

Towards hybridity in Civilian Protection

Workshop Convenors:

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Summary:

The workshop seeks to gain perspectives from engaged academics and practitioners to identify commonalities, differences, and models of best practices in how organisations form and implement concepts of ‘civilian protection’ in violent conflict.

The ability of organisations to effectively offer civilian protection in violent conflict is a critical factor in how interventions are understood. Since the United Nations’ first ‘cross-cutting’ Security Council Resolution which considered the protection of civilians in 1999, a comprehensive suite of policy responses from a range of organisations has emerged which guide the actions of national and international actors to better analyse, prepare and react to instances where civilian populations are targeted by armed actors. This has led to mixed mode interventions with multiple intervening parties who have different mandates, competencies, and constitutional constraints. Moreover, the extent to which these approaches complement or contest local capacities for civilian protection presents a further challenge. This range of challenges is possibly why UN Secretary General Guterres argued in 2019 for ‘sustained engagement and dialogue among Member States, the UN and civil society to improve the protection of civilians’.

Papers at this workshop will therefore examine the mechanisms of engagement in civilian protection activities, paying particular attention as to how concepts of civilian protection are implemented, challenged, adapted and altered in deployment zones. It will use the concept of ‘hybridity’, a term introduced by Mac Ginty (2010) in the peacebuilding field, to better understand the evolving flexibility of models of civilian protection, particularly when faced with challenges in implementation in local contexts. It will be guided by four distinct sub-themes:

- 1) What process do protection organisations undertake to arrive at an understanding of the root causes of violence against civilians, and possible strategies of humanitarian protection?
- 2) What types of interaction exist between intervening organisations and civilian organisations in conflict contexts?
- 3) How do organisations identify and prioritise the variety of possible approaches to adopt in response to protection needs in local contexts?
- 4) What methodological considerations are required to engage in research into PoC?

The workshop seeks to engage with a multidisciplinary audience, encouraging perspectives from fields including peace and conflict studies, humanitarian and disaster management, law, international relations, and security studies.

This workshop is linked to a broader ESRC/IRC funded project which investigates this topic. Like the project, an aim of this workshop is to build the capacities of Early Career Researchers, through networking, article development, and peer support.