

NP Calls for Centring Protection of Civilians Amid Deadly Escalations in the Middle East

4 March 2026 — Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is deeply alarmed by the ongoing, violent escalations across the Middle East. Civilians are once again paying the highest price for decisions they did not make. Every day, families are being displaced, injured, and killed; homes, schools, and hospitals are being destroyed; and entire communities are being thrown into upheaval and turmoil.

As a civilian protection organisation, NP's first and deepest concern is the safety of individuals and communities caught in the crossfire of armed actors and political decisions. In every crisis, civilians are the most harmed and the most forgotten, and in every crisis—including the current violence in the Middle East—their protection must be non-negotiable.

"In the communities where we work, people are concerned about whether it is safe to send their children to school, to go to work, or even to sleep through the night," said Thiago Wolfer, Nonviolent Peaceforce's Head of Mission in Iraq. "When airspaces and roads close, missiles fly overhead in all directions, and rumours of new attacks spread, the first thing to disappear is any sense of safety. People feel that they are left to navigate threats on their own, yet they continue to look for ways to protect each other and hold on to some sense of normality in the middle of uncertainty and fear."

In the face of the escalating violence across the region, it is our responsibility to the communities we work with to call out the harm they endure and to prioritise their protection. As hostilities intensify and tensions deepen, protection of civilians remains the utmost, urgent priority.

Civilians must not be reduced to strategic calculations or dismissed as collateral damage. Their lives, rights, and humanity must be centred in every decision, every policy, and every response, and their protection must be concrete, immediate and enforceable.

Civilians across the Middle East are currently facing an unprecedented escalation of regional violence that transcends borders and directly threatens their lives, communities, and futures. People are entitled to safety, functioning services, and having the space to organise, support one another, and lead their own protection efforts. All actors with power must take immediate steps to prevent further bloodshed and prioritise the safety and dignity of those living through this violence. Every moment of delay in meaningful action means the loss of civilian lives, property, and that more people will face displacement.

NP is calling on all Heads of States, the UN Security Council, and actors on the ground, to prioritise the preservation of human life above all else. The international community, particularly states with direct or indirect involvement in this growing crisis, has a responsibility to act urgently towards de-escalation. Military escalation is not a path to peace or stability, but rather a threat to the lives and dignity of millions of people across the Middle East. Only dialogue, mediation, and conflict prevention efforts that centre civilians' safety and protection can halt the spiralling violence and prevent even more catastrophic developments.

About Nonviolent Peaceforce

Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) is an international nongovernmental organisation deploying Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) tools to safeguard lives in conflict zones. Our mission is to protect civilians through unarmed strategies, build peace alongside local communities, and advocate for wider adoption of nonviolent protection in order to safeguard human lives, safety, and dignity.

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