



Examining Unarmed Civilian Protection in the UN Context: A Complement and Contribution to POC

Consultation for Member States: 10 – 11 May 2019, Tarrytown, New York



On 10-11 May 2019, the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Australia, Senegal and Uruguay along with the NGO Nonviolent Peaceforce hosted a retreat for representatives of member states, the UN Secretariat and several NGOs to examine unarmed civilian protection (UCP) methods and possible contributions to the UN's work on the protection of civilians. Over the course of 1.5 days, participants were introduced to the concept of UCP and discussed the practical work of Nonviolent Peaceforce in different countries and settings, as well as various related topics: UCP with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs); community engagement in peacekeeping; integrating local protection and self-protection approaches; UCP and DPO field missions; UCP and the role of UN Member States; and integrating high-level and local approaches to negotiation and mediation.

Civilians have increasingly become victims of the wars and violent conflicts that plague so many parts of the world today. The methods and philosophy of unarmed civilian protection can help break these cycles of violence and contribute to the spectrum of tools used by the international community to protect civilians and prevent violence.

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and at least 40 other NGOs¹ prevent violence, protect civilians and promote peace through unarmed civilian protection (UCP). UCP represents a philosophical change in POC that emphasizes protection from the bottom up, community ownership and deep, sustained engagement with the communities served. UCP is a comprehensive approach that offers a unique combination of methods that have been shown to protect civilians in violent conflicts. Well-trained unarmed civilians provide direct, immediate protection to civilians under threat and work with local civil society to strengthen their own capacities to protect themselves and prevent violence. These unarmed civilian protectors come from the host country and from other places in the world.

UCP offers studied, tested, proven methods that contribute to protection of civilians (POC) that are particularly needed at a time of the highest levels of displacement on record over 70 million people around the world have been forced from their homes because of violent conflict and when the UN is challenged to meet the needs in existing missions, in new areas, and when it is not possible to have missions in many places. New forms of conflict and nontraditional actors have also created new challenges for the UN to protect civilians and prevent violence. It is especially appropriate to examine effective and affordable methods for protecting civilians at a time when the UN is challenged to meet the needs in existing missions as well as in new areas where missions will not be deployed.

Main takeaways of the retreat

Through a facilitated process of plenaries and small group discussions with practitioners of UCP in various areas of violent conflict, retreat participants identified overarching themes, challenges, opportunities and next steps for better utilizing UCP in the UN context.

Overview

- UCP can expand the UN's ability to protect civilians
- UCP complements armed peacekeeping; it does not replace it.
- UCP entails a change and expansion of philosophy for POC to:
 - protection from the bottom up
 - community owned protection
 - deep community engagement
 - focus on local conflict.
- There needs to be a shift in mindset at the UN and among Member States in several related ways:
 - UN peacekeeping should further expand their repertoire of approaches beyond the military components;
 - UN police (IPOs) and civil affairs officers can play a greater role in integrating unarmed approaches and cooperating with UCP actors;
 - UN forces could benefit from working more closely with increased numbers of civilian actors engaged in UCP in a mutually complementarity.

¹ See: <http://selkirk.ca/node/10307>

Challenges

- Need to deepen the definitional and methodological understanding of unarmed civilian protection in order to create the necessary awareness and uptake as a complement to traditional peacekeeping.
- Access to funding.
- Managing expectations of the community.
- Convincing armed security actors of the impact of UCP.
- UCP could be perceived as a threat to sovereignty.

