



South Sudan Capacity Statement





INTRODUCTION

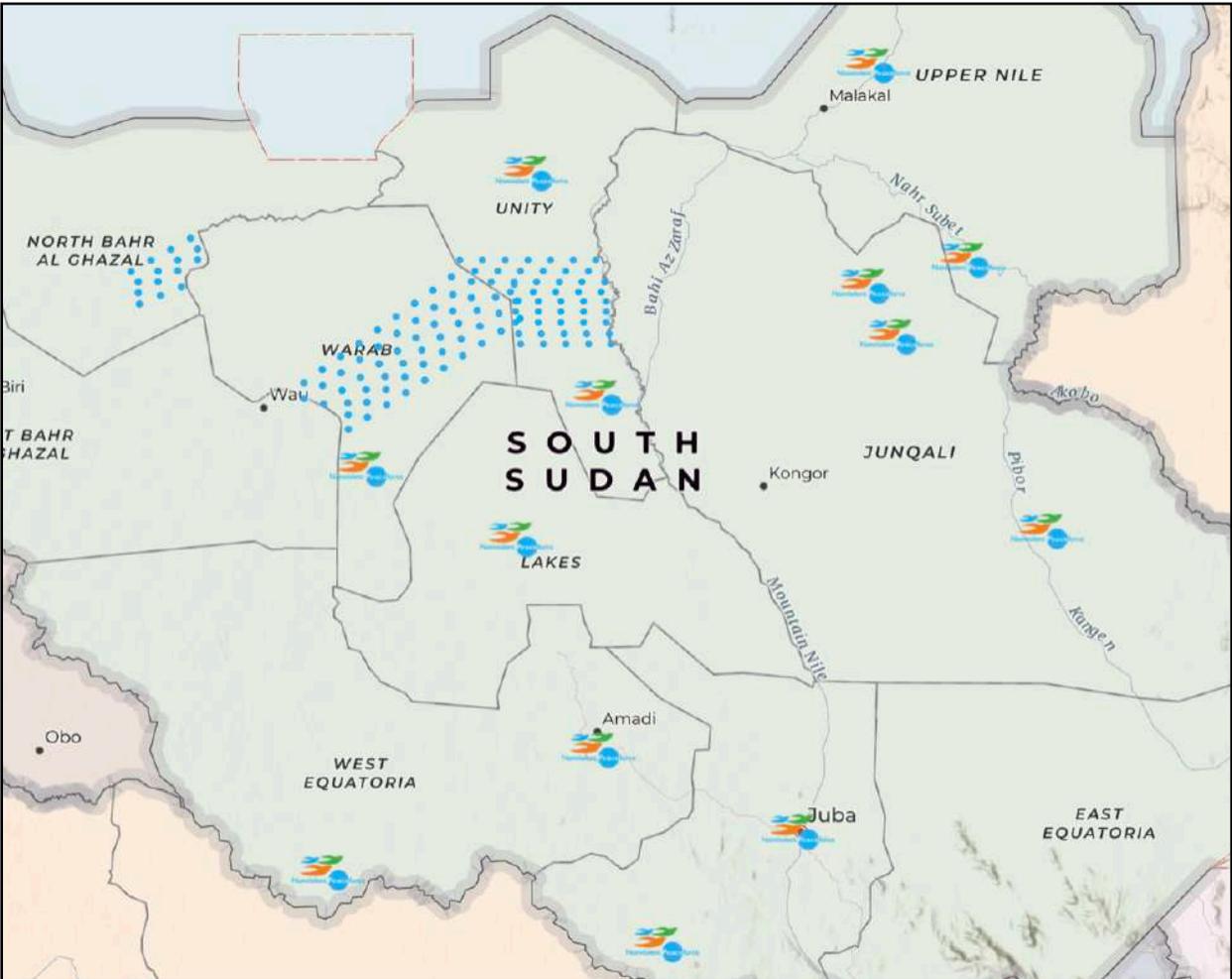
Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is a global civilian protection agency that utilizes the methodology of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), an innovative, evidence-based approach with a demonstrated track record of reducing violence against civilians across the world. UCP is based on relationship building, acceptance and trust by the community that utilizes a mix of strategies to prevent violence, enhance the safety and security of civilians, build and strengthen local peace infrastructures, and create an enabling environment for communities to devise and implement locally led peace and protection strategies.

