling at transit places or unwanted or stateless minority groups, whose needs may not be adequately reflected by existing legal or assistance frameworks. It also includes displaced people who are unable to return and have settled among the urban poor and marginalised groups of host countries, whose needs and vulnerabilities are difficult to distinguish.

UCP methods have successfully been applied to respond to some of these challenges. UCP actors have proactively responded to unexpected security threats civilians face in the turmoil of humanitarian emergencies, seeking local solutions together with affected populations. They have mobilized refugees to participate in their own protection, restoring a sense of dignity among people who have lost everything. They have provided protection for groups that have fallen through the cracks of humanitarian aid systems and supported local protection teams to mitigate conflicts between host communities and IDPs. Finally, they have provided frontline protection responses to emergencies and challenged attitudes of risk aversion or outsourcing security risk among humanitarian agencies. Central to all these efforts is a strong sense of the primacy of displaced people. As the story from Myanmar in box 8 shows, displaced people often already apply some form of UCP, though they may not call it that. External UCP agencies can support and validate these efforts, provide additional methods, or expand the support networks of IDP leaders. And as the story shows, these leaders may not necessarily be the secretary of the IDP camp administration committee, but perhaps an 18-year-old boy that knows how to talk to the military.



#### CASE STUDY: TEENAGER BECOMES GO-TO PROBLEM SOLVER IN IDP COMMUNITY

It was our village which became the first IDP Camp after that initial clashes. The initial clash lasted just for a while, and things got back to normal. Instead, there were serious clashes in other places. To avoid those battles, it was possible to hide in the jungle... Then we formed the organising committees, five persons in each team. The responsibility was to go around and motivate Kachin people to be united... Finally, our village parson was contacted by the district-level secretary of the Kachin Baptist Association. They took action to build temporary camps. Civilians around the state capital who were affected by the armed clashes also found some possible temporary places, to stay away from those clashes. Kachin Baptist Convention churches allotted spaces for the refugees. They also tried to get in contact with NGOs... Then the Kachin Army wanted me. The army supervisor saw I didn't want to serve them. So he helped me by giving me a position in the village administration committee so that the army could not get me to serve. He told me not to worry about the tasks and responsibilities because there were many elders including himself to advise me whenever I needed. This is how, at the age of 18, I became a village administrator... Even though I am not a member of the IDP camp administration committee or otherwise in charge, I am often asked to counsel and troubleshoot, because I am someone who knows how to talk to military personnel or leaders.

**SOURCE:** 'Like a Shady Tree for Those in Trouble. Experiences of War and Hopes for Peace of People Living Amidst Violent Conflict in Kachin State, Myanmar', compiled by Rachel Julian and others

PBI Photo / Accompaniment of Legal  
Representative of the Association of Friends of  
Lake, Izabal Eloyda Mejía, Guatemala / July 2012



espacios para la paz  
brigades International  
Internacionales de Paz

## 4.6.4

### Human rights defenders

*In the middle of the solitude that human rights defence work can bring, turning round in a hearing and seeing the green jacket and a volunteer's face you say to yourself, 'ok, it's fine, let's keep going, I'm not alone, we're not alone.'*

*German Romero, DH Colombia, referring to the presence of Peace Brigades International.*

'Human rights defender' is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. Human rights include civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Particular issues of concern in areas of violent conflict are executions, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, discrimination, forced evictions, and access to health care. Human rights defenders investigate and report on human rights violations and abuse. They also accompany survivors of human rights violations, take action to end impunity, support better governance, contribute to the implementation of human rights treaties, and provide human rights education.

Many human rights defenders work in places where carrying out human rights activities, or giving voice to survivors and witnesses of human rights violations, can put their own lives at risk. Front Line Defenders, an international foundation for the protection of human rights defenders, reports that 304 human rights defenders were killed in 2019, 40% of whom were working on land rights, indigenous peoples' rights and environmental rights. Amnesty International reports that between 2014 and 2019 many states have introduced restrictive laws to silence and repress human rights defenders and attack the civic space in which they work. 'Some states have turned their back on previous commitments to the international human rights framework, even questioning the definition of a human rights defender.' (Amnesty International, 2019)

Human rights defenders are, perhaps, the group most frequently accompanied by UCP actors. An important reason for this is that the work of human rights defenders often has significant impact on the lives of many others. UCP actors have accompanied human rights defenders in many different countries: for example, lawyers who advocated on behalf of human rights workers who had disappeared in Guatemala, lawyers who filed lawsuits against army commanders and police chiefs in Colombia, and human rights activists who advocated for the protection of sexual minorities and sex workers in Indonesia. UCP personnel have sat in front of the offices of human rights defenders, courtrooms, and prisons, while human rights defenders conducted their affairs inside, sometimes for weeks on end. For many human rights defenders amidst armed conflict, the unarmed civilian presence and appearance of UCP personnel not only makes them feel safer and morally supported, but also reaffirms their belief in their own unarmed struggle for justice.

The protection of human rights defenders is a key tenet of the UCP sources of guidance,

described in module 2, including the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders (A/RES/53/144). UCP teams:

- Provide protective accompaniment to human rights defenders under threat;
- Provide presence and monitoring for human rights trials and tribunals;
- Build the capacity of human rights defenders to strengthen their own protection strategies;
- Monitor compliance of protection agreements (for example the EU guidelines for human rights defenders [2004], that EU member states pledged to implement through their missions abroad);
- Connect human rights defenders with each other and to international support networks in-country and abroad (for example through speaking tours);
- Encourage and support human rights defenders in building relationships with security forces and non-state armed actors, and include these actors in the support network;
- Indicate to government officials and other duty bearers the international expectation that human rights defenders be permitted to work unimpeded.

As discussed in module 3, many of these activities are augmented by or combined with advocacy for changes in specific policies and practices that contribute to the violence against human rights defenders.

While the direct protection of human rights defenders is the first priority of UCP actors, the issue of solidarity plays an important role as well, as the opening quote to this section illustrates. UCP actors may embody this solidarity in different ways with different actions across the world to ensure that human rights defenders are given the attention and platform they deserve. As Colombian human rights defender Adriana Arboleda from Corporación Jurídica y Libertad remarks: “We see PBI volunteers as human rights defenders who accompany other defenders, they are an expression of international solidarity, they are an expression of fraternity amongst peoples”.



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# 5

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## UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN PRACTICE: LIVING IN AND EXITING THE COMMUNITY



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## OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Applying UCP in situations of violent conflict requires ongoing analysis of the situation as well as security management. UCP practitioners tailor their strategies and methods to continuously changing conflict dynamics, and in response to the initiatives of local partners. A rare window of opportunity for the prevention of violence may suddenly appear amidst a situation of turmoil. In order to use this window of opportunity to maximum effect, all the pieces on the chessboard need to be in place. Security measures and contingency plans must be updated and known to all UCP personnel at all times. They need to be prepared for the worst-case scenario, even if it is unlikely that this scenario will ever occur. When violence prevention is the goal, a situation where ‘nothing’ happens is an indicator of success.

Module 5 starts with a description of context analysis, followed by a description of security management. These are two major components of the UCP programme cycle that are carried out continually. They are initially modelled on the outcomes of conflict analysis and needs assessment. In turn, context analysis informs the occasional review of conflict analysis and also leads to additional needs assessments. Furthermore, context analysis accompanies and strengthens the application of UCP methods. The last stage of the UCP programming cycle to be described involves UCP exit strategies, which guide UCP personnel in phasing out of a particular situation of violent conflict. Of course, local protection efforts do not ‘exit’, though as threats change or significantly decrease, local actors may focus on other issues.

After describing the final different components of the UCP programming cycle, completing a process that was started in module 4, module 5 presents a case study from South Sudan that brings the learning from all five modules together. This case study is used to show how the different components of the UCP programming cycle described in modules 4 and 5 and the UCP methods described in module 3 can be applied in a particular situation of violent conflict. Module 5 concludes with a number of key dilemmas that UCP practitioners may experience throughout the UCP programming cycle.

**BOX 1 | LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Describe how the context is analyzed within UCP
- Describe the basics of UCP security management
- Develop an exit strategy
- Develop and apply basic UCP strategies to specific examples of varying conflicts and population types
- Describe key dilemmas of UCP



## Summary of Key Messages

- Successful UCP interventions are complex, requiring meticulous and often ongoing conflict and context analyses, needs assessments, security management, communication with multiple parties, external support structures, exit strategies, appropriate choices of personnel and partners, and the application of appropriate methods and skills.
- Context analysis refers to the detailed examination of the ongoing developments and dynamics of a specific situation. It allows UCP practitioners to identify trends in violence in order to predict and prevent crises, as well as to prepare for a timely response to a crisis situation.
- The security of UCP field staff and assets is inextricably linked to its mission of improving the security and protection of civilians in situations of violent conflict. UCP practitioners cannot protect others if they cannot first protect themselves. The first concern of all UCP fieldwork, therefore, is to ensure the security of its own staff, reputation, and assets.
- UCP operations are phased out when local actors no longer need or want UCP, when UCP has achieved some of its objectives but is unable to do more, or when UCP has failed or has been expelled by the government. Exit strategies need to have clear and attainable objectives and must address how UCP efforts will be sustained by local infrastructures, following the exit of non-local personnel.
- During the implementation phase, UCP practitioners will face a variety of dilemmas that are caused by the tensions between the various key principles and objectives of UCP. Strict adherence to these principles alone will not solve these dilemmas. A deep understanding of their intent, as well as experience and common sense are essential. Team discussion can help to clarify how to apply UCP principles in a particular situation.
- Effective UCP requires sustained effort, flexibility, persistence, and the strategic use of a wide variety of methods. Successful UCP means being present at the right time, the right place, and ready to apply the right methods and the right skills to support local actors in stopping violence and resolving conflicts.

# 5.1

## Context analysis

*In our field site we had imagined what had happened and might happen. What is more or less likely? We had done analysis...of a hot spot area. That really helped and we knew among national staff who could deal with what; it was clearly defined. Even if we had nothing to do, we would just visit (the) military and MILF for example...it was helpful ...at one point they become really close (to fighting). The leader was on leave and he was following (the situation), but he asked for my opinion if they should fight back or not. For five seconds I was stunned...but then I told him that I spoke to the camp monitors and they told me it was safe. I don't know if he trusted me but he trusted us.*

*Mahesh (2018) in Oakley, What is the relationship between the situated learning of Unarmed Civilian Protection workers and gendered power dynamics? (2020, p. 125)*

After conducting a conflict analysis, UCP organizations will have determined if there is a role for UCP to prevent violence or protect civilians in a particular situation of violent conflict. They will also have identified the need for UCP among communities affected by this conflict and received acceptance from these communities to establish a presence in the area. Finally, they will have identified populations and individuals that most urgently require UCP services. Local organizations and individuals engaging in self-protection efforts may not have gone through these formal steps. Nonetheless, they will have conducted some form of analysis of the conflict, needs, and potential responses.

Based on these outcomes, UCP teams will start formulating strategies and tailoring UCP methods to address the needs of people identified at risk of harm from current or potential violence. When enough confidence is present that UCP will be useful (based upon extensive exploration and encouragement from local communities), sufficient funding is in place, and initial arrangements made, a UCP intervention will begin. While UCP personnel will have already analyzed the conflict and understood its dynamics, the situation around them, including the conflict dynamics, will be continuously changing. To make sure that the strategies that have been formulated remain relevant against the backdrop of a changing situation, they need to analyse the local context. This not only serves the purpose of streamlining programming, it is also a matter of security. Understanding the context from which threats arise, and formulating informed strategies to reduce exposure to those threats, makes the difference between risk avoidance and risk management.

### WHAT IS CONTEXT ANALYSIS?

Context analysis or situational analysis, as used by some UCP organizations, refers to the detailed examination of the ongoing developments and dynamics of a specific

situation. UCP teams conduct context analysis to identify trends of violence in order to predict and prevent crises, as well as to prepare for a timely response to a crisis situation. Context analysis is different from conflict analysis, but they are interrelated. *Conflict* analysis has a limited focus on one particular conflict and its development through time (focus on the past). *Context* analysis on the other hand has a broad focus on one particular moment in time (focus on the present). *Conflict* analysis precedes context analysis and is undertaken periodically, especially at the beginning and end of a project cycle. *Context* analysis is done continually. UCP personnel at the field level may conduct context analysis on a weekly or monthly basis.

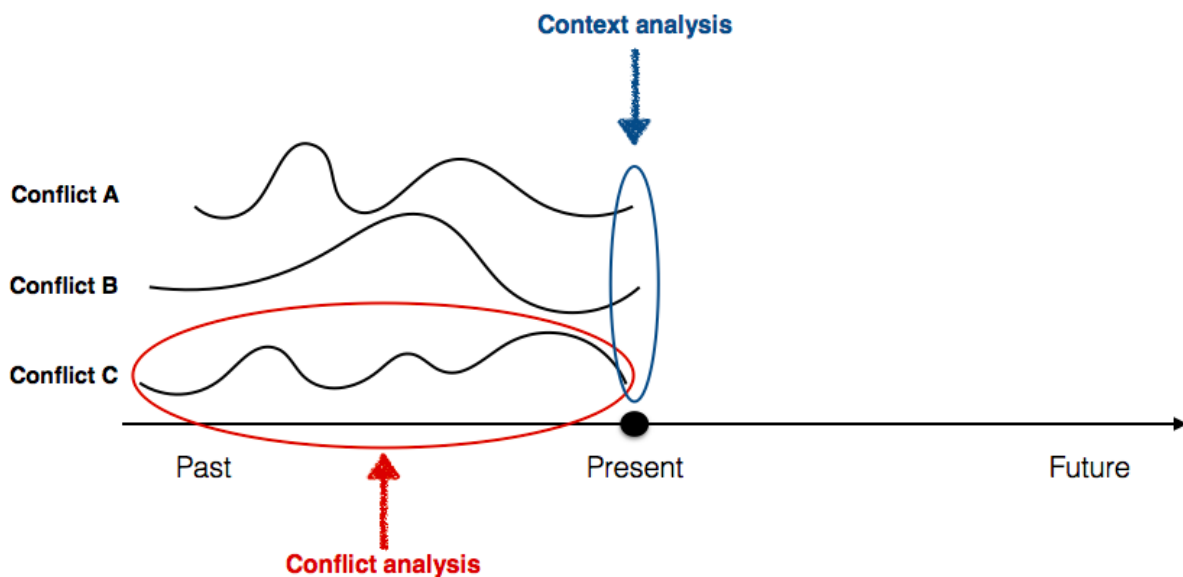


Figure 1: *Conflict* analysis has a limited focus on one particular conflict and its development through time (focus on the past). *Context* analysis on the other hand has a broad focus on one particular moment in time (focus on the present). Context analysis does not only focus on conflicts, but a wider variety of relevant trends and developments.

