ANNUAL REPORT
2014

CENTER FOR CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT
RECOGNIZE. PREVENT. PROTECT. AMEND.
Letter from the Chairman of the Board

Dear friends,

2014 was an exciting, productive year of transition and growth.

Last summer, CIVIC enthusiastically welcomed Federico Borello as the organization’s new executive director. Federico has set his sights on expanding the organization’s role as a global leader on civilian protection, recognized by policymakers, multi-national organizations, military commanders, and the public. The board and I are eager to continue playing an active role in CIVIC’s second decade.

With ongoing conflicts placing millions of civilians at risk in Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and elsewhere, the need for our experience and expertise remains high. At CIVIC we provide tangible solutions that help prevent civilian harm.

We enter 2015 with a renewed vision—which you’ll hear more about in this report—and a passion to ensure that this organization continues to grow in size and influence, so that fewer civilians around the world have to suffer.

This is life-saving work. I am proud to be a part of it, and I greatly appreciate your past and future support for our efforts.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Anil Soni
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
Center for Civilians in Conflict
Letter from the Executive Director

Friends,

In July, when I took the reins at CIVIC, the world seemed to have taken a turn for the worse. Civilians were bearing the brunt of the violence as armed conflicts grew in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. It was clear that the need and demand for our work was far outstripping our capacity.

Our incredible and dedicated staff and I understood that we had little time to spend on a traditional “transition.” We instead kept our focus on our in-country reporting and analysis and our high-level advocacy. I’ve learned volumes from my CIVIC colleagues in the process.

I also saw first hand our remarkable impact, including NATO’s creation of an office focused on preventing civilian harm—something CIVIC long called for, even when some policymakers were skeptical. The impact of our ideas, our tools, and our advocacy will grow exponentially if we can scale up our operations—thus sparing more civilians from harm in conflict.

In the fall, our staff, board of directors, and some of our partners and donors embarked on an exciting process to chart the course of CIVIC’s future growth. The result is an ambitious three-year vision plan to engage civilians, governments, international organizations, civil society groups, media, and academic institutions to help protect more civilians around the world.

We also reaffirmed our commitment to our three core values. We are civilian-focused, believing that change should be rooted in the wants and needs of civilians caught in conflict. We are pragmatic, believing that changes in the behavior of parties to a conflict will result from working directly with decision-makers. We are collaborative, believing that working in partnership to protect civilians is more effective than working alone.

I want to thank all of you for the warm welcome I’ve enjoyed, and, more importantly, for your confidence in our work. With your support, I have no doubt that we will continue to make progress toward better civilian protection.

Sincerely,

Federico Borello
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Center for Civilians in Conflict
MALI
We launched a year-long project with staff based in Bamako to document civilian perspectives of conflict-related harm, identify civilian protection gaps, and advocate practical solutions with an aim to strengthen the protection capabilities of the Malian government, Malian Armed Forces, and the UN peacekeeping mission.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
CIVIC staff conducted a scoping mission in Bangui where we met with representatives from civil society, governments, international organizations, and the African Union mission (MISCA) to assess current civilian protection and harm mitigation mechanisms, and to advise in the drafting of the United Nations peacekeeping mandate.

ISRAEL/GAZA
In summer 2014, CIVIC responded to renewed conflict in Israel and Gaza. We presented recommendations to the US State Department on steps that parties to the conflict could take to reduce civilian harm.

SOMALIA
We advised the African Union (AU) on implementation of their civilian harm tracking cell and on the importance of including the capability to make amends to civilians unintentionally harmed by AMISOM operations.
AFGHANISTAN
With international forces officially ending combat operations in December 2014, we continued to focus our advocacy and technical assistance on the Afghan government to increase its capacity to prevent civilian harm and also to recognize, track, investigate, and appropriately address harm that does occur.

IRAQ AND SYRIA
We spoke with civilians, civil society, international aid groups, and members of the political and armed opposition to assess protection gaps. When the anti-ISIS coalition was announced in 2014 we provided recommendations to the US State Department and the Pentagon on policies to investigate, track, and assist civilians harmed during operations, and on security force assistance to local forces in Iraq and Syria.

UNITED STATES
We continue to push for the creation of standing policies on protection and harm mitigation including the appointment of a senior advisor at the Pentagon to serve as a focal point for these efforts. After years of advocacy, CIVIC successfully persuaded Congress to request that the Secretary of Defense create a standing amends program.

NATO
After several years of CIVIC advocacy, NATO took a groundbreaking step by creating the Office of Human Rights and Armed Conflict. This office is expected to help build a high-level, sustained focus within NATO HQ on civilian protection and harm mitigation, as well as other important human rights issues in modern conflict.
OUR WORK

CIVIC is an international advocacy organization focused on civilian protection in armed conflict. Our work has saved lives in conflicts in areas ranging from Afghanistan to Somalia.

CIVIC encourages parties to armed conflicts to adopt a set of tools, policies, and practices that go above and beyond what is legally required by international humanitarian law. We thus seek to raise the level of protection afforded to civilians before, during, and after conflict.