UCP provides a framework for NP to work uniquely on the spectrum of protection and peacebuilding, especially with the most vulnerable such as women, youth and children. NP's activities include direct protection activities such as protective presence and patrolling, inter-communal peace dialogues, early warning and early response, rumor control, strengthening of local conflict mitigation capacities, and community security meetings, focusing on hard-to-reach hotspot areas where there is inadequate humanitarian presence or significant need for protection programming, including areas of return and where displacement occurs as a result of violence. All activities are designed to respond to the immediate protection needs of beneficiaries as well as to support the resilience, adaptive capacity and recovery of communities from violent conflict and insecurity. UCP's flexibility enables NP's programming to respond to an evolving context while maintaining an emphasis on the centrality of civilians and communities.

NP has had extensive experience and presence across South Sudan since 2010. Currently, NP's program in South Sudan is comprised of 15 static teams and complements its protection programming with mobile response teams that cover areas where there is either a lack of static protection partners or that require immediate protection response. Thanks to its significant presence across the country, NP is an important and essential protection and peacebuilding partner that is able to utilize its significant community engagement to inform and guide further relevant humanitarian response by partners.

NP's programming in South Sudan includes general protection, gender-based violence prevention and response, child protection, youth engagement, social cohesion, ceasefire monitoring, peacebuilding, and reconciliation with a particular emphasis on violence prevention. NP works closely with different partners through protection mainstreaming and other interventions to ensure the centrality of protection so that material aid and services are safely provided to communities. NP utilizes its constant and in-depth community engagement to support effective and coordinated multi-sectoral response that is relevant, holistic, conflict sensitive, and ensures the centrality of protection. NP has been the deep field focal point for OCHA and co-lead for the Protection Cluster in several parts of the country, serving as an important partner with reliable information on the local context which helps partners improve program implementation and demonstrates NP's ability to coordinate response in a variety of contexts.

AREAS OF OPERATION IN 2021



- Mobile response
-  Static field site

Intervention	Thematic Focus	Donor	Locations
Preventing Violence and Increasing the Protection and Security of Civilians	Child protection, GBV prevention and response, youth engagement, conflict management, and protection mainstreaming	Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance	Pibor with response to Lekuangole, Manyabol, and Gumuruk (Jonglei); Nyirol County with response to Urur (Jonglei); Bentiu with response to Rubkona, and Guit (Unity); Tonj (Warrap); Yei with response to Morobo, Lainya and Kajo-Keji (Central Equatoria); Panyijiar (Unity); Southern Unity Mobile Team with response to Leer, Mayendit, Koch, and Mayom (Unity)
Strengthening women's leadership in violence prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding	Women's inclusion, peacebuilding, and conflict management	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	Bentiu IDP camp (Unity); Juba IDP camp (Central Equatoria); Aburoc (Upper Nile State); Rumbek (Lakes)
Opening civilian space for community reconciliation, and strengthening community mechanisms for protection and peacebuilding initiatives	Community protection, peacebuilding, women's and youth engagement, and protection mainstreaming	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Ulang with response throughout the Sobat Corridor (Upper Nile) and Mundri with response to Mvolo (Western Equatoria)
Community Violence Reduction (CVR) in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area	Community violence reduction, peacebuilding, resilience, women's and youth empowerment	South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (WFP as consortium lead)	Akobo West (Jonglei) and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (Jonglei)
Supporting the Cohesion of Communities and Inclusive Ceasefire and Transitional Security Monitoring Mechanisms	Social cohesion and ceasefire monitoring	European Union	Yambio with response to Tambura (Western Equatoria); Mundri (Western Equatoria); Ganyliel (Unity); Juba (Central Equatoria); and Bentiu (Unity)
Increasing the safety, security and operational space of South Sudanese Human Rights Defenders	Direct protection, civic engagement, and civic development	European Union and Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	Juba with response throughout the country
Rapid integrated mobile response to prevent and respond to emergency protection concerns due to conflict outbreaks and severe food insecurity	Direct protection, GBV prevention and response, and child protection	South Sudan Humanitarian Fund	Tonj North (Warrap) and Aweil South (Northern Bahr El Ghazal)
Supporting Dialogue and Reconciliation between the Jur of Mvolo and the Dinka Atuot of Yirol	Reconciliation and peacebuilding	Embassy of France	Mvolo (Western Equatoria) and Yirol West (Lakes)



