NP
Core Competencies
Summary

Inclusive Ceasefires and Peace Processes

2021

Nonviolent Peaceforce

The alarming number of conflicts and associated civilian casualties worldwide emphasizes the need to find resolution through peaceful means. The many methods of unarmed civilian protection (UCP) often prove successful in solving or calming conflicts with the long-term benefit of strengthening communities, infrastructure and ongoing dialogue that are needed to sustain hard-earned peace. Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a global civilian protection agency, working in some of the world's most troubled zones to promote peace through civilian protection, reduction of community violence, and self-protection, conflict prevention, conflict management capacity development. Currently, NP has approximately 300 protection officers deployed in our programs in Iraq, Myanmar, Philippines, and South Sudan and we are collaborating with more than 50 implementing community organizations in 24 countries. To interrupt cycles of violence and facilitate sustainable peace, we work through five avenues, one of which is inclusive ceasefires and peace processes.

* * *

This summary is based on the full version of the NP core competency program document "Inclusive Ceasefires and Peace Processes" that contains additional examples of interventions, methods, and guidance as the basis of work in this field by NP, partners, and other collaborating bodies.

Head Office
Rue de Lausanne 82
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
Tel: +41 (0)22 552 66 10
headoffice@nonviolentpeaceforce.org

U.S. Office
P.O. Box 14386
St. Paul, MN 55114
Tel: +1 (612) 871-0005
info@nonviolentpeaceforce.org

Inclusive Ceasefires and Peace Processes

Inclusive ceasefires and peace processes view all stakeholders as having a role in shaping peace and strive to bring stakeholders into discussions, negotiations and the search for solutions. Studies have found that broadening the participation of actors in the negotiation phase of peace agreements makes it more likely that agreements are reached and implemented.1 However, many scholars and practitioners have pointed out that inclusive ceasefires and peace processes have proven extremely difficult to achieve. Ceasefires are important as they are often the first step in a peace process. Military negotiators of ceasefires may set the parameters that determine the broader peace process. By the time civilian voices are included, the foundations of the peace process may be firmly in place, even if they don't fit very well with the needs and vision of women, youth or political parties.

Strengthening inclusive ceasefires and peace processes means taking a strategic look at the role of different actors or stakeholders, their viewpoints and needs, their potential subsequent actions, and the timing or juncture of their involvement. Crucially important is the inclusion of women, not merely as representatives, but as active participants and leaders. Inclusivity is more than determining who has a seat at the table and who doesn't. It involves questions, such as: Who should be involved in the initial process? When is the right moment to include additional actors? What form should their participation take?

How inclusivity of ceasefires and peace processes is strengthened in general

Participation in ceasefire processes is generally focused on three stages:

- **Ceasefire negotiations** determine the parties involved, the duration of the ceasefire, coverage areas, and commitments and actions to implement and monitor the ceasefire.
- **Establishment of a ceasefire architecture** that includes setting up offices, recruiting monitors, establishing codes of conduct, and the composition of verification teams.
- **Ceasefire implementation** includes carrying out commitments by signatories, the coordination of bodies within the ceasefire architecture, the compliance monitoring, and the resolution of disputes.

Formal ways that (civil society) actors other than the main conflict parties participate in the monitoring of ceasefire and peace agreements include the following:

- Official monitoring bodies are required to consult with civil society
- Independent monitoring by third parties
- Inclusive commissions with civil society representatives
- Civil society participation in international or national monitoring missions

"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)

Informal strategies that foster inclusivity in ceasefire and peace processes, include:

- Outreach, campaigning, advocacy, mapping, consultation efforts and polls
- Influencing of mediators or facilitating their access to youth and women's groups
- Training and information provision for marginalised groups that have a seat at the table
- Local, citizen-led peace agreements or local peace committees at local levels
- Expert advisory groups or professionals that assist key parties in drafting inclusive decisions

NP's niche in the area of inclusive ceasefires & peace processes

The niche of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) in strengthening inclusive ceasefires and peace processes is its focus on the proactive role of civil society in ceasefire monitoring and the integration of monitoring with Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) methods. We promote an approach to ceasefire monitoring that is led by civil society actors and focuses squarely on reducing the impact of ceasefire violations and armed clashes on civilian populations.

