One Conflict After Another, We’re Building a New Expectation in War: That the Tragedy of Civilian Losses Will Never Be Ignored.
I want to thank CIVIC for bringing us together...I have heard many things that I will go back to discuss with my commander for action.

—Nigerian Army Major Badare of 28th Taskforce Brigade
**LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR**

Friends:

These days are difficult ones for proponents of human rights. Even so, it still seems possible to make headway in some places on issues of concern to human rights advocates. These include the issue on which Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) focuses: the protection of civilians against harm in armed conflicts.

One factor making it possible for CIVIC to be effective is that some military leaders have come to agree that minimizing civilian casualties can confer a strategic advantage. This is not a new idea. Since ancient times, some commanders have recognized and sought the prestige of mercy. Still others have also recognized that if one side took care to limit harm to the other side’s people, it increased the chances that opponents would do the same. Since the nineteenth century, this reciprocity has played an important part in the codification of international humanitarian law.

Today, the strategic advantage of minimizing harm to civilians should be especially apparent: contemporary wars are not fought on restricted battlefields; they take place in large territories populated by civilians. And in the face of widespread civilian hostility exacerbated by harming civilians, it is difficult for any military force to prevail.

However, the main reason to minimize harm to civilians is not to confer military advantage—rather, it is to save innocent lives. That is why CIVIC exists. Persuading military leaders where it is in their self interest to minimize civilian harm is how we advance our mission.

Of course, there are still many military commanders and political leaders who think they can prevail by spreading terror, such as Syria’s Bashar al-Assad. In the short run, these tactics may seem to succeed. Yet, such regimes never regain legitimacy at home or abroad, and they entrench the permanent hostility of a large portion of the Syrian population. At some point, the disadvantages of such behavior may come back to haunt President Assad’s government and its military allies.

The conduct of the war in Syria shows how much remains to be done to achieve the goals of CIVIC. We are making headway in some places, but we have a very long way to go. With your help and support, we will move forward. And for that we are eternally grateful.

With gratitude and respect,

Aryeh Neier

---

**LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dear friends:

I’m going to be honest with you: This past year was not great for civilians trapped in conflicts around the world.

We all watched the massacres of civilians in Aleppo with a feeling of horror and impotence. We witnessed the violation, not once but twice, of the sanctuary of United Nations bases in South Sudan, despite the presence of international peacekeepers. Civilians in Yemen, Iraq, and Ukraine felt that danger can come at any time, by all sides, from the air or from the ground. In Ukraine, civilians told us, “We are afraid of silence,” because in some places silence does not mean peace, but instead only a threatening lull in the violence.

Around the world, we have seen the growth of populist movements that cheer the closing of borders and disregard the basic rules to protect civilians.

And yet I am proud to say that CIVIC has risen to the challenge. We are working with the Nigerian government to help them create the right policies to better protect their own civilians in the multiple conflicts they are facing. We trained Kurdish commanders prior to the Mosul operation in Iraq, and once the operation started, we heard back from them that “their first rule is to protect civilians.” Our work in South Sudan promoted more transparency and accountability to the UN system, and our advocacy helped bring about landmark standing policies to protect civilians within NATO and the US government.

In 2017, we are determined to keep moving forward, expanding our work in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and engaging a diverse set of stakeholders—from both the North and the Global South—around the need to strengthen, rather than weaken, the rules, policies, and practices for the protection of civilians. That commitment will make civilians safer not only in Iraq and South Sudan, but also in Europe and the United States.

We are here only because of your support. In these extraordinary times, we need that support more than ever.

Sincerely,

Federico Borello
Executive Director
Center for Civilians in Conflict

CIVIC/Sahr Muhammedally
OUR VISION

A future where parties involved in conflict go above and beyond their legal obligations to minimize harm to civilians in conflict.

Our activities are four-fold:

- **Documenting the toll of armed conflict** on civilians, through interviews with civilians themselves, humanitarians, and security actors.
- **Advocating with decision makers** in world capitals and international and regional institutions to change mindsets and develop policies and practices that protect civilians and dignify their losses.
- **Engaging directly with military actors** to provide them with practical solutions to minimize civilian harm.
- **Amplifying civilian’s voices** by highlighting both their plight and our solutions to lessen their suffering.