COMMUNITY PROTECTION TEAMS

The effective establishment and strengthening of women's protection teams (WPTs) and youth protection teams (YPTs) is a cornerstone of NP's successes in protection and peace throughout the country, and a core operationalization of NP's UCP methodology. These WPTs and YPTs have been trained on topics encapsulated in the UCP methodology such as peacebuilding, nonviolent conflict resolution, protection, and GBV prevention and response and have already begun implementing relevant independent and joint activities with NP and other community groups. These community mechanisms ensure inclusive participation of youth and women in the local decision-making processes in peace and security issues, transforming them from being traditionally perceived as perpetrators or victims respectively, to agents of change and role model for peace and social cohesion.

In addition, NP establishes and supports EWER groups that are mobilized to identify potential sources of violent conflict including within and between communities, as well as armed actors. Through NP's existing interventions, these groups have been up-skilled to intervene non-violently to prevent escalation of conflict through dialogue facilitation, negotiation, and advocacy. Early warning and early response groups are formed with the intention of creating community-led mechanisms to identify early signs of conflict and violence and then lead their communities in response to mitigate the impacts of violence and displacement on the community, particularly for the most vulnerable members of that community. Members of these EWER groups, comprised of traditional leaders, women, youth, and church leaders, often begin as participants of NP' UCP trainings and grow into established groups in communities that are particularly vulnerable to violence and displacement. Since the establishment of the EWER groups in Mundri, for example, community members have reportedly felt more connected to leaders and empowered to face mutual challenges utilizing the power of their shared voices. The EWER group in Madiba Payam of Mundri East even managed to engage in dialogue and dispute resolution with Mundari cattle keepers migrating

through their communities, de-escalating tensions between the Mundari and their communities, to prevent recurrence of cyclical violence in the community between farmers and cattle keepers.

WOMEN'S PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION

NP has significant experience working alongside and providing direct protection for women facing immediate threats of violence, including through protective accompaniment to post-incident support services, referral services to GBV survivors, awareness raising sessions on pertinent women's protection and gender issues, trainings on gender-based violence prevention and response, and advocacy to civilian, military, and traditional authorities to support women's protection efforts.

As of October 2021, NP actively supports 55 WPTs throughout South Sudan. Each WPT is comprised of approximately 30 women who are trained and mentored to identify security and protection concerns, respond to protection threats and escalation of conflict, and serve as leaders for peace and protection in their communities. WPTs are also linked to civilian and military authorities, and traditional leaders to facilitate the legitimacy of the WPTs as community structures and, eventually, support their inclusion into local peace and decision-making processes. For example, in Ganyliel, Panyijiar County, a WPT focal point has been invited to observe traditional court processes for GBV cases, a forum traditionally reserved for males. In Hai Kuzee, Yambio County, a WPT member has recently been elected the community's first female head chief. In Juba IDP camp, WPT members have been invited to attend decision-making forums at the block, zone, camp, and humanitarian levels. As part of these decision-making forums, members of the WPTs took part in nominations for camp leadership. During the subsequent elections, 14 WPT members were selected by the community to become community representatives, including nine WPT members who became block leaders, four WPT members who became zone leaders, and one WPT member who became the camp chairlady, designated as the person responsible for raising the concerns of women and girls. WPT members have also been critical for implementing protection strategies to prevent violence in their communities such as by providing protection mainstreaming for distribution partners in Wau and inter-positioning themselves between two clans to de-escalate conflict in Ulang.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Nonviolent Peaceforce currently supports 26 YPTs throughout South Sudan, comprised of approximately 30 youth per team. Youth protection team members are provided with a suite of unarmed civilian protection trainings, including nonviolent communication, conflict management, GBV prevention and response, and positive masculinities. Then, youth are supported to identify community concerns and work with community leaders to develop locally-driven solutions. Engagement with youth is determined by the context of each location and the specific needs and requests of youth. For example, in Pibor, NP is liaising with leaders of different age-sets and bringing divergent age-sets together for dialogue whereas in Yambio, NP is providing capacity building and logistical support for youth to facilitate community dialogues that bring the chiefs of different ethnic groups together for improved community cohesion.