## HOW DOES CONTEXT ANALYSIS WORK?

Though context analysis is conducted continually, it is especially important in situations where:

- UCP is starting its operations or moves its operations to unknown areas;
- There is a sense by those in the field or at headquarters that UCP methods are not adequately addressing the situation;
- Major developments have changed the conflict dynamics or the positions and power bases of conflicting parties.

There are many different ways to undertake context analysis. Most models follow these basic steps:

- Information gathering and identification of priorities of locations, methods, and vulnerable populations;
- Analysis and interpretation of events and specific actions of influential actors;
- Establishment of linkages between political, economic, social, religious, and security aspects;
- Revealing and understanding trends;
- Assessment of the role of UCP personnel within the context.

Context analysis includes details about threats, power plays, and hidden agendas of conflicting parties, as well as the perception of local actors about UCP and its practitioners (see box 2 for sample questions that guide UCP team members for an internal context analysis).

### **BOX 2 | SAMPLE QUESTIONS THAT GUIDE UCP TEAMS IN CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

(addressed to UCP personnel, not directly to local actors). In all the following questions attention should be paid to changes, trends and patterns:

#### **Civilians:**

- Who do you see in the community: women, girls, men, boys, elders, or disabled? Estimate numbers.
- How would you describe the atmosphere? (Do they seem happy? Angry? Fearful? Calm?)
- Are there areas where you do not see any civilians?
- Do you see any armed civilians? What were they armed with?
- Are civilians initiating contact with humanitarian workers? Are they willing to talk when approached?
- Are people fleeing or preparing to do so? If yes, is it a particular group?
- Do you see anyone injured? Anyone who lost a limb?

#### **Armed actors:**

- Do you see armed actors – if so, who?
- Does the community appear to accept them?
- Are their numbers increasing?
- What do the uniforms look like on the armed actors that you see? (e.g., colours, pattern, armbands, hats)
- How do they behave towards civilians?
- Are the armed actors engaging with humanitarian workers? If so, what is the engagement like?

#### **Infrastructure and surroundings:**

- Do you see a functioning market? What goods do you see in the market?
- What kinds of shelter do people have? What is the condition of civilian shelter?
- Are children going to school?



- Do you see any recent destruction? (e.g., trees damaged, bullet holes in walls)
- Are any public buildings (e.g., schools, hospitals) occupied by armed actors? If so, where and by whom?

### Humanitarian experience:

- Are you able to move in the community freely? Are there areas that you cannot travel?
- Did anyone accompany you to certain locations? If so, who and where?
- Did anyone threaten you? Or were you harmed in any way?
- Did anyone question what you were doing? If so, who? Why?

### Specific protection indicators:

- Did you see anyone harmed during your visit? If so, who and what were the circumstances?
- Did you see any children associated with the armed groups?
- Was there any direct threat to life?
- Are the threats specific to women? Children? Elderly people? Young men?
- Is civilian movement restricted?
- What is the ratio of men to women in the community?
- What, if anything, has changed in the local, regional, national, and international context that is impacting our work? Why?

An important part of context analysis focuses on the role of UCP practitioners within a particular context. It is important to know how local parties, including their own partners, perceive them and also to assess if there is a risk of becoming too involved with non-state armed actors. UCP personnel need to understand if the government is attempting to manipulate them or use them to strengthen their position. A corrupt government may, for example, collect large amounts of money from the UCP organization through a variety of bureaucratic measures. For instance, each time UCP personnel provide protection to human rights defenders who are critical of a corrupt government, the government may respond by refusing to extend their visas. The government may also use the presence of UCP teams to show the world that they are respecting human rights, while curtailing their movements to a bare minimum. Through context analysis, UCP teams analyse this type of behaviour and determine whether their current strategies are effective. They may conclude that their presence by and large strengthens the position of the corrupt government and undermines the work of human rights defenders. In that case they will, in consultation with those defenders, either change their strategies or leave a particular area, or the country. As Liam Mahony writes in response to what he describes as ‘the failure of the UN and the wider humanitarian community to improve the respect for the human rights of the Rohingya people in Myanmar’:

*The humanitarian community in Myanmar has allowed itself to be boxed in to a very small space, pressured and manipulated into silent complicity with ethnic cleansing, and it remains to be seen whether the UN and its humanitarian partners will find the courage and creativity to try to push that space open.*

*In situations like this, international actors tend to bemoan how little political space and manoeuvrability they believe they have, and paradoxically use this as an excuse for not trying to expand it. But political space is very often self constrained: the Myanmar government has learned that it can depend on humanitarian self-censorship. However limited it may appear, that space has to be constantly contested, protected and expanded.*

*Liam Mahony, Time to break old habits, Fieldview Solutions (2018, p 46)*

## 5.2

# Security management

*Some aggressions are preceded by threats. Others are not. However, the behaviour of individuals planning a targeted violent aggression often shows subtle signs, since they need to gather information about the right time to aggress, plan how to get to their target, and how to escape.*

*Enrique Eguren and Marie Caraj, Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders (2009, p.54)*

Analysis of the security situation is an important part of context analysis. UCP teams operate in dangerous and volatile environments. Therefore, the work of UCP, by definition, involves a level of risk. In order to effectively mitigate and address risk factors, UCP organizations apply a management system for staff security and safety in the field (Peace Brigades International, 2009; Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2011). The security of UCP field staff and assets is inextricably linked to its mission of improving the security and protection of civilians in situations of violent conflict. UCP personnel cannot protect others if they cannot protect themselves. Moreover, they cannot provide a more secure environment for civil society organizations if they cannot provide a more secure environment for UCP.

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security are often used interchangeably or in the same breath, but they are not exactly the same. Safety can be defined as being free from danger, risk, or injury; and security, as the condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger. Safety is a more complex word that implies an inner certainty that all is well. It has both emotional and physical attributes that both needs to be in agreement for safety to be achieved. In a sense, *security* is external, while *safety* is internal (Maddox, n.d). Security has also been

likened to an umbrella that protects safety or a process that ensures safety. In this section we refer to this umbrella or this process that shields both civilians at risk of violence as well as UCP actors that aim to protect them.

## **WHAT IS SECURITY MANAGEMENT?**

Security in the context of internal UCP security management relates to the protection of UCP personnel from violence, and also the protection of the image and reputation of the UCP intervention and its organizing agency and of UCP assets. The image of the UCP intervention is not merely a matter of public relations. A negative image of UCP has direct implications for its capacity to protect. Additionally, measures are taken to avoid or mitigate the effects of circumstances that are not related to violence. These include 'accidents' caused by nature (e.g. avalanches, earthquakes) or other external circumstances like forest fires and road accidents. They also include illness, injury, and death resulting from medical conditions or from a lack of adherence to safety guidelines in the workplace.

## **HOW DOES SECURITY MANAGEMENT WORK?**

UCP considers staff security *and* safety to be an integral part of its programmatic work. The credibility of UCP as a valid approach to civilian protection would be undermined if UCP agencies were not able to provide for the safety and security of their own staff. The safety and security of staff members are therefore an integrated and essential component of analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring of all UCP related activities on the ground.

Staff safety and security are direct extensions of context analysis and are based on the same logic as UCP methods for civilian protection. For example, by observing troop movements, incidents of violence, and behaviour of local actors, UCP teams assess their own vulnerabilities and their capacities to reduce threats. They must also assess the strength of their networks with other actors whose visible concern helps to protect them. Just as they aim to reduce the vulnerabilities of threatened populations and increase their capacities to respond to threats, UCP practitioners also try to reduce their own vulnerabilities and increase their own capacities (see figure 2).

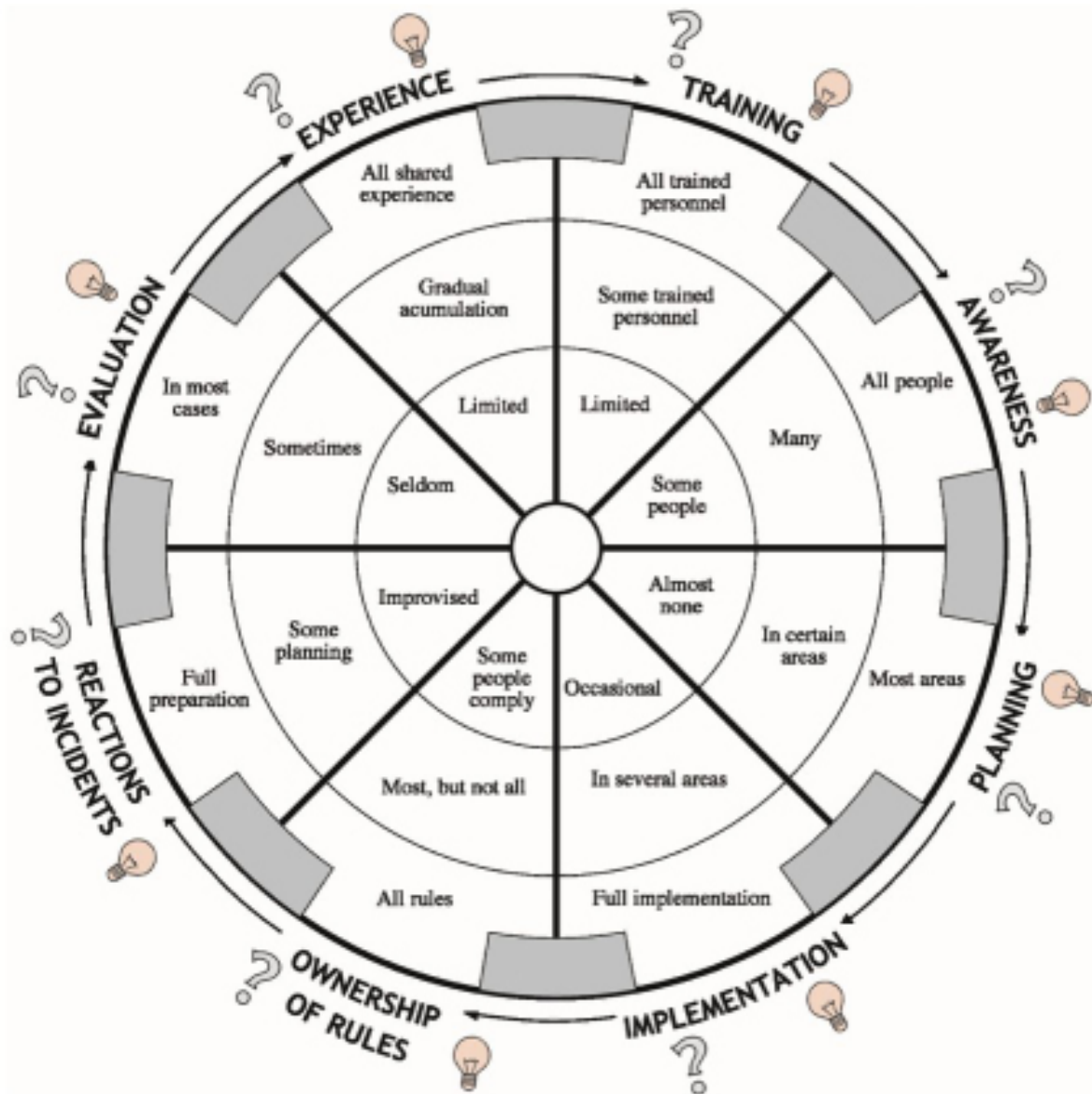


Figure 2: The Security Wheel (Eguren and Caraj, 2009) “A wheel must be round to turn; in other words, all the spokes need to be of the same length. The same applies to the security wheel with its 8 spokes (components), representing the security management of an organisation...” (Eguren, 2009, p.133). By reducing vulnerabilities or strengthening capacities in weak components of the security wheel, UCP teams can strengthen their own security management and that of the organizations they support or protect.

Generally there are three types of threats UCP practitioners need to be aware of: direct threats, indirect threats, and common criminal attacks. Direct threats can be targeted to the UCP agency or an individual UCP actor. Such threats may be reduced with the support of influential actors within the UCP team’s political support network, by improving or strengthening relationships with key actors, or by changing strategies. Indirect threats arise from the potential harm caused by violent incidents in the area or external circumstances such as natural disasters. This is about “being in the wrong place at the wrong time”.

Indirect threats can often be reduced through context analysis, precaution, and contingency plans. UCP personnel are especially vulnerable to the third type of threat: common criminal attacks. These attacks are more difficult to prevent, as they are in most cases not clearly politically motivated (though they may have political undertones). Increased physical security (e.g. window bars, other protective barriers, care about traveling after dusk or alone) may be necessary to reduce threats. However, UCP practitioners usually prefer to keep these physical protection mechanisms to a minimum and use nonviolent options, though they have under rare circumstances relied on (armed) UN peacekeepers to evacuate. Close relationships with neighbours and community acceptance often go a long way in providing protection and do not damage the image of UCP as a force of unarmed protection.

## SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

The first step in managing staff security is the transmission of a clear understanding to all staff and all stakeholders of what UCP is. The next step is to gain a deep understanding of where UCP is placed within the conflict. This step is directly related to context analysis. The third step is to build security strategies. Different organizations may use some but not all of the following strategies. These strategies include:

- Building trust and acceptance among all (often qualified by legitimate or legally accessible) actors in the area to prevent harm;
- Protecting and monitoring the UCP organization's image and reputation in the communities and with all actors for being nonpartisan, independent, respecting the primacy of local actors;
- Establishing precautionary and preventive security measures (e.g. locks and fences, travelling in groups, varying routes, avoiding public displays of wealth) to prevent or reduce harm;
- Building relationships with influential stakeholders who can be called upon in situations when UCP practitioners are under threat;
- Being visible with uniforms and well-marked vehicles or in some cases being thoughtful about not using uniforms.
- Ensuring that UCP staff—both international and national—behave appropriately by local cultural standards;
- Including the perspectives and information from local partners, staff, and community in security analysis.

In order to be responsible and effective, UCP teams constantly monitor and analyse the level of risk so as not to exceed the threshold of 'acceptable risk'. They necessarily work in places where other (humanitarian or development) INGOs, agencies, and peacekeepers might not choose to work, go where they might not go, and engage in activities that they might avoid. This does not mean UCP practitioners are reckless, careless, or cavalier about their security. On the contrary, the work that they do requires them to be at least as security conscious, if not more so, than most other INGOs and agencies working in similar environments. This imperative is reflected in their pre-deployment training and ongoing alertness.