IN 2017, WE PLAN TO:

1. Continue our work with the Afghanistan national government and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) to adopt national policies to reduce civilian harm during operations and to identify new capabilities to protect civilians.
2. Develop our work in Ukraine, Yemen, and Iraq by building our capacity in-country and strengthening our advocacy on civilian protection with security forces.
3. Establish a Europe program to deepen our work with regional organizations (EU, NATO) and with states who are key actors in the security landscape both at home and abroad.
5. Support communities in Nigeria to develop self-protection strategies to minimize civilian harm and expand our work with the Nigerian military to develop and implement civilian protection policies.
6. Expand our work on peacekeeping operations mandated to protect civilians, focusing on the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and South Sudan.
7. Help strengthen the UN’s capacity to track, analyze, and respond to civilian harm, as well as mitigate harm to civilians in UN peace operations.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve protection for civilians caught in conflicts around the world. We call on and advise international organizations, governments, militaries, and armed non-state actors to adopt and implement policies to prevent civilian harm. When civilians are harmed we advocate the provision of amends and post-harm assistance. We bring the voices of civilians themselves to those making decisions affecting their lives.
WHERE WE WORK

United Nations

Last year, CIVIC hired a UN advisor and opened an office in New York, launching its first-ever-based advocacy and policy engagement with the United Nations. In 2017, CIVIC will continue to conduct advocacy with the UN and Member States in New York, and work to strengthen the protection for civilians caught in conflict.

NATO

After years of advocacy by CIVIC and our partners, last year NATO adopted a comprehensive Protection of Civilians policy, strengthening its capabilities on civilian protection and harm mitigation. In 2017, CIVIC will continue to engage with NATO to translate policy into doctrine. CIVIC will also continue to push NATO to ensure that civilian harm is acknowledged and that amends are made.

United States

CIVIC has advocated for the principles of preventing, recognizing, and making amends for harm to civilians in conflict since 2003, and last year a US Executive Order made protection of civilians a key concern in war planning. As the agenda of the Trump administration becomes clearer, in 2017, CIVIC will continue to argue that US leadership in protecting civilians from harm is always in the best interest of the United States.

Central African Republic

In 2016, CIVIC conducted research in CAR on the protection of civilians by the UN peacekeeping mission, MINUSCA. In April 2017, we published a report, The Primary of Protection: Delivering on the MNUSCA Mandate in the Central African Republic, and in April 2017, and will continue to work to strengthen the protection afforded to civilians in CAR.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

We published From Mandate to Mission Maximizing Civilian Harm in UN Peacekeeping Operations in the DRC, which assessed civilian perspectives of peacekeepers and the peacekeeping mission’s efforts to prevent harm to civilians during its military operations.

Ukraine

CIVIC released its report, We Are Afraid of Silence: Protecting Civilians in the Donbass Region, based on several months of research and over a hundred interviews with civilians in the Donbass region. We also released a short documentary film, A first for CIVIC. In 2017, CIVIC will conduct a strategic assessment of the Ukrainian military protection capabilities and provide technical assistance to the Ukrainian government.

Iraq

We instructed 190 Peshmerga commanders on civilian protection before the Mosul operation, and we’re assessing the impact on civilians and working with the Peshmerga to strengthen processes. In 2017, CIVIC is also expanding its work with Iraqi Security Forces.

Afghanistan

We continued our work with the national government and security forces and helped create the Civilian Protection Working Group in Kabul. We also issued the report, Seeing Ourselves: Civilian Protection and Security Transition, examining the strategies civilians are facing with an emboldened insurgency and the departure of most international combat.

Somalia

We continued our work in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia. In October, at the request of the mission, we facilitated a two-day workshop to develop a policy on post-harm assistance currently pending AU approval. We also secured an official invitation from the AU to conduct an assessment of the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell, which we will complete in mid-2017.

Yemen

We investigated patterns of civilian harm in Yemen’s civil war, and published Days in Hell: Civilian Perspectives on the Conflict in Yemen. In 2017, CIVIC plans to work with newly created government forces on civilian protection.

Syria

Early in 2016, CIVIC published a report, The Primacy of Protection: Delivering on the MNUSCA Mandate in the Central African Republic, and in April 2017, and will continue to work to strengthen the protection afforded to civilians in CAR.

Nigeria

In 2016, CIVIC began work in Borno, the epicenter of the conflict in Northeast Nigeria, and held a high-level dialogue with security actors to develop policies to better protect civilians. In 2017, we will continue to instruct the Nigerian security forces on how to implement these policies.

Democratic Republic of

We published From Mandate to Mission Maximizing Civilian Harm in UN Peacekeeping Operations in the DRC, which assessed civilian perspectives of peacekeepers and the peacekeeping mission’s efforts to prevent harm to civilians during its military operations.

South Sudan

We investigated patterns of civilian harm in Yemen’s civil war, and published Days in Hell: Civilian Perspectives on the Conflict in Yemen. In 2017, CIVIC plans to work with newly created government forces on civilian protection.

