

2

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.

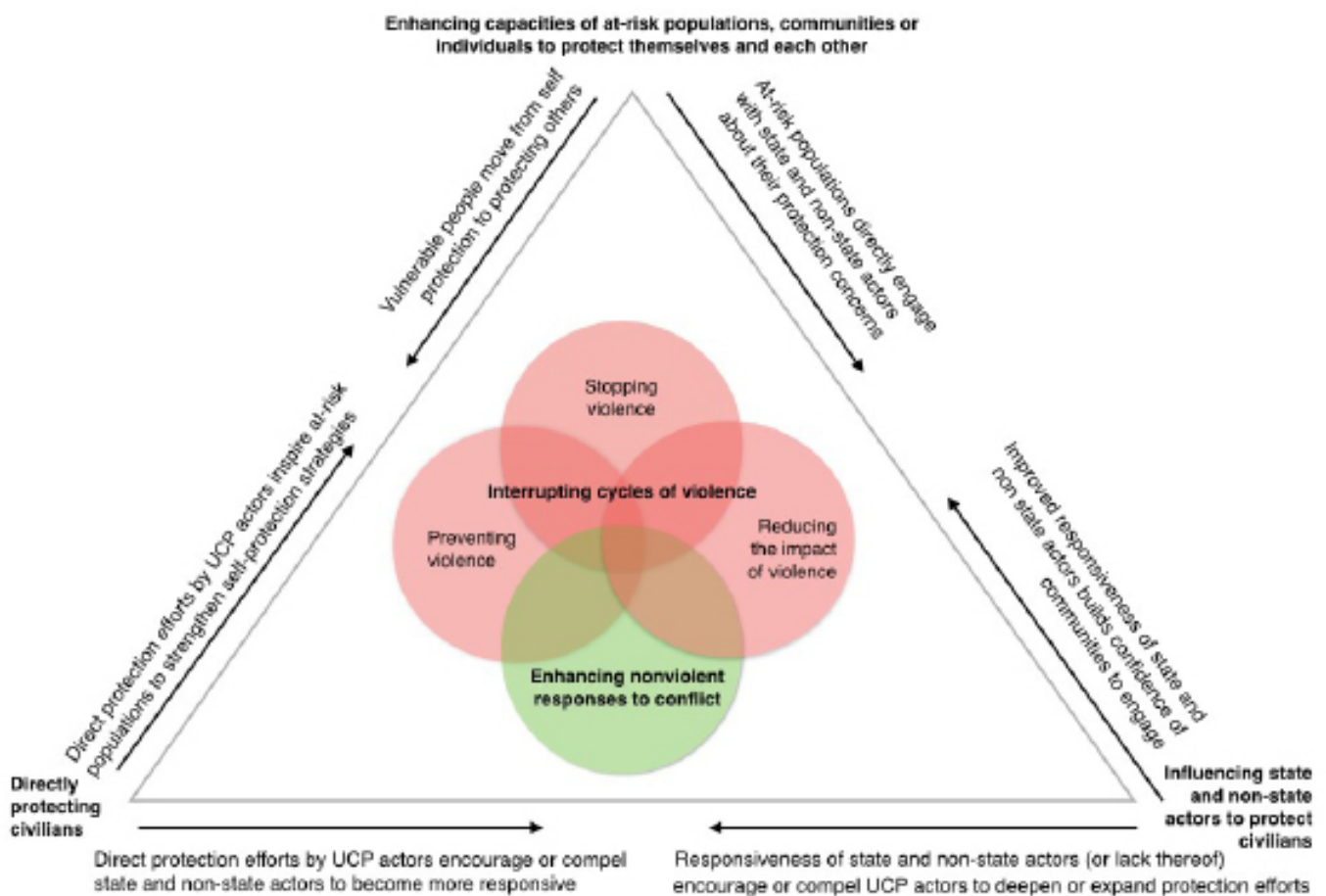


Figure 1: UCP is governed by two core objectives: interrupting cycles of violence and enhancing nonviolent responses to conflict. The former objective is broken down into three parts: preventing violence, stopping it in its tracks and reducing its impact. UCP practitioners approach these core objectives 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.¹ 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.² 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

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.³ 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

³ 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.

