SAFER EVERYWHERE
2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN
INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

It is my pleasure to share with you Safer Everywhere, CIVIC’s 2018–2020 strategic plan. We believe that it reflects both our commitment to sustaining CIVIC’s current important work and our determination to pursuing new opportunities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to harm.

For civilians trapped in conflict, fear can be all encompassing. Violence can come at any time, from any side, and from any direction. Even silence can mean danger, signaling little more than a lull before the fighting begins again.

At CIVIC, we seek a world where political and military leaders acknowledge the dignity and rights of civilians, recognize their obligation to prevent harm, take action to protect those caught in conflict, and make amends for the harm they cause.

To achieve these ambitious goals, we pursue three simultaneous courses of action:

• We speak truth to those in the halls of power, pushing them to adopt and implement critical civilian protection and harm mitigation policies.

• We demand better of commanders and soldiers on the field of battle, documenting their challenges, recommending changes, and offering help in implementing them.

• We amplify the voices of those in local communities affected by conflict and work with them to engage directly with those putting them in harm’s way.

Over the next three years, we plan to continue our work on all three fronts to ensure that all parties to armed conflict recognize their obligation to protect civilians.

It’s sometimes hard to believe that it’s been more than 15 years since our founder Marla Ruzicka first traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan and realized that no one was counting the dead—or helping the survivors. We are proud of what we have accomplished since those humble beginnings, and thankful for what our supporters have done to sustain and build on her vision.

There is still much to be done. From Mali to Myanmar, the consequences of war remain far too damaging for far too many civilians. Authoritarian leaders are increasingly using violence against their own citizens, rather than protecting them. The United States seems to be undoing a lot of the progress it made over the last decade.

And yet we have hope. In places like Nigeria, Iraq, Ukraine and Afghanistan, efforts are underway to do better. We have seen governments sign and adopt new policies, military commanders take time off the frontline to attend trainings, communities find the courage to speak up to the militaries in their area to demand better protection. With your help, we will continue our essential work to develop and implement solutions to protect civilians from harm.

Sincerely,

Federico Borello

Executive Director, Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
OUR VISION
A world where parties to armed conflicts recognize the dignity and rights of civilians, prevent civilian harm, protect civilians caught in conflict, and amend harm.

OUR MISSION
Our mission is to work with armed actors and civilians in conflict to develop and implement solutions to prevent, mitigate and respond to civilian harm.

“[Your workshop] enables me as a commander to educate and prepare my soldiers by telling them that all the people in the villages are not perpetrators but also among them are innocent civilians that needed to be protected.”

—Participant in CIVIC’s community engagement workshops in Dikwa, Nigeria, in March 2017.
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that:

- Parties to an armed conflict have a responsibility and interest to prevent and address civilian harm.
- Engaging directly with armed actors and offering them practical ways to better protect civilians will ultimately change their mindset on the importance and feasibility of protecting civilians.
- Civilians are not merely victims of armed conflict but rather active participants in its mitigation and resolution.
- Identifying, engaging, and supporting vulnerable and marginalized populations is central to our work.
- Working collaboratively with affected communities, governments, multilateral institutions, and fellow civil society organizations is the most effective way to protect civilians.
- Innovation is essential to protecting civilians from conflict.
Under international law, armed actors have a duty to minimize human suffering and protect civilians. When they fail to honor this obligation, civilians pay the price. Even when they meet their obligations, civilians often still suffer harm.

CIVIC believes that all parties to a conflict can and should do more to protect civilians before, during, and after combat operations. To that end, we encourage governments and their security forces, international institutions, and armed non-state actors to adopt policies, develop tools, and implement best practices to ensure they don’t harm civilians. Doing so can help them protect civilians from harm caused by other parties—including those who consciously target civilians. When prevention fails, we push armed actors to acknowledge their responsibility, make amends, and provide post-harm assistance to those civilians who were harmed.

Although we tailor our engagements to reflect the conditions, context, and environment in each situation, our overall approach places civilians at the center of the solutions we seek.