We continued our work with the national government and security forces and helped create the Civilian Protection Working Group in Kabul. We also issued the report, Seeing Ourselves: Civilian Protection and Security Transition, examining the strategies civilians are facing with an emboldened insurgency and the departure of most international combat.

Afghanistan

We continued our work in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia. In October, at the request of the mission, we facilitated a two-day workshop to develop a policy on post-harm assistance currently pending AU approval. We also secured an official invitation from the AU to conduct an assessment of the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell, which we will complete in mid-2017.
HIGH LEVEL ADVOCACY

On the Ground Training

Nigeria

In early 2016, CIVIC staff returned to Nigeria and Chad to continue our advocacy around the findings of our 2015 report, *When We Can’t See the Enemy, Civilians Become the Enemy*. This report called on the Nigerian army to place protecting Nigerian civilians at the heart of military planning rather than focusing operations merely on defeating Boko Haram.

CIVIC was asked by the Nigerian government to assist in drafting the country’s first civilian protection policy, and in November 2016, CIVIC organized a high-level event that brought together members of the government, Defense Headquarters (DHQ) and civil society representatives to discuss the proposed policy and how it could be adopted and implemented.

The end of the year also saw CIVIC working in Borno, the epicenter of the violent conflict in Northeast Nigeria. CIVIC engaged with security actors on how to better protect civilians, worked with local civil society on self-protection strategies and held workshops with IDPs to help strategize how they can better protect themselves from attacks. CIVIC also traveled to Chad and received support from the head of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Multi-National Joint Task Force, and officials from the African Union to collaborate on joint tactics to improve civilian protection.

Thanks to numerous high-level endorsements, CIVIC has the necessary access to security officials and has observed a newfound enthusiasm on the part of the government and military on the need to protect civilians in ongoing military operations, and CIVIC was informed that our recommendations were being taken into consideration.

Unfortunately, these recommendations have taken on new urgency in the face of continuing reports of high levels of civilian harm and human rights abuses, as well as the mistaken bombing of an IDP camp in January 2017, which killed over 200 civilians and aid workers.

There is a building momentum and recognition by the military and other security actors of the need to prioritize civilian protection and we continue to work with the Nigerian government to improve their response to such incidents.

---

If not for you, the community will be afraid of us. You are like our bridge to the community.

— Brig Gen Idriss, Commander 22 Armoured Brigade in Dikwa, Nigeria, after civilian protection workshop in March 2017.
Every day we hear about the tragic toll of conflict. At CIVIC, we advocate for tangible solutions that improve the lives of the men, women, and children living in the midst of war.
LOOKING AHEAD

Our Work with AMISOM: Set For Expansion

Somalia
The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) continues to face challenges in its interaction with the civilian population and its responses to al-Shabaab. The Mission has stated its intent to begin withdrawal from Somalia in 2018, to be completed by 2020; however, Somalia’s security situation is uncertain. Approximately 20,000 local forces need to be trained and other measures put in place to ensure that AMISOM’s withdrawal does not cause the country to descend into further violence.

Since late 2011, CIVIC has been working with AMISOM on the creation of a Civilian Casualty Tracking Cell (CCTARC) to help gather and analyze information on civilian harm allowing AMISOM to change tactics when necessary to mitigate harm to civilians. In mid-2015 the CCTARC was officially created, and steady progress continues to be made.

In the fall of 2016, CIVIC was invited by AMISOM to lead a conference to draft an amends and post harm assistance policy and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). After sustained advocacy by CIVIC over several years, the African Union (AU) and AMISOM gave official support for such a mechanism. CIVIC delivered the draft to the AU in November and the SOP is currently pending adoption. The significant progress on this SOP will hopefully be replicated in all future AU operations.

In December, we received formal sign off granting CIVIC access to work with CCTARC staff to assess gaps in and obstacles to CCTARC’s current work. We continue to work with the Peace and Security Operations Division of AU headquarters to secure an official memorandum of understanding, laying the groundwork for future work across the African Union.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

‘Making amends to the victims is about much more than the money,’ says Marla Keenan, managing director of the Center for Civilians in Conflict. ‘It can seem incredibly arbitrary if you are the victim and someone shows up on your doorstep with a bag of money.’

Newsweek
U.S. Airstrikes In Afghanistan Are Killing Civilians At Greatest Rate In Seven Years, Feb 18, 2016
ENGAGING COMMUNITIES  
Capturing What Works in Peacekeeping

The Central African Republic (CAR)
Since September 2016, CAR has seen an uptick in violence, much of it targeting civilians. Clashes have broken out between ex-Séléka forces and pro-government forces and there has been minimal progress on demobilization, security sector reform, and the other promises of the 2015 Peace Accords. About 60 percent of the country remains under the control of non-state actors. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is tasked with a long list of responsibilities, ranging from directly protecting civilians from physical violence to supporting the extension of state authority and the preservation of territorial integrity. But MINUSCA isn’t a substitute for the state and is limited in the protection it can provide to civilians across large swaths of territory.