Putting communities at the centre of ceasefire processes: Our approach to monitoring is modelled on a partnership with local communities, in which we play the role of monitor, technical advisor, or coach. It draws the voices of communities, women, and youth into discussions about security, challenging the notion that it is the exclusive domain of (male) security actors.

Building trust between ceasefire parties and communities: Unlike a lot of human rights monitoring groups that present themselves as 'watchdogs', we present a model in which civilian monitors assume a nonpartisan position to build relationships with ceasefire parties. We then encourage these parties to minimise harm against civilians and open channels of communication between communities and armed actors.

The combination of **monitoring and reporting with direct protection methods:** We present a model in which monitors also directly address protection needs of civilians. When monitors proactively engage with all relevant actors, they are able to clarify rumours, de-escalate tensions and prevent displacement. These immediate responses often strengthen confidence on all sides as well as the ability of monitors to collect relevant information.

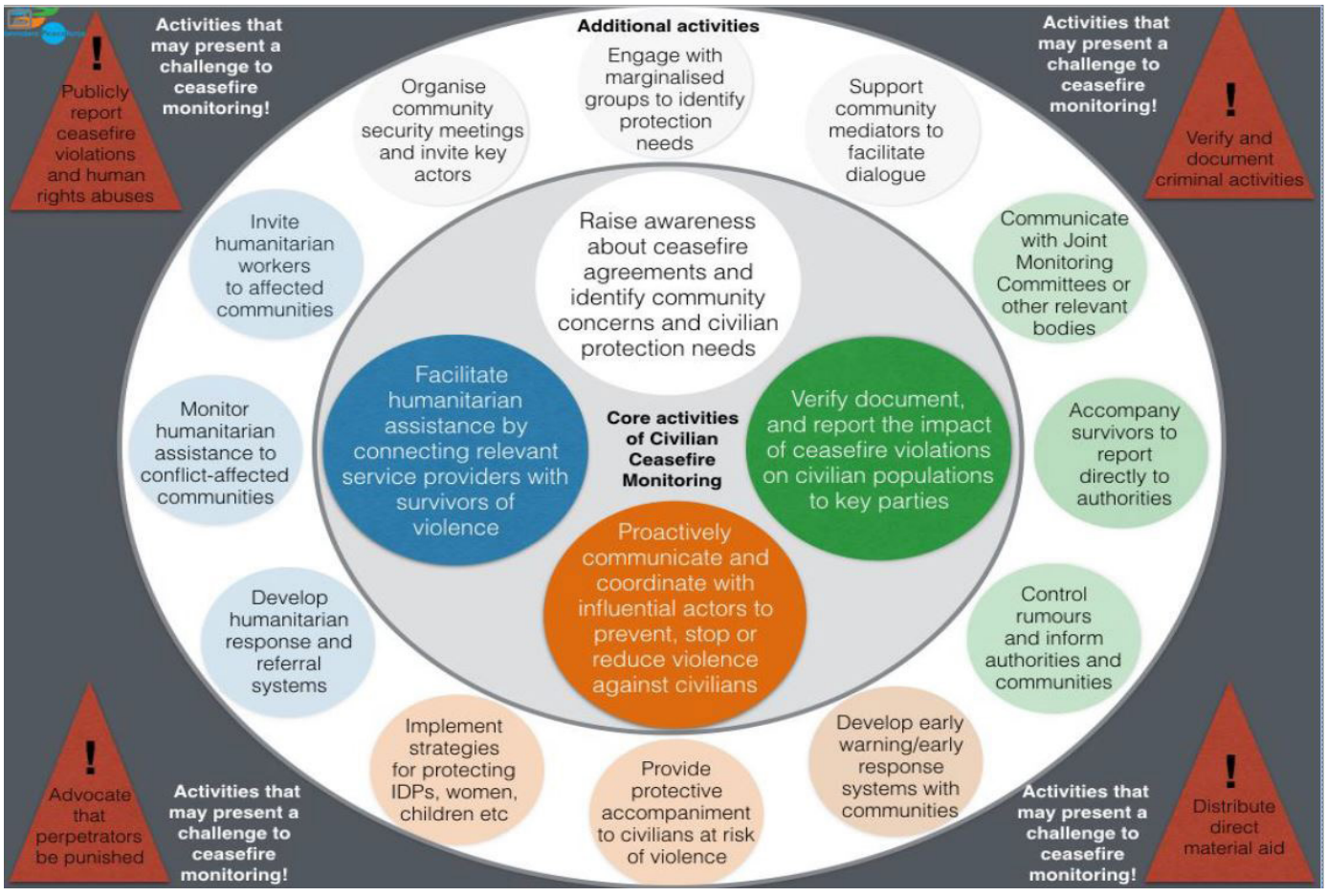

Fig 1: Core Activities of Civilian Ceasefire Monitoring

Horizontal and vertical connections: Formal military-led monitors may view independent community-based monitoring networks as a threat to their legitimacy or as redundant. Communities may mistrust the formal mechanisms in advance. We train both groups and connect them around the issue of civilian protection. We also foster alliances between peace networks across ethnic divisions, supporting them to advocate for the protection of civilians at the national level.

Peace agreements between tribes and clans: We support informal peace and security agreements undertaken at local levels between tribes and clans. It may create safer or neutral spaces for such efforts to take place. These 'smaller' conflicts often threaten progress of the larger peace process, but formal peace process mechanisms may not have the mandate or the trust to intervene.

