



Nonviolent Peaceforce

Ethical Image Use Policy

Approved by Board of Directors: December 17, 2019

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Introduction

The mission of Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is **to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies. We build peace side by side with local communities. We advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity.**

Images can help people understand the protection needs of civilians living in situations of violent conflict, the places where NP works. Photos can also help people understand how building relationships with community members can be an effective approach for increasing civilian safety and saving lives.

NP protection officers live and work in local communities building on community strengths and local peace infrastructure. Protection officers are present to enhance the resiliency of communities and support community members to solve their own problems. As one protection officer says so clearly in a video about his work in the Iraqi displacement camps: *No one knows the community better than the community itself.* Images used in NP materials should reflect community strengths and provide images that accurately portray people, their homes and surrounding areas.

I. Organizational Principles

NP is rooted in the following principles:

- Nonpartisanship – We do not take sides in any conflict.
- Independence – We work independently from any special interest group, political party, ideology or religion.
- Nonviolence – We believe nonviolence is the strongest and most effective force for achieving lasting peaceful settlements of conflict.
- Agency of local actor -- We believe in the resiliency and problem solving skills of the communities where we work.
- Guided by international human rights and humanitarian laws.

Images used for organizational reports, marketing and fundraising materials should reflect NP's core principles. We aim to use images which illustrate NP protection officers interacting with local community members in a way that is respectful, thoughtful and authentic.

II. Safeguarding

Nonviolent Peaceforce adheres to safeguarding standards as defined internationally: Organisations have a duty of care to protect all people from harm, abuse or exploitation that may occur when coming into direct or indirect contact with organizational staff, representatives or programmes.

Our duty of care permeates the organizational culture and underpins this Image Use policy. In our attempt to convey to the public the implementation and impact of our programs, Nonviolent Peaceforce staff, volunteers and contractors must not obtain, share, or store images that could cause harm¹,

¹ We will add definitions from our safe guarding policy when created.

bullying, abuse or exploitation. The purpose of this policy is to inform all those involved with Nonviolent Peaceforce that the protection of those we work to assist are not harmed in any way through the use of images.

III. Obtaining Images

Images and the context in which they are used should not promote misleading or false information about places and people or the work of NP. Everyone involved in taking photos must accurately document the conditions that they see. It is the intent of NP to represent people, the conflict, the peacekeeping efforts fairly and accurately. We must never use a photo to imply that people are suffering from things they are not or the conflict in the area is worse than it actually is. Authenticity is key to telling a good story.

Who – It is rare that Nonviolent Peaceforce has a professional photographer available to take photos for communications. Most of the time, photos are taken by protection officers, volunteers or visiting staff. In the event that we do have a photographer or journalist going to a community to take photos, NP staff should inform community members and leaders about the forthcoming trip before it takes place. The process should give community members time to decide if they wish to participate and be photographed.

Protection officers – Staff working in the field on a regular basis are often the best poised to take photos that capture the work of Nonviolent Peaceforce and community-based protection activities. Protection officers must consider the impact of taking photos on each protection activity. They should discuss with their team leader the possible effects of carrying a camera into a community site and how it could impact the protection activities. For example, if a protection officer intends to interview an IDP about their security concerns, they should consider if the presence of a camera would hinder the person from talking openly and honestly. Protection Officers should be in communication with their Team Leaders about possible risks that could come about when taking photos so they do not increase the risk of the people they are working with.

Visitors – All individuals “visiting” Nonviolent Peaceforce project sites on behalf of with the organization will indicate with their signature that they have read and understand the organization’s image use and safeguarding policies. This includes donors who may be meeting with partner organization representatives on a donor trip. Prior to travel, all people will be provided basic information on cultural differences particularly as it relates to taking photos. This process would be coordinated through the U.S. Office or HQ and materials shared approved by country program leadership.

Professional Photographers – All professional photographers (pro bono or on contract) should follow NP’s rules and regulations and have a full security briefing by the Head of Mission or Team Leader prior to arriving on site. At the determination of local NP leadership and taking into account the security of the context, the photographer *may* be asked to wear an NP t-shirt or vest during the assignment. The agreed work of the assignment must be set out in a Terms of Reference document, including the procuring of images.

When – NP needs to have photos that show emotion in people’s faces and in their interactions with one another and NP staff, but it is important to be sensitive to each situation. We want to avoid intrusion into people’s personal spaces. We ask that all people taking photos for NP avoid situations where putting a camera in front of someone could appear insensitive. For example, we will not show photos of people while bathing or enter into their homes and take photos without asking.