CIVIC staff travelled to CAR in December 2016 to review MINUSCA’s protection of civilians operations. The research gathered lessons learned from failures and successes alike. In 2017, CIVIC will augment its focus on MINUSCA, call on the Security Council to further prioritize the protection of civilians in CAR, and urge the UN to integrate good practices in MINUSCA’s policies.

POLITICAL PROGRESS
Mitigating Harm by Those Mandated to Protect

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
Eastern DRC has faced widespread and almost uninterrupted violence for two decades now. The national political crisis has worsened since September 2016, when opposition leaders stepped up their protests to call for president Kabila to step down at the end of his second constitutional term, which ended in December 2016. On New Year’s Eve, the ruling coalition and the opposition reached a tentative agreement to postpone elections until the end of 2017 and to forge a power-sharing agreement. The signatories, however, have struggled to implement the agreement.

Many DRC civilians face violence on a daily basis. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has much work to do to achieve the stabilization and protection goals at the heart of its mandate, despite its long-running presence and the unprecedented addition of a Force Intervention Brigade authorized to use force to neutralize abusive non-state armed actors.

As peacekeeping operations increase their use of force they must also increase the measures they take to track, prevent, and make amends for harm caused during their operations. From July to December 2016, CIVIC conducted in-depth field research in the DRC to assess strengths, gaps, and civilian perceptions of peacekeepers in the Goma, Beni, Masisi, and Walikale regions. Our December 2016 report, From Mandate to Mission: Mitigating Civilian Harm in UN Peacekeeping Operations in the DRC, based on this research, is a comprehensive examination of MONUSCO’s own policies to mitigate and respond to civilian harm occurring in joint operations with DRC’s armed forces. Since its publication, MONUSCO officials have asked CIVIC for further policy recommendations to improve their approach to civilian harm mitigation.

We will continue this work in 2017 and increase our focus on how peacekeeping operations can better engage the communities they seek to protect. While it has had its share of failures, MONUSCO has also been a leader in developing innovative approaches to working with communities under threat. We will work to capture practices that work and lessons learned when they don’t.
She deserves a better playground. CIVIC works hard to persuade parties to conflicts to avoid targeting civilian homes, schools, and hospitals.
A CRISIS UNFOLDING

Holding Peacekeepers Accountable

South Sudan

2016 saw increased armed conflict in many parts of South Sudan. Armed state and non-state actors continued to target civilians. Parties also blocked humanitarian assistance in many parts of the country, compounding the devastating consequences for civilians affected by violence.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) remains the only barrier between perpetrators of violence and their intended victims in many of the country’s most conflict-affected areas. In February 2016, an UNMISS base and protection of civilians site housing over 47,000 displaced persons in the town of Malakal, was engulfed in violence that left at least 30 people dead and much of the camp in ashes. CIVIC staff traveled to the town days after the crisis ended and conducted extensive research, interviewing both civilians and UN officials. Our report, A Refuge in Flames: The February 17-18 Violence in Malakal POC, found that the mission’s reaction was slow and ineffective throughout much of the incident and a quicker and more robust response likely would have saved civilian lives. The report provided a unique outside perspective, and CIVIC was asked to testify on the events before the US House of Representatives’ Africa and Global Human Rights Subcommittee.

Five months later, UNMISS found itself again trying to prevent attacks on civilians in Juba. Warring parties committed widespread sexual violence against women and attacked international and national humanitarians and journalists. CIVIC undertook another investigation and published Under Fire: The July 2016 Violence in Juba and UN Response, which found that, even allowing for significant constraints, peacekeepers were unable or unwilling to leave their bases and at times even underperformed in protecting 37,000 civilians in its bases. Our decision to name troop contributing countries responsible for protection failures helped to pave the way for the UN’s own Special Investigation to do the same in November and hold commanders accountable.

In 2017, we will continue to monitor how the UN implements recommendations resulting from these investigations. We will also review how the mission engages with conflict-affected communities.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

‘There is very little accountability for peacekeeping failures in terms of protection of civilians,’ said Matt Wells, a senior advisor on peacekeeping. ‘As long as there is little consequence to failing to perform under a mandate, events like Malakal and Juba are unfortunately likely to happen again.’