**Research & Analysis**

*Conducting Research:* We begin by investigating conditions on the ground. We listen to civilians—particularly victims—to gain their perspectives and understand their needs. In our findings, we identify specific gaps in protection and propose concrete solutions. Lastly, we assess the capacity of the parties to the conflict to implement our recommendations.

**Strategy Development**

*Identifying Practical Solutions:* Experience has shown us that real change requires identifying pragmatic solutions that provide a clear guide for armed actors on how to protect civilians and mitigate harm. Our reports always include realistic recommendations for governments, militaries, and armed non-state actors. We identify potential champions and likely leverage points that can help bring about change, as well as potential critics, opponents, and stumbling blocks that could inhibit it.

**Advocacy & Engagement**

*Engaging Parties to the Conflict:* Once we identify the challenges and suggest practical solutions, we develop a detailed advocacy plan to engage all relevant stakeholders. Although we focus on those responsible for the harm, we work with everyone—government officials, armed actors, civilians, civil society groups, and international organizations and coalitions—to secure the outcomes we seek.

**Promoting Public Awareness:** We also work with traditional and social media to raise local and international awareness about the plight of civilians in particular conflicts, helping generate public support for the implementation of our recommendations.

**Empowering Civilians:** We work with local civil society to ensure that they have the knowledge and tools they need to press for better policies and practices. We seek out civilian input—and integrate their concerns into our recommendations to armed actors.

**Recognizing and Addressing the Needs of Marginalized Communities:** We recognize that conflict has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the disabled. We work to amplify their voices and include their perspectives in our research, recommendations, and engagement. In line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, we promote women’s involvement as active participants in protection and as advocates for policy change within communities.

**Implementation**

**Technical Assistance:** Once we make recommendations, we roll up our sleeves and work with governments, armed actors, and civil society to implement them. We help develop the tools they need to ensure sustainable change, including civilian harm tracking cells, post-harm assistance mechanisms, and updated military doctrine and planning guidance. We regularly deploy our in-house experts to support program development and implementation.

**Promoting Dialogue:** Whenever safe and feasible, we encourage civilians to be their own advocates by engaging directly with civilian and military leaders. We encourage civilians and armed actors to understand each other’s perspectives and identify shared solutions. We organize roundtable discussions in neutral settings and conduct empathy trainings that help security actors understand the civilian perspective.

**Facilitating Training:** We work with governments, peacekeepers, and multinational coalitions to develop training packages that address particular protection issues. We identify gaps in current training programs, drawing on our research and interviews. We track implementation and conduct post-training assessments to gauge progress and identify further opportunities.
Making Amends: We believe that all parties to a conflict have an ethical obligation to recognize and provide assistance to civilians they harm while lawfully conducting combat operations. We educate governments, militaries, peacekeepers, and multilateral coalitions on the forms that amends can take—including transparent investigations, apologies, monetary payments, and other offerings in accordance with victims’ needs and preferences.

Evaluation & Learning
Evaluating Results and Identifying Lessons Learned: We track the results of our engagement and actively seek ways to improve. We integrate monitoring, evaluation, and learning into every stage of our work to ensure that policies we propose are aligned with the needs and priorities of civilians. This approach also helps us better measure the long-term impact and effectiveness of our work and apply any lessons learned to other contexts and conflicts.
In the three years since CIVIC adopted Standing with Civilians, our previous strategic plan, we have met—and in many respects surpassed—its ambitious goals. We have expanded into new countries and engaged new actors while growing our staff and maintaining our flexibility, financial health, and loyalty to our vision, mission, values, and approach.

By remaining pragmatic and focused on incremental, sustainable change, we have been able to work with civilians, governments, armed actors, and international organizations to produce concrete, measurable improvements in the protection of civilians in conflict zones. Our reputation for seeking out and implementing pragmatic solutions has helped us engage armed actors that remain suspicious of other advocates.

That said, changing the way armed actors understand conflict doesn’t happen overnight. Our work requires building relationships based on respect and mutual trust, and these take time to develop. In the nearly 15 years since our founding, we have demonstrated concrete results. What follows are some of our most recent success stories.

