Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Friends,

In 2003, with a handful of donations and the deep conviction that civilians in conflict deserve to be treated with dignity, CIVIC’s late founder Marla Ruzicka created the “Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict” or “CIVIC.” First in Afghanistan and later in Iraq, Marla witnessed how civilians harmed in conflict were neither acknowledged nor offered amends. She realized on the U.S. military and its coalition partners to commit to better protection of civilians in conflict zones, and when harm did occur, she asserted that civilians were entitled to financial compensation.

Fifteen years later, though our name has changed, we honor our founder’s legacy with an unwavering commitment to better protection of the estimated 50 million civilians living in conflict zones across the globe. To that end, we have developed sophisticated military training modules and protection assessments, and bolstered our monitoring, evaluation, and learning capacity. The leadership on CIVIC’s Board grew as well as our welcomed home engagement for Human Rights, Prince Zidil Rif Al-Hussein, and South African writer and activist, Sisonke Msimang, to help guide CIVIC’s vision for the first fifteen years of CIVIC.

I see our work as a journey of many stages — each of them necessary to building the dynamic organization we are today. In 2003, our founder, Marla Ruzicka, set our long-term vision of a world in which civilians in conflict are not seen as “collateral damage” but as human beings with rights and dignity. Following Marla’s tragic death, my predecessor, Sarah Holewinski built both a team and an entire discipline – civilian harm mitigation – and proceeded to demonstrate its value in places like Afghanistan and Somalia. When I joined CIVIC in 2014, we increased our model to prioritize the protection of civilians well into the future.

On behalf of the entire CIVIC team — both past and present — thank you for being part of our incredible journey to better protect civilians in conflict. We are honored by your support and look forward to continuing to improve the lives of civilians well into the future.

Thank you,

Susan Danis
Board Chair, CIVIC

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

From a passionate humanist driven to a dedicated global shift of $500 billion by the end of 2019 — and still growing.

From a singular vision — protect, prevent, and amend from conflict zones to nearly one dozen.

There are many ways to measure the past fifteen years of CIVIC.

I review our work as a journey of many stages — each of them necessary to building the dynamic organization we are today. In 2003, our founder, Marla Ruzicka, set our long-term vision of a world in which civilians in conflict are not seen as “collateral damage” but as human beings with rights and dignity. Following Marla’s tragic death, my predecessor, Sarah Holewinski built both a team and an entire discipline – civilian harm mitigation – and proceeded to demonstrate its value in places like Afghanistan and Somalia. When I joined CIVIC in 2014, we increased our model to prioritize the protection of civilians well into the future.

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Thank you,

Federico Borondo
Executive Director
Center for Civilians in Conflict
15 YEARS OF CIVIC

2003
In April 2003, CIVIC is founded by Marla Ruzicka, a young activist and humanitarian alarmed by the U.S. military’s failure to account for civilian casualties in Iraq. CIVIC assembles civilian casualties in 2003 2004 2005

2004
In a C-SPAN interview by Paul Craig, Marla shares CIVIC’s work in Afghanistan and Iraq and advocates for increased U.S. assistance for civilian victims of war.

2005
In April 2005, Marla and her driver, Farw Al Sareem, are killed by a suicide bomber in Baghdad, Iraq, while advocating for the rights of civilian war victims. Later that year, U.S. President George W. Bush signs legislation to rename the civilian war victims fund to “the Marla Ruzicka Iraq War Victims Fund.”

2006

2007
CIVIC issues its first Annual Report, Advocating for Civilian Victims of Armed Conflict. At the time, CIVIC was comprised of two full-time staffers with an annual budget of $250,000.

2008
CIVIC is selected for special consultative status with the NGO Committee of the Economic and Social Council, or ECOSOC, at the United Nations.

2009
CIVIC publishes its first report, Losing the People: The Costs and Consequences of Civilian Suffering in Afghanistan.

2010
On July 7, 2010, following years of advocacy by CIVIC on amends, Patrick Mugoya, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the UN, states during the ninth open debate on Protection of Civilians (POC) that he “encourage[s] Member States to embrace the concept of making amends, not because there is any legal obligation to do so, but simply in the interest of mitigating suffering.” This marks the first time that CIVIC’s language is used in a UN debate.

2011
In his report on Somalia, then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon mentions CIVIC’s report Civilian Harm in Somalia: Creating an Appropriate Response and its recommendation to establish a civilian harm tracking cell.

2012
CIVIC rebrands from the “Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC)” to “Center for Civilians in Conflict” to capture the broadened scope of our work while maintaining our focus on civilians.

2013
U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power writes a letter condemning CIVIC on its civilian protection work, noting “[CIVIC] is helping to lay to rest one of the most unfortunate phrases in the English language – ‘collateral damage’ – and replace it with the recognition that – when touched by combat – people just like us – and families just like our own – need protection and deserve justice.”

2014
Following numerous interviews with ISAF, NATO, and U.S. military personnel, as well as civilian analysts and representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations, CIVIC releases Civilian Harm Tracking: Analysis of ISAF Efforts in Afghanistan.

2015
In a landmark year, CIVIC issues four research reports in addition to its first strategic plan, Standing with Civilians: Growing our Impact 2015 – 2017, outlining how CIVIC will respond to the increasing demand for its expertise.