Dealing with direct threats to UCP is particularly important. Direct threats cannot be



mitigated through general security measures or context analysis in the same way that criminal attacks and indirect threats can. It relies upon having established relationships in advance with the hierarchies of the armed actors. When dealing with direct threats, UCP security strategy involves four essential steps aimed at reducing vulnerability to the perceived threat. UCP practitioners:

- Identify exactly what the threat is and where it comes from;
- Engage as directly as possible with the source of the threat to explain the nature and purpose of UCP;
- Move up the chain of command as far as necessary to remove the threat or seek out actors with the power to exert influence on decision makers or appropriate commanders;
- Proceed only if and when the threat has been effectively removed.

Many UCP actors apply some or all of the following precautionary measures to prevent direct threats:

- Maintaining nonpartisanship at all times, treating all parties with respect and goodwill;
- Avoiding public statements, denunciations, and any other activity that may embarrass, humiliate or demean any of the parties;
- Remaining as open and transparent as possible about all UCP activities with all parties concerned;
- Supporting parties in understanding that it is in their own interest to prevent and avoid attacks on civilians and other gross violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law;
- Maintaining a clear and unequivocal image of UCP as an institution that seeks to work with all parties to help them prevent violence from taking place. By doing so, UCP is helping these parties to improve or, at least, not tarnish their image with external actors
- Building and maintaining visible and transparent support networks.

These security measures are very much aligned to the methods and principles of UCP. Indeed, security is embedded in the DNA of UCP. It is not an add-on task. Thus, adhering to UCP principles in their work with communities automatically provides a certain amount of protection to UCP personnel. When UCP agencies deliberately choose to take sides or make public statements, they may strengthen other security measures, such as building an influential support network or taking extra measures to display transparency.

UCP security strategies are based on the assessment of specified threats rather than generalized ones. This enables UCP personnel to work in more places and circumstances than would otherwise be possible if they used a more traditional approach to security, based on generalized threats alone. The most important thing is that UCP practitioners do not take unacceptable or unnecessary risks; rather, they operate on a more analytically refined assessment of the specific threats they face.

*Our relationships with the local communities will do more to protect us from ISIS sleeper cells and direct threats than a relationship with our influential*



*actors... There is a very fine line between relationship building with influential actors who will be able to protect you in a security situation and unintentionally having this relationship be the reason for a direct threat (or indirect threat).*

*Security Manager for Nonviolent Peaceforce in Iraq, 2020*



#### Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- Eguren, E., *Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders*, 2005, Dublin: Front Line: International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders: [http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/2312\\_Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders.pdf](http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/files/en/2312_Protection%20Manual%20for%20Human%20Rights%20Defenders.pdf)

## 5.3

### Exit strategies

*Exit is not your process... It is the response of the partners and communities that really matters. Therefore, healthy exit involves letting the partners lead the process.*

*Rachel Hayman, et al., Exit Strategies and Sustainability: Lessons for Practitioners (2016 p.18)*

Conflicts are continuously changing and so are the needs of civilians within conflicts. When threatened groups feel increasingly safe and empowered, and local protection infrastructures more effectively address conflicts and prevent violence, it may be time at least for international UCP team members to leave the area or the country. The decision to leave a particular area or country is not taken suddenly. UCP organizations formulate clear strategies to guide their country directors or implementation teams in making that decision and, in fact, work towards that outcome. This section describes these strategies that prepare for the exit of the international team. Clearly, local protection efforts will have their own, different set of concerns focused on sustainably maintaining the progress made in strengthening local infrastructure and in addressing conflicts nonviolently.

#### WHAT IS AN EXIT STRATEGY?

Despite the phrase ‘exit strategy’ becoming increasingly prevalent in peacekeeping and

peacebuilding discussions, there does not appear to be a common definition for the term. The term seems to have originated in business circles, moved to the military, and has more recently been applied to humanitarian and development-related third-party interventions. Nonetheless, the phrase implies that careful thought and preparation should be given to the timing and process with which an external organization (in this case, a UCP provider) withdraws from a field of action, so as to allow local actors to sustain the work undertaken (if appropriate) and minimize organizational disruption as the process of removal is completed.

### HOW DOES AN EXIT STRATEGY WORK?

UCP operations are based on acceptance by local conflict parties as well as by the national government. Therefore, the three circumstances that would prompt UCP to exit are as follows:

- local actors no longer have need of the presence of external UCP agencies (success);
- the UCP mission has made progress in achieving at least some of the objectives but is prevented from completing all of them (partial success);
- the UCP mission faces a major contradiction between its presence or the objectives and principles of UCP and the desires of the local population (failure).

Lack of funding and expulsion by authorities could be added as additional circumstances, as this has played a role in the past in the exit of UCP agencies from situations of violent conflict, and may again in the future.

**Local actors no longer need or have interest in the presence of external UCP agencies:** When civilians are no longer threatened, and feel confident in their ability to protect themselves and/, or are effectively protected by state structures, the need for the presence of external UCP agencies has ceased. This may seem clear, but the reality is often more complex. First, as the collaboration between UCP teams and local actors progresses, additional areas of interest and need are easily identified. There are always vulnerable people who need to be protected, especially in an area that is emerging from protracted conflict. Deciding that a particular threat to a vulnerable population is not serious enough for an agency to maintain its presence is not easy.

Secondly, a complicating factor is the uncertainty of a peace process. Many peace processes, apparently well on the way to sustainable peace, have collapsed within a few years. Others have moved back and forth between crisis and post-crisis at a snail's pace. A period of stability without incidents of violence does not automatically indicate a ceased need for UCP. When the stage of crisis passes, there usually is a period of tension, when it is not clear if the 'calm' will be maintained. During this time, UCP personnel can play a critical role, along with UN peacekeeping monitors and peacebuilding efforts, to strengthen the confidence in the peace process and support the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. This is a period when UCP teams might replace armed peacekeepers for a distinct period of time, until UCP organizations also phase out their presence.

Thirdly, UCP methods and principles are increasingly applied beyond the scope of

direct physical protection from imminent threats of violence, for example to increase women's participation in peace processes or strengthen social cohesion and inter-religious dialogue. Having established expansive networks of relationships and trust during periods of war and crisis, UCP agencies are often well-positioned to accompany the difficult transition from war to peace, from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, and from humanitarian crisis to stabilization. This is also a time in which local actors, trained in UCP and in a position to take over the work of external UCP agencies, often move into politics or assume important positions within peace process institutions.

Though determining the right time to exit is difficult, timely implementation of exit strategies is important. Humanitarian organizations in areas of violent conflict at times continue their operations too long. This may lead to an identity crisis within the organization as its mandate and methods no longer suit the context. Lack of morale and loss of reputation are some of the consequences. It may also lead to an unnecessary dependence of local actors on the protection and support of external actors. To avoid such a situation, exit strategies need to have clear objectives that are sustainable and substantive, but also attainable. The objectives need to be formulated in a way that provides clear criteria for the fulfilment of the mandate.

Indicators that may contribute to an exit strategy of external UCP agencies include:

- **Decreased incidents of violence:** a systematic decrease of incidents, obtained through monitoring of trends over a significant period of time, indicates a decreasing need for violence prevention and reduction;
- **Increased safety and security of civilians:** evaluation and context analysis need to be carried out to measure the security situation and the perception of safety among civilians;
- **Increased local initiatives for peace and human rights:** an increase of local initiatives for peace and human rights often indicates that the space for local actors to address safely issues related to conflict and violence has increased;
- **Effective application of UCP by local agencies or groups:** enhancing local capacity in UCP is often part of the overall mission of external UCP agencies;
- **Increased functioning of state structures for civilian protection:** an increase in the effective use of state mechanisms for the protection of human rights indicates a decreasing need for UCP;
- **Changing nature of UCP methods:** a decrease in the number of activities that involves protective presence, accompaniment, and interpositioning and an increase in conflict mitigation, dialogue, and training activities indicates a decreasing need for direct protection;
- **A large presence of internationals:** part of the strength of UCP lies in the presence of internationals (other than armed actors) in isolated areas of violent conflict. A large presence of internationals in conflict-affected areas is often an indicator of increased development and openness and usually results in a loss of added value from UCP agencies.
- **Increased peacebuilding and development activity:** increased peacebuilding activity may be observed in different ways. First, responding to the needs and requests of local actors, UCP teams may increasingly include components of peacebuilding in their work. Second, peacebuilding agencies may increasingly start their operations alongside UCP. This indicates that the transition from peacekeeping

to peacebuilding is well underway and that the need for direct physical protection is decreasing. Although the inclusion of methods that are often associated with peacebuilding (e.g., capacity enhancement, providing space for dialogue, supporting sustainable peace infrastructure) is an important added value of UCP and often reinforces protection strategies, UCP is not intended to be primarily a peacebuilding intervention. When successful, UCP interventions support the transition to situations where protection of civilians is no longer required, even if peacebuilding is still in process.

*UCP focuses on the primacy of local actors and their needs, and it is sufficiently flexible to move between the different stages of the peace process and address the particular needs of communities. Given these strengths, the use of UCP could be expanded in appropriate contexts and at larger scale to improve the protection of civilians while simultaneously supporting local peacebuilding work. Peacebuilding needs sufficient safety to take hold and peacekeeping needs grounding in local contexts in order to provide that safety and support local peacebuilding.*

*Ellen Furnari, et al., Securing space for local peacebuilding (2015, p.16)*

Exit strategies also need to address how UCP efforts will be sustained by local peace infrastructures following the exit of UCP personnel. In all likelihood, an exit strategy must include capacity enhancement for both local government and civil society actors so that local peace infrastructures will provide effective protection for civilians. Part of the exit work ensures that local efforts are connected to national and international agencies for continued funding and other support, when possible. Including national staff as peacekeepers or in comparable roles can also be regarded as part of the exit strategy.<sup>1</sup> Not only does it make UCP work more effective, it is also one step towards sustainability. Local staff are likely to remain in the country after internationals have gone (Schweitzer, 2012).

**Partial success:** Between clear-cut success and failure lies a large grey area. Complete success, if such a thing exists when there are so many different variables in play, would coincide with much decreased needs of local actors for UCP. Partial success refers to a situation in which a UCP agency withdraws an operation that is making a positive contribution in some respects, but is being blocked in others. UCP teams may be curtailed by the national government in such ways that the limited positive impacts of their efforts do not justify the continuation of the entire operation. A government may, for example, require an organization to leave the area or make it impossible to function by creating administrative hurdles, such as cancelling visas. These actions could indicate that UCP is having a positive impact and draws attention to the government's own lack of protection of civilians. Or it could indicate a failure of the UCP organization to build and maintain critical relationships. A good exit strategy in the context of partial success or failure will also take into account any risks to local and national staff and to local partners as a result of their employment in the UCP intervention, and will include plans

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<sup>1</sup> Another part also involves management training so that the local organization can take over the running of an organization. Management training is often a gaping hole in most UCP organizations.

to address this.

**Failure:** A UCP operation can be considered a failure under the following circumstances:

- UCP personnel repeatedly endanger local actors;
- UCP personnel repeatedly endanger themselves;
- Local actors do not accept UCP agencies;
- UCP does not achieve any of its objectives.

While lack of acceptance and achievement may constitute clear failures of a UCP operation, it is important to understand that these may take significant time to develop. Thus it is important to give an intervention more than a year or even two, before making this determination. Unlike humanitarian aid, many people in communities may not initially see the need or value of UCP.<sup>2</sup>

*The genocide didn't happen, at least not while I was there. In fact, hardly anything happened at all in Waat [South Sudan]... The village elder I spoke to in my first week gave me a cold stare and said, "You are too late. Our women and children have already died." I decided to walk. Literally. Sometimes I walked for up to 12 hours a day, through water that came up to my chest. We visited remote villages... mostly to gain trust and build relations. When I am disheartened, I remember a recent message I received from a colleague in South Sudan. She told me how much my former South Sudanese team mates have grown since I recruited them in 2012. One of them has just mediated a dispute in his own community... His dream of making a difference for his people came true... Change comes in waves. We need to hold our ground and keep moving!*

*Huibert Oldenhuis, Head of Mission Nonviolent Peaceforce in Myanmar, 2017*

## 5.4

# Development of a comprehensive UCP strategy

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<sup>2</sup> This statement may appear in contradiction with the earlier statement that community acceptance is a prerequisite for programming. In reality UCP actors are often invited by specific individuals or groups that have witnessed the UCP work elsewhere and believe it can be applied in their own context. The UCP agency may then establish a tentative presence to explore programming and in the process gains acceptance by the broader community. It often takes a few direct interventions before the broader community really understands and embraces the concept of UCP.



Modules 2 and 3 have described UCP principles and methods, and modules 4 and 5 have explained key components of the UCP programming cycle, from the identification of suitable personnel to the formulation of exit strategies. What makes these components “UCP” is their combined application in a situation of violent conflict. In this section some of the main components of UCP are brought together and applied on a case study from South Sudan (Nonviolent Peaceforce n.d.). The first part of the section (4.1) provides a presentation of the case study; the second part (4.2) describes, step by step, how UCP can be applied in this particular situation.

## 5.4.1

### Case study: Mvolo County and Yirol West County reconciliation process, 2011, South Sudan<sup>3</sup>

In Greater Mundri, violence occurs virtually every year during the dry season. It occurs when Dinka cattle keepers from Yirol West County in Lakes State migrate across the border to Mvolo County in Western Equatoria State (WES) to graze their cattle (see figure 3). Because there is insufficient grass and water in Yirol West to keep their cows alive during dry season (approximately December to May), Dinkas move south where there is more grass available. However, as they move south, they cross over into Mvolo County, where Jur farmers reside year-round. According to the Jur, the Dinka and their cattle trespass on their land, destroy their crops, steal their fishnets, and scare away the animals they hunt. However, usually the violence is relatively contained and short-lived, and the Mvolo and Yirol West communities have a history of peaceful coexistence, including shared schooling, health care facilities, and intermarriages.

But 2011 was different. Fighting started abruptly on 9 February after a youth was killed while travelling through Mvolo. Although it was never clear who committed the murder, or what the motives were, a series of retaliatory attacks immediately followed. South Sudan has been at war for most of the past fifty years and only established its independence as a separate country on 9 July 2011. Therefore, its legal structure is still evolving, and often violence remains the reflexive response to any type of conflict. Initially, the Maduynyi Cattle Camp, located in Mvolo, was attacked where the cattle camp members were Dinkas from Yirol West. The fighting at first was restricted to two villages in Mvolo, but it soon spread to affect the entire county and into Yirol West. Youth from both sides were moving along the borders and violently attacking communities from the other side. According to parties on both sides, the conflict escalated far more in 2011 than it had since 2005, when Sudan’s civil war ended; the violence was more brutal, it affected a larger geographical area, and it lasted for a longer period of time.