CHILD PROTECTION

NP's work aims to prevent physical harm and reduce violence impacting children, strengthen community capacity for self-protection and promote psychosocial well-being through responsive and survivor-centered programming in South Sudan. NP has been operating child protection programming in South Sudan since 2010 implementing activities aimed at enhancing safety and security for vulnerable children, establishing and strengthening sustainable capacity-building of local protection structures, and awareness-raising resulting in behavior change among communities to support the safety of children. NP has made a number of important achievements through its child protection programming in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected contexts in South Sudan including the facilitation of child safe spaces across the country. As of September 2021, these child safe spaces have a combined attendance of over 2500 children who are provided with education, recreation, and life skills development in a safe environment. In addition, NP refers children to child protection services, reports violations to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, establishes, strengthens, and improves the utilization of the child protection referral pathways, and engages the community in child protection services through trainings, workshops, and child protection committees.

SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEBUILDING

NP conducts advocacy initiatives targeting local leaders to link women, youth groups and other traditionally excluded groups with state peace actors as well as community forums that bring together women, youth, and state peace actors with the aim of establishing and enabling joint peace strategies, amplifying voices of women and youth, and promoting social cohesion within communities. This, in turn, facilitates the participation of civilians in community

decision making processes and civilian protection initiatives For example, after support and linkages provided by NP, the WPT in Lui Payam of Mundri East engaged in negotiations with an army commander to secure the release of wrongfully detained youth. In Bentiu, NP initiated a meeting between the Rubkona commissioner and the WPTs which resulted the commissioner agreeing for the WPT to serve as an immediate point of communication between IDP camp authorities, the community and county authorities. By linking community groups with peace actors, authorities and signatory parties, community groups are empowered to use their voice for positive change. Additionally, authorities and signatory parties are more likely to hear and respond to the needs of their communities, thereby improving their response to civilian concerns and strengthening cohesion.

NP also facilitates communal dialogues and peace conferences with traditional leaders, women, and youth to enhance trust, build confidence, and provide an enabling environment for cohesive communities. In Juba, for example, NP brought together the Moryok, Lokwilil, Nakitom, Merelotor and checkpoint communities to strengthen relations between the communities in and around Juba IDP camp. Due to high levels of mistrust between different ethnic and tribal groups, the host and the IDP communities have been blaming one another for incidents, perpetuating divides between them and instilling fear in one another. The conference initiated positive engagement between these communities and NP also established intra-communal peace committees and one inter-communal peace committee to continue peace efforts and sustain positive impacts.

Finally, NP organizes dialogues and supports shuttle diplomacy between communities and members of signatory groups with the aim of increasing effective communication and building positive civil-military relationships. Dialogues are often facilitated between communities and the signatory parties that live in nearby barracks where, despite close proximity, peaceful communication is often limited or completely absent. Following dialogues, members of the signatory parties have expressed their appreciation to NP, committed themselves to improving their response to civilian concerns, and encouraged civilians to report to them. For example, after tensions arose between the community and the SSPDF next to the Juba-Yei road checkpoint in Juba, NP facilitated dialogue between the SSPDF and community. As a result of this dialogue as well as the commitment of both sides to effectively participate, initial trust and a line of communication has been established between the community and the SSPDF commander. One of the participants expressed that, because of this dialogue, they can now directly raise their concerns to the commander whereas they previously only communicated with the soldiers through complaints to UNMISS. Since this dialogue, relations between the community and the SSPDF stationed at this check point continues to improve.

After the conclusion of dialogues and conferences, NP conducts follow up meetings and activities to support the implementation of local peace agreements and dialogue outcomes. For example, in Juba, after an inter-communal peace conference, NP conducted follow up meetings jointly with inter-communal peace committee members to assess whether all participating communities were following and implementing the resolutions of the peace conference. Local leaders in these communities expressed their continuous commitment to work towards a peaceful environment in the Juba IDP camp and the surrounding neighborhoods.