2016
CIVIC establishes two field offices in Nigeria, first in Abuja and later in Kaduna. Later that year, CIVIC release its first report from Ukraine: We Are Afraid of Silence: Protecting Civilians in the Donetsk Region.

2017
CIVIC sees continued global growth with the launch of five separate country offices in Mali, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, and the issuance of eight research publications, including its first report from Yemen, We Loved Days in Hell: Civilian Perspectives on the Conflict in Yemen.

2018
As the culmination of years of dedicated advocacy, the UN Secretary-General called on each and every Member State to adopt a national policy on the protection of civilians.

2004 In C-SPAN interview by Paul Craig, Marla shares CIVIC’s work in Afghanistan and Iraq and advocates for increased U.S. assistance for civilian victims of war.
United States

CIVIC advocated for strengthened legislation and policies that require the U.S. Department of Defense to adopt more robust and consistent reporting on civilian casualties and to ensure that humane investigations into civilian deaths are conducted. CIVIC also supported the United States Department of State’s efforts to ensure that civilians harmed during U.S. military operations, and incorporate lessons from past operations into standard practice.

United Nations

CIVIC spearheaded the first-ever “Protection of Civilians Week” at the United Nations in New York, which brought high-level attention to critical protection issues through events on the margins of the 2018 UN Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

Mali

As violence escalated in Mali, CIVIC continued to undertake research and advocacy to strengthen the UN peacekeeping operation’s ability to protect civilians. CIVIC also launched a program to support the development of a G5 Sahel Joint Force civilian harm tracking cell, which aims to identify, analyze, and address harm that could result from the Force’s operations throughout the Sahel.

United States

CIVIC advocated for strengthened legislation and policies that require the U.S. Department of Defense to adopt more robust and consistent reporting on civilian casualties, expand the authority to provide payments to civilians harmed during U.S. military operations, and incorporate lessons from past operations into standard practice.

WHERE WE WORK

Niger

CIVIC continued to institutionalize CHM within the Nigerian military and deepen civilian protection practices with communities and deployed units in the conflict-stricken northeast of the country. In two local government areas, 5,500 community members saw increased protection because of our efforts.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Following our 2017 research into the impact of personnel and budget cuts on the UN peacekeeping operation in DRC to protect civilians, we published two groundbreaking products in 2018: Protection With Less Presence and Community Engagement by MONUSCO With Reduced Field Presence.

Iraq

CIVIC conducted tailored, hands-on workshops on civilian protection to hundreds of officers from the Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces, including women military officers. CIVIC produced two public reports, We Hope, But We Are Hopeless: Civilian Perceptions of the Compensation Process in Iraq and Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post-ISIS.

Europe

In January 2018, CIVIC established a permanent presence in Europe with an office in Geneva, Switzerland. By November, CIVIC had been selected as a project leader at the inaugural Paris Peace Forum where, with support from the European Union, CIVIC showcased Civilian Harm Mitigation (CHM) as a global standard.

Afghanistan

In early 2018, CIVIC conducted capacity-building workshops with community civilian protection councils in four provinces: Kandahar, Baghlan, Herat, and Nangarhar. The workshops taught community members how to effectively address and resolve their own protection concerns and develop systems for improved protection.

Nigeria

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Central African Republic (CAR)

Shocking levels of violence continued in CAR. Armed groups deliberately attacked civilians, aid workers, and UN peacekeepers. Throughout the year, CIVIC mobilized non-governmental organizations and influential Member States to call on key decision-makers to provide the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR with adequate assets and higher-performing personnel who are willing and able to protect civilians.

South Sudan

In November 2018, we published a report, Data-Driven Protection: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Informed by comprehensive research including hundreds of interviews in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the report identifies steps that must be taken to enable UN peacekeeping operations to protect civilians from diverse threats.

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Ukraine

CIVIC’s engagement in Ukraine moved from concept to reality with the creation of a Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team (CCMT) within the Ukraine Armed Forces. CIVIC helped to develop the protocols and procedures for the CCMT, trained the civil-military (CIMIC) officers who run the CCMT, and trained the civil-military (CIMIC) officers who run the CCMT.
How We Work
For nearly fifteen years, Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) has worked to ensure that the rights of civilians in conflict zones are recognized and respected.

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.

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.
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
We begin by investigating conditions for civilians on the ground in conflict zones. We learn to civilians in order to learn their perspectives and understand their needs. In our findings, we identify specific gaps in protection and propose concrete solutions. Further, we assess the capacity of the parties to the conflict to implement our recommendations.

ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT
Engaging Parties to the Conflict: Once we identify both the challenges and practical solutions, we develop a detailed advocacy plan to engage all relevant stakeholders. While we focus on those responsible for 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 utilize traditional and social media platforms to share our findings about the plight of civilians in particular conflicts and generate public support for the implementation of our recommendations.

Empowering Civilians: We work with local civil society groups to ensure they have the knowledge and tools they need to press for better policies and practices. We seek out civilian input and ensure they have the knowledge and tools they need to press for better policies and practices. We seek out civilian input and ensure they have the knowledge and tools they need to press for better policies and practices. We seek out civilian input and ensure they have the knowledge and tools they need to press for better policies and practices.