Opportunities

- UN Secretariat and Member States could stimulate more discussion in and around UNHQ about the application of UCP in current missions as well as non-mission settings.
- UN Secretariat could integrate the methodology in policy, training and guidelines.
- Member states and Secretariat could expand access to funding and provide more flexibility within UN Funds and Programmes e.g. Peacebuilding Fund to directly fund civil society organizations on the ground engaged in UCP.
- UNPOL (IPOs) can more easily integrate UCP methods and may act as a bridge between UCP and UN Peacekeepers.
- UCP groups and UNPOL can share hotspot mapping and develop joint plans.
- Civil affairs officers and community liaison assistants (CLAs) can also carry out some UCP methods.
- The Secretariat could explore how UCP can complement Special Political Missions (SPMs).
- UCP groups could engage youth in carrying out UCP working with the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth and other YPS actors.
- Member States could increasingly promote the methodology in national statements delivered at various debates.
- Member States are encouraged to organize side events and meetings to discuss different scenarios and cases where unarmed protection has provided or could provide benefit.
- Member states could increasingly invest in organizations that use unarmed and nonviolent approaches.
- Member states could create a Friends of UCP group or integrate UCP into the Friends of POC group including as a sub-group.
- Member states could host an event featuring UCP at the 75th General Assembly or at other high-level events.

Next Steps

- Raising awareness
 - Member states include UCP in their statements for the UNSC Open Debate on POC

- Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and Secretariat brief members of the UNSC on UCP²
- NP brief staff in DPO and other sections of the Secretariat
- Member states introduce UCP to the Public Diplomacy group at the UN
- NP brief the incoming President of the General Assembly, H.E. Tijjani Muhammad
- NP share best practices and case studies with Secretariat and Member States to delineate the comparative advantage and complementary nature of UCP
- Member states and Secretariat visit UCP field sites
- Survey what UCP methods are already being used by peacekeeping missions
- Creating partnerships with: key member states; regional and sub-regional organizations; UN Women; the Peacebuilding Fund; the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth; and other relevant actors
- Training
 - DPO integrate UCP into pre-deployment and in-service training for peacekeepers
 - DPO focus training on IPOs, Civil Affairs and Protection Officers
 - NP work with one or more regional training centres (i.e. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Centre) to lead in UCP training
- Implementation
 - UNMISS in partnership with agencies and NGOs to develop a pilot project where mission staff after necessary training use UCP methods, including response services, to prevent GBV in one or more specific geographic locations for one year. Results and lessons learned will be used to consider the use of UCP more extensively in UNMISS as well as other missions.
 - Secretariat to identify and assess prospective non-mission settings where UCP could be effective. Resource and implement UCP project in at least one of those settings.

Introduction to Unarmed Civilian Protection

Unarmed Civilian Protection is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians, for localized violence reduction, and for supporting local peace infrastructures. UCP provides unarmed, specially trained civilians who live and work with local civil society and local communities in areas of violent conflict.

Unarmed Civilian Protection is an emerging discipline currently practiced by at least 42 non-governmental organizations working in 24 areas. Recent examples include Colombia, Iraq, South Sudan, Palestine, and the Mindanao region of the Philippines. Increasingly recognized as an effective tool for protection, UCP has been cited and recommended in major UN studies, including *The High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO)*, *The Global Study on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*, *Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (2016)*, as well as in UN policy documents, and Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions.

Unarmed protectors play an important role in preventing violence protecting civilians and sustaining peace. They:

- provide direct protection to local peacebuilders who are under threat

² The Mission of Belgium to the UN hosted an informal breakfast on UCP and the results of the retreat on 17 May 2019.

- help to create and protect safer spaces for local people to work across political, ethnic, geographic and religious divides
- strengthen and/or develop local capacities for dialogue and dispute resolution
- strengthen local peace infrastructures thereby adding to the stability of areas emerging from violent conflict

Examples of UCP methods used by unarmed protectors include:

- Accompanying women as they leave the Protection of Civilians areas to collect firewood in South Sudan
- Returning and protecting former child soldiers in Sri Lanka
- Civilian based ceasefire monitoring in Mindanao, Philippines
- Providing protection in IDP camps with organized foot patrols in western Iraq
- Forming and supporting local women's protection teams to protect themselves in South Sudan



Assistant Secretary General Bintou Keita gives opening remarks.