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

NP provides protection mainstreaming support through a three-pronged approach: Protection mainstreaming training, protection technical advice and planning support, and protection support at registration and distribution

events. NP provides protection mainstreaming trainings to staff of partner organizations and local community structures to enhance knowledge and practical capacity in protection mainstreaming. Training curricula includes definitions of protection, international standards, including 'do not harm' and other humanitarian principles, confidentiality, ensuring the safety and security of beneficiaries in all activities and a planning session for how agencies can improve the way protection is mainstreamed within agencies and local community structures. NP also coordinates closely with agencies during planning sessions to provide protection technical support. By ensuring the integration of the centrality of protection during the planning of registration and distribution events, NP supports adherence to 'do no harm' and other humanitarian principles, thereby mitigating potential risk to those seeking humanitarian assistance. During registrations and distributions, NP provides direct protection assistance by identifying sources of conflict and de-escalating tensions, providing crowd control to reduce the likelihood of violence and disruption, liaising between community members and distribution partners, and identifying and prioritizing the most vulnerable.



CASE STUDY: BUILDING ALLIANCES BETWEEN YOUTH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO ENABLE COLLECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PEACEFUL COMMUNITY COHESION

In Saura, a payam in Yambio County, Western Equatoria State, the administration of community affairs is a duty of the local chiefs led by a head chief who has overall authority over the sub-chiefs. However, since 2019, the head chief and one of the sub-chiefs have been in a dispute which divided the youth in the community by their affiliations with the head chief and sub-chief. The sub-chief and head chief chose not to work with the youth perceived to be aligned with the other despite unsuccessful attempts by the youth leader to promote unity and resolve the dispute between the two leaders. In February 2020, the sub-chief secretly organized a meeting with the head chief and the youth

leader during which the sub-chief and the youth supporting him verbally attacked the head chief. In response, the head chief immediately declared that he would stop all engagement and cooperation with the Saura youth and the sub-chief and suspended many developmental activities.

NP was not aware of the dispute until April 2021 despite ongoing engagements with the community in Saura since 2019, especially with the youth protection team (YPT) and women's protection team (WPT), through activities such as Unarmed Civilian Protection trainings, including joint patrols and peace messaging. In April, NP facilitated a community protection meeting in which members of the WPT and YPT were analyzing the context, reflecting on the challenges facing their community, and devising solutions to the identified challenges. As one of the challenges, the youth mentioned the tensions between them, the head chief and the sub-chief and asked NP to help them resolve the dispute. After further investigation into the issue, NP decided to support resolution to the conflict through shuttle diplomacy between the chief and the youth. NP first met with the head chief to listen to his version of the story and urged him to consider dialogue, a call which he accepted. NP then met with the sub-chief and key youth leaders and successfully encouraged them to engage in dialogue.

Given that NP has been providing Unarmed Civilian Protection trainings in Saura since 2019, including trainings on conflict management, nonviolent communication, and dialogue to community leaders and youth, together with participants the team determined that participants of the dialogue were prepared to come together in a dialogue. On May 28, 2021, the two chiefs and the youth met for a dialogue facilitated by NP and attended by church leaders, state and county authorities, and other local stakeholders. During the dialogue, the youth apologized to the head chief for their actions and the youth and the sub-chief expressed their willingness to reconcile. After further discussion, the head chief agreed to reconcile and work with the youth and sub-chief again. The forum for further discussion was then opened for the youth and the chiefs to reflect on the challenges facing their communities in Saura and find ways of collectively addressing them.

One of the concerns raised by the youth during the discussion was the lack of participation by the Jur and Bongo communities in Saura, including in the reconciliation dialogue. The youth decided that they would organize a consultation meeting with the key leaders of the Bongo and Jur to understand why they have not been participating in community activities. During the consultative meeting, the leaders of Jur and Bongo communities told the youth they were not participating in community activities because they were not formally invited by the head chief. In response, the youth organized a community meeting to bring together the leaders of the four ethnic communities in Saura. During the meeting, the youths and chiefs discussed their challenges and concerns, including the relative isolation of the Jur and Bongo. At the end of the meeting, the representatives from the Bongo and Jur said they were willing to actively participate in community activities as long as they were informed.