Recognizing and Addressing the Needs of Groups Facing Additional Risks in Conflict: We recognize that women, men, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities experience conflict differently, creating different protection needs. We work to amplify these diverse voices and include their perspectives in our research, recommendations, and engagement.

WHO WE ARE

Muzaffar Shah
Afghanistan Country Director

Mozaffar Shah
Afghanistan Country Director

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, preferences, and effective solutions. We organize discussions in neutral settings and conduct empathy trainings that help security actors understand civilians’ perspectives.

Facilitating Training: We work with governments 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 conflict have an ethical obligation to recognize and provide assistance to civilians they harm while conducting combat operations, as well as a legal obligation to provide reparations to civilians when parties violate civilians’ rights. We educate governments, militaries, peacekeepers, and multinational 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 activity-based ways to improve. We integrate monitoring, evaluation, and learning into every stage of our work to ensure that the 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 lessons learned to other contexts and conflicts.

IMPLEMENTATION
Technical Assistance: Once we make recommendations, we roll up our sleeves and engage governments, armed actors, civilians, civil society groups, and international organizations to implement them.

We work with them to design practical change, including civilian harm tracking cells, post-harm assistance mechanisms, and updated military doctrine and planning guidance. Our team of experts regularly supports program development and implementation.

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Also because of CIVIC’s success in advocating for protection of civilians globally. Every day, I am inspired by what CIVIC had accomplished in Iraq, but also because of CIVIC’s success in advocating for protection of civilians nationally. I am proud that CIVIC’s practical approach includes concrete recommendations to improve the protection of civilians.

"My work at CIVIC is driven by my passion to be a bridge for those caught in conflict and empower them to safeguard their dignity, respect, and honor. My work environment, colleagues, and network are unique and together turn possibilities into opportunities for those impacted by conflict. This combination brings me great fulfillment and I am grateful to be part of the CIVIC culture and promote the protection of civilians in conflict.”

Liza Baran
Ukraine Country Director

"My passion (is) to be a bridge for those caught in conflict and empower them to safeguard their dignity, respect, and hope.”

— Tunde Ojei, Nigeria Country Director

Tunde Ojei
Nigeria Country Director

Nadwa Al-Dawsari
Yemen Country Director

Ali Al-Assaf
Iraq Country Director

"In Afghanistan, more than 10,000 civilians either lose their lives or are injured every year. CIVIC is diligently advocating for better protection to avoid these harms. It is an honor and a privilege to work for an organization so dedicated to saving the lives of civilians caught in conflict.”

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"With its unique and pragmatic approach, CIVIC is helping change the way armed actors operate so the fewer civilians are harmed during conflict. In Yemen, we work to identify gaps in civilian protection and offer sustainable and effective solutions for minimizing civilian harm.”

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The conflict in northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin continues to be one of the world’s deadliest. Since May 2011, an estimated 38,070 people have been killed, and 19 million are reported as internally displaced. Many more civilians have fled the country in a desperate attempt to reach safety. Since establishing operations in Nigeria in 2016, CIVIC has witnessed important strides in the Nigerian government’s and the military’s ability and willingness to protect civilians, yet much work remains to be done.

To address the evolution of the conflict in Nigeria and ongoing civilian protection challenges, CIVIC has mobilized champions within the government, military, and civil society to advance policies and practices that minimize civilian harm. For instance, we advised the Nigerian government on developing a national civilian protection policy that puts civilians at the center of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. In 2018, senior government officials publicly endorsed and committed to adopting the policy. If adopted, Nigeria would join a small group of nations worldwide who have committed to such a high standard to protect their citizens.

CIVIC also continued research and analysis to inform its engagement with security forces and communities. We completed our first research report on protection concerns related to armed non-state actors, also known as ANSAs. Civilian Perceptions of the Yans Gora (CJTF) in Borno State, Nigeria explores the role that community militias play in both protecting and harming civilians. We are currently working on a second phase of our research, due to be completed in 2019, which will strengthen our efforts to address this important protection challenge.

CIVIC trained senior military and community militia leaders on how to promote civilian protection practices within their respective organizations. We secured agreements from Nigerian military training schools to incorporate protection of civilians (POC) modules into their standard curriculum, through which we will reach thousands of soldiers. In addition, CIVIC trained 180 members of the military and 180 community militia members on POC in conflict-affected Borno State.

Throughout conflict-ridden northeast Nigeria, CIVIC continued to support civilians in developing their own self-protection strategies. Following CIVIC-facilitated meetings, communities advocated to the military for protection while they farm and collect firewood — activities that frequently result in civilians being killed, injured, and abducted.

Looking forward, CIVIC will double the number of localities in the northeast in which it conducts community protection work. As with existing facilities, our work will focus on strengthening civilians’ self-protection strategies. We will continue to engage with Nigerian security forces to support their efforts to institutionalize POC. Finally, we will continue research on important protection topics to further advocacy with communities and the government.
AFRICA

SAHEL

In recent years, the Sahel region has witnessed a spike in intercommunal conflict, terrorism, and transnational organized crime. Civilians living in border areas, characterized by limited state presence, are increasingly at risk of violence. The hyper-militarization of the region—now home to Nigerien, Malian, Chadian, Mauritanian, Burkinabe, French, and U.S. forces—continues to exacerbate intercommunal tensions. In addition, in February 2017, the G5 Sahel Joint Force (G5S-JF or Joint Force) was created to confront common challenges to peace and security among its five member states—Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad. These realities have contributed to an unstable security situation that threatens civilian lives and livelihoods. To address threats to civilians in the region, CIVIC is pursuing a dual-track strategy of engaging at a regional level with the Joint Force and bilaterally with specific countries.