"What the training with Nonviolent Peaceforce helped us realise, is that the JMCs [Joint Monitoring Committees] are a joint activity and that both sides had to make this work. The training was practical and helped us prepare for a specific JMC meeting. This helped to build our confidence and made us more equal partners in the dialogue with the military."

Chief Liaison Officer of Ethnic Armed Organisation Myanmar, 2018



Ceasefore monitoring and verification in the Philippines, NPP

NP's work in the field

Activities of our team in the field may inckude the following:

Ceasefire monitoring

- Monitoring ceasefire agreements as an official partner of formal ceasefire architecture
- Crisis interventions in ceasefire areas to prevent violence and protect civilians
- Community outreach about ceasefire agreements and implementation
- Establishment and training of independent civilian ceasefire monitoring networks
- Fostering alliances between civilian ceasefire monitoring networks across ethnic divisions
- Dialogue between community ceasefire monitors, ceasefire parties and humanitarian agencies
- Interpositioning to boost the sanctity of buffer zones and zones of peace
- Negotiating humanitarian corridors for civilians to evacuate areas of shelling
- Encouraging ceasefire parties or monitoring bodies to patrol areas of tension
- Accompaniment of returnees or humanitarian aid staff to isolated Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps

"Being a woman Community Peace Support observer is really challenging. Everyone thinks that it is inappropriate for a girl to be working as a community peace observer."

Peace observer from Northern Shan State Myanmar, 2018

Ceasefire negotiation, design of formal mechanisms and interpretation

- Assisting negotiators in the formulation of ceasefire provisions and monitoring models
- Enhancing capacity of women within ceasefire architectures
- Training ceasefire parties in preparation of Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
- Convening and chairing dialogue between ceasefire parties
- Protecting and supporting parties in horizontal conflicts to negotiate cessation of hostilities

Peace dialogue processes

- Increasing information flow to and from women at the negotiation table
- Facilitating dialogue between negotiators and women, youth and other marginalised groups
- Supporting responsive village peace committees