The four main methods of UCP are identified below (third ring) along with their practical applications (outer circle):



While not appropriate in every conflict, unarmed civilian protectors apply field-tested methods in a nonpartisan and nonviolent manner always focusing on the *primacy of local people*. UCP can be applied at all stages of a conflict – at an early stage to prevent or mitigate violent conflict, during hostilities, and after violent conflict has subsided to support the transition to a stable, peaceful society.

Evidence suggests that UCP impacts positively on the safety of civilians and capacity for them to engage in everyday activities that might otherwise be dangerous. Recent evaluations indicate that lives are saved, communities are able to stay at home rather than be displaced, the behavior of armed actors changes, local actors are given more primacy, and peace and human rights work is made more possible.

For peace to be sustainable, it needs to be built by the people who live it. International partners must acknowledge and act on the premise that people have capacities, rather than just needs. There is a greater chance of successful change and sustainability if outside actors build on what

communities have and what they know. Thus, community engagement and relationship building with all relevant actors, as much as possible, are an essential part of UCP philosophy and methodology. UCP methods identify what capacities for peace are present and strengthen and elevate these in order to create sustainable solutions.

The relevance of UCP in the UN context

Retreat participants included representatives of member states who are troop contributing countries (TCC), police contributing countries (PCCs), funders of PKO missions, and Security Council members. Participants recognized that the deployment of armed peacekeepers to areas where civilians are at risk, or where there is active conflict, is not a panacea, and that current strategies have neither been capable of fully addressing the complex challenges of armed conflicts nor of sufficiently protecting civilians.

Given the direct relevance of UCP to their concerns, there was particular interest in exploring ways of incorporating nonviolent and unarmed approaches into UN peacekeeping operations and possibly pre-deployment and in-service training. A range of tools were examined and considered to enhance the protection of civilians. There was general agreement that by applying unarmed approaches in peacekeeping and other settings, missions could be more effective and efficient in implementing their mandates and expand the UN's ability to protect civilians.



Co-facilitators Fatuma Ibrahim and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara keep the discussion moving.

UCP was recognized by the participants as a useful, complementary tool to enhance the UN's approach to protection. It does this by utilizing direct community-based approaches that strengthen local communities' short- and long-term capacities to protect against violence and sustain peace and security. Interest in and understanding of non-military tools can be increased by re-conceptualizing and broadening peacekeeping. Protection within a peacekeeping context is

clearly a whole-of-mission approach including a variety of components – and UCP can be a valuable addition to that. UCP organisations can also work in armed conflicts where no UN peacekeeping mission exists as well as in places where any such mission would be highly unlikely. And, UCP organizations’ mandates allow them to do things UN blue helmets and police cannot do such as live in communities and conduct firewood patrols on foot.

In sum, retreat participants concluded that UCP is presently undervalued because it is not well known. Participants recognized that much needs to be done in terms of explaining the philosophy, describing its practical applications, and sharing best practices. One of the biggest challenges identified by the participants was in creating buy-in from different stakeholders, including Member States and the Secretariat.

Participants supported the idea of UCP being included in more peacekeeping mandates because of the added value it can bring in certain situations. A greater awareness and understanding of this added value will have to be created so that UCP can be included into the curricula of peacekeeping training and accepted as a needed and natural part of mandates. They agreed to explore ways to further promote the concept of UCP within the UN context so as to raise awareness and increase understanding of the practice and willingness to absorb into mandates, training, and UN policy.



Tiffany Easthom, Executive Director for Nonviolent Peaceforce, describes what unarmed civilian protection looks like in the field.

Unarmed Civilian Protection in practice

Retreat participants were introduced to several projects, presented by staff members of Nonviolent Peaceforce, to increase their understanding on what applying UCP tools looks like in practice.