Countries participating in the Joint Force committed to adhering to best practices in protecting civilians, as codified in the Human Rights Compliance Framework (HRCF). The HRCF includes mechanisms for civilian casualty and incident tracking, screening, training, development of rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures, and planning and operations that take into account human rights and international humanitarian law, after action reviews, and accountability measures.

In 2018, in partnership with the UN’s Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), CIVIC engaged with the Joint Force in Mali and Niger to lay the foundation for its efforts to mitigate civilian harm throughout the lifecycle of operations. The Joint Force will achieve this aim through establishing a Civilian Incident Tracking and Analysis Cell (CITAC) to identify patterns of harm to civilians and adjust operations to prevent future harm. In the past year, CIVIC increased the Joint Force’s awareness of civilian harm mitigation (CHM) and the value of the CITAC through multiple engagements in Mali and Niger. In late 2018, CIVIC trained officers of the Joint Force at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. The course, inspired by real-life incidents, provided practical tools for the Joint Force to improve civilian protection practices in the Sahel.

Separately, CIVIC undertook two assessment missions to Niger in 2018. While the country lies at the crossroads of numerous conflicts, its center remains relatively calm as threats to civilians in the border regions, particularly those shared with Mali and Burkina Faso, have increased in the last year. Nigeriens living in this area face persistent threats of attacks and displacement from armed groups of all stripes, including incursions from political armed groups from Mali. Our assessments, which included key informant interviews and focus group conversations with more than 60 individuals, helped CIVIC to refine our understanding of risks and opportunities to civilian protection, and to inform our regional advocacy and future programming.

During 2019, CIVIC will establish a permanent presence in Mali to support the Joint Force’s efforts to establish the CITAC and improve its understanding of civilian protection and, in particular, civilian harm mitigation (CHM).

CIVIC IN THE NEWS

“Protection of Civilians: Nigeria’s Moment to Join the League of Nations” – William Meeker, CIVIC’s Africa Program Director, for the Premium Times

“The proposed POC Policy would integrate protection throughout the government, double down on commitments to the protection of civilians caught in conflict, and provide civilians with critical post-harm assistance if they have been affected by conflict.”
“The growing area of protection of civilians (POC) recognizes the role that security actors and armed groups play in providing protection, as well as the need to ensure that civilians are involved in developing protection strategies. Unfortunately, these strategies often overlook the specific concerns of civilian women and girls, whose experiences in conflict differ from those of men and boys. When POC efforts are gender-blind, the impact can be devastating.

Given our direct engagement with civilians and security actors, CIVIC is uniquely positioned to improve the effectiveness of protection measures for women, men, boys, and girls caught in conflict.”

TASREEN HUSSAIN, Gender Advisor
By invitation from the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, CIVIC was one of four organizations that directly participated in a series of closed-door sessions with the DOD staff charged with evaluating the U.S. military’s civilian casualty policies. CIVIC staff also provided analysis and recommendations in writing to DOD, based on our observations from the field, in an effort to ensure that the study reflected leading practice. This study is expected to contribute to the formulation of DOD-wide guidance on civilian casualties.

UNITED STATES

Ever since CIVIC founder Marla Ruzicka engaged with the U.S. military in Afghanistan in 2003, CIVIC has consistently advocated increased transparency and accountability in U.S. military operations. As the U.S. administration continues its operations against the Islamic State (ISIS) and the “associated forces” of Al Qaeda, civilian casualties resulting from major combat operations and drone strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen remain under-acknowledged and often without remedy. CIVIC’s approach, based on a combination of technical expertise, public and private advocacy, and direct engagement with military leaders, continues to provide meaningful opportunities to shape U.S. policy and practice.

In 2018, CIVIC’s advocacy supported the passage of legislation and adoption of policies mandating more robust and consistent reporting on civilian casualties and adapting lessons from past military operations. As a result of CIVIC’s direct engagement with the U.S. Congress and Department of Defense (DOD), and through joint advocacy within a broader coalition of organizations, CIVIC influenced the production of a comprehensive public report on civilian casualties, an internal study of civilian casualties procedures, and the appointment of a senior DOD official charged with overseeing the development of a department-wide civilian casualties policy.

CIVIC brought significant and much-needed attention to the unique opportunities and challenges for civilian protection when the U.S. conducts military operations in partnership with other countries or forces. In 2018, CIVIC partnered with like-minded organizations to co-host three events on this topic, with the active participation of DOD personnel. We captured the findings of these engagements in The Protection of Civilians in U.S. Partnered Operations, a report that calls attention to the challenges and opportunities faced by policymakers, military actors, and humanitarian professionals in positively shaping the conduct of armed forces partnering with U.S. forces. Thanks to these efforts, as well as intensive private engagement with Congressional staff and U.S. government officials, policymakers are increasingly scrutinizing the impact on civilian populations of working “by, with, and through” national and local partners.

