

# 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 inter-positional 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

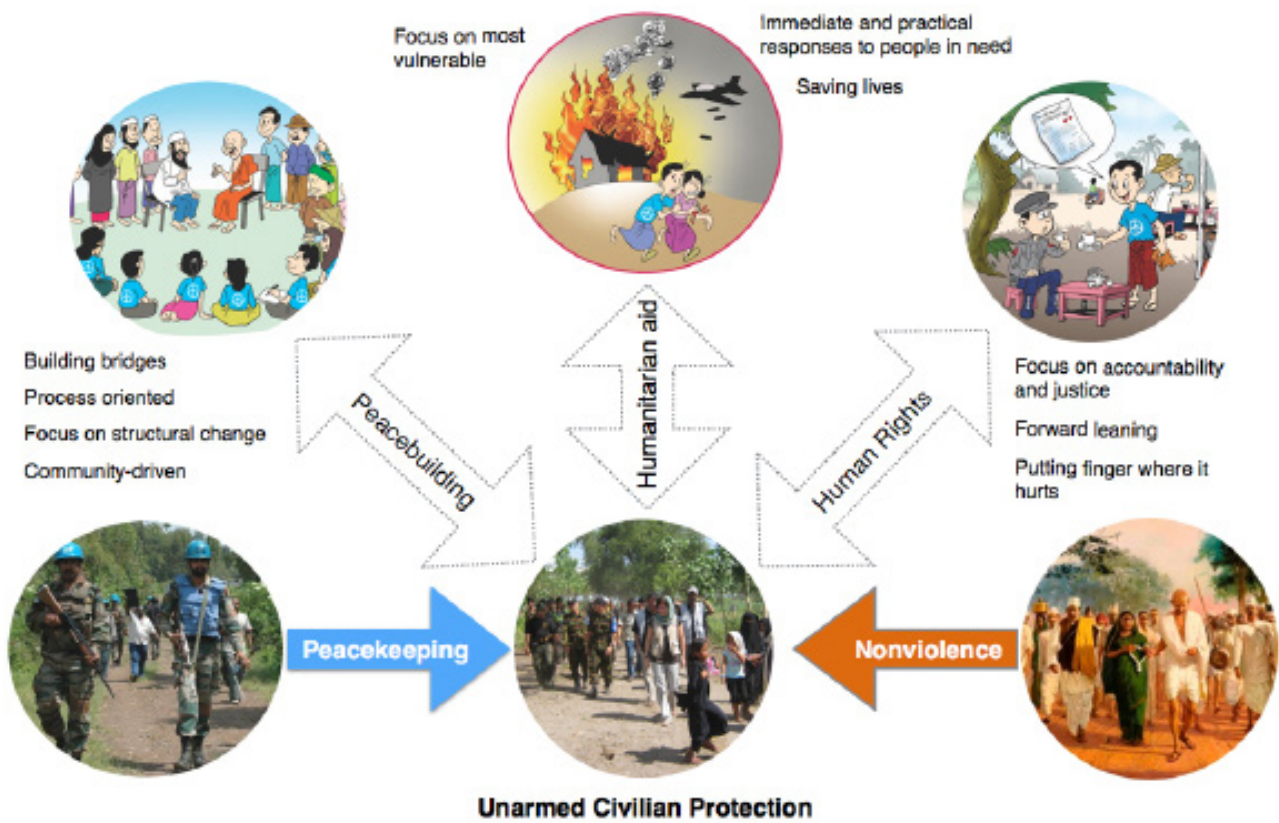


Figure 6 shows that UCP actors draw on different fields of practice and adopt certain qualities that are associated with or characteristic of these fields.

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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