**In The Halls Of Power**

**USA:** Incorporating Civilian Protection into US Government (USG) Policy and Practice. In July 2016, President Obama issued an Executive Order (EO) mandating that all USG agencies put the protection of civilians at the forefront of their planning and action. The EO—a key objective of our prior strategic plan—also requires tracking civilian casualties and the making of amends in the form of ex-gratia payments to recognize and address harm to civilians. Not only must US forces follow these standards, but this order requires that partner militaries do so as well. CIVIC will continue to track USG implementation and work with Congress to push the Trump Administration to comply.

**NATO:** Standardizing the Approach to Civilian Protection. CIVIC successfully convinced the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan to issue guidelines that standardize the way the alliance’s coalition partners in Afghanistan make amends to civilians for harm suffered. We also pushed ISAF to adopt a better approach to investigating, tracking and analyzing civilian harm, and suggested tactical changes to better protect civilians. In 2016, NATO adopted a comprehensive Protection of Civilians policy—something CIVIC has advocated for since 2010. Once implemented, it will standardize and strengthen NATO’s capacities on civilian protection and harm mitigation, including capabilities to learn from those operations that have harmed civilians and to adjust tactics to avoid harm.

**United Nations:** Furthering best practices on civilian harm mitigation. CIVIC opened an office in New York in September 2016 to advocate to the UN and its member states. The UN has since recognized the importance of civilian harm mitigation, with a clear call by the UN Secretary-General for all member states and regional organizations to implement policies and strategies on civilian harm mitigation. Good practices that CIVIC has helped foster, including with NATO, Afghanistan and Nigeria, were referenced by the Secretary-General as stand-out examples in this regard.

**Nigeria:** Building the Government’s Capacity to Protect Civilians. After a year of advocating for better civilian protection with officials in both government and the security forces, the Nigerian government asked CIVIC for assistance in drafting the country’s first civilian protection policy. We brought together members of the government, Defence Headquarters, and civil society to discuss the proposed policy and how to garner the political will to pass such a proposal. We have seen a positive change in the language used by the government and military around the need to protect civilians in ongoing military operations. However, our work took on new urgency after the Nigerian Air Force hit an IDP camp in January 2017, resulting in a horrific loss of life. Thanks in part to CIVIC’s ongoing engagement and advocacy, the Nigerian government acknowledged responsibility for the bombing and launched two separate investigations. Officials have since asked CIVIC to look at the investigations’ findings and provide guidance on how to reduce the chances of future such incidents.

**On The Field Of Battle**

**South Sudan:** Influencing UN Peacekeeping Policy and Practice. In 2016, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) failed to take effective action to protect civilians in two separate instances of intense violence that killed scores, raising serious questions about the Mission’s ability to fulfil its mandate to do so. In response, CIVIC investigated both incidents, releasing two reports documenting UNMISS’s failures. Our findings were cited in Security Council deliberations and had an impact on the UN’s internal inquiry, helping to direct the conversation within the UN towards greater transparency and accountability. The UN’s subsequent dismissal of UNMISS leaders was one of the most public steps that the world body has taken to
hold peacekeepers accountable for failing to protect civilians. CIVIC’s reporting identified the contingents that had not acted, a step that contributed to the UN’s Special Investigation’s decision to publicly name the troop-contributing countries responsible, a significant break from precedence.

**Iraq:** Training Peshmerga Commanders on Civilian Harm Mitigation. CIVIC began training Peshmerga forces on civilian harm mitigation in 2015, after the Ministry of the Peshmerga agreed to a pilot training program. In August 2016, the Kurdish government announced that all sector commanders would receive the CIVIC training in advance of the assault on Mosul. CIVIC’s training module, Protecting People and Communities During Operations, not only outlines the legal, ethical, and strategic reasons to protect civilians and their property, but also walks soldiers through conflict-specific scenarios that allow them to learn through experimentation before they face similar decisions on the battlefield. The response to the training has been very positive. “We suffered injustice under Saddam, our homes destroyed and people killed,” one commander told us. “We cannot let that happen to others.”