The Associated Press,
UN Peacekeepers Fled, Used Tear Gas on South Sudan Civilians, Oct 5,
Afghanistan

Civilians in Afghanistan continued to face violence amidst a resilient insurgency emboldened by the departure of most international combat forces in December 2014. The Taliban are on the offensive in the countryside, threatening to overrun provincial capitals and launching attacks in Kabul. Civilians bear the brunt of the fighting with deaths and injuries; thousands have been displaced. Armed opposition groups, which include the Talibans and, since 2015, the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (IS-K) are responsible for the majority of deaths and injuries in Afghanistan.

CIVIC, however, continued our work with the national government and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) to adopt national policies to reduce civilian harm during operations and to identify new capabilities to protect civilians. CIVIC provided technical assistance to the Afghan government on a national civilian casualty prevention policy, which will be signed by the Afghan president in 2017. We are part of the working group to implement the policy and improve trainings and processes to assess and mitigate civilian harm. We also issued the report, Saving Ourselves: Civilian Protection and Security Transition, examining the challenges civilians are facing and offered recommendations to the government to address protection concerns.

Since 2015, we have been working with Afghan civil society to develop their capabilities to engage the Afghan government and military forces on civilian protection. We helped created the Civilian Protection Working Group, based in Kabul, and which will be expanded to Baghlan and Kandahar in 2017. In 2017, we are launching programs to create civilian protection shuras so communities can engage with both government forces and the Taliban on the need to conduct operations away from civilian areas.

Civilian protection at the grassroots level is a new engagement for CIVIC. This expansion and the creation of community civilian protection groups means more access, outreach, and influence beyond Kabul to empower civil society and communities.

What we want is for [warring parties] to care about civilians’ lives and fight each other out of our villages and towns.

—Malek Khairuddin, Tribal Chief in Parliz Village, Kandahar Province

**FROM VILLAGES TO THE PALACE**

**A Three-Level Approach To Civilian Protection**

’The numbers reported by the White House today simply don’t add up and we’re disappointed by that,’ said Federico Borello, executive director for the Center for Civilians in Conflict.

U.S. Says Kills Up to 116 Civilians in Strikes Outside War Zones, July 1, 2016
We have suffered injustice under Saddam, our homes destroyed and people killed. We cannot let that happen to others.

—Peshmerga commander

REAL IMPACT

Peshmerga Training Has Saved Civilian Lives

Iraq

Violent conflict continues to engulf Iraq; large areas of the country remain under the control of the Islamic State (ISIS), and security in other areas of the country has been undermined by terrorist attacks. The Mosul Operation, launched by the US-led, anti-ISIS coalition to clear Mosul of ISIS, began on Oct 17, 2016. The eastern half of the city was retaken from Islamic State in January 2017, and the campaign for the western half began in February 2017, where some 400,000 civilians are still trapped. At the operation’s launch, we briefed the Congressional Thomas Lantos Human Rights Commission on civilian protection concerns that need to be addressed by the coalition and Iraqi forces.

Prior to the Mosul operation, we registered our office in Erbil and trained 190 Kurdish Peshmerga commanders on civilian protection. We are assessing the impact on civilians and will continue to work with the Peshmerga on strengthening processes and trainings on civilian protection. CIVIC’s unique training module, Protecting People and Communities During Operations, reflects the legal, ethical, and strategic reasons to protect civilians and their property. It discusses community engagement and how to address challenges in distinguishing between civilians and combatants. The module also explains why it is important to assess the impact of operations on civilians and how to conduct those post-operation assessments. Finally, the module stresses the importance of acknowledging civilian harm when it does occur.

In 2017, we plan to expand our work with Iraqi Security Forces as the country moves towards a stabilization phase. We will also continue to engage the US-led anti-ISIS coalition on its air operations in Iraq and Syria to ensure civilian harm is minimized and civilians are assisted.
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

CIVIC Helps Raise $1.5 Million For Syrian Civilians

Syria

The situation for civilians within Syria remained dire throughout 2016. East Aleppo, a stronghold of the Syrian opposition, finally fell to pro-government forces on Dec. 14, 2016. This came after months of brutal aerial bombardment and fierce urban warfare during which government forces—supported by Russian airstrikes—targeted health centers, schools, and the civilian population in general. Unfortunately, the surrender has not brought an end to persecution for some civilians. In December, the UN’s Human Rights Office reported, “We received quite credible reports that hundreds of men had gone missing after they crossed into government-controlled areas.”

While the fall of Aleppo is likely to be a turning point in the war, it is not an end to the violence. Approximately two-thirds of the country remains outside government control.