In 2019, CIVIC will continue our strategic advocacy calling on the U.S. military to acknowledge harm to civilians caused in past conflicts, set a high standard of protection in current coalition and partnered operations, and strengthen civilian protection practices in future engagements.

With Great Power: Modifying US Arms Sales to Reduce Civilian Harm

Released in January 2018, With Great Power: Modifying US Arms Sales to Reduce Civilian Harm identifies adjustments to the U.S. arms sales process that would reduce civilian harm associated with U.S.-sold weapons. The report finds that when arms sales are associated with corruption, human rights abuses, violations of the laws of war, and civilian suffering, the United States may be exposed to legal, moral, reputational, and strategic risks.
The success or failure of UN peacekeeping operations can determine whether civilians caught in conflict live or die, and yet, despite significant engagement by UN Secretaries-General and Member States in recent years, peacekeeping missions still struggle to protect civilians. These challenges are particularly acute in CIVIC’s four focus countries: Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Mali, where violence continued or increased in 2018. In each of these four countries, national-level peace agreements were brokered or elections were held. While hopeful, these developments may not reduce violence against civilians in the short-term. If these developments don’t deliver dividends to marginalized communities or address subnational conflicts and economic drivers, they could exacerbate violence. At the same time, some UN Member States are seeking to downsize and withdraw peacekeeping missions from conflict-affected areas. Unfortunately, recent decisions to drawdown missions have not been sufficiently based on comprehensive analysis of the country context, including threats against civilians. Moreover, missions are not being given the resources and capabilities needed to implement their mandates, including their mandate to protect civilians.

In 2018, CIVIC continued to work toward five interrelated objectives that are essential to the effective protection of civilians through UN peacekeeping:

- Peacekeeping mission planning and decision-making is linked to assessments of threats of violence against civilians;
- Peacekeeping performance is strengthened by ensuring that mandates are matched with adequate means;
- Accountability systems to hold UN Member States and UN personnel accountable for peacekeeping operation underperformance and egregious failure are improved;
- Peacekeeping missions have the capabilities to operationalize civilian harm mitigation; and
- Communities at risk of violence are safely and effectively engaged in peacekeeping mission planning and activities to protect civilians.

PEACEKEEPING

The overall lesson that UN member states need to learn is that haphazard budget cuts to individual missions will not in themselves make peacekeeping operations more efficient or effective. UN member states, UN secretariat officials, and UN peacekeeping missions will need to work together to do the long-term and difficult work of identifying and reducing inefficiencies, many of which originate in the bureaucracy of UN headquarters and the political turf battles of member states. Otherwise, the U.S. government may save some money in the short-term, at a steep cost to civilians in Congo and for other conflicts where peacekeeping missions are deployed.

As one civilian stated after a MONUSCO base was closed in his town: “Personally, I don’t know of, nor do I have, any hope for another way to be protected.”

CIVIC IN THE NEWS

In 2013, CIVIC persuaded UN Security Council Member States to include unprecedented language in a UN peacekeeping operation mandate that required the UN mission to mitigate risk that could result from its own operations. Since then, CIVIC has worked with Member States to secure similar language in eleven additional UN peacekeeping operation mandates. CIVIC remains the leading international NGO seeking to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations both protect civilians from other actors perpetrating violence and mitigate harm that could result from their own presence, activities, and operations.

In 2013, CIVIC persuaded UN Security Council Member States to include unprecedented language in a UN peacekeeping operation mandate that required the UN mission to mitigate risk that could result from its own operations. Since then, CIVIC has worked with Member States to secure similar language in eleven additional UN peacekeeping operation mandates. CIVIC remains the leading international NGO seeking to ensure that UN peacekeeping operations both protect civilians from other actors perpetrating violence and mitigate harm that could result from their own presence, activities, and operations.
PEACEKEEPING

To contribute to these objectives, CIVIC continued to undertake in-depth research and constructive advocacy in our four countries of focus, at UN Headquarters in New York, and in UN Member State capitals. Informed by our research findings, in 2018, we influenced an unprecedented Security Council resolution on peacekeeping performance and accountability, the mandate renewals of the peacekeeping operations in CAR, DRC, Mali, and South Sudan, and the annual report of the UN General Assembly’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping. We also deepened our work to ensure mission mandates were matched with resources. CIVIC was the first NGO to review how cuts made in 2017 to MONUSCO’s personnel and budget undermined the mission’s ability to implement its protection of civilians mandate. This research informed our 2018 report, Protection With Less Presence and a subsequent policy brief, Community Engagement by MONUSCO With Reduced Field Presence. These publications and related advocacy helped policymakers in New York and major capitals understand how their decisions were impacting civilians. Based on this research, CIVIC began innovative work to monitor and influence the UN General Assembly’s Administrative and Budgetary Committee, known as the Fifth Committee, to advocate against cuts to key protection-related posts in peacekeeping operations. CIVIC’s increasing success is based on a model that links in-depth and comprehensive field research at the local level in CAR, DRC, Mali, and South Sudan, to the national and international levels. We capture good practices and lessons learned to inform policy and decision-making by UN Member States and at every level of the UN.