**Central African Republic (CAR):** Better performance and more capacity for UN peacekeepers. In response to escalating violence against civilians in CAR in 2016, CIVIC researched and published a report on the response of the UN peacekeeping mission deployed to the country, MINUSCA. Following this report, CIVIC conducted concerted advocacy and policy engagement to mobilize support for additional capacity for and better performance by the UN mission in CAR. We met with the UN Secretary-General, mobilized partner organizations, and influenced positions at the UN Security Council at a time of unprecedented budget cuts to UN peacekeeping. The Council ultimately approved additional peacekeepers for the MINUSCA, and a special investigation has been launched to strengthen the mission’s ability to protect civilians.

**Syria and Iraq:** Engaging the Anti-ISIS Coalition. Since 2014, we have deepened our direct engagement with the US Central Command (CENTCOM), the US military command responsible for the anti-ISIS coalition operations in Iraq and Syria. Our field research with civilians and security actors informed our detailed recommendations to CENTCOM on civilian casualty tracking, post-harm investigations, and amends processes. CENTCOM has adopted many of our recommendations, and earmarked funds for civilians harmed in conflict, although implementation has not been entirely satisfactory. We continue to press for faster and more transparent investigations as well as greater acknowledgment of civilian harm.

In Local Communities

**Nigeria:** Empowering Civilians to Engage Security Forces. CIVIC is working to strengthen the capacity of Nigerian civil society organizations (CSOs) to bring their concerns to their security forces. To date, we have organized two themed advocacy campaigns that engage and involve local CSOs. The first explored opportunities for improved community engagement by security forces in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states. The second looked at sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) by security forces against internally displaced persons (IDPs). We have held roundtables with CSOs in Abuja and the Northeast to collect information and align our strategies. As a result, we have developed a civil society handbook that will help IDPs better understand their rights, protect themselves, and engage with security forces around their concerns.

**Afghanistan:** Building Civilian Protection at the Community Level. Civilians in Afghanistan continue to face violence amidst a resilient insurgency emboldened by the departure of most international combat forces. 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 create the Civilian Protection Working Group, based in Kabul, and have worked to expand it to Baghlan and Kandahar. We have launched 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 and better protect communities.

**Syria:** Expanding Early Warning. In 2016, CIVIC released *Waiting for No One: Civilian Survival Strategies in Syria* which examines civilians’ experience of the conflict and the survival strategies they have developed in the face of impossible odds. The report provided concrete recommendations on how to support these strategies, including developing early warning systems; protecting civilian infrastructure including schools and medical facilities; marking and disposing of unexploded ordnance; and creating a secure online platform to share these strategies. In September of that year, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission of the US Congress invited CIVIC to testify on civilian needs in Syria. As a result of the hearing and the work of partner nonprofits applying our recommendations, Mayday Rescue (Syria’s “White Helmets”) raised almost $1.5 million for the expansion of early warning systems across the country.
WHERE WE WORK

United Nations
Since opening our New York office in 2016, CIVIC has increased its impact, strengthening the protection of civilians through targeted advocacy with the UN and its member states. We will build on this in 2018 and advocate in New York and Geneva for practical yet innovative policy responses to ensure that civilians caught in protracted conflicts are better protected. We will press to strengthen UN peacekeeping by leveraging our field research to push for needed reforms.

United States
Since its founding, CIVIC has consistently pressed the government of the United States to adopt policies and practices that reduce harm to civilians that occurs because of its military operations. In the future, CIVIC will put particular emphasis on ensuring US security cooperation and assistance to partner militaries includes training on protecting civilians.

Europe
CIVIC’s new Europe program will provide research, advocacy, and technical assistance to Europe-based institutions and select states as they build on their leadership role on the protection of civilians in conflict. CIVIC will work with government and multilateral institutions to strengthen Europe’s contribution to civilian protection policy, doctrine, and training.