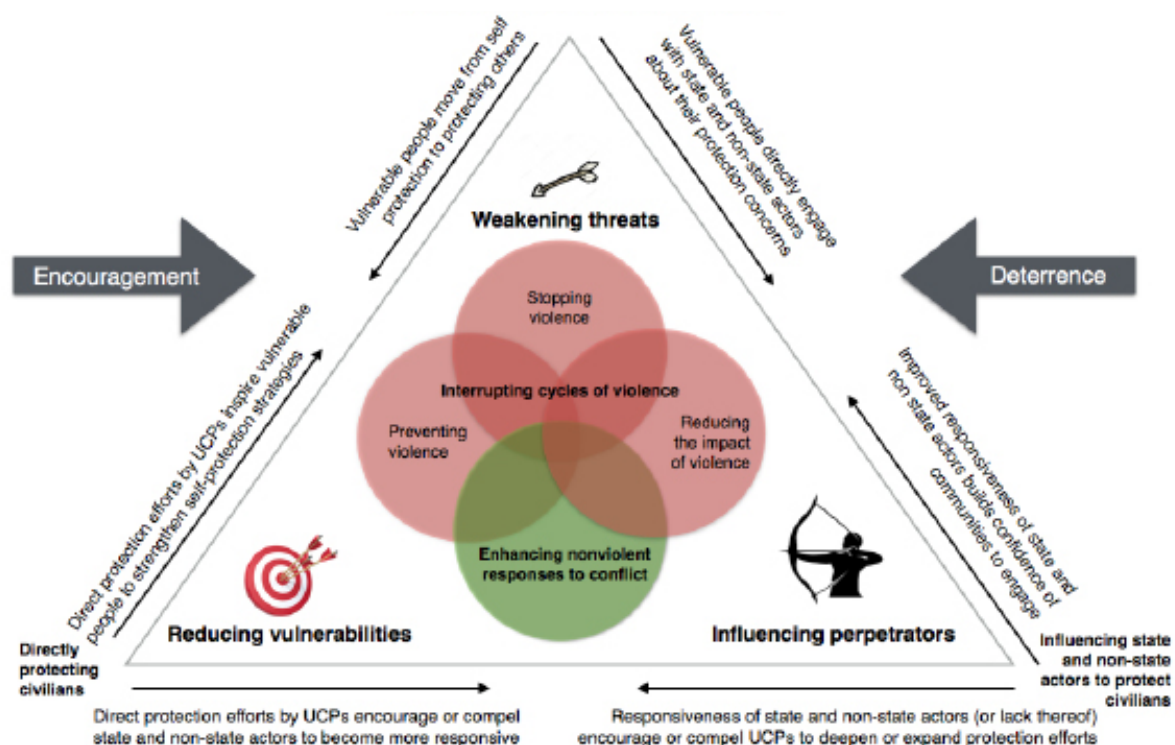


Figure 2: UCP actors may use encouragement or deterrence as specific tactics for each of the strategies. They may for example encourage armed actors to increase their protection efforts or they may exert a certain amount of pressure to deter those actors from harming civilians. The diagram also shows 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 ⁴ INTERSECT WITH ENCOURAGEMENT AND DETERRENCE		
	Encouragement	Deterrence
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.

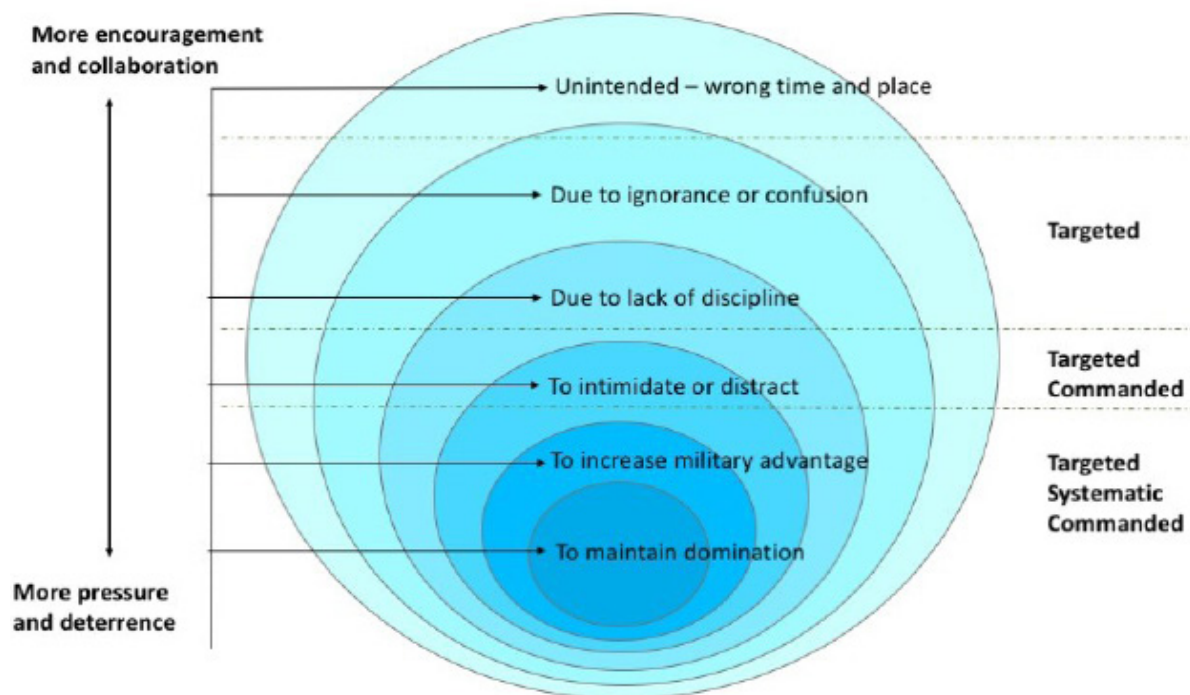


Figure 3: Violence against civilians that is unintended, the result of ignorance or confusion or lack of discipline can often be prevented or reduced through encouragement, collaboration, and coordination. Violence that is targeted, systemic and commanded from the top of the military command structure 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

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