Iraq

NP's UCP work in Iraq protects civilians and prevents violence, filling a crucial gap in areas of displacement and return in northern and central Iraq. By consistently patrolling day and night, the UCP teams decrease violence and harassment, build trust in camps, share timely information about accessing services, find cases to refer to other humanitarian organizations, and maintain the camps' civilian character. As needed, they provide protective accompaniments when IDPs are under threat, are at risk of physical violence, or need access to services. The UCP teams convene regular meetings of the Community Security Forum, Women's Group, and Youth Group in each camp to discuss protection concerns faced by these groups. They also coordinate with other humanitarian aid groups to address concerns.

The Mobile Team has regular presence in territory along the disputed Federal Iraq and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) border. It monitored several waves of displaced people in late 2017 and early 2018 and surveyed IDPs about their immediate needs and longer-term obstacles to returning to their homes. The Mobile Team provides protective accompaniment to ensure that returns are safe, voluntary, and dignified and also facilitates returnees' access to services. Additionally, this UCP work is creating a safe space for dialogue between the different communities at the grassroots level, building confidence in the population, linking the Turkmen Town Council members with Kurdish ones, and laying the groundwork for meaningful reconciliation between the different communities.

South Sudan

The pressing needs of the country have dramatically increased the scope and scale of NP's UCP work in South Sudan since the first team was established in Mundri County in 2011. There are now over 200 national and international staff in 16 teams around the country. Some of the teams are in areas heavily affected by the politically motivated conflict, while some are in areas largely untouched by the conflict but facing other challenges of communal conflict, drought, poverty, and lack of access to food and resources.

UCP work in South Sudan focuses on emergency response and the protection of civilians in areas of active conflict. The teams increase the safety and security of civilians in a number of ways including direct protection, community engagement and training, and providing safe spaces for civilians. With women and children particularly affected, Women's Protection Teams (WPTs) are helping women to prevent gender-based violence and to participate in peacebuilding and the political processes, thus reducing violence and creating the opportunity for people to peacefully resolve their own conflicts and advocate for improved security.

Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan (NPSS) works in a complementary manner with the Protection Cluster and UNMISS by sharing information derived from living within the community. This work also complements the work of the mission; where missions are not able to act or patrol, NP, in some areas, is able to step in, i.e. for protective accompaniment and in communities far from UNMISS's presence.

Philippines

Nonviolent Peaceforce Philippines (NPP) has used UCP methods to build a broad base of trust and has helped prevent violence in Mindanao for over ten years during the long peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

NPP is a part of the International Monitoring Team-Civilian Protection Component. This UCP work monitors and reports civilian protection concerns in the regions covered by the peace talks. In addition, NPP is the only international organization actively promoting and providing UCP which provides protective accompaniment for civilians and organizations in areas of conflict, including opening protective corridors during attacks and helping hostage survivors reunite with their families, monitoring ceasefire agreements at the local level, and verifying and reporting on compliance and noncompliance of agreements.

In this context, UCP has helped to create safer spaces for peaceful dialogue between different stakeholders in the country, including for local institutions, community-based conflict prevention and conflict resolution. To sustain these initiatives, UCP actors train local partners and other stakeholders in UCP methodologies for ceasefire monitoring, unarmed peacekeeping and civilian protection, and encourage nonviolent ways for communities to respond to conflict.

Myanmar

Nonviolent Peaceforce Myanmar, NPM, is helping local actors to protect civilians and build peace in regions where there is violent conflict. Between 2012 and 2017, NPM worked in a number of states (Chin, Mon, Kayin, Kachin, Shan, and Kayah) training 800+ members of civil society and ethnic armed groups in ceasefire monitoring and civilian protection.

Since 2018, NP has supported women and youth throughout the country, training them to understand and develop strategies to address needs and issues that are important to their communities. In this way, UCP methods have connected women and youth from various groups to strengthen their voices and encourage the population to pay more attention to their shared needs. Such work is creating opportunities for discussions between groups and allowing civilians to participate in local decision-making processes as well as the early stages of Myanmar's peace process. It also brings together representatives of civilian protection networks from different ethnic areas throughout the country to reduce isolation and create learning opportunities.

Thematic discussions

Retreat participants broke out into groups to discuss topics related to their current work and UCP.