In April, CIVIC published Waiting for No One: Civilian Survival Strategies in Syria, a report that examines civilians’ experience of the conflict and the survival strategies they have developed in the face of nearly impossible odds. The report provides concrete recommendations on how to support those strategies. Tactics that urgently need support to be more effective include: the development of early warning systems, physical protection of civilian infrastructure including schools and medical facilities, local rescue and aid teams, efforts to mark and dispose of unexploded ordnance, and the creation of a secure platform to share protection strategies.

CIVIC’s report brought tangible benefits to Syrian civilians; nonprofits working inside Syria informed CIVIC that they were able to use our report to secure over $1.5 million for the expansion of early warning systems in Idlib province.

“If people can have confidence in a warning system, they can...live their lives instead of constantly looking to the skies.”

—Ahmed in Sarmada, Syria
I want a strong state with strong security that can protect me and my city.

—40-year-old woman in Taiz, Yemen

CIVILIAN PERSPECTIVES

CIVIC Amplified
the Voices of Civilians

Yemen

Yemen’s civil war in 2016 has been catastrophic. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that since the conflict began, 3,600 civilians have been killed and 6,000 injured. Some 2.8 million people have been displaced. In August 2016, amid aerial bombardment and continued fighting, Médecins Sans Frontières closed six of their remaining 11 hospitals, leaving civilians with few options for even basic healthcare, let alone for injuries from bombs, bullets, or mines.

Nonetheless, in the summer and autumn of 2016, CIVIC and a team of Yemeni researchers conducted a preliminary assessment of newly created security forces capabilities to protect civilians in Aden as well as investigated patterns of civilian harm, civilian perceptions of the various parties to the conflict, and civilians’ needs and expectations for protection and assistance. The findings were published in Days in Hell: Civilian Perspectives on the Conflict in Yemen.

All armed actors have harmed Yemeni civilians: the forces backing President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, members of the Saudi-led coalition supporting the Hadi government, and the Houthi militias and other forces backing former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. A 46-year-old man from Majzer, Mareb said, “We would meet with [the] party that caused us harm and they would apologize, but blame the other side for what happened. I don’t trust anyone. All sides are criminals and they have no conscience whatsoever.”

While civilians mistrust all armed actors, there is potential to regain public trust. Yemeni government officials have publicly expressed interest in our findings and acknowledged the need for civilian protection. Now that the Hadi-led government has returned to Aden and local resistance fighters are being incorporated into the security forces, it is imperative that all military and security forces have the requisite knowledge, capabilities, and trainings to minimize civilian harm and protect civilians. In 2017, CIVIC is exploring options to work on civilian protection with newly created forces.
From Policy to Practice

**Ukraine**

Violence continues between Ukraine and Russia along the contact line in the east of Ukraine despite the signing of the Minsk Protocol in 2014 and Minsk II in 2015. As the international community focuses elsewhere, Ukraine and the separatists have settled into a stalemate, with neither side making serious attempts to gain territory, but civilians continue to suffer.

In December, CIVIC released its report, *We Are Afraid of Silence: Protecting Civilians in the Donbass Region*. Based on several months of research and over a hundred interviews with civilians and humanitarian workers in the Donbass region, the report was accompanied by a short film, a first for CIVIC. Civilians interviewed by CIVIC expressed their main concerns and protection needs in connection with three main activities: artillery shelling; unexploded ordnance, mines, and booby traps; and abuses committed by armed actors. Vira, a civilian living in non-government-controlled Horlivka, said: “There are no laws in this land and nobody knows to whom we can report. Ukraine will say that we support separatists by living in our home. Separatists will say that we are Ukrainian collaborators or something like this. Nobody has money, nobody helps.”

The report included recommendations for the Ukrainian government, Russian-backed separatists, civil society actors, and the international donor community to improve proactive protection and harm mitigation for civilians before, during, and after combat operations. It was translated into Ukrainian and Russian, and presented to international and local partners in Kyiv in early December. High-level government officials invited CIVIC to set up a project, and after several successful meetings, in 2017, we progressed to our second phase: a “Capabilities Assessment” to determine Ukraine’s ability to implement our recommendations. We have been invited by several ministries to continue working with them to fully implement best practices and structures to reduce civilian harm, protect civilians, and provide amends.

**NATO**

In 2016, NATO adopted a comprehensive Protection of Civilians policy, capping years of sustained advocacy by CIVIC and other organizations. Once implemented, the policy will standardize and strengthen NATO’s capabilities on civilian protection and harm mitigation, including the ability to learn from those operations that have harmed civilians and adjust tactics to avoid harm. It will allow the alliance to work more closely with civil society organizations, and to train allied security forces to better protect civilians on their own. Notably missing from this policy, however, is a standing commitment to making amends for harm done to civilians, and in 2017, CIVIC will continue to push at NATO HQ to ensure civilians are recognized and that amends are made for harm suffered. CIVIC will also provide advice and expertise to NATO as it formulates its Protection of Civilians doctrine, and will participate in the development and coordination of a multinational exercise to test key protection concepts.