In 2019, CIVIC will augment this work in three ways. First, we will deploy two field-based peacekeeping researchers, one based in CAR and the other in Mali. Second, CIVIC will increase its outreach and advocacy work in key European capitals. Finally, we will undertake dedicated research on gender in peacekeeping focused on how peacekeeping operations take gender into account when seeking to protect civilians.

Our Publications

Data-Driven Protection: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations

This report reviews how information on threats to civilians is collected, shared, analyzed, and used by UN peacekeepers to inform actions ranging from patrolling to longer-term strategic planning. Few things are more important to a peacekeeping mission than its ability to maintain a clear understanding of its operating environment and the threats that civilians face. Having a comprehensive picture of threats enables peacekeeping missions to achieve their mandated goals, including the protection of civilians.
Multilateralism is under threat, and the norms and laws that safeguard civilians in conflict are increasingly flouted or undermined in the halls of power. At the same time, the number of violent conflicts underway is greater than at any point over the past thirty years – and civilians caught in these conflicts are paying the highest price. Without determined action by the UN and its Member States, there is a serious risk of backsliding on the important progress made in building the protection of civilians agenda over the past twenty years.

In the face of these worrying trends, CIVIC’s work has shown that there is a way to better protect civilians.

In addition to influencing mission-specific and peacekeeping reform issues, CIVIC informed key policymakers of critical protection challenges facing civilians in multiple conflicts throughout 2018. For example, CIVIC regularly briefed the UN and Member States on protection concerns facing civilians in Yemen and influenced Security Council deliberations and decisions to ensure that POC was central to the UN’s response to the dire situation. Further, recognizing the importance of acting in coalition, we continued to prioritize convening an important group of over thirty NGOs and think tanks focused specifically on improving protection of civilians (POC) in armed conflict and the UN’s response to crises.

In 2019, CIVIC will mark the 20th anniversary of the protection of civilians being taken up on the Security Council’s agenda by mobilizing the UN and its Member States to prioritize POC in responding to conflict. CIVIC will convene key stakeholders to build momentum for political action and policy reform to address the recurring and contemporary barriers to the effective protection of civilians in armed conflict. Further, we will continue to convene and mobilize our partners to stand up for the norms and laws that safeguard civilians.

“CIVIC brings the voices of civilians caught in conflict to the halls of power at the United Nations. Our advocacy to strengthen civilian protection is informed by in-depth research and operational programming in some of the most complex conflict situations in the world right now. We bring clear analysis and practical recommendations to the main decision-makers in the halls of power of the UN and press countries to be at the forefront in putting an end to the deaths of civilians in conflict. At a time when multilateralism is in retreat, and the laws and norms that safeguard humankind are under threat, we are fighting back to make sure the UN and its Member States embrace a higher standard of civilian protection.”

EVAN CINQ MARS
Senior Advisor, United Nations

Our innovative approach was recognized by the UN Secretary-General in his 2018 report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, which included direct references to CIVIC’s engagement in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Ukraine. Countries adopting and implementing national POC policies and taking a proactive approach to civilian harm mitigation have indeed become priorities in the Secretary-General’s vision for the protection of civilians agenda.
European governments and institutions have a critical role to play in prioritizing civilian protection worldwide. From the presence of key military powers, many of whom are engaged – whether directly or indirectly – in the most acute conflict areas in the world, to arms manufacturing and export, Europe has a sizeable influence on conflicts around the globe.

Recognizing the opportunity for European governments and institutions to demonstrate increased leadership on protection, CIVIC established a permanent presence on the continent in 2018. Within one short year key interlocutors in Geneva, Brussels, Paris, and London had confirmed their interest in furthering civilian protection, and CIVIC became a trusted source of protection-related insights for civil society and governments alike.

CIVIC advocates and provides technical advice to European governments and institutions, namely, France, the United Kingdom, European Union, and NATO, to improve their protection of civilians (POC) policies and practices and that of their security partners. Given the operations undertaken by European governments, bilaterally or in partnership with other national or local forces, a deeper understanding of and stronger commitment to protection in Europe has the potential to improve the lives of civilians around the world.

As a key actor promoting the adoption of the NATO POC policy in 2016, CIVIC continues to support NATO in undertaking meaningful, practical steps in the operationalization of the policy. Throughout 2018, CIVIC provided technical expertise and inputs including, most notably, the drafting of a POC handbook.

Looking forward, CIVIC is deepening its network across Europe, especially in the United Kingdom and France, where we have established a policy dialogue with French and British authorities on civilian protection issues. Furthermore, building on CIVIC’s groundbreaking research on U.S. partnered operations, CIVIC is exploring the impact of such operations on civilians from the lens of European security cooperation and partnerships.

In November 2018, CIVIC was honored to be a project leader at the inaugural Paris Peace Forum. Hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron on the 100-year anniversary of the 11th of November 1918 armistice, the gathering drew high-level officials, international experts, and other leaders from around the world. With the support of the European Union, CIVIC showcased civilian harm mitigation as a global standard.
EUROPE
UKRAINE Civilians continue to lose their homes, their livelihoods, and even their lives in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Suffering the brunt of the conflict, civilians’ concerns range from food scarcity and sanitation to active landmines and indiscriminate artillery shelling. In late 2017, based on our research near the conflict’s front line, CIVIC launched a program in Ukraine with the goal of strengthening the government’s capacity to prevent and address civilian harm in the conflict-affected east.