Mali
In 2017, CIVIC re-established a research and advocacy project in Mali to advance the protection of civilians through the UN peacekeeping operation, MINUSMA. In 2018, CIVIC will focus its work on strengthening MINUSMA’s efforts to mitigate harm to civilians that may occur through its own operations and the operations of other security actors that the mission is mandated to support.

Central African Republic
Throughout 2017, CIVIC successfully advocated for an increase in the capabilities of the peacekeeping operation in CAR. As part of this work, we published *The Primacy of Protection: Delivering on the MINUSCA Mandate in the Central African Republic.* In 2018, CIVIC will focus on how MINUSCA can better protect civilians through enhanced engagement with communities at risk and how it is using threat analysis to inform the deployment of mission assets to protect civilians.
Ukraine
In 2016, CIVIC conducted a six-month research project on the capabilities, gaps, and potential for civilian protection in the Ukrainian military and Ministry of Defense. We are now launching a program to assist the government in the development and implementation of policies, tools, and training based on best practices we have learned from other conflicts as well as building the capacity of the Ukrainian government to continue this work independently.

Iraq
As the fight against ISIS winds down, CIVIC is continuing our work to ensure Kurdish and Iraqi forces are trained to protect civilians in areas retaken and that the government commits to civilian protection and post-harm assistance policies. We are also continuing our engagement with the anti-ISIS coalition to ensure targeting and post-assessment strikes improve.

Afghanistan
After our persistent advocacy on behalf of Afghan civilians, the government has turned to CIVIC for help in developing and implementing policies, practices, training, and tools to better protect civilians. In complement, we are mobilizing community leaders to voice their protection concerns with government forces and convince the Taliban not to undertake indiscriminate attacks.

Yemen
We are launching a new project to build the civilian protection capabilities of newly created security forces in southern Yemen, and develop community engagement practices. We will also engage with key members of the Saudi-led coalition conducting operations in Yemen to adhere to international humanitarian law and adopt civilian harm mitigation policies.

South Sudan
In 2017, we published, ‘Let Us Be a Part of It’: Community Engagement by the UN Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan, a comprehensive look at how UNMISS could improve its protection of civilians through enhanced community engagement. This work will continue in 2018 and be complemented by new research and advocacy on how UNMISS could improve threat analysis to inform protection planning and decision-making.

Democratic Republic of the Congo
In 2017, CIVIC published Protection with Less Presence: How the Peacekeeping Operation in DRC Is Attempting to Deliver Protection with Fewer Resources. The report is based on our research on the impact of MONUSCO’s recent base closures and will serve as a foundation for our 2018 focus on how efforts to make peacekeeping operations more mobile and increasing budget cuts to peacekeeping missions are impacting civilian protection in DRC.

Syria
Over the last few years, CIVIC engaged with the anti-ISIS coalition to advocate for the adoption of civilian harm mitigation policies in targeting, post-harm assessments, and amends, and for the transmission of civilian protection practices to their local partners. CIVIC also participated in pre-deployment trainings of US Special Forces highlighting challenges civilians face when fleeing ISIS, air strikes, and the impact of urban warfare on civilians.
**OUR GOALS**

**GOAL ONE**

International and regional organizations, governments, and armed actors adopt or improve policies and practices on civilian protection.

All too often, parties to a conflict—whether governments, multilateral coalitions, or non-state actors—neglect their obligation to prevent and mitigate civilian harm. Or worse, they deliberately use violence against civilians as a weapon of war. CIVIC works to challenge the status quo and change existing dynamics, helping all actors strengthen their capacity to protect civilians. We believe that lessons learned from other conflicts can help inform and enhance future policy, planning, doctrine, and training.

**OBJECTIVE ONE:** Identify and engage with governments and security actors in order to implement policies and practices that protect civilians and reduce civilian harm. We will deepen our work in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Ukraine and Nigeria, and expand into other countries in Africa and the Middle East, our main areas of focus. In 2019, after a careful internal assessment process, we plan to expand into Asia.