The youth resolved to conduct a series of community meetings to address the many challenges facing Saura. They asked NP to continue supporting them improve community cohesion, resolve tensions, and lead dialogues and meetings through the provision of trainings and mentoring sessions in dialogue facilitation, nonviolent conflict resolution, leadership, and advocacy. Since the community meeting, the youth have also engaged in various activities to support their communities such as providing awareness raising in Saura on gender-based violence, peace, and the ceasefire agreement.



CASE STUDY: IMPROVING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR UASC'S THROUGH PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING IN PANYIJAR

NP has been conducting protection mainstreaming, proactive presence and protective accompaniment during general food distributions (GFD) since January 2019 in both Ganyliel and Nyal in collaboration with distribution partners coordinating and providing food assistance to these communities. NP supports at distributions by identifying and prioritizing vulnerable individuals, assisting with crowd control, mitigating the risk of conflict and violence, and providing accompaniment to the elderly, lactating and pregnant women, and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).

Although food distribution partners were initially providing food assistance to UASC, they suspended the provision of food assistance in the absence of the household representatives. Under these procedures, food could only be only collected by the household representative and, in his or her absence, another adult member of the family could collect the rations. This was, in part, due to the practice of adult community members sending young children to collect the food rations on behalf of their families. However, by prohibiting the distribution of food to these young children due to a lack of verification, grave child protection concerns arose for UASCs. Hence, there was a need to verify the status of the children queuing for food.

According to IOM representatives at the biometric verification desk, distribution partners were not interviewing the children to determine other means of identification and instead, would simply turn the children away. When this issue was reported to NP, NP called for a partner meeting and advocated for alternative methods of identifying household members in instances where thumbprints were not recognized or in the absence of household

representative. As a result of these meetings, alternative methods were devised and implemented including identification of the composition of the household and naming at least two people on registration cards. This allowed beneficiaries more flexibility receiving food assistance in the absence of household representatives.

In November 2019, NP consulted the distribution partners and local authorities, raising the issue that the immediate denial of humanitarian assistance to minors without verification and investigation was a violation of their rights and contributed to significant child protection concerns.

To resolve the issue, NP was assigned to take note of the UASCs who were unable to access the food assistance provided. The referrals were then shared with relevant distribution partners in order to organize a complimentary distribution for these children. Through the use of child friendly interviewing skills, NP was able to identify, interview, and complete a written referral for UASCs which would support these children through appropriate channels identified by distribution partners and local authorities. In addition, the team was involved in writing referrals to the IOM to consider other individuals whose thumbprints was not recognized by the biometric identification system, thereby ensuring equitable access to food assistance for all members of the community.

Between January and March 2020, there were four food distributions in Nyal and Ganyiel. During these distributions, NP interviewed and referred 15 UASC's who were then able to successfully receive rations. By identifying and referring these UASC's, NP reduced the risk of these children engaging in harmful child labor or experiencing increased neglect and exploitation in order to access food, as well as ensured equitable access of food assistance for these children, thereby reducing their risk of malnutrition and related illnesses. Further, NP ensured that the rights and needs of UASCs were respected and considered in the distribution of material aid.

Further, through this process, NP identified gaps in the way complaints were handled during food distributions that, in effect, hindered access to food assistance for other members of the community. To address this, NP will continue promoting protection principles in material aid distributions through direct protection to vulnerable members of the community at distributions as well as targeted trainings to humanitarian partners, key community stakeholders, and community leaders on topics including protection mainstreaming, child protection, and prevention and response to GBV. These trainings will support humanitarian partners and community leaders to develop protection centered best practices for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Nonviolent Peaceforce is a global civilian protection agency (NGO) based in humanitarian and international human rights law. Our mission to protect civilians in violent conflicts through unarmed strategies, build peace side by side with local communities, and advocate for the wider adoption of these approaches to safeguard human lives and dignity. NP envisions a worldwide culture of peace in which conflicts within and between communities and countries are managed through nonviolent means. We are guided by principles of nonviolence, non-partisanship, primacy of local actors, and civilian-to-civilian action.