Why – The purpose of using images in Nonviolent Peaceforce communications is to illustrate the work that donors are supporting so they understand the impact of their donations. It is also important that our supporters understand the conditions and context in which NP lives and works. Our goal is to illustrate protection activities that enhance communities, show community strengths and needs. We do not want to use photos that portray people in a negative light or in need of being “saved” but rather images that uphold our mission to work “side by side with local communities” while accurately describing the situations in which our protection officers are needed and are active participants in peacekeeping efforts.

IV. Consent

Obtaining someone’s consent to be photographed is not simple in the context where Nonviolent Peaceforce works. Depending on how consent is requested, the language used, the setting where the request is taking place, the individual’s situation and who is asking can influence individual consent.

It is important that people are given information about why NP wants to take their photograph and where it could be available, ie. NP website, social media, and promotional materials. We cannot make promises about how each photo will be used, but the photographer should provide as much information as possible about the various uses the photo may have.

Written – Ideally, NP would have written consent for every picture taken in the field, but that is not always practical or safe. For example, many people from whom NP seeks consent are illiterate and written consent wouldn’t indicate consent. Additionally, walking around a community or IDP camp with consent forms could pose a security risk for NP staff or the people being photographed. The goal is that the person(s) being photographed understand what they are consenting to.

Verbal – Verbal consent is considered sufficient, as long as it is informed and freely obtained. Staff should not make promises about how material will be used. The focus of the conversation should be to make sure the subject of the image fully understands and is making a decision on his/her own.

V. Manipulation

Photos of places and people can be altered to meet size requirements or to artistically emphasize a feature of the photo that will grab people’s attention. Photos should not be cropped or altered to make a situation seem more desperate, violent or sad. For example, photos of children may not be cropped to make it appear that the child has been abandoned by caregivers and photos will not be manipulated to change facial expressions or the stance of the body to fit the theme of a story or to garner more sympathy from viewers.

VI. Child Protection

Children suffer in violent conflicts and NP works to alleviate their suffering as we do with adult members of a community. We aim to use photos of children that show how we're working to protect them from the unique struggles children face. A few examples include having access to an education, being protected from recruitment into an armed group, being reunited with their caregivers and being protected from sexual exploitation and abuse. NP does not exaggerate the situations of children nor use photos that undermine their dignity or make them more vulnerable. NP does not use photos that show full or partial nudity.

VII. Approval for use

Images along with location, date/time and activity during which it was taken should be documented by the person who took the image. For use in Nonviolent Peaceforce publications, social media site or promotional materials, each photo will be approved by the program manager and In Country designated communications staff. Depending on the country program, the Head of Mission may choose to weigh in on each photo. This will be determined at the country level and communicated with the Program Manager, U.S. and In-Country Communications staff.

After the program manager and communications staff have approved the use of an image, the in-country communications staff will share the image with the U.S. Communications Associate informing them of the location, date and context in which the photo was taken and confirming that consent was given verbally or in writing. If consent was obtained in writing, the written form should accompany the photo when sent electronically to U.S. Communications staff.

VIII. Sharing Images

Many photos are shared on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Once the photos have been approved for use at the country level, they can be shared with people outside and inside the organization. If there are restrictions on whether the location of the photo should be shared, it is the responsibility of the In-country Communications staff to communicate that with the U.S. Office Communications Associate.

How – Photos will be shared by the In-country communications staff to the U.S. Communications Associate for storage in Office 365. If the material is sensitive and there is concern about others having access to the photo, it should be sent via Signal or not shared at all.

Descriptions – Images will be described as accurately as possible, but for security purposes may be less detailed if the In-country communications person believes it necessary. The U.S. Office Communications Associate may change language to ensure that the average supporter or member of the public can understand the context of the photo. Pseudonyms will be used as needed to keep community members and Nonviolent Peaceforce staff safe.

IX. Storing Images

The U.S. Office should store all photos available for use in publications, website and social media platforms in Office 365.² The folders with photos is shared with the in-country staff and organized by geographic location and date so others in the organization can access the photos for use in Powerpoint Presentations, grant reports and other needs at the country level. Photos older than 18 months should not be used for fundraising purposes unless the date accompanies the photo and is still relevant to NP's current work.

² Example of naming photo: (subject_location_year): GBV Training for Youth_Yambio_2019