1. UCP with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

The challenges related to refugees and IDPs currently and in the coming years are enormous and unprecedented. Participants agreed that protection would be enhanced when all organizations adopt UCP principles and practices, including UN agencies, when implementing their programmatic activities. A strategy is needed to create a broad coalition among NGOs and other stakeholders that embraces UCP and can work with implementing partners. Participants recognized that the current number of IDPs and refugees is far beyond what one institution can deal with and emphasized the necessity of strengthening partnerships.

The discussion centered on the similarities and differences between IDPs' and refugees' needs and responses. Refugees are not in their country of origin, so it is easier for the international community to neglect them, while IDPs are displaced within their own country and easier to reach. On the other hand, there are stronger legal protections for refugees than for IDPs. Refugees and IDPs are similarly disempowered when they move into camp settings, and consequently people fail to strengthen mechanisms of self-protection even if they have the capacity to do so. Participants recognized the need for working with the communities inside camps to bring back the sense of ownership and strengthen self-protection capacities.

When working with refugees and IDPs, organizations such as Nonviolent Peaceforce run the risk of being used as instrument for involuntary return. NP always has to ensure and convince the communities that they only support voluntary return – and provide the communities with information so a well-informed decision can be made.

Challenges

- Preventing and reducing violence at the community level can transfer conflicts to other levels.
- Preventing further displacement, so people can stay within their own communities.
- Convincing armed and security actors of the positive impact of unarmed and nonviolent approaches.
- Preventing recurrence of violence during and after the return process. It is a challenge to ensure that violence does not break out again when a peace agreement or ceasefire is implemented, or that the return of IDPs and refugees does not lead to renewed violence and tension.

Opportunities:

- The presence of opposing groups within a camp creates an opportunity to find a durable and sustainable solution to the conflict because building peace necessitates the involvement of all groups.

- Camp settings create the need to strengthen self-protection capacities, as humanitarians are often not present at night.

Concrete next steps:

- Embed UCP in camp management: in camps where different environments and different legal/protection frameworks are applied. It is often the camp management agencies, including UNHCR and IOM, that have the largest influence and the ability to include UCP tools in their mechanisms with larger reach than smaller organizations.
- Concentrate UCP prevention programming in places of displacement.
- Embed UCP into an organized, voluntary return process by including all communities and increasing the understanding about the return process among all stakeholders.

2. Community engagement in peacekeeping: integrating local protection and self-protection

Participants were introduced to community engagement as a key tool of UCP that relies on dialogue with the communities and armed actors to help them behave in ways that will reduce violence and protect civilians. This approach depends on building relationships of mutual trust and understanding. Community engagement is not one blueprint for all situations. Relationships and partnerships must be developed to address the specific needs of each community.

Participants discussed ways in which community engagement can be applied to peacekeeping settings and identified possible challenges, opportunities and next steps. Participants agreed that community engagement is not easy; it requires building trust with communities, it takes time, and language obstacles are a big issue. For UN peacekeepers, community engagement is even more difficult because they do not live within the communities. UN peacekeepers live at the base, do patrols, talk to communities, and return back to their base which is a fundamental difference with UCP actors. Participants shared that sometimes UN peacekeepers see community engagement solely as a way to gather information instead of a way to engage with the people.

All participants agreed that the biggest inhibitor to integrating UCP methods in peacekeeping is the lack of understanding about the benefits and positive impacts of UCP. UN missions need to better understand that UCP can be used in a complementary manner. To contribute to a better understanding, UCP should be integrated into mandates and in the curriculum of pre-deployment training of TCCs and PCCs.

Challenges:

- Establishing trust within communities where UCP actors work to ensure that they are perceived well.
- Trust building is a core challenge for successful UCP activities and is very time consuming. One needs to understand the local context, including local language and culture.
- UN peacekeeping missions do not have the capacity nor a full understanding of how to do community engagement; military leaders do not have civilian advisers to guide them, and there are not enough female peacekeepers able to engage with local women.