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3 See appendix 2 for an alternative case study, Verifying Violence and Cultivating Confidence in Western Mindanao



Large-scale destruction of property and attacks on civilians ensued: between 9 February and 3 April 2011, over 6,000 homes were burned down, over 76,000 people were displaced, dozens of civilians including children were killed or injured, and hundreds of cattle and goats were raided.

Those who were interviewed by UCP team members reported that children were hiding in the bushes, dying from dehydration, meningitis, and attacks by bees. A mission team from the South Sudan Legislative Assembly found that "children, women and elderly were under trees without food, water and health services and there was a high danger of outbreak of disease such as malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea".

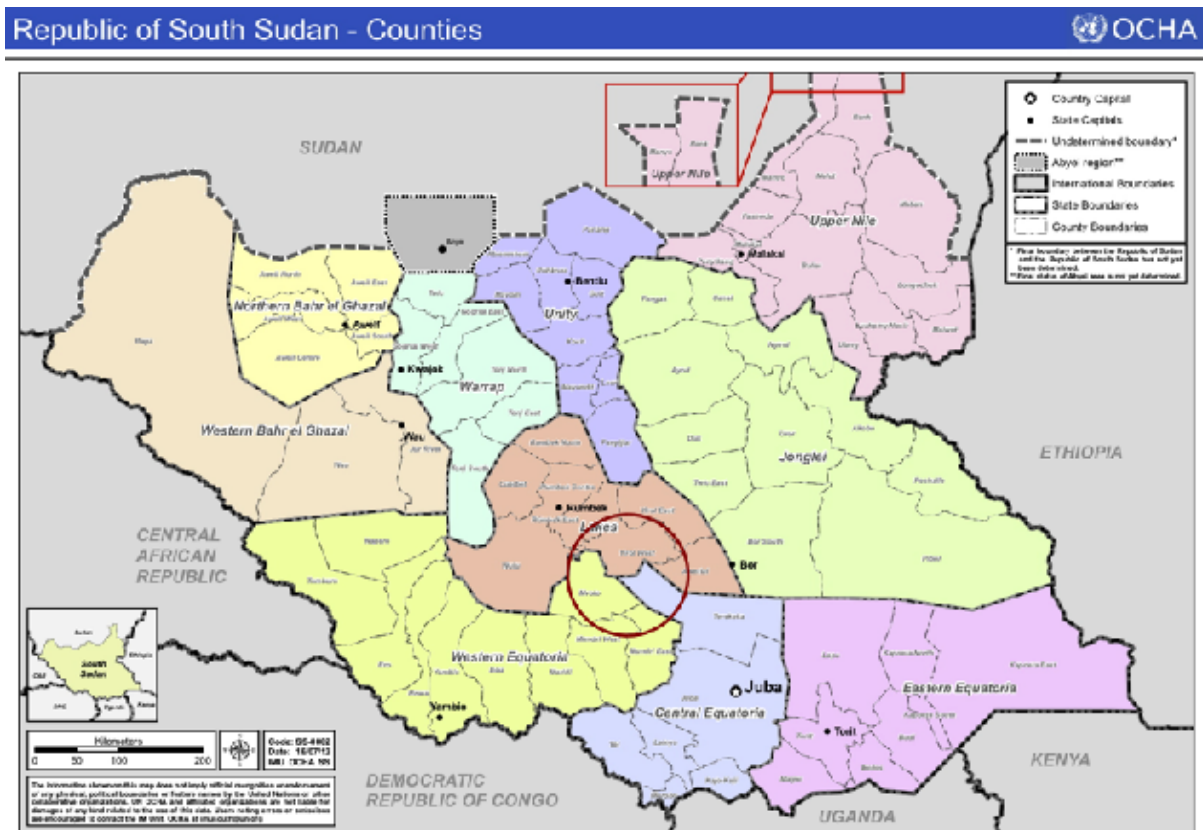


Figure 3, Map of South Sudan: The red circle indicates Mvolo County, Western Equatoria State (yellow area) and Yirol West County, Lakes State (orange area)

## 5.4.2

### Development of a comprehensive strategy to provide UCP in Mvolo County and Yirol West County

In the following strategy outline, it is assumed that a UCP agency had a long-term presence in Greater Mundri at the time this series of incidents occurred. The outline is written from the perspective of UCP personnel residing in Western Equatoria State at the time of 9 February 2011 when violence started abruptly.

#### **CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

As UCP personnel have been present in the area of Greater Mundri for a long time, an in-depth conflict analysis may have already been done. They are familiar with the conflict between the Dinka and the Jur, as violence occurs every year during the dry season. Nevertheless, they will engage in a limited conflict analysis. As mentioned in the case study, in 2011 the situation is different from previous years. The unusual scale of the violence is a good reason for reviewing conflict analysis.

UCP team members may first of all try to gather information from as many sources as possible at their base in Western Equatoria. They may try to analyse the conflict from different angles, including national politics, social relationships, culture, religion and geography. The relationship between the Dinka and the Jur communities is a key component to be analysed. As mentioned in the case study presentation, there is a history of peaceful co-existence. Team members may question if recent developments have caused a strain on this relationship and if there are other signs that indicate a breakdown in ties between the two communities. Other aspects of thematic analysis include the existence and functioning of conflict resolution mechanisms, as well as possible changes in the environment that may have further increased the scarcity of grazing areas. While the conflict presents itself as an inter-communal conflict, it occurred across a state border, so there could also be a political aspect to the conflict. Therefore, UCP personnel may want to assess the relationship between the different states. This information will not only support the analysis, but can be used later on, when state authorities may need to be involved in addressing the situation.

UCP team members may strengthen their thematic analysis by assessing the attitudes and behaviour of different groups. This would include, first of all, the youth, as they are prominently involved in the conflict, but it should include also other groups such as community elders and women. These groups may have different attitudes towards the conflict and could be encouraged to take a leadership role in promoting peace. An analysis of connectors and dividers may also be insightful. Shared hospitals, schools, and inter-marriages have connected the two communities in the past and could be used to reconnect them in the future. The difference in identity between the Jur farmers and

Dinka cattle keepers is clearly a divider, though the scarcity of natural resources seems to be the main cause of the conflict. However, as cattle keepers, the Dinka clearly view these natural resources differently from the Jur, and this intensifies the conflict. Though the ethnic differences between the Dinka and Jur do not seem to be an issue at the moment, it could become a main driver if the conflict were to intensify or expand.

When the UCP team has collected sufficient information about the conflict, they will try to integrate the different aspects of the conflict and draw conclusions. They may create a conflict map that shows the different parties and their relationships to the targeted areas. They may also draw a time-line of events to see how the conflict has progressed since the killing of the youth on 9 February. Furthermore, they need to find out if the local government, police, or chiefs have intervened and how widely the fighting youth are supported by the rest of the communities.

UCP team members may conclude that there are a number of entry points for UCP to prevent or reduce violence and provide protection in this situation. Many civilians have been displaced and may fear additional violence. If other service providers are present at all they may also fear for their safety, especially local service providers. Local authorities and segments of the affected communities most likely do not support the violence, though it is important to determine their attitude toward it. In fact, they may wish to intervene before the conflict expands in order to bring the two communities together as soon as possible. As most of them are directly or indirectly affiliated with one or another of the communities, potential peacemakers may fear being targeted if they take active roles. They may welcome the presence of a nonpartisan third party at their side.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

As soon as UCP personnel receive word of the first incident they will contact local partners and contacts in the area to gather information (pre-assessment). As the needs assessment coincides with a specific incident, information gathering for conflict analysis and needs assessment partly overlaps. UCP networks may already include actors from the affected areas; if not, local partners will be able to facilitate these relationships. Local contacts in affected communities may not only have more details about the situation, they will also be able to assess if it is appropriate for UCP personnel to become involved. UCP team members will approach local authorities for the same reasons. Moreover, they may ask them what local authorities in the affected areas have already done to respond to the crisis. They will also contact other service providers in the area. Since reports about casualties and displacement will have circulated quickly, other service providers may be planning a rapid response assessment and may be interested in teaming up.

Following initial information gathering and an affirmative response from local actors to their possible involvement, the UCP team may plan a rapid response needs assessment. Ideally this assessment is conducted in collaboration with other service providers. As early reports may already have indicated the need for food and other supplies, a collaborative needs assessment would identify and/or address various needs as quickly as possible. The communication network in rural areas may be limited, which could hinder the exchange of information. This makes it even more important for UCP personnel to travel in person to the area to gather information and assess the needs from a variety of

perspectives. As the incidents have taken place during the dry season, the roads will be accessible by car, though affected areas may still be hard to reach.

Team members will have to determine the location of the needs assessment prior to departure. Because the attacks started at the Maduynyi Cattle Camp and two villages in Mvolo, this would be a likely place to start. They may also try to identify the exact place where the youth was killed on 9 February and engage with the community there to find out what happened. The most urgent issue, however, is to locate the displaced people. As mentioned in the case study, 6,000 homes have been burned down, over 76,000 people have been displaced, dozens of civilians including children have been killed or injured, and hundreds of cattle and goats have been raided. Moreover, children are hiding in the bushes, dying from various diseases. Children, women, and elderly people have also been found without food, water, and health services. Once these vulnerable people are located, UCP personnel will need to engage with them to assess their needs. Based on the reports, there seems to be a need for food, water, shelter, medical treatment, and safety. There may also be children who have lost their parents in the attacks or were separated from their families during their flight. As livestock has been raided, many people have lost their source of income.

The UCP team will not only engage with vulnerable populations, but also with local authorities, community leaders, and civil society organizations. They will need to engage with these actors to build trust, increase their understanding of the conflict, and assess the needs of these actors. These are important actors as they may be the drivers of change, as well as potential partners. Team members will explore with them how UCP may be of service to the communities in reducing violence and protecting civilians.

In conducting the needs assessment, UCP personnel have to make sure they engage with both sides of the conflict, even if most of the urgent protection needs are identified on one side. They have to demonstrate that they are nonpartisan and advocate for the safety and security of civilians rather than favouring a particular outcome to the conflict. Furthermore, they need to engage with the authorities at the county and state levels in both Lakes State and Western Equatoria State to make sure that the presence of UCP personnel is explained and supported. This would also ensure that emergency response action by various actors is coordinated and streamlined.

## **CONTEXT AND SECURITY ANALYSIS**

Context analysis in this situation will take place during the needs assessment and during any follow-up missions to the affected areas. However, an assessment of the security situation both on the roads and at the location of the needs assessment will need to be conducted prior to departure. If the conditions are not deemed sufficiently safe, the needs assessment cannot take place. In this particular situation, there is no indication that external actors are targeted. The youth involved in the fighting seem to have moved to the border areas between the states to confront each other. Moreover, the displaced people will have moved to safer areas where UCP personnel can assess their needs. Accessibility of the area needs to be assessed prior to departure. The affected areas may be located in remote areas that are difficult to reach by road and perhaps impossible to reach by phone. Local authorities, police, and partners will be key sources of information

in regard to security and accessibility. Satellite phones are going to be indispensable.

During their journey and on location, UCP team members will try to observe and analyse the situation. Are people armed? Who are they? What weapons are they using? What is the ratio of women to men among the displaced people? Are particular groups targeted? Are they fearful? Are they injured? Are they willing to talk to UCP personnel? Where do they come from and where do they go? Team members will try to answer these questions and ask similar questions again on their following visits. This will help them to detect trends and changes in the situation and anticipate additional crises. One of the impending crises in this situation could come in the form of food insecurity. If a settlement of the conflict is not reached by the beginning of the rainy season, the displaced people may not be able to return to their homes. This means that they cannot start cultivating their crops and will risk having no food for the rest of the year, which could increase tension and spark more conflict.

Part of the context analysis is focused on the position of UCP in the conflict. As the UCP organization has a base in Western Equatoria, but not in Lakes State, it could be perceived to be on the side of the Mvolo community. Most of the UCP activities will have been conducted among the Mvolo community and their relationships with the Mvolo community may be stronger as a result of this. The UCP team can reduce this vulnerability by building relationships with key actors on all levels in Lakes State as well as with the community in Yirol West. Other vulnerabilities of UCP personnel may be identified as well. Criminal actors may take advantage of the chaos and pose threats. These actors may not target UCP practitioners, but precautionary measures have to be taken to avoid being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED**

The first population to be served will be the displaced people. They are in urgent need of help. UCP personnel may be able to support the displaced people in increasing their safety and security. They will not be able to address many of the needs of the displaced people directly as many of these needs involve material aid, but they can engage other service providers who may be able to address material needs.

Other populations to be served are the wider communities of Mvolo and Yirol West. UCP team members may support them in reducing and preventing violence as well as increasing their safety and security. They may also strengthen local peace infrastructures in the two communities in their efforts to resolve the conflict and build peace. Though the displaced people come from these same communities, they are considered a specific target group with distinct needs.

A third population to be served consists of individuals and groups who will take a leadership role in addressing the crisis situation and/or resolving the conflict. These actors may be local peacemakers from one of the two communities, but it may also be representatives from a national mediation NGO located in the capital city. The UCP team may support these actors in addressing the situation.



## IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL PARTNERS

UCP organizations often do not have to look for local partners. During the needs assessment they will engage with a wide range of actors about the situation and the potential role of UCP in the situation. A partnership may fall into place during one of these encounters. The national mediation NGO, for example, is an obvious choice for a partnership. They may have been approached by local authorities or community leaders and have come down to the area to do their own assessment. There may also be local relief and development agencies in the affected area that have assumed a leadership role in the crisis and approached UCP personnel during their needs assessment. Additionally, local community leaders such as tribal elders may offer to partner once they have met and feel confidence in the potential UCP intervention.

Though teaming up with civil society organizations is usually the easiest and most frequently used form of partnerships, in this particular situation there may not be any organized civil society organizations in the area. Therefore, the establishment of ongoing working relationships with the local government, informal structures or with community leaders would be the most obvious strategy here.

## UCP SKILLS AND METHODS

The use of UCP methods depends very much on the expressed needs and interests of the populations served, as well as the recommendations of local partners. Asking the right questions and active listening are key skills in drawing out these needs and interests. The following text describes how UCP team members of Nonviolent Peaceforce applied a variety of skills and methods in this particular situation.

As the only civilian protection agency working in the area, Nonviolent Peaceforce became involved from the early days of this conflict.<sup>4</sup> Their team members, initially four internationals and six nationals, utilized various strategies to increase the security of civilians affected by the fighting and to support the development of a sustainable peace agreement. Working together with local government authorities, they were able to locate many of the civilians who had been displaced by the fighting. UCP teams played a key role in linking humanitarian service providers with the populations in need. They alerted their partners, participated in interagency assessments of internal displacement, and advocated for humanitarian agencies to provide emergency support, while developing strategies to mitigate the violence.