In 2018, CIVIC made significant strides advocating for the adoption of a national policy on protection of civilians. By cultivating high-level champions, both at the national and international levels, and creating an advisory group on the protection of civilians (POC), CIVIC galvanized crucial support within the government around a national POC policy. In 2019, alongside increased training of the military, CIVIC will continue to push for the adoption of the national POC policy. CIVIC also plans to publish the findings of its research on gaps at the local and national level that have impeded the government’s ability to provide assistance to civilians harmed in the conflict. Based on recommendations in this report, CIVIC will advocate structural reforms to ensure civilians receive the assistance they need.

15 YEARS OF CIVIC

In 2018, CIVIC achieved major milestones in enhancing the Ukrainian Armed Forces’ ability to protect civilians in the conflict zone, particularly through the creation of Eastern Europe’s first civilian casualty mitigation team (CCMT). We provided crucial support in designing the protocols and procedures for the CCMT, developing the database, and training the civil-military officers who will run the CCMT. At the end of 2018, the Joint Force Operations Commander signed the order officially creating the CCMT. This capability will allow Ukrainian Armed Forces to learn from incidents in which civilians have been harmed in order to better protect them in the future.
In 2018, CIVIC continued to be part of high-level discussions about urban war and a key voice for civilian protection. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of urban warfare on civilians, CIVIC advocates avoiding the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. In May, CIVIC co-hosted a scenario-based workshop with Article 36 in London with military practitioners to identify, share, and discuss military policies and procedures relevant to the use of EWIPA. The workshop surfaced operational policies and procedures that can be used by armed forces to decide whether and how to use such weapons, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law.
AFGHANISTAN Armed conflict continues to take a devastating toll on Afghan civilians. The United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported more than 10,993 civilian deaths and injuries in 2018 alone. Armed opposition groups were responsible for the majority of these casualties, but civilians were killed and injured during operations by national and international forces.

In 2018, CIVIC adopted a multi-faceted approach to address these civilian protection challenges. We began training Afghan National Army officers on Civilian Harm Mitigation (CHM) – a crucial need identified in Afghanistan’s landmark 2017 Policy on Prevention and Mitigation of Civilian Casualties and Damages. This training, which included modules on Protection Ethos and Law, CHM in Practice, and Community Engagement, led to an average 27-point improvement in participants’ awareness of protection of civilians (POC) and CHM based on pre- and post-workshop assessments.

CIVIC’s engagement with the government and security forces has been complemented by our work with Afghan civil society and community leaders. CIVIC-formed, gender-inclusive Community Civilian Protection Councils (CCPCs) in the provinces of Baghlan, Herat, Kandahar, and Nangarhar are building their knowledge of civilian protection, communication, and advocacy in order to address their protection concerns and needs. Using language found in international humanitarian law and Islamic law, the CCPC members demand changes in the conduct of Afghan forces and the Taliban. The CCPCs’ engagement with armed actors has yielded measurable results at the local level, including the Taliban agreeing to remove improvised explosive devices from public roads used by civilians in a district in Kandahar, the police increasing their patrols in order to enhance public security in Herat, and a local commander allowing girls to attend school in a district in Kandahar.

In 2019, we will work to fully realize the promise of improved protection embedded in Afghanistan’s civilian casualty mitigation policy. CIVIC’s focus is twofold: building security forces’ capabilities to reduce and respond to civilian harm through training and technical assistance; and further developing conflict-affected communities’ capacity to engage armed actors on civilians’ protection concerns. In particular, CIVIC plans to expand its community-level work to Balkh and one additional province. We will also continue to engage NATO forces to improve targeting procedures and reduce civilian harm.

In September 2017, following two years of advocacy by CIVIC and others, the government of Afghanistan adopted a landmark national civilian casualty prevention policy – the first of its kind – which has been recognized by the UN Secretary General as model for elevating and embedding the protection of civilians in policy.

15 YEARS OF CIVIC
Throughout 2018, as Iraq sought to stabilize post-ISIS, our work to bolster the capacity of Iraqi and Peshmerga forces to improve the protection of civilians played a critical role. CIVIC’s in-depth research has identified major gaps in knowledge, policy, and practice of civilian protection within Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Peshmerga forces, as well as the institutions that support them. Our advocacy and technical assistance sought to fill those gaps and achieve a higher standard of civilian protection and greater support to civilians as they recover from the violence of the past decade.

Over the year, more than 680 Peshmerga and ISF officers, including 33 women, attended CIVIC workshops on protection concerns including learning lessons from how ISF and the anti-ISIS coalition conducted.

In 2018, CIVIC published research examining gaps in protection and barriers accessing post-harm assistance and recommending how to best address performance failures. *We Hope, But We Are Hopeless: Civilian Perceptions of the Compensation Process in Iraq* presents civilians’ perspectives on the implementation of Iraq’s compensation law and its significant shortcomings. Based on in-depth research, the report includes practical recommendations to reform the compensation process and make it accessible, fair, and effective.

*Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post ISIS* explores major, ongoing civilian protection challenges in Mosul. This policy brief provides guidance to the Government of Iraq and ISF to improve their interactions with civilians in order to stabilize the country and earn the public’s trust.