Opportunities:

- In particular settings, the scope of UCP actors is different from the scope of UN missions. Sometimes missions are perceived by communities as part of the conflict and they have not built the trust to engage with all the involved actors, whereas civil society actors may be able to do this.

Concrete next steps:

- Deepen the definitional and methodological understanding of UCP by focusing on concrete case studies in an ongoing effort within the UN system, with Member States and other organizations.
- Conduct awareness-raising and outreach to share the comparative advantage of using UCP methods and working with UCP actors
- Encourage partnerships, invest in local civil society organizations, and learn from their methods. Ways to expand UN money allocated directly to civil society organizations need to be further explored.

3. Unarmed Civilian Protection and DPO Field Missions

Participants discussed ways in which to further promote and integrate UCP approaches in DPO field missions and UN policing. Participants emphasized that when talking about DPO missions, the focus is primarily on the uniformed and military personnel. Recognizing the important role police can play, participants explained there is a need for further developing UCP strategies in this context. The police have different skills than the military and are usually more embedded in the communities with which they work. It is often assumed that unarmed police cannot provide security, however the police in domestic situations often do so without carrying weapons.

Participants supported the idea of UCP being integrated in peacekeeping mandates, because of the added value it may have in certain situations compared to armed approaches. A greater awareness and understanding of the added value has to be created, so that UCP will be increasingly accepted as a needed and natural part of mandates.

UNMISS is preparing to implement a pilot study. Since the UN is increasingly asked to document performance and quantify it to provide tangible indicators about effect, impact, change and results, the pilot currently being conceptualized will look at a series of initiatives in which UCP is used and will try to document the benefit of cooperation in a tangible reduction in sexual violence.

It was also hoped that members of the UN Security Council will start to see the benefits of investing in UCP approaches. Once it is included in a mandate, the UN can work on further sensitization and guidance on implementation. Once concrete data can be presented to the UN Security Council, it is hoped that UCP can be refined and adapted to other missions, as appropriate.

Challenges:

- Implementing UCP approaches need a conducive environment and cannot be applied everywhere at all times.

- UNPOL, other mission components, and UCP actors all have comparative advantages and duplication needs to be avoided.
- Joint operations with UCP actors and UNPOL might generate confusion among the population. It has to be clearly stated in mandates, whether and how UCP should be integrated in joint approaches.

Opportunities:

- Conduct a survey of all current activities related to UCP undertaken in the field to get an overview of strategies already being implemented and use that as the basis of future work.
- Investigate partnerships and increase resources devoted to the UCP approach.
- UNPOL may act as a bridge between full force and unarmed protection and UNPOL's position should be further explored.

Concrete next steps:

- Establish a UN Security Council working group on unarmed civilian protection, so that UCP can be debated at the highest levels to make it easier to examine its utility to meet different needs.
- Further integrate UCP in all UN strategies, including peacekeeping and policing.
- Missions should propose ways to better integrate UCP into their POC strategies (not only top-down, but also bottom-up).

4. Unarmed Civilian Protection and the role of UN Member States

Retreat participants explored ways to further promote the UCP approach within the UN context to raise awareness and increase its understanding in the Security Council and at UNHQ overall. Participants recognized that a lot needs to be done in terms of explaining the approach and sharing best practices. UCP is rarely mentioned in national statements delivered by Member States during various debates, nor is it included in the documents the UN Secretariat produces. One of the biggest challenges identified by the participants was generating buy-in from different stakeholders, including Member States and the Secretariat. They observed that UCP is undervalued and unknown and discussed concrete ways to overcome this deficit.

Participants suggested that to ensure that awareness about UCP is raised and that its application becomes mainstreamed, it should be included in the pre-deployment training of TCCs, PCCs and the UN. Similarly, Member States and the UN Secretariat need to be sensitized to the importance of including UCP in UN doctrines, guidelines and training material.