Because Nonviolent Peaceforce had an office in Western Equatoria State, but not in Lakes States, they had to ensure that both sides of the conflict perceived them as a trusted and nonpartisan actor. Therefore, the team members undertook several trips to Lakes State, where they began to build relationships with communities and government officials. This laid the groundwork for later UCP interventions. By May they had established trust with community leaders, chiefs, elders, youth, police, government, and military on both sides. They also gained a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics and needs of all parties involved.

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4 This project was funded by the Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Developing relationships on both sides of the conflict was crucial, but they also needed to identify key actors on all levels of the conflict. The strategic first step was spending time visiting the affected communities and local government officials, such as the district commissioners and village administrators. UCP team members worked together with partners such as the Mundri Relief and Development Association (MRDA). They coordinated and participated in the three Peace Conferences that MRDA held in April, July, and September. They also provided a constant protective presence within the affected communities. Following these initial efforts, UCP team members travelled to the state capitals of Western Equatoria and Lakes State to meet with the governors and ministers. The governors of both states were involved in the project at the state level, but were not involved in the detailed engagements at the community level. While team members in the field engaged with the authorities at the state level, others in the capital city met with members of the national legislative assembly to gain support from high-level government officials.

As the project developed, the Nonviolent Peaceforce team also ended up working closely together with a unit of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), called the Joint Integrated Unit (JIU). The JIU, deployed to the area to bring the situation under control, had a difficult time engaging with the various parties as they were sent out to cover two states with one vehicle and no communication equipment. Nevertheless, according to the UCP team members, the JIU turned out to be a very helpful partner. "...they were one of the most genuine group of soldiers we had ever worked with and they were eager to be agents of peace..." (Easthom, n.d.).

At the beginning of May 2011, UCP personnel learned of an initiative coming from the chiefs on each side to meet. On three occasions meetings were scheduled, but all failed. On 25 May two UCP teams travelled along the borders of Mvolo and Yirol West to meet with a number of key actors. These actors included local government officials, chiefs, elders, youth, as well as the recently deployed Joint Integrated Unit forces. The UCP team members inquired why the scheduled meetings were cancelled. The local government and chiefs told them that the community members feared traveling to each other's side of the border to meet. Two days later UCP personnel coordinated with the Joint Integrated Unit and the local government to hold the first peace talks. UCP team members accompanied chiefs and local leaders from Kokori to Mapourdit, two of the most affected areas, to meet. They provided proactive presence throughout the meeting. This was the first time since the start of the conflict in February that chiefs crossed the border from one side to the other.

The dialogue was remarkably successful. Peace and freedom of movement were officially declared between the communities of Kokori and Mapourdit. Furthermore, concrete measures were established to improve the situation for civilians affected by the conflict and to strengthen the relationships between the two communities. For example, both sides agreed that the main hospital would be reopening with immediate effect to provide medical care to the sick and injured people from Mvolo. These patients had been too afraid to travel into Mapourdit since February. Schools located in Lakes State, which had provided educations to residents from both Yirol West and Mvolo, re-opened. Chiefs encouraged their displaced communities to return home. Furthermore, a structure of accountability between the youths, chiefs, and local government was agreed upon to strengthen the peace process. Any breaches of the agreement were to be reported to the

Joint Integrated Unit forces.

Despite the significant progress, more dialogue was necessary. In order to sustain and further strengthen the peace process, chiefs from other affected areas, as well as the two most respected leaders in Yirol West and Mvolo would need to participate and buy in to the peace agreements. UCP teams organized and accompanied a convoy of four vehicles to carry the chiefs, elders, and youth from Mvolo to Yirol West to the second round of peace talks on 7 June.

The second round of peace talks was emotional and intense. Chiefs on both sides expressed a strong desire to restore peace. As a result of the talks, peace and freedom of movement were officially declared between all communities along the border. IDPs were encouraged to return home and begin their cultivation. The chiefs also agreed to meet again to draft guidelines on how the different communities would interact. This involved cattle-keepers obtaining and carrying letters of permission from local government officials whenever they entered other villages. Finally, on 10 June 2011 UCP team members accompanied chiefs from Yirol West into Mvolo to a special ceremony and monitored the meeting as all participating chiefs signed the peace agreement.

Evidence of the success of the ceasefire agreement was already apparent the day following the first meeting on May 27 when UCP personnel observed nurses returning to the hospital to resume their work. The ceasefire agreement also included provisions to allow IDPs to safely return home without the threat of further violence. In the days following the first peace talks, UCP personnel observed small groups of men returning to the deserted communities to begin cultivation, and by the end of the second peace talks, families were observed walking home with their belongings. The chiefs from the border communities estimated that approximately half of their people returned in those days.

Following the peace agreement UCP team members worked together with the two communities to monitor its implementation. On 22 June the peace process faced its first challenge. There was news that five unidentified youth went looking for their cattle that had been stolen in the first major incident on 9 February in Mvolo area. Once the youth realized there were no cattle in the area for them to reclaim they killed five people. The investigator for the South Sudan Police Service in Greater Mundri immediately led an investigation team to collect information, informing the local community not to take the law into their own hands. UCP personnel arrived on 23 June and stayed until 25 June to meet with authorities and community leaders. There was an enormous sense of frustration and anger among community members in Mvolo. They felt the other side was not keeping their part to the peace agreement.

Although there were communication channels between the two sides, the relationship was still weak. Moreover, the chiefs did not know whom to contact to find out why they had been attacked. Because the UCP teams had built relationships with both sides, they travelled into Yirol West to meet with community leaders and authorities to gather information. From 27 to 30 June a UCP team was deployed to first meet with the Mvolo side again, before going to Yirol West. This visit was simply made to advise the community in Mvolo about the trip they were undertaking to Yirol West. It made the affected communities aware about the movements of UCP personnel in the area. In Yirol West, UCP team members quickly found out that the communities of Yirol West

were appalled by the incident. The administrator of Mapourdit as well as the head chief both sent letters of condolence to the communities in Mvolo and informed them that they had nothing to do with the attack.

When the perpetrators were apprehended, UCP personnel visited them in prison. They also engaged with the leaders of the community to which the perpetrators belonged. This community feared revenge attacks and made a real effort to explain that the community did not support these criminal acts. They also wrote letters to the communities of Mvolo to express their condolences. UCP team members traveled back to Mvolo to share the information they had obtained on their trip to Yirol West. This helped to ease tensions in Mvolo and the leaders of the affected areas in Mvolo expressed their willingness to re-engage with the other side to further increase the relationship and prevent similar incidents in the future.

In all of these efforts UCP personnel tried to identify the actors most committed to the peace process. They encouraged these actors to influence those who were losing confidence in the process in order to avoid a re-escalation of the conflict. UCP teams continued for a long time to provide follow-up support to these communities. They visited tribal chiefs to ensure that information of the ceasefire had been properly disseminated and planned a follow-up conference to ensure buy-in from all tribal chiefs. They also provided accompaniment for returning IDPs to the affected areas. Finally, UCP personnel supported the leadership from both communities to document their resolutions and to formulate mutually agreed codes of conduct. This would guide communities through difficult issues such as cattle movement and the use of land. In September 2011 the chiefs on each side signed a Memorandum of Understanding that consolidated all the agreements.

*There have been no conflicts since September. Usually the conflicts are in the dry season between September and April. This has been a 100% success. I give the credit to Nonviolent Peaceforce.*

*Sapana Abuyi, Deputy Governor Western Equatoria State in South Sudan,  
2012*

Though South Sudan descended into civil war in December 2013, large-scale violence between the Jur farmers and the Dinka cattle keepers in Mvolo County and Yirol West County has not yet repeated itself. There have been a couple of minor incidents in the area, but no deaths have been reported since the September agreement. The effects of the civil war have been felt in the area and increased all sorts of tensions, but the local government has reportedly been effective in diffusing major tensions that could lead to a resurfacing of the conflict between the farmers and the cattle keepers. Nonviolent Peaceforce has continued to monitor the situation and occasionally sent a UCP team to the area to conduct community dialogues and support affected populations to explore their options. These teams observed that local communities have been proactive in solving conflicts nonviolently and appeared strongly committed to prevent new outbreaks of violence.

## EXIT STRATEGY

Throughout the peace process, stakeholders repeatedly shared with UCP personnel that they felt they needed to learn how to deal with conflicts without violence. Over time, traditional nonviolent conflict resolution practices had been eroded and the communities wanted to learn new processes as well as reinvigorate traditions. As a component of conflict prevention, Nonviolent Peaceforce therefore developed a capacity enhancement programme for the two communities. This programme was designed to increase the skills and the confidence of community members to engage in nonviolent conflict resolution and develop unarmed community protection mechanisms. A training-of-trainers was provided as a conclusion to the capacity development programme, allowing local actors to continue to train more people. As a follow-up to the capacity development programme, UCP personnel worked together with the two communities to develop their Early Warning Early Response (EWER) capacities.

The capacity development programme and the establishment of community-based EWER systems can be seen as part of an exit strategy. The capacity development programme helped to increase the confidence and capability of local actors to take over the role of UCP teams in the process as well as to develop the capacity and confidence of others. The development of EWER systems strengthened UCP infrastructures in the area, which communities could use to prevent and reduce violence in the following years.

The case study shows that many of the UCP methods presented in module 3 were used over the course of this particular conflict. Some of these methods could have been applied more extensively, in different ways, or at different stages of the conflict. Additional methods like interpositioning could have been applied as well. However, the choice of methods and their particular application in a particular situation depends very much on specific developments in the conflict, as well as the initiatives of local actors. The moment community leaders initiated peace talks or peace conferences, UCP team members responded to these initiatives and adapted their strategy to support them. It clearly shows that local actors are the main actors in the peace process, while UCP personnel create the space for these processes to take place, nurture the processes, and ensure they are followed through, despite many obstacles. In doing these activities, UCP teams not only accompanied individuals but also accompanied the process.

The case study only describes a few obstacles. There were many more. Reducing violence, protecting civilians, and supporting a sustainable resolution to this conflict required NP to engage in 115 separate interventions between February and September 2011. It shows that UCP requires sustained effort over a long period of time. It also shows that a peace agreement may only be the beginning of a much longer peace process. The investment in direct attention and presence in the community yields real rewards, in the gradual restoration of safer communities.

# 5.5

## Dilemmas

During the implementation of UCP in situations of violent conflict, throughout the UCP programming cycle, a variety of dilemmas can arise. UCP actors, along with their local partners, may have to make difficult choices between two or more alternatives that are equally undesirable or that may lead to undesirable consequences, or where they feel external pressure from donors or governments, for example. A lot of these dilemmas are caused by the tensions that arise between the various key principles and key sources of guidance when they are applied to a specific context, or by the realities of conditions on the ground.

The following sections provide a number of dilemmas that UCP practitioners may face.

### **PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND NONVIOLENCE VERSUS THE PRIMACY OF LOCAL ACTORS**

UCP teams may find themselves in situations where the civilians they protect or the actors they team up with engage in actions that seem to go against UCP principles. They may for example find a weapon on a human rights defender they are about to accompany, even though the organization that person represents espouses nonviolence. The principles of the primacy of local actors and nonpartisanship require UCP practitioners not to interfere in the affairs of local actors. At the same time, the principle of nonviolence tells them not to support or be associated with armed struggle. This can be a dilemma.

Though UCP practitioners refrain from imposing their views on local actors, it does not mean they have to support violent attitudes or behaviour. In regards to the abovementioned example, they may engage the human rights defender in a dialogue about the use of weapons, the perception that carrying a weapon creates, and its impact on the work of the organization. Furthermore, they may offer the defender the possibility to proceed with the accompaniment if he or she decides to go unarmed, all the while clearly explaining that ultimately it is the choice of the defender to decide on the desired course of action.

### **BEING RESPONSIVE VERSUS PRIMACY OF LOCAL ACTORS**

In certain isolated areas of violent conflict, UCP teams may be the only service providers present. Though the levels of violence are high and protection needs many, state structures may be limited and organized civil society non-existent. Interest in UCP services may be apparent, though it is not articulated or formulated into official requests. This situation prompts UCP personnel to take a more active role in the prevention of violence and the protection of civilians. If the primacy of local actors is too strictly adhered to, there is a risk of stagnation. UCP teams will be perceived as not responsive to the urgent needs and may even risk further disempowering an already disempowered community. Though



traditional mechanisms can be identified (they exist in every situation) and capacity can be enhanced, UCP organizations will have to exercise a greater degree of leadership for a time in these contexts.

In determining the boundaries of their more active involvement, UCP personnel need to consider the danger of interfering in local affairs, in particular being sensitive to the different perspectives and complexities of contradictions within local communities. They also need to take to consider overreaching their professional capacity. The lack of basic support services and expert service providers may prompt them to be responsive and support affected communities wherever they can (“if we don’t do anything, no one else will”). This may be appropriate in some cases, but not in other cases. Providing trauma counselling to survivors of sexual violence without appropriate skills may not only be unprofessional, but it may even cause harm. Even the act of simply opening a space to talk about sexual violence, without providing any access to psychosocial and medical support services, may have a negative impact. It may encourage women to come forward and address these issues in their community, while UCP teams do not have access to the necessary support services to back them up. This does not mean sending away a survivor of sexual violence that knocks on your door, just because you are not specifically trained to deal with GBV issues, and you are afraid to do harm. It simply means being aware of your own professional capacity and managing expectations.

Another issue related to the dilemma of being responsive, while maintaining the primacy of local actors, is immediate conflict intervention. Perceived as expert peace workers, UCP personnel are often approached by local actors independent of an EWER system to solve urgent conflicts in the community or interposition themselves in a fight. Not only is such an active role in many cases interfering with the principle of the primacy of local actors (i.e., local police, elders, or others who might be asked), it may also interfere with being nonpartisan. Moreover, it is often a security risk. UCP protection methods are mainly preventive, and interpositioning is only undertaken after very careful preparation and risk assessment. It would be more appropriate if local actors would intervene in the conflict themselves, while UCP teams provide a protective presence. In another example, UCP organizations may be asked to provide training or other forms of capacity enhancement that could be provided by or at least include local actors in leadership. Community people may prefer the ‘outside experts’ and request just UCP support, but care must be taken not to undermine the position of local expertise.

## **PREVENTING VIOLENCE VERSUS PROMOTING CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

Prevention of violence is a key objective of UCP. De-escalating tensions is one method that UCP practitioners use to prevent violence. De-escalating tensions at the stage of confrontation may prevent violence, but it may also reaffirm an unjust status quo (structural violence) and prevent the transformation of conflict. Oppressed groups may have accepted an unjust status quo for a long time, but at some point feel sufficiently confident and emboldened to confront their oppressors. Confrontation in this case is a sign that the balance of power is shifting. It may eventually lead to a more just status quo. At this stage the injustices need to be made visible in order for negotiations to take place and change to occur. Civil society advocates may push for a re-balancing of power. They may amplify the voice of the oppressed, legitimize their concerns and aspirations,



and undermine the legitimacy, authority, and power of those who rule over them. The confrontation may be addressed through either violent struggle or active nonviolence, or a combination of both.

