



GPC GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2021 CONCEPT NOTE FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS THEMATIC EVENT



Unpacking the protection of civilians in armed conflict: case-studies from the field
27th of October 2021, 14:00 – 15:30 CET

Rationale/purpose

Most of today's armed conflicts are characterized by the presence of a myriad of parties, both state and non-state entities, and produce multifaceted effects often with an impact at the regional and global levels. Especially in urban environments, civilians and civilian infrastructure are harmed, often with long-term consequences including failing infrastructure and public services, rising levels of crime, a breakdown in the rule of law, and weakened State authority.

Moreover, all parties to conflict, including some States and the multiple and fractured Non-State-armed groups controlling or disputing territory, disregard the basic principles of International Humanitarian Law, with profound effects on civilians.

Faced with these increasingly complex, protracted and multifaceted armed conflicts, the humanitarian actors made considerable efforts to integrate the protection of civilians (PoC) in policies and to put it at the center of humanitarian response; yet operationalizing it in practice on the ground remain challenging.

As highlighted by the UN Secretary-General in his latest report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, "what is needed urgently now from all Member States and all parties to armed conflict is the political will to respect the rules and implement good practices" to strengthen the protection of civilians.

This event aims to unpack complementarity of action and contributions to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Experiences and good practices will be shared by field Protection Clusters and operational partners on engagement with NSAGs, community-based approaches to protection in armed conflict and working with peacekeeping operations.

The event is a follow-up to last year's GPC Forum webinar on "Strengthening the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: the role of Protection Clusters and Operational Actors" which reflected on the practical and operational challenges, opportunities and constraints for Protection Clusters to address issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and opportunities to join up to and leverage global frameworks to reinforce their efforts.

Expected Outcome

The expected outcomes of the session are to:

- Unpack and exchange good practices and lessons learned to enhance the protection of civilians by the Protection Cluster and operational partners and peace operations on the three above mentioned topics



- Raise awareness regarding existing approaches to strengthen the protection of civilians and new initiatives and practical measures developed at the country-level, and identification of technical and operational gaps and areas of support.
- Highlight the role of key stakeholders: Member States including in their capacity as donors as well as civil society, and relevant global-level efforts in addressing issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Speakers/Moderator/ technical donor partner

- Moderator: Houda Chalchoul, Senior Legal Officer (IHL), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Opening remarks:
 - Bernadette Castel-Hollingsworth, Deputy Director, Division for International Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - Aurelien Buffler, Chief, Policy Advice and Planning Section, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Panel:
 - Aziz Rahjo, Senior Protection Cluster Coordinator Officer (Sudan)
 - Yasin Abbas, Senior Protection Cluster Coordinator Officer (Syria)
 - Jacques Ajaruvwa Wathum, Senior Protection Cluster Coordinator Officer (CAR)
 - Samuel Mutungi (or Abou Jeng), UNITAMS-Sudan
 - Ezequiel Heffes, Geneva Call, Senior Policy and Legal Advisor
- Closing remarks:
 - Brigitte Oederlin, Deputy Head of Africa Division and Head of Protection Unit, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Humanitarian Aid
 - Hannah Rose Holloway, Co-Coordinator, Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) and Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP) Coordinator – Danish Refugee Council Geneva Representation

Background Reading

- UNHCR, Protection in Armed Conflict toolkit, <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/UNHCR-Toolkit-Protection-in-armed-conflict.pdf>
- GPC, [The Global Protection Update](#): Focus on Protection of Civilians in Practice , September 2021
- Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, [S/2021/423](#), 3 May 2021
- OCHA, [Aide Memoire on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#)
- From Words to Deeds. Providing Tools for an Effective Engagement of Armed Non-State Actors to Improve Humanitarian Protection: <https://words2deeds.org/>
- Generating Respect for Humanitarian Norms: The Influence of Religious Leaders on Parties to Armed Conflict: <https://www.generatingrespectproject.org/>