Participants mentioned that much work is done in silos in a mission setting as in many parts of the UN. To move away from considering peacekeeping as solely a military enterprise, different departments and tasks need to be integrated. Peacekeeping missions are “multidimensional” and have large civilian components and also focus on peacebuilding but the siloes remain and many peacekeeping and POC discussions at the UN are still about the military, mission footprint, and helicopter support. Participants recognized their responsibility in contributing to a shift of mindset at the UN.

Challenges:

- Creating the necessary buy-in for integrating UCP by Member States and the UN Secretariat.
- There is a lack of knowledge on the approach.
- UCP is undervalued and unknown.
- The UN system is ‘member state driven’, so any initiative needs to be pushed forward by member states.
- UCP is absent from pre-deployment and in-service training for peacekeepers.
- Addressing the “fear” that UCP actors are taking over the work of UN peacekeeping, and instead emphasize the comparative advantages and complementarities.

Opportunities:

- Member States should systematically include references to the UCP approach in national statements during debates and during formal and informal discussions.
- The UN Secretariat should systematically include references to the concept of UCP in policy, guidelines and strategies.
- Establishment of a Group of Friends of Unarmed Civilian Protection or creation of a sub-group of the already existing Group of Friends of POC, specifically focused on UCP.

Concrete next steps:

- Increase awareness on the issue by talking to other Member States during formal and informal consultations and meetings.
- Include references to UCP in national statements during various debates.
- Explore possibilities of establishing an UNSC Working Group on UCP or a Group of Friends of UCP.
- Approach regional organizations and training institutes on including UCP in pre-deployment training.
- Partner up with NGOs in New York to organize side-events on UCP.

5. Integrating high-level and local approaches to negotiation and mediation

Participants underlined the importance of understanding different applications and uses of negotiation and mediation. What are the different tools for conflict resolution and at what level and stage of the conflict are they to be applied?? Participants concluded that the ‘ripeness’ of the conflict is a determining factor regarding what tools to apply and when.

However, activities for the protection of civilians should continue at all times and at all levels. Participants discussed what the ultimate goal is of negotiation and mediation: is it only ending overt violence or also building lasting peace? Negative peace, when one actor prevails by force, is not sustainable and requires a large, enduring military presence. Participants indicated that the world is currently stuck in this paradigm of negative peace, where peace is simply about the absence of war. Strengthening local capacity to bolster the long-term protective environment by contrast could contribute to sustaining peace.

Participants agreed that local and national processes are closely interlinked. Local conflicts or issues can have a decisive influence on whether the national negotiation and mediation

processes succeed or not and vice versa. Participants discussed that local conflicts are often insufficiently addressed due to a lack of interest from the international community. Mandates are often focused on the big national process and resources are allocated to that, resulting in local conflicts being neglected.

The way the UN primarily uses its assets for POC, DDR and peacebuilding is part of a state-centric, internationally driven, top-down paradigm. Participants mentioned that this privileges state-led security, but does not lead to a sustainable kind of peace. Real peace can only be established by addressing the root causes, realizing and releasing the peace capacities within local communities, and having them feed from the bottom up into the national peace processes.

Challenges:

- There is a limited interest in focusing on local-level conflicts and much attention is focused at high-level conflict resolution.
- Limited UN mandates and resources are a challenge to be addressed.
- Larger geopolitical dynamics and competition can influence the conflict locally.

Opportunities:

- Strengthen local ownership of peace processes for political settlement.
- Strengthening partnerships between UN and UCP organizations.
- Ensure that mandates do not only focus on the larger picture, but leave enough space for local level intervention

Concrete next steps:

- Increase awareness on the issue discussed by talking to other Member States during formal and informal consultations and meetings.
- Encourage and strengthen partnerships between the UN and different organizations and especially local civil society.
- Create training to further improve leadership skills. There is a need for courageous leaders who are willing to push the envelope.



Malick Faye, Police Advisor for the Permanent Mission of Senegal, offers closing reflections.