UCP methods such as accompaniment, proactive presence, capacity development, and confidence-building may be partly responsible for the initiatives of local actors in challenging the unjust status quo. Guided by the principles of nonviolence and of International Human Rights Law, UCP practitioners may encourage this process, as long as the confrontation is addressed through nonviolence. As nonpartisan actors, though, they must refrain from taking the side of those driving the process. This is a subtle difference that can be extremely challenging for individual UCP practitioners, who may have joined the UCP agency out of their commitment to social justice. In case of a vertical conflict, in which the government is maintaining the unjust status quo, UCP personnel are easily perceived as interfering with state sovereignty. They may be perceived as taking the side of ‘trouble makers’ and ‘actively promoting conflict’. If the confrontation becomes violent, the government may even blame UCP teams for actively promoting violence. Under these circumstances it is of the utmost importance that UCP team members maintain a strict discipline in adhering to nonpartisanship, nonviolence, and the primacy of local actors. One step out of line may give the government the justification to shut down the entire UCP operation and expel the international UCP personnel.

### **MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS VERSUS CHALLENGING AUTHORITIES TO UPHOLD AND PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS**

As has been explained in earlier sections of this narrative, UCP actors aim to build and maintain close relationships with authorities that they can leverage for the sake of providing protection. Good relationships may also allow UCP actors to maintain their presence in the country or gain access to restricted conflict-affected areas. From this perspective, the extension of visas, access to restricted areas, or invitations to participate in formal ceasefire bodies can be seen as indicators of success, while lack of access, hostile remarks, and expulsion as indicators of failure. Negative reactions, however, do not necessarily imply lack of impact, sometimes it is quite the contrary. The mistake organizations sometimes make is to conclude that if government authorities get angry it must mean the organization has made a mistake or ‘gone too far’ (Mahoney 2018, p.28). While this may be the case, it may also be that the organization has put the finger exactly where it hurts and that the response of the government is a deliberate tactic to dissuade the organization from repeating such behaviour.

UCP is usually provided as a response to poor application of the rule of law. Uncomfortable encounters with authorities are bound to happen. UCP actors need to be willing to step into, even get comfortable with, a space of discomfort. At best, they try to remain right on the razor’s edge, continuously leaning deeper into discomfort, but never overstretching, and swiftly pulling back or sideways when required. If strings on a musical instrument are too tight, they break. If they are tuned too loose, no sound will come out. As political circumstances continuously change, UCP agencies do well to regularly ask themselves whether their strings are too loose or too tight, if they do enough to challenge the injustice and marginalization they witness. As Liam Mahony

writes, “peacebuilding efforts that tacitly accept discrimination and segregation as an unchangeable given (‘politically unfeasible to confront’) are likely to strengthen the discriminatory structures and patterns they don’t explicitly try to change.” (Mahony 2018, p.19)

## USING PRIVILEGE VERSUS NONVIOLENCE

Some UCP practitioners make use of the special status (often based on race, nationality or ethnicity) that a foreigner is given in many places around the world, in order to provide protection. Even many of those deemed to be ruthless killers may abide by etiquettes of hospitality and civility. UCP personnel are often perceived as “guests”. The Swahili phrase “when the guest arrives, the host desists” succinctly states the pattern.<sup>5</sup> UCP teams “use the psychological force of the universal inclination to hospitality to prevent their ‘hosts’ from losing this esteem. Granted, this is a subtle ‘force’, but no less real. It exists only through face-to-face presence of ‘guests’, especially guests from places most distant...” (Grant 2008).

Using the visibility and the privilege accorded to them as internationals to their advantage has been an important instrument of UCP protection strategies. It may have enabled them to pass through checkpoints, and given them access to military camps or to authorities who are reluctant to meet local actors from particular ethnic groups or classes. This, however, can be a dangerous use of privilege. It can reinforce the existing oppressive order and may contribute to preventing the population from standing up for their rights. In that way, UCP presence can contribute to a culture in which the state is not held accountable for the continuation of a discriminatory status quo. UCP organizations usually counter this by enhancing the capacity and confidence of oppressed minority groups and facilitating dialogue between minority groups and other groups, including state actors. Some UCP organizations specifically include training on anti-racism and consider de-colonizing their work to be a significant and ongoing practice (see Paynesville good practices report, 2020)

The issue of race is a particularly delicate issue that has not been explored or acknowledged sufficiently within many UCP organizations.<sup>6</sup> While the power that a foreign passport brings to an isolated conflict area applies to all foreigners, regardless of race, white skin and European descent has undoubtedly played (and still plays) a significant part in creating the desired deterrence effect. In fact, various local (slang) languages equate the word ‘foreigner’ with ‘white person’. UCP actors have frequently experienced that local actors have been more open to meeting with or listening to white people, men in particular, than people of colour. At the same time, international UCP staff of colour, from the Global South, have been effective in UCP work in contexts as diverse as South Sudan, the South Caucasus, and the Philippines. Moreover, they have at times managed to connect faster with local actors through (perceived) shared experiences of war and poverty. The dynamics of race and global status and related disparities of power may also play out within organizations and need careful attention. This is particularly important

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5 The aphorism refers to a husband and wife who must stop arguing because a guest has arrived.

6 See Sara Koopman “Making space for peace: international protective accompaniment in Colombia” for in depth discussion, and CPT website

for UCP teams residing in conflict-affected areas. When white team leaders are always seen to make the decisions, it reinforces racial prejudice and misses opportunities for communities to reflect on their own diversity.

*Yes, UCP may use white privilege to its advantage and risks reinforcing it, but its methods and principles also enable people to reflect on the issue of race. The state governor may only want to talk to my white colleague rather than to me, a woman of colour, and we may both let that be in order to gain the leverage we need to protect civilians. But then we go back home and we talk about it as a team, because it is an aspect of UCP to look at these issues and a concern of all of us to build on, empowering both the members of the team and the communities we work with.*

*Rosemary Kabaki, Head of Mission, Nonviolent Peaceforce in Myanmar, 2020.*

## **BUILDING CONFIDENCE VERSUS PROTECTION**

Building confidence usually empowers people, but if it is not handled correctly it can also disempower people. In a situation of violent conflict it can even put people at risk. If confidence building is not linked to a real improvement in security, it could encourage excessive risk-taking. Conversely, when training becomes teaching people what to do or ignores local wisdom it can reinforce dependency on external experts and decrease confidence.

The East Timor experience is an example of high-stakes encouragement. The presence of UN peacekeepers in East Timor encouraged full popular participation in the ballot that led to independence. It enabled Timorese political organizations to feel that they, in turn, could encourage popular participation. As violence and threats mounted, the UN mission promised, ‘We will not leave.’ But it was a promise that the UN mission could not keep; as security conditions deteriorated drastically, the mission reached a point where it felt that its protective impact was not significant enough to justify the risk to its staff. The mission first pulled out of all the provinces, and then held on in Dili until a military intervention was mandated (and until it could evacuate the national staff and IDPs hiding in its compound). In this case the policy of encouragement—firmly supported by the leadership of Timorese civil society—may have increased civilian vulnerability to subsequent massacres (Mahony, 2006, p.77).

## **SELF PROTECTION VERSUS PROTECTING OTHERS**

*The strategy of stopping a bullet only works once.*

*Tiffany Easthom, former Head of Mission of Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan*

Increasing the safety and security of threatened civilians is one of the highest priorities

in UCP, but it is never done at the expense of the safety of UCP personnel. They are not asked to sacrifice themselves to save others. The basic rationale behind this is a pragmatic choice: UCP practitioners cannot protect if they get shot. Furthermore, the death of a UCP practitioner will have a negative impact on the capacity of UCP to provide protection. Even if vulnerable civilians are under immediate threat, UCP teams may have to seek cover instead of advance and protect. As has been mentioned before, UCP is a preventive strategy, not a defensive one. It is something all UCP practitioners know, but in a situation of immediate threat, it is not always easy to apply. Moreover, it is often not easy to determine the severity of a threat.

Most UCP agencies have strict security protocols in place to prevent such occurrences. Evacuation of UCP personnel is often a decision taken by a country director or a designated committee, and it does not allow individual team members the option to stay behind and protect civilians. Even a consensus-based organization like Peace Brigades International has exceptional mechanisms in place: a particular body is provided with the authority to make a unilateral decision on the evacuation of UCP personnel in emergency situations. Risk assessments and context analysis are continually carried out to evaluate the security situation. UCP teams also rely heavily on their extensive network of relationships, especially local partners, but also diplomatic and NGO communities. In a very real way, they are being protected by those they have come to protect. For instance, when a UCP team member of Nonviolent Peaceforce was kidnapped in Mindanao in 2009, local civil society groups held public demonstrations demanding his release<sup>7</sup>.

## **IMMEDIATE NEEDS VERSUS SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE**

UCP practitioners in the field are frequently confronted with a dilemma between reacting to current needs versus developing and implementing plans towards more sustainable changes. Parents may approach UCP personnel requesting support for the return of their children from armed groups, IDPs may need help negotiating with other agencies and the government, a crisis flares and specific communities may need proactive presence. These activities can consume all available resources and push to the background previously planned activities such as supporting the development of a community network or establishing a local protection team. The pressures of daily work and the need to react to immediate needs are often seen as being in contradiction with the need to take time to update context analysis, make a work plan, or to reflect together on the work. This can be understood as a dilemma between the immediacy of the need to uphold the humanitarian imperative (i.e. the obligation of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed) versus the need to develop local capacities and to do so sustainably. Both positions can claim to give primacy to local actors.

One can even think of this as a dilemma regarding UCP practitioners being nonviolent toward themselves versus responding to the context at hand. Thomas Merton noted that: “There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away

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7 The person in question was released soon after.

by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.” (Merton, 1977)

These are just a few of the many dilemmas which UCP practitioners face. There are no simple formulas to guide decision making in these cases. They present what can be termed “wicked problems”. UCP practitioners must rely on a strong grounding in the principles and practices of UCP, a strong team that can discuss the specifics of the situation and help each other make good decisions, and the humility to acknowledge mistakes and change course.



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APPENDICES

# Appendix 1

## Glossary

Concept	Description/definition
<b>Accompaniment</b>	<p><b>Accompaniment</b> in its broadest usage refers to unarmed civilians using their presence to deter violence against other civilians. It is usually, though not always, carried out by international organizations. Accompaniment may be provided to individuals such as human rights defenders or other activists, as well as to whole communities. Some organizations refer to physical accompaniment as well as legal, psychosocial and political accompaniment. In this text accompaniment has been used in a narrower sense only of physical accompaniment of people who are traveling, or moving, from one place to another. Among ucp actors, accompaniment is often used interchangeably with <b>protective accompaniment</b>, though not all accompaniment has a protective aim. See also protective accompaniment.</p>
<b>Capacity enhancement</b>	<p><b>Capacity</b> is the ability of individuals, institutions, and broader systems to perform their functions effectively and efficiently, and achieve their development objectives in a sustainable way. <b>Capacity enhancement</b> is a process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time.</p> <p>In the context of ucp, it is understood as the strengthening of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the purpose of violence prevention and protection of civilians. Capacity enhancement includes training courses or workshops on topics such as ucp and human rights or early warning early response. It also includes the coaching and supporting of existing or newly established local protection mechanisms.</p>

<b>Ceasefire monitoring</b>	<b>Ceasefire monitoring</b> refers to the observation and communication of compliance or non-compliance to a ceasefire agreement by its signatory parties. A <b>ceasefire</b> is understood as a period of truce, especially one that is temporary and is often a preliminary step to establishing a more permanent peace on agreed terms. <b>Civilian ceasefire monitoring</b> within the concept of ucp focuses on reducing the impact of ceasefire violations and ongoing armed clashes on civilian populations. It complements observation, verification and reporting with protective presence, proactive engagement and other ucp methods. Ceasefire monitoring is perhaps the most prominent and most complex application of monitoring. See also <b>Monitoring</b> .
<b>Civilian immunity</b>	<b>Civilian immunity</b> is to be understood as ‘an <i>almost</i> absolute principle that spells out one of the central and most stringent requirements of justice as it applies to war, and recognizes an <i>almost</i> absolute right of the vast majority of civilians—namely, all those who cannot be considered “currently engaged in the business of war”—not to be targets of deadly violence.’
<b>Civilian-led</b>	<b>Civilian-led</b> refers to the partnership (whether formal or informal cooperation) between (international or national) ucp organizations and local civil society actors. It also refers to the notion that the ucp organization itself and the local people most engaged with it are civilians, not operating as part of a military organization.
<b>Conflict</b>	<b>Conflict</b> refers to the tensions between people over specific needs or wants they try to fulfil. It is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving their respective goals. Conflict is a part of life and cannot be avoided. See also <b>Horizontal</b> and <b>Vertical</b> conflict.
<b>Conflict analysis</b>	<b>Conflict analysis</b> refers to the detailed examination of the elements, structures and dynamics of a conflict. Conflict analysis is a tool that helps in understanding of a particular conflict, in order to prevent violence and to manage or solve that conflict in a timely manner. See also <b>Context analysis</b> .