**Future Work**

An Assessment, a Film, and a New Opportunity to Help Civilians

**Ukraine**

**From Policy to Practice**

**NATO**

In 2016, NATO adopted a comprehensive Protection of Civilians policy, capping years of sustained advocacy by CIVIC and other organizations. Once implemented, the policy will standardize and strengthen NATO’s capabilities on civilian protection and harm mitigation, including the ability to learn from those operations that have harmed civilians and adjust tactics to avoid harm. It will allow the alliance to work more closely with civil society organizations, and to train allied security forces to better protect civilians on their own. Notably missing from this policy, however, is a standing commitment to making amends for harm done to civilians, and in 2017, CIVIC will continue to push at NATO HQ to ensure civilians are recognized and that amends are made for harm suffered. CIVIC will also provide advice and expertise to NATO as it formulates its Protection of Civilians doctrine, and will participate in the development and coordination of a multinational exercise to test key protection concepts.

**Future Work**

An Assessment, a Film, and a New Opportunity to Help Civilians

**Ukraine**

Violence continues between Ukraine and Russia along the contact line in the east of Ukraine despite the signing of the Minsk Protocol in 2014 and Minsk II in 2015. As the international community focuses elsewhere, Ukraine and the separatists have settled into a stalemate, with neither side making serious attempts to gain territory, but civilians continue to suffer.

In December, CIVIC released its report, *We Are Afraid of Silence: Protecting Civilians in the Donbass Region*. Based on several months of research and over a hundred interviews with civilians and humanitarian workers in the Donbass region, the report was accompanied by a short film, a first for CIVIC. Civilians interviewed by CIVIC expressed their main concerns and protection needs in connection with three main activities: artillery shelling; unexploded ordnance, mines, and booby traps; and abuses committed by armed actors. Vira, a civilian living in non-government-controlled Horlivka, said: “There are no laws in this land and nobody knows to whom we can report. Ukraine will say that we support separatists by living in our home. Separatists will say that we are Ukrainian collaborators or something like this. Nobody has money, nobody helps.”

The report included recommendations for the Ukrainian government, Russian-backed separatists, civil society actors, and the international donor community to improve proactive protection and harm mitigation for civilians before, during, and after combat operations. It was translated into Ukrainian and Russian, and presented to international and local partners in Kyiv in early December. High-level government officials invited CIVIC to set up a project, and after several successful meetings, in 2017, we progressed to our second phase: a “Capabilities Assessment” to determine Ukraine’s ability to implement our recommendations. We have been invited by several ministries to continue working with them to fully implement best practices and structures to reduce civilian harm, protect civilians, and provide amends.
The children of Nigeria deserve protection and safety amidst the fight between the army and Boko Haram. CIVIC is working to give them that.
GAMING IT OUT
A Year of Both Progress and Uncertainty for US Policy

United States

Since 2003, CIVIC has been committed to the principles of preventing, recognizing, and making amendments for harm to civilians in conflict. We have tirelessly advocated for the formal adoption of these principles in US policy and military practice, and in July 2016, President Barack Obama issued an Executive Order (EO) requiring that any time the United States uses force, protection of civilians should be at the forefront of government officials’ minds. It also requires tracking civilian casualties as well as recognizing and addressing harm to civilians. And not only must US forces follow these standards, but this order requires that partner militaries do as well. This was a great success for CIVIC’s US program and came after 10 years of sustained advocacy.

In September, CIVIC held a day long “war gaming” event with participants from the Defense and State departments as well as other US NGOs that explored the best practices for implementing the EO generally, and post-harm assistance/investigations specifically, in multiple conflict contexts.

The US presidential transition makes it difficult to predict whether the EO will remain in place, but what’s clear is that the operational and strategic benefits of minimizing harm to civilians should persuade military leaders and policymakers alike to preserve its core elements. As the Order makes clear, “protecting civilians is fundamentally consistent with the effective, efficient, and decisive use of force in pursuit of US national interests.”

As the policy agenda of the new administration becomes clearer in 2017, CIVIC will make the case that US leadership in protecting civilians during conflict will always serve the best interests of the United States.

CIVIC will look closely at ways that the United States can reduce the risk of harm to civilians through the many forms of US security cooperation and assistance, especially in countries affected by conflict or where the risk of conflict is greater. As the world’s largest supplier of arms and security assistance, the United States can do much to reduce the risk of civilian harm through its relationships and programs, from more informed risk assessments to customized training, to enhanced end-use monitoring.