In 2019, CIVIC will work with the National Security Advisor’s office, military staff colleges, and security forces to implement a “train the trainers” method to guiding the civilian protection approaches of the ISF and Peshmerga. Our intervention will also capture civilian perspectives of the current gaps in protection across Iraq through research and community-level dialogues with security actors in Kirkuk and Mosul. These dialogues will focus on the vulnerabilities civilians face in both governorates and the fragile links between communities and state institutions, with the goal of ensuring security actors address those concerns and restore citizens’ confidence in state institutions.
MENA AND SOUTH ASIA

YEMEN

The war in Yemen has devastated the lives of millions of people and is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Two-thirds of the country’s population need humanitarian assistance, including food and medical care. Civilians have borne the brunt of the fighting from air strikes, banned antipersonnel landmines, and the use of artillery in populated areas, in what the UN Human Rights Council has called “unrelenting violations of international humanitarian law.” According to the UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, between March 2015 and November 2018, 8,772 people were killed and 10,678 were wounded. In Yemen, due to underreporting, the actual casualties are likely higher.

In 2018, CIVIC launched a program in Yemen with a multifaceted approach involving advocacy at both the international and country levels to improve civilian protection. First, we urged those with the most influence over conflict dynamics – the U.S., UN, Saudi-UAE-led Coalition, France, UK, and the internationally-recognized Yemeni government – to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law. We also called on parties to the conflict to participate in UN-led efforts to resolve the conflict and guarantee the safe delivery of food and medicine.

Second, we sought to improve the understanding, practices, and ability of nascent security forces in Aden, Al-Jawf, and Marib governorates to protect civilians. We conducted capabilities assessments of these forces to inform our engagement, including trainings on civilian protection.

Finally, we conducted in-depth community research in five Yemeni governorates – Al-Jawf, Shabwa, Baydha, Taiz, and Hodeidah – in order to understand civilians’ perspectives of the conflict and their protection needs and inform our engagement with parties to the conflict.

In 2019, using findings from our capabilities assessments and community research, CIVIC will begin civilian protection trainings with security forces affiliated with the Government of Yemen. We will also begin working with communities in Aden, Al-Jawf, and Marib to advocate for civilian protection.

EMAL ASLAMI
Program Officer, Afghanistan
REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

**WITH GREAT POWER:** Modifying U.S. Arms Sales to Reduce Civilian Harm

This report assesses existing constraints on U.S. arms sales and identifies ways to modify the sales process to reduce civilian harm associated with U.S.-sold weapons, while preserving the intended policy benefits of international arms sales.

**Mosul: Civilian Protection Challenges Post ISIS**

This report investigates the challenges facing interagency relations in Mosul, examines the issues limiting interactions with security actors, and offers recommendations to address ongoing protection needs and gaps. The report identifies four approaches that need to be taken at all levels to ensure the safety and security of civilians in Mosul and beyond.

**Challenges Post-ISIS: Civilian Protection in Mosul**

The report offers detailed perspectives on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. It identifies four approaches to engagement that are important to reinforce the effectiveness of engagement activities.

**Civilian Perceptions of the Use of Explosive Weapons**

The report identifies four main approaches to engagement that are important to reinforce the effectiveness of engagement activities.

**Data-Driven Protection: Linking Threat Analysis to Planning in UN Peacekeeping Operations**

This report examines the challenges and gaps that UN peacekeeping operations face when conducting threat analysis and using it as the basis of integrated mission planning and decision making. It presents civilians’ perspectives and experiences of the CJTF’s presence in their communities and focuses on some of the engagement approaches that have been employed by MONUSCO staff, local communities, and international organizations over recent years. It also discusses military policies and procedures relevant to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas due to urbanization and strategic considerations.

**The Protection of Civilians in U.S. Partnered Operations**

This report examines the challenges and gaps that the U.S. military faces when conducting threat analysis and using it as the basis of integrated mission planning and decision making. It presents the perspectives of international organizations, NGOs, and communities on the impact of military operations on civilians in Iraq and Syria.

**Community Engagement by MONUSCO with Reduced Field Presence**

This report examines the challenges and gaps that UN peacekeeping operations face when conducting threat analysis and using it as the basis of integrated mission planning and decision making. It presents the perspectives of international organizations, NGOs, and communities on the impact of military operations on civilians in Iraq and Syria.

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**Center for Civilians in Conflict**

**Statements of Financial Position**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DEC 31 2018</th>
<th>DEC 31 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses and other assets</td>
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<td>Property and equipment, net</td>
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<td>8,839,583</td>
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<td><strong>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
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<td>Deferred rent</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>8,839,583</td>
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**Statement of Activities**

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<td>In-kind revenue</td>
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<td>Contract income</td>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
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**EXPENSES**

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<tr>
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<td>Supporting Services</td>
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<td><strong>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>(386,743)</td>
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**Statement of Functional Expenses: January through December 2018**

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<tr>
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<th>PROGRAMS</th>
<th>MGMT SERVICES</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td>Travel &amp; Travel Related Costs</td>
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<td>Technology &amp; Supplies</td>
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<td>Special Events</td>
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<td>889,491</td>
<td>257,835</td>
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THANK YOU
This report is dedicated to CIVIC researcher and friend, Hamza Cherbib.