<p><b>Context analysis</b></p>	<p><b>Context analysis</b> or situational analysis refers to the detailed examination of the ongoing developments and dynamics of a specific situation. Context analysis is different from conflict analysis, but they are interrelated. <i>Conflict</i> analysis has a limited focus on one particular conflict and its development through time (focus on the past). <i>Context</i> analysis on the other hand has a broad focus on one particular moment in time (focus on the present). <i>Conflict</i> analysis precedes context analysis and is undertaken periodically, especially at the beginning and end of a project cycle. <i>Context</i> analysis is done continually. UCP personnel at the field level may conduct context analysis on a weekly or monthly basis.</p>
<p><b>Deterrence</b></p>	<p><b>Deterrence</b> means confronting aggressors with sufficient negative consequences, or the potential for negative consequence, to influence them not to commit human rights violations or abuse. See also <b>Encouragement</b>.</p>
<p><b>Duty bearer</b></p>	<p><b>Duty-bearers</b> are actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights. By ratifying a un human rights treaty or convention, the state (as principal duty bearer) automatically assumes the role of guaranteeing these rights (of the right holders), namely the obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil people’s rights. In other words, the state must take all necessary procedures to guarantee their citizens’ rights. Non-state duty bearers (aka moral duty bearers) include parents, teachers, principals, administrators, ngos, etc.</p>

<p><b>Early Warning Early Response</b></p>	<p><b>Early Warning Early Response (EWER)</b> is a systematic application of monitoring for the sake of preventing violence, reducing the impact of violence and increasing the safety and security of civilians in tense situations of violent conflict. It is based on the awareness that conflicts generally progress through well-recognized stages. By monitoring the progression of a conflict, it may be possible to predict the development of a crisis or at least be aware of signs of imminent violence. Timely awareness of an imminent crisis may help civilians to prepare themselves to face the crisis or to evacuate the area. A timely response may prevent the crisis from developing or at least reduce its impact.</p> <p><b>Early Warning</b> can be defined as the collection and communication of information about a crisis, the analysis of that information, and the initial consideration of potential response options to the crisis. Conflict early warning requires (near real-time) assessment of events that, in a high-risk environment, are likely to trigger the rapid escalation of violence. It consists of data collection, risk analysis, and the sharing of information and recommendations with selected recipients.</p> <p><b>Early Response (Action)</b> is often used in conjunction with early warning. It refers to the actions that are taken to prevent violence or the escalation of violence and to protect civilians who are in danger of harm due to the conflict. In addition to direct ucp intervention, actions to prevent or de-escalate violence can be diplomatic, military, humanitarian, and/or economic. They may be as simple as getting armed parties to agree to wait until all civilians are removed from the area before resuming fighting, or as complicated as organized civilian displacement to safe places.</p> <p>See also <b>Monitoring</b>.</p>
<p><b>Encouragement</b></p>	<p><b>Encouragement</b> can provide moral support, boost morale, and provide new ideas and additional protection tools. This can support local peace infrastructures in generating renewed efforts for peace and security. It can also support perpetrators of violence in respecting human rights and identifying alternative strategies to fulfil their needs without resorting to violence. See also <b>Deterrence</b>.</p>



<b>Environment-building action</b>	<b>Environment-building action</b> refers to a more structural process aimed at creating and/or consolidating an environment conducive to full respect for the rights of individuals and groups. See also unarmed civilian peacekeeping.
<b>Horizontal conflict</b>	<b>Horizontal conflict</b> refers to conflict between non-state actors. This includes tribal conflicts and conflicts between religious or ethnic groups. Conflicts between indigenous communities and multinationals are also referred to as 'horizontal', though multinationals are usually backed by state power. See also <b>Conflict</b> and <b>Vertical Conflict</b> .
<b>Human rights defender</b>	<b>Human rights defenders</b> , individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights, including civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Particular issues of concern in areas of violent conflict are executions, torture, arbitrary arrest, and detention, discrimination, forced evictions, and access to health care. Human rights defenders investigate and report on human rights violations and abuse. They also accompany survivors of human rights violations, take action to end impunity, support better governance, contribute to the implementation of human rights treaties, and provide human rights education.
<b>Human security</b>	<b>Human security</b> goes beyond the traditional concept of national security to a new and inclusive concept that brings together the agendas of basic human rights, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. It recognizes the intrinsic indivisibility of human development, rights, and safety.
<b>Intercultural competence</b>	<b>Intercultural competence</b> is a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interactions in a variety of cultural contexts.
<b>International Human Rights Law</b>	<b>International Human Rights Law (IHRL)</b> is made up of an accumulated body of international instruments including treaties, declarations and standards that aim to establish the basic rights of all people.
<b>International Humanitarian Law</b>	<b>International Humanitarian Law (IHL)</b> is the law of armed conflict. It is a set of international (conventional and customary) rules specifically designed to govern the humanitarian issues stemming from armed conflict, whether international or internal.

<b>International Refugee Law</b>	<b>International Refugee Law (IRL)</b> is a set of rules that aims to protect: i) persons seeking asylum from persecution; and, ii) those recognized as refugees under relevant legal instruments.
<b>Interpositioning</b>	<b>Interpositioning</b> is the act of physically placing oneself between conflicting parties in order to prevent them from using violence against one another. See also <b>Proactive engagement</b> .
<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>Monitoring</b> is essentially the practice of observing compliance to a standard. The purpose of monitoring is to help all those involved to make appropriate and timely judgments and decisions that will improve the quality of the work, ensure accountability, and encourage implementation according to plan. Within the context of ucp there are three main applications of monitoring: <b>ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, and early warning early response (EWER)</b> .
<b>Multi-track dialogue</b>	<p><b>Multi-track dialogue</b> is a term for dialogue (deliberate, arranged conversations organized, and often facilitated by, organizations or individuals.) Processes operating on several tracks simultaneously.</p> <p><b>Track 1</b> usually refers to official dialogue between high-level political and military leaders, focusing on ceasefires, treaties and post-conflict political processes;</p> <p><b>Track 2</b> refers to unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships and encouraging new thinking that can inform the official process. It typically involves influential academic, religious, and ngo leaders and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials;</p> <p><b>Track 3</b> refers to people-to-people dialogue undertaken by individuals and private groups to encourage interaction and understanding between hostile communities. This involves awareness-raising and confidence building within these communities.</p> <p>More information: <a href="http://glossary.Usip.Org/resource/tracks-diplomacy">http://glossary.Usip.Org/resource/tracks-diplomacy</a></p>

<b>Needs assessment</b>	A <b>needs assessment</b> is a systematic process for determining and addressing needs, or ‘gaps’ between current conditions and desired conditions or ‘wants’. ‘Needs’ refer to basic human needs that apply to all human beings. In the context of ucp, a needs assessment usually determines the safety and security needs of civilians in situations of violent conflict. Ucp teams aim to measure the discrepancy between current conditions and wanted conditions, and to measure their ability to appropriately address the gaps.
<b>Nonpartisanship</b>	Being nonpartisan means not choosing or taking sides in a conflict. <b>Nonpartisanship</b> does not mean indifference or passivity. Nonpartisan actors proactively engage in a conflict. They may work against injustice and the violations of human rights, or for personal dignity and individual freedom, as means for establishing an enduring peace.
<b>Nonviolence</b>	<b>Nonviolence</b> is a framework that consists of a specific ethical and political philosophy, principle, and practice. In its most basic form can be defined as the use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change. As an ethical philosophy, nonviolence upholds the view that moral behaviour excludes the use of violence; as a political philosophy it maintains that violence is self-perpetuating and can never provide a means to a lasting peaceful end. As a principle, it supports the pacifist position that war and killing are never justified. As a practice, both pacifists and non-pacifists have used nonviolence to achieve social change and express resistance to oppression.
<b>Peacebuilding</b>	<b>Peacebuilding</b> efforts aim to resolve violent conflict and improve political processes, social services, state functions, and economic development.
<b>Peacekeeping</b>	<b>Peacekeeping</b> is action undertaken to preserve peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the <b>peacemakers</b> . Peacekeeping efforts deliver security and early <b>peacebuilding</b> support.
<b>Peacemaking</b>	<b>Peacemaking</b> efforts aim to bring about a negotiated agreement between conflicting parties.

<p><b>Power</b></p>	<p><b>Power</b> is the ability to get what you want. There are different forms of power: visible, hidden, and invisible power. Visible power includes formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions, and procedures of decision-making; hidden power relates to influential people and institutions maintaining their influence and determining the agenda; invisible power involves the shaping of psychological and ideological boundaries of participation.</p>
<p><b>Primacy of local actors</b></p>	<p>The phrase ‘<b>primacy of local actors</b>’ refers to the principle that local actors have the right and responsibility to determine their own futures, govern their own country or community, and solve their own problems. In the context of violent conflict this means that third parties can support, protect, empower, and/or collaborate with local actors, while recognizing that the local actors remain the drivers of peace processes, development, and socio-political change.</p>
<p><b>Proactive engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Proactive engagement</b> refers to the need of being proactive for the sake of providing protection. It means being physically present, as well as being proactively engaged with all stakeholders for the purpose of providing protection. It has three different, but closely related, applications: <b>protective presence, protective accompaniment, and interpositioning</b> (definitions in glossary).</p>
<p><b>Protection</b></p>	<p><b>Protection</b> can be defined as a concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee, and international humanitarian law. Within the context of ucp, protection is mainly understood as direct physical protection from imminent violence. Un agencies sometimes refer to direct physical protection as ‘general protection’ to distinguish it from the word ‘protection’ as commonly used by humanitarian actors (i.E. Risk reduction). See also <b>Civilian self-protection</b>.</p>

<p><b>Protective accompaniment</b></p>	<p><b>Protective accompaniment</b> is a preventive strategy whereby individuals or groups under threat of imminent violence are accompanied to move from one place to another. Protective accompaniment is provided to civilians because they perceive a threat either during their journey from one place to another, or upon arrival at their destination. It usually requires elaborate protection strategies, conscious visibility, or the establishment of a support network of influential actors. Whereas ‘protective accompaniment’ is used for the purpose of providing protection, other forms of (<b>‘strategic’ or ‘physical’</b>) <b>accompaniment</b> are used as a way to build confidence or connect vulnerable civilians to designated service providers. While fear may play a role in these other forms of accompaniment, there may not be an immediate identified threat or a potential perpetrator to be deterred. See also <b>Accompaniment</b> and <b>Proactive</b></p>
<p><b>Protective presence</b></p>	<p><b>Protective presence</b> is a specific method by which ucp practitioners are strategically placed in locations where civilians face imminent threats. It is the stationary version of the mobile protective accompaniment. Physical presence tends to increase the feeling of safety among civilians nearby. Protective presence is perhaps the most basic application of ucp methods. Proactive presence is usually provided for a shorter period of time, from a few hours up to a few months, and represents more accurately the concept of proactive engagement than the sometimes-used definition of protective presence as the more long-term presence of a ucp team in an area of violent conflict. See also <b>Proactive engagement</b>.</p>
<p><b>Refugees, IDPs, Returnees</b></p>	<p><b>Refugees</b> and <b>IDPs</b> (internally displaced people) are people who have left behind their homes and communities because they have suffered (or fear) persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, and political opinion or because they flee from conflict or natural disaster. Whereas refugees are outside their country of origin or habitual residence, idps have not crossed an international border to find a safe haven. <b>Returnees</b> are people that voluntarily or involuntarily return to their country of origin after a long absence.</p>

<p><b>Relationship building</b></p>	<p><b>Relationship building</b> with local and international actors at the grassroots, key parties in the conflict, middle-range, and top levels of society is used by ucp actors to prevent or reduce violence, create community acceptance, control rumours, communicate needs, dissuade potential perpetrators, connect communities with duty bearers, and influence decision makers. A crucial element of relationship building is establishing and improving relationships with actors who have the power to influence potential perpetrators of violence or parties in conflict. These actors include government representatives, armed actors (state and non-state), and local religious and community leaders. While establishing such relationships inherently provides some protection, these influential persons can be called upon if and when threats do occur. They may be able use their influence to dissuade potential perpetrators from actualizing their threat.</p>
<p><b>Remedial action</b></p>	<p><b>Remedial action</b> is aimed at supporting people in restoring their dignity and ensuring adequate living conditions subsequent to a pattern of violence. It usually involves access to rehabilitation, restitution, compensation, and repair. Remedial activities are longer-term and aim to assist people living with the effects of a particular pattern of abuse.</p>
<p><b>Responsibility to Protect</b></p>	<p>The <b>Responsibility to Protect</b> (R2P) doctrine introduces the concept of ‘sovereignty as responsibility’. It places limits on national sovereignty in case a government cannot or will not protect its own citizens. Until recently national sovereignty was an undisputed organizing principle of the post-wwii order. There is a growing realisation that no single actor can do the work of civilian protection alone. This applies especially in cases of mass atrocities.</p>
<p><b>Responsive action</b></p>	<p><b>Responsive action</b> is undertaken in connection with an emerging or established pattern of violation. It is aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence, putting a stop to it, and/or alleviating its immediate effects.</p>
<p><b>Rumour control</b></p>	<p><b>Rumour control</b> refers to the verification of rumours about imminent threats. It includes the timely sharing of factual information with various parties within and across conflict lines in order to prevent escalation of conflict and premature displacement. Rumour control is always intended to de-escalate tensions. See also <b>Monitoring</b>.</p>



<b>Safety</b>	<b>Safety</b> can be defined as being free from danger, risk, or injury. Safety implies an inner certainty that all is well. In a sense, safety is internal.
<b>Security</b>	<b>Security</b> can be defined as the condition of being protected from or not exposed to danger. In a sense, security is external.
<b>Stages of conflict</b>	<p><b>Stages of conflict</b> include: latent conflict, confrontation, crisis, outcome, and post crisis.</p> <p><b>Latent conflict</b> is the stage when there is an incompatibility of goals between two or more parties, which could lead to open conflict. At the stage of <b>confrontation</b>, the conflict has become more open. The crisis is the peak of the conflict, when tensions and/or violence are most intense. One way or another, the crisis will lead to an <b>outcome</b>. One side may surrender or defeat the other(s), or perhaps call a ceasefire. In any case, at this stage the levels of tension, confrontation, and violence decrease somewhat with the possibility of a settlement. In the stage of the situation is resolved in a way that leads to an ending of any violent confrontation. It also leads to a decrease in tensions and to more normal relationships between the different parties in the conflict.</p>
<b>Unarmed Civilian Protection</b>	<p><b>Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP):</b> UCP is the practice of unarmed civilians providing direct physical protection to other civilians before, during, and after violent conflict, to prevent or reduce violence, and strengthen or build local peace infrastructures. The practice is nonviolent and nonpartisan. It provides protection on invitation from local actors. It supports local actors as they work to resolve the consequences of violent conflict. This practice is grounded in the global promise of civilian immunity in war and protections afforded by international conventions. Ucp methods can be responsive, remedial, or environment-building actions. Ucp was originally an acronym for <b>Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping</b>, a term some ucp actors and researchers continue to use.</p>
<b>Vertical conflict</b>	Vertical conflict refers to conflict between the state and civilians. See also <b>Conflict</b> and <b>Horizontal Conflict</b> .

**Violence**

**Violence** is a particular response to conflict. It is the behaviour that involves the use of force intended to dominate, hurt, damage, or kill someone or something. Violence can be physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional. These types of violence are usually called *direct violence*. This is inflicted directly from one person to another. Violence can also be *indirect*, such as cultural violence or structural violence. The dehumanization of other cultures is a form of cultural violence. Structural violence refers to violence that is built into social, political, or economic structures. Unjust or violent structures are often an underlying cause for secondary violence (e.G. Oppressed minority groups may resort to physical violence as a response to unequal access to economic resources).