A GLOBAL REACH
Bridging Policy and Practice at the UN

United Nations

In 2016, CIVIC hired a United Nations Advocate and Policy Advisor and opened an office in New York, bolstering our ability to connect our work with UN missions and officials charged with maintaining international peace and security, conflict-affected communities, and armed actors.

CIVIC can now link our cutting-edge programs and on-the-ground field research with advocacy to push for a higher standard of protection for civilians in conflict in 2017 and beyond.

The world is currently facing a global protection crisis of unprecedented proportions. Civilians are suffering from violence in too many conflict zones, prompting massive levels of displacement unseen since World War II. International law is routinely flouted and the international community is struggling to protect civilians in many dire and protracted crises. The UN is the only international organization with the scale that can address these intersecting crises.

In our engagement with the UN, we will raise awareness of civilian harm in countries in conflict—such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Ukraine—and what steps the UN and its members should take to address it. CIVIC seeks to improve the UN’s capacities to track, analyze, mitigate, and respond to civilian harm and urges Member States to use their voice and vote to encourage warring parties to do the same.

We will work to strengthen the protection of civilians through UN peace operations and expand the understanding of good peacekeeping practices. CIVIC will also push for accountability when UN peace operations fail to protect civilians, and advocate for broader reforms to ensure UN peace operations are better able to deliver on their mandates to protect.

Going forward in 2017, CIVIC will continue to forge partnerships with Member States, the UN, partner NGOs, think tanks, and the media in our work. The voices of civilians caught in conflict will continue to be central to all of our efforts.
CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT

Statement of Financial Position Fiscal Year 2016

Dec 31 2016 Dec 31 2015

ASSETS
Current Assets
Cash and cash equivalents 1,159,053 1,099,611
Other current assets 500,865 442,639
Total Current Assets 1,659,918 1,542,246
Property & Equipment 82,710 33,757
(less accumulated depreciation) -22,756 -21,656
Leasehold improvements 8,740 8,740
Other assets
Security deposit 8,047 8,047
Contributions receivable 280,000 450,000
TOTAL ASSETS 2,016,659 2,021,138

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS
Current Liabilities
Accounts payable 141,849 15,058
Other current liabilities 187,534 20,698
Total Liabilities 329,383 35,756

EQUITY
Net Assets - Restricted 1,095,797 1,378,236
Net Assets - Unrestricted 591,479 607,146
Total Net Assets 1,687,276 1,985,382

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 2,016,659 2,021,138

Statement of Activities

INCOME
Grants Unrestricted 282,113 655,650
Grants Restricted 1,395,696 1,417,719
Contract Income 141,462 196,219
Corporate Gifts 31,875 10,566
Individual Contributions 81,025 82,421
Interest Income 0 626
TOTAL INCOME 1,935,296 2,352,635

CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT

Statement of Activities

January through December 2016

PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT MGMT TOTAL SUPPORTING TOTAL EXPENSE
EXPENSE:
Salaries & Related Costs 1,103,566 165,318 138,465 303,784 1,407,350
Occupancy 870,188 18,054 250,714
Travel & Travel Related Costs 233,518 16,815 381 171,969 250,714
Technology & Supplies 31,875 7,854 18,420 50,295
Special Events 41,532 5,716 1,053 6,769 48,301
Professional Fees 299,741 7,073 4,060 11,333 310,874
Other Costs 17,214 5,360 7,903 13,263 30,477
TOTAL EXPENSE 1,814,637 228,902 189,864 418,765 2,233,403

CIVIC REVENUE VS. EXPENSE

IN Millions

Breakdown of Funding Resources

In Millions

2016 Funding by Source

6% Individual & Corporate Giving
44% Project Restricted Grants
50% General Funding Grants

Unrestricted vs Restricted Funding

In Thousands

Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) adheres to general accepted accounting principles and uses the accrual method of accounting, recognizing income as it is pledged. CIVIC’s 2016 financial reports were independently audited and copies of the full audit are available by request.
CIVIC extends special thanks to the many civilians who spoke with us, even in the midst of personal tragedies.

We also thank our consultants, who provided valuable services and contributions to our work around the world.

Center for Civilians in Conflict was founded as Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC) in 2003 by Marla Ruzicka, a young humanitarian who recognized the need for an organization focused on the plight of civilians in war. Following Marla’s death from a suicide bomb in Baghdad in April 2005, her colleagues, friends, and family knew that she had created a unique space in the advocacy community that should not be left vacant. The Center continues to grow, building on Marla’s foundation.
BACK COVER  Civilians crossing a bridge near Luhansk in Stanystia Luhanska, Ukraine, on Jan 16, 2016.
OSCE/Evgeniy Maloletka