**OBJECTIVE TWO:** Work with intergovernmental bodies engaged in military operations to promote the adoption of policies and practices that protect civilians from harm, whether caused by other parties or their own operations. We will continue our work to strengthen the civilian protection capacities of the United Nations and African Union, working at the headquarters level, with peacekeeping missions, and in key capitals around the world. We will push NATO to implement and further strengthen its new standing policy on the protection of civilians. We will continue to engage ad hoc coalitions, such as the anti-ISIS coalition and the G5 Sahel, at headquarters, through those who provide support and assistance, and through individual members.

**OBJECTIVE THREE:** Explore opportunities to engage armed non-state actors (ANSAs) and encourage them to protect civilians and reduce civilian harm. We have commissioned a preliminary study to look into ways that CIVIC could adapt its existing approach and create new tools to engage ANSAs. On the basis of its findings, we will explore engagement in at least two conflicts.
GOAL TWO

Civilians participate in the design and implementation of protection policy and practice.

Ever since our founding in 2003 as the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict, CIVIC has put civilians at the center of our work. Our advocacy is designed to convince warring parties that they must recognize, respect, and make amends to those they harmed. In all our work, we incorporate civilians’ views—and find ways to amplify their voices when they speak for themselves. Recently, we have expanded to promoting civilian protection at the grassroots level. Our outreach to and partnerships with civil society have meant more access, outreach, and influence beyond typical centers of power, giving civil society and local communities the opportunity to share their views directly with government and military leaders.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Incorporate civilian perspectives and participation into CIVIC country programs.

Building on our work in Nigeria and Afghanistan, we will deepen our engagement with local communities, seeking their views on protection gaps and priorities. We will pay particular attention to the inclusion of the needs and views of women and other marginalized groups in our research, advocacy, and programming.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Amplify civilian voices in CIVIC’s engagement with governments, intergovernmental bodies, and armed actors.

Ideally, affected communities and local civil society groups should take the lead in speaking for themselves to governments and armed actors about their protection needs. CIVIC will work with communities to build their capacity to conduct effective engagement, and facilitate direct dialogue between communities and civilian and military authorities around concrete protection solutions.

CIVIC/Maranie Rae Staab
GOAL THREE

CIVIC advances the broader field of civilian protection through the development and implementation of innovative tools and strategies.

For nearly 15 years, CIVIC has been at the forefront of civilian protection and harm mitigation efforts, helping demonstrate the field’s relevance and sustain its impact and influence. In the coming years, we will continue to refine existing tools and develop new ones to respond to the evolving nature of conflict. To do that, we need the involvement and participation of other practitioners and partner civil society organizations.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Identify and develop new tools, approaches, and methods that protect civilians. CIVIC has always been known for its innovative and evidence-based approaches to civilian protection. Our expert staff will continue to develop and strengthen our thinking and technical “toolkit,” including through innovation in policy implementation, tool creation, training, and monitoring and evaluation of protection activities.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Develop the institutional capacity to conduct thematic research and develop policy options that address new and ongoing threats to civilians. Research and analysis is the foundation of our work. In the next three years, CIVIC will build our core research function to strengthen our methodology and approach, support programmatic research needs, identify and conduct research on new and emerging threats to civilians, and provide better insight into progress on protection implementation.

OBJECTIVE THREE: Cultivate partnerships with civil society groups and academic institutions to broaden the reach and impact of our work. One of our core values is collaboration. We partner with diverse partners in the conflicts in which we are engaged both to bolster our work and to ensure we are not duplicating the efforts of others. In the next three years, CIVIC will build a community of thought and practice that includes solidifying relationships with current civil society partners and also developing new and strong ties to academic and think tank institutions.

GOAL FOUR

CIVIC builds and maintains the infrastructure and processes necessary to protect civilians in conflict.