# Appendix 2

## Case Studies

### **Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce**

**April 2011**

### **Verifying Violence and Cultivating Confidence in Western Mindanao**

A sudden firefight erupted in one of the most isolated and disputed locations of western Mindanao on 7 April 2011 when 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 4.5 hour firefight ensued in which several loud explosions were heard displacing some 4,000 civilians, the entire population of the island, burning 13 houses and killing nine suspected criminals – burnt beyond recognition.

On the request of local stakeholders, Nonviolent Peaceforce's (NP) Quick Response Team, comprised of both International and National Protection Monitors, embarked upon a three-day verification mission. Mindanao is a large island about the size of Greece so it took the team some 10 hours and a boat-ride to reach the secluded site in western Mindanao.

The prompt intervention of NP helped to ensure the immediate and safe return of the 4,000 frightened civilians to their homes. Before NP's presence, they were reluctant to do so for fear of further attacks.

A local representative of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said, "The people in my municipality, and in particular the people in the village which you visited, are very happy for your eagerness to help them diffuse their fears..."

NP's presence also helped to ensure the incident was dealt with immediately and was afforded proper attention warranted by higher authorities one result of which was compensation to the families whose houses were burned.

The Vice Mayor of Naga, Zamboanga Sibugay Province, said: "Thank you Nonviolent Peaceforce for the concern for the people of my community. We will do our best to cure their trauma and will assist them the best we can".

A complicating feature to the conflict, and of relevance in this particular incident, is that ordinary but widespread banditry confuses the origin of violent attacks, extortion and kidnapping. In this case, it was unclear whether the target of the operation was indeed an MILF member or only a criminal. If he was a MILF member, the operation would have implications far greater than just an operation against criminal elements and could indeed constitute a ceasefire violation. Such a violation could trigger retaliation and counter-retaliation, thereby derailing the entire peace process resulting in massive displacements and irreparable damage to civilians and their property. In the past, triggers not unlike this one precipitated full-scale hostilities. It was therefore imperative for NP's team to

determine the affiliations and alliances of the target of the operation. In Mindanao, these alliances and affiliations are not straight-forward and are often complicated by multiple affiliations which can include a vast network of family, political and criminal alliances. Upon arriving at the site, one member of the verification team said: “The first thing that struck me was the imposing silence and emptiness of the area. Houses remained closed and only domestic animals were seen wandering. The scene portrayed chaos and destruction. Thirteen houses and many trees were totally burned. Impacts of bullets could be seen on walls of the remaining houses and trees.” After the incident all civilians had left the island, fearing for their safety and security.

The reconstruction of the incident with the police and some witnesses shed light on the course of the incident and focused on the sequence of events and questioned the balance of force against the objective pursued. The observation also evaluated the amount of destruction and assessed the needs and possibilities for civilians affected by the incident to return safely to their location.

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 NPP’s verification conducted an investigation of the incident. Further, the report was discussed at length during a round of exploratory talks of the peace process held in Malaysia. This speaks to the positive impact that NP is having on civilian protection-related issues and is the first time a specific civilian protection-related issue was talked about in the forum of the official exploratory peace talks.

NP’s report found that no violation of the ceasefire between the government and the MILF had occurred during the encounter. Rather, it was an operation meant to reinforce the law and was ordered by the police in Zamboanga Sibugay supported by the army. However, it did suggest that future similar operations be better coordinated, especially when carried out in predominantly Muslim areas, so as to preclude panic amongst civilian populations resulting in displacement because of *the impression* that the army is targeting Muslim populations. Joint mechanisms to combat criminality exist.

As a final testament to the positive impact of such interventions, local residents of the secluded island requested NP establish an office there to help ensure their safety and security. Incidentally, NP was officially requested by local civil society to establish a field office in the Zamboanga peninsula previously. Although the request is still under consideration, NP made a series of initial courtesy visits to local Government authorities to explore the viability of the proposal. Local response has thus far been positive.

## **Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce**

**June 2012**

### **Cultivating a Culture of Peace in Future Leaders**

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in the Philippines supports the peace process by assisting in the development of future Bangsamoro leaders and managers who will utilize their political and socio-economic knowledge and skills to improve the situation in conflict-affected Mindanao.

Twelve future leaders, from all across conflict-affected central and western Mindanao, including the most conflict-affected island provinces of Sulu and Basilan, attended a three-day training from 28-30 May 2012 given by NP's Maguindanao field team. The training was done in support of the Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI).

Majid Nur, a participant from Al-Barka, Basilan, where late last year a clash between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines resulted in the death of 19 soldiers said: "Thank you Nonviolent Peaceforce for delivering this training. We live in places with many challenges so it is good for us to learn more about human rights and conflict management. It will help us support our people in time of conflict."

The BLMI, a registered nongovernmental organisation, is envisioned to be a centre of excellence and repository of knowledge in the discipline of human resource development that produces individuals of impeccable character, equipped with exemplary leadership and managerial qualities for the transformation of the Bangsamoro people.

The establishment of the BLMI was discussed during the 10th Formal Exploratory Talks between the two parties in February 2006. It was finalized and formally agreed upon during the 14th Formal Exploratory Talks held on November 14-15, 2007, with funding commitment from the Philippine Government to jumpstart the Institute's operations.

The Government of the Philippines (GPH) panel chair Dean Marvic Leonen said: "If I have to underscore the many gains that the negotiating process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front achieved, I would count the establishment of the Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute to be close to the top of the list."

In the wake of NP's training, the BLMI officially launched the institution on 6 June 2012 in a new building. Mohagher Iqbal, chair of the MILF Peace Panel, during the turnover ceremony, attended by NP representatives, said: "We acknowledge with utmost sincerity the big contribution extended by... Nonviolent Peaceforce through its Country Director, Brother Atif Hameed, in conducting training... needed to capacitate future Moro leaders especially from the youth sector."

The training was conducted on the request of the BLMI with an eye to forming a long-term sustainable partnership wherein NP will act to capacitate the Institute and conduct trainings related to unarmed civilian peacekeeping and human rights. The training in May first gave an overview of NP and unarmed civilian peacekeeping and then delved into

various related topics including sessions on but not limited to: conflict analysis, peaceful approaches to solving conflict, International Humanitarian Law, Grave Childs Rights Violations, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The sessions were participatory in nature and the participants were eager to share their own experiences in light of the training.

Tirso Tahir, a participant from Zamboanga City said: “It is very hard for us living in conflict-affected Mindanao to be patient. But we would like to thank NP for the opportunity to come together here. It is important that we listen to each other and the other party. This platform will help us to understand human rights violations and its remedies.”

The training not only served to educate the future leaders on their rights and obligations under international and national law, but also connected the participants with the newly appointed Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao’s Commission on Human Rights Director, Attorney Laisa Alamia.

At the turnover ceremony, the Malaysian facilitator Tengku Dato' AB Ghafar Tengku Mohamed aptly pointed out: “Peace without education is not peace, this is a very good step towards peace and development.”

As a member of the International Monitoring Team’s (IMT) Civilian Protection Component, and due to initiatives such as partnering with the BLMI, NP acts on two fronts in support of the peace talks: it supports the ceasefire as a member of the IMT and supports initiatives such as the BLMI, a product of the peace negotiations, geared towards confidence building and institutionalising endeavours supporting the peace process.

Silvestre Afable, former government chief peace negotiator under president Gloria Arroyo at the turnover ceremony said: "Confidence-building measures lie in the meat of any peace process anywhere in the world. While we seek a political solution in the peace talks, we try to safeguard the ceasefire like precious life itself, and carve out a positive direction for fighters-on-hold—who will hopefully trade their guns for ploughshares when a final settlement is reached."

NP in the Philippines Country Director, Atif Hameed, said: “The budding partnership with the BLMI is a poignant example of how unarmed civilian peacekeeping can support actors in a conflict while they try to negotiate a sound and lasting peace.”



## **Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce**

**2012 November**

### **Averting Violence and Displacement in Mindanao**

“It was not long ago that in barangay Mamaanon that the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] and the MILF [Moro Islamic Liberation Front], heavily armed and ready to fight, came as close as 50 meters to one another. If it was not for Nonviolent Peaceforce who intervened, the community would have experienced the effects of another war ... Piagapo is already affected by conflict and cannot afford any more, 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, in the presence of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and the community.

The Chairperson was referring to an incident wherein due to a lack of coordination and miscommunication, elements 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.

An NP-trained early warning and early response local monitor informed NP's local partner, the Kalimudan Foundation Inc, who in turn informed NP. NP immediately contacted the MILF and 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, a third-party ceasefire mechanism led by Malaysia, of which NP is a part.

Within an hour, the ceasefire mechanisms did what they were designed to do – prevent open hostilities by utilising structured lines of communication. Sometimes though these lines become plugged and that is where NP and the local early warning mechanisms it helps to build have a profound impact, at many levels. A clash was avoided thereby surely 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 spiralled 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.

## **Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce**

**2011 March**

### **Building Bridges Across Conflict**

Hundreds of people participated in a “Walk for Peace” in the conflict-affected municipality of Datu Piang, Maguindanao province, an event demonstrating the strong push of civil society organizations (CSOs) for the Peace Negotiating Panels of both the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to forge a negotiated political settlement of the conflict as soon as possible. Had it not been for Nonviolent Peaceforce’s (NP) assistance, the walk would most likely not have taken place.

Maguindanao province is the most conflict-affected province in Mindanao. According to the International Organization for Migration some 82,000 individuals remain displaced in the province, resulting mainly from the 2008 conflict but also stemming from years of clan feuds over political power and land, which often boil over into renewed violence. The most infamous event in recent history connected to a clan feud in the province was the “Ampatuan Massacre” in which 57 people were slaughtered. At least 34 of these were journalists making it the single deadliest event for the press in recorded history.

The massacre illustrates the often dangerous position that civil society finds itself working in, and Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines can play a crucial role in supporting local initiatives for peace by, for example, bridging and convening a wide array of local actors and providing neutral space for these actors to come together, without fear.

Field Coordinator of Maguindanao field site said: “The community here is extremely polarized springing from years of conflict, and although difficult, we are in a position where we can bring the communities together.”

NP’s local partners in Datu Piang, the Bangsamoro Centre for Justpeace (BCJP) and the Kaduntaya Foundation Inc. (KFI) spearheaded the “Walk for Peace” initiative. To do so, the partners had to arrange a meeting with the Mayor and involve him in the planning. The partners also wished to include religious leaders in the peace walk, with whom they had not previously engaged. Upon their request NP’s field team held a series of meetings with the Mayor and/or his representatives and religious leaders, on separate occasions.

Both the local government unit and the local religious leaders had earlier been collaborating with NP and were therefore familiar with its mandate and thus agreed to meet NP’s local partners. The religious leaders however agreed to meet only on the condition that the meeting was to be held within the NP’s compound as they felt much safer talking openly within NP’s premises. The meeting went ahead and subsequently the Mayor appealed to all citizens to join the activity.

Abdulbasit R. Benito, BCJP’s Executive Director said: “NP’s field presence has really helped us bridge divides created by conflict and even strengthen our links with local institutions, a key factor in creating a robust and resilient civil society.”

The peace walk was a success and sent a clear message of the peoples' desire for a just and lasting peace. People from all walks of life including women, youths, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations participated. Further, both the local imam and the local priest invited their respective communities.

Shadab Mansoori, Field Coordinator of Maguindanao said: "I think the best part of the peace walk was that the local imam and the local priest led the procession holding hands and chatting the entire time."

This was a promising step towards reconciliation because new paths of communication and dialogue were created which sent a clear and resounding message to the communities: peace is the way forward.

Benito said: "We are very grateful for the work that Nonviolent Peaceforce has been doing in our community and its sincerity of purpose is evident in that it is the only international nongovernmental organization actually living and working conflict-affected communities across Mindanao."

NP recognizes it is just one actor in a wide array of local organizations, local community leadership, national civic movements, political parties, women's organizations, religious organizations and others. In a conflict situation their diverse activities are critical to any serious strategies for change and need to be supported. NP supports peace initiatives of local actors like the BCJP and the KFI and works to connect diverse actors, like the Mayor with civil society. And crucially, NP bridges divides created by conflict like that between the local imam and the local priest.

## **Source: Nonviolent Peaceforce**

**2010 October**

### **Helping Unknown Victim of Violence**

In September, while visiting a municipality Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) had not been to before, the team noticed a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) beside the highway. As the team was new to the area, it went down to meet the IDPs living there and learn more about their situation. NP was received with intrigue and it soon became clear that these IDPs were not used to international visitors. Initially they responded politely to our questions about their well-being, not sure about the team's motives or relationships with other actors in the conflict. However, once the NP team explained that it is a member of the International Monitoring Team and has a specific Civilian Protection mandate, the IDPs began to open up about their anxieties and experiences. They described living in fear over the past few months because lawless armed groups had been roaming the area and targeting vulnerable communities like their own. They started to tell the NP team about recent incidents and pointed to a ramshackle shelter nearby. They said a young girl living there had been shot two weeks before when one of these lawless groups entered the camp. NP quickly made its way to the shelter to find out what had happened.

Sitting quietly in the corner was 10-year-old Liz , wearing a bright yellow plaster cast on her leg. Liz's mother described how armed men had surrounded their home and fired indiscriminately as the family hid for safety inside. When the firing stopped, the family members realised Liz had been shot, a bullet passing through a bone in her leg. They told NP that the only support they had received since the incident was a small hand out from the local mayor to cover their transport to the hospital. Liz's mother said that the cost of the medication Liz needed was draining the family's resources and they were struggling to survive. NP then explained that it would try to link the family to an organisation that could assist them and immediately returned to base to set about this task.

Through the main office NP was able to contact a number of International Nongovernmental Organisations and local welfare organisations. Details of the incident quickly passed from one agency to another, all alarmed by what they heard and eager to assist. Within a few days, several organizations came to visit Liz's family: the local Department of Social Welfare, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross; all of which pledged their support for Liz's future medical treatment.

The NP team recently returned to the camp where Liz resided and visited the family. Although Liz is still wearing the cast, it is due to come off shortly and the doctor expects her to make a full recovery. Moreover, there was a noticeable change in how the family spoke with NP. They were much more positive about Liz's situation and the mood of the camp in general, saying that they had not been harassed in recent weeks and felt a lot safer.

IDP communities are among the most vulnerable in Maguindanao and are often located in conflict-prone areas where NP is the only international organisation with a sustained presence. Not only do they have to cope with the trauma of war and displacement,

but they are also an easy target for armed groups. The recent influx of international organisations at the camp clearly sent a message to the armed groups that people do care about these communities and their actions will not go unnoticed. On one level, NP's intervention was simple, and on another level it was vital. There is a real need for the work NP is doing in these communities. NP bridges the gap between abandoned civilians and the people who can help them. It's a crucial link connecting those in need of services with those who can provide them, but very often a missing one.