Over the past three years, CIVIC has benefitted from a rapid expansion of its programs and staff, moving into new countries and taking advantages of new opportunities for engagement. To sustain that growth and prepare for future expansion, we must ensure that we have the necessary human, financial, and infrastructure resources.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Strengthen infrastructure and support operations. CIVIC’s dramatic growth over the past three years has led to extraordinary opportunities to extend its influence and reach. But that also brought challenges. In response, we have worked to ensure that our approach remained both scalable and sustainable. Over the next three years, CIVIC will continue to develop sound infrastructure to sustain our growing staff, projects and funding, and be prepared for similar opportunities for growth in the future.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Standardize monitoring, evaluation, and learning. CIVIC’s monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approach is grounded in a belief that learning is key to successful programs. Over the next three years, we will develop an organization-wide MEL policy and ensure that every project has a robust MEL plan. To facilitate learning, every project will have an evaluation, learning questions, and routine learning sharing sessions. We will work to expand our use of rigorous qualitative data collection methodologies to supplement quantitative data to gain a better understanding of how CIVIC can most effectively and efficiently contribute to the prevention of civilian harm.
OBJECTIVE THREE: Improve knowledge-capture and management systems. For more than a decade, CIVIC’s expertise, analysis, and in-depth reports have been major elements of its success. To sustain this level of excellence, and to support our values, we will develop a responsive knowledge-management system that allows us to draw upon past experience to inform future action. A strong knowledge-management system will ensure that we are able to give our staff the information they need to move quickly; adapt current programs to a rapidly changing environment; identify resources to take on new challenges and opportunities; and use past experiences to inform implementation of new programs.

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Diversify CIVIC’s donor base
CIVIC’s rapid growth has been facilitated by a vast expansion of our donor base. In the next three years, we plan to continue strengthening and diversifying this base.

We will achieve this by deepening our funding sources from private foundations, governments and through the recruitment of major individual donors.
OUR STORY

CIVIC's story starts with one person: Marla Ruzicka, a young activist and humanitarian, with a fiery sense of right and wrong and a deep empathy for the civilians harmed by American military operations.

After the US invaded Afghanistan in response to 9/11, Marla arrived in Kabul where she found that no one, including the US military, was keeping count of civilians harmed—or helping them. Armed with a few thousand dollars and some Afghan volunteers, Marla conducted a small survey of civilians who had suffered harm from the war. But after returning to San Francisco, she was determined to do more. She wanted to put pressure on the US government to make amends to the civilian victims of its military operations. In 2002, she traveled to Washington and convinced Sen. Patrick Leahy and his aide, Tim Rieser, to successfully help institutionalize the US's ad hoc condolence payment system to war victims.

When the new war in Iraq erupted, Marla moved to Baghdad and organized another door-to-door survey of Iraqi civilians. Later in 2003, to expand the work she was doing, Marla founded Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC).

In April 2005, however, Marla and her colleague, Faiz Ali Salim, were killed by a suicide bomb in Baghdad after visiting civilian war victims. Her colleagues, friends and family knew that her organization held a unique place in the advocacy community that could not remain unfilled. They were as determined as Marla had been that CIVIC continue and build on her extraordinary legacy.

To do so, CIVIC took on the ambitious goal of pressing all parties engaged in conflict—not only the US—to set a new standard of behavior towards civilians by recognizing and helping those harmed by their bombs and bullets. The concept of making amends remains at the heart of the organization's work today, even as the scope increased to preventing—and not only addressing—civilian harm.

Today, we work to protect more civilians and to ensure warring parties don’t walk away from those they have harmed. And that's why, in 2012, to reflect our broader mission, CIVIC changed its name to the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC).

CIVIC now employs more than 40 staff members from four continents, with very diverse backgrounds and expertise. We work in 12 countries, and have offices in the US, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan.

As long as there is conflict, civilians will be at risk. CIVIC exists to remind those engaged in conflict that civilians must be respected and protected.

(octposite) Farah Arkan Abdullah Majid lost her mother, an unborn sibling, her father, two uncles and a grandmother to US bombing during the Iraq war. Through the work of the Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC) and its founder Marla Ruzicka, the family obtained a $5000 condolence payment from the US government.

Baghdad, Iraq. 27/04/2004

CIVIC/J.B. Russell