Our work takes us from the homes of civilians in active conflict zones to halls of power around the world—places where the decisions that impact civilian lives are made. We document harm to civilians and analyze its causes. We also advise governments, their armed forces, and international and regional institutions on practical solutions for preventing and responding to civilian harm. We then offer our technical expertise to implement proposed solutions.

CIVIC has played an important role in persuading governments and their militaries as well as international and regional organizations to better protect civilians from the effects of military operations.

We call the whole of our work “civilian harm mitigation,” a vitally important new field that we have helped create. As a result of our work, the United States, the African Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and others now have policies in place to better protect civilians. Ultimately, we work toward the establishment of a new international standard on prevention and response to civilian harm.
Afghanistan

With a grant from Open Society Foundations’ Regional Policy Initiative, we were able to base an analyst in the country throughout 2014. With international forces officially ending combat operations in December 2014, we refocused our advocacy and technical assistance on the Afghan government to increase its capacity to prevent civilian harm and also to recognize, track, investigate, and appropriately address harm that does occur.

We conducted research in Kandahar province, giving us valuable information on civilian harm caused by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Our research and ongoing advocacy have equipped us to undertake an assessment on Afghan harm mitigation capabilities. In 2015, we will prepare an implementation plan for the Afghan government, supported by the NATO-led Resolute Support mission, for an Afghan civilian casualty mitigation team (CCMT), with a comprehensive civilian casualty tracking, analysis, and response cell. We believe that a CCMT, if properly used, would allow ANSF to both reduce and better respond to civilian harm.

We released a comprehensive report on International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF)’s civilian casualty mitigation efforts and presented our recommendations on how NATO can expand civilian casualty mitigation efforts to all 49 ISAF troop-contributing countries at NATO headquarters. We also worked with the Afghan Human Rights Commission to draft a victims’ assistance policy to assist those harmed during the ongoing conflict.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT: AFGHANISTAN

“...Some of these engagements that were resulting in high civilian casualties were not necessarily in violation of the law of armed conflict and were also within the rules of engagement for both ISAF as well as the individual troop contributing countries in the ISAF operation. But civilians were dying.”

-Excerpted from the video “Afghanistan: Return to Hope,” NATO’s virtual overview of its mission in Afghanistan.

While quick to criticize the Americans for episodes that killed civilians, Mr. Karzai has been far less outspoken on such actions by the insurgents and his own government’s forces, said Hadi Marifat, a Kabul spokesman for the Center for Civilians in Conflict, an advocacy group. “He has been selectively highlighting cases of civilian casualties for political lobbies externally, but quite reluctant to criticize the casualties caused by the Taliban, and that is a concern for all of us; there is a need to depoliticize this issue,” Mr. Marifat said.

Iraq and Syria

Due to the international focus on fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), CIVIC merged its work in these two countries. In April, amid escalating fighting, a CIVIC team traveled to Turkey’s border with Syria, where we spoke with civilians, Syrian civil society, international aid groups, and members of the political and armed opposition. Our goal was to assess current civilian protection principles in some of the Syrian armed opposition and ascertain how we could improve that protection.

We subsequently contributed to an article published on the Atlantic Council's MENA Source outlining ways to prioritize civilian protection concerns in Iraq. As the US and coalition partners carried out an aerial bombing campaign against ISIS, and began training and equipping other forces, we provided recommendations to US Central Command (CENTCOM), the US State Department, and the Pentagon on policies to investigate, track, and assist civilians harmed during operations and on security force assistance to local forces. Many of our recommendations are being implemented.

In 2015, we will expand this engagement to coalition partners including the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, and explore possible work with the Kurdish Peshmerga forces.

Israel/Gaza

In summer 2014, CIVIC responded to renewed conflict in Israel and Gaza. We presented recommendations to the US State Department on steps that parties to the conflict could take to reduce civilian harm. Our Harvard Law Fellow, Nicolette Boehland, wrote “No Safe Place in Gaza,” published in the Huffington Post, drawing on our 2013 Israel/Gaza field research of civilians’ experiences.

“...For the people I have interviewed, the idea that they will be protected by virtue of being civilians has been proven tragically wrong time and again. But a great deal can be done to keep civilians safer, both in Gaza and in Israel.”

**Mali**

In 2014, CIVIC launched a year-long project with staff based in Bamako to document civilian perspectives of conflict-related harm, identify civilian protection gaps, and advocate practical solutions. Our report, to be published in early 2015, will detail the harm suffered and explore the needs and expectations of civilians. Our advocacy and practical recommendations will aim to strengthen the policies, training, and capabilities of the Malian government, Malian Armed Forces, and the UN peacekeeping mission to protect civilians.

**Somalia**

After years of conceptualizing and working toward implementation of a civilian casualty tracking cell for African Union forces in Somalia (AMISOM), we succeeded in 2014 in overcoming many of the obstacles to finalize implementation of the cell. We advised the African Union (AU), including providing expert advice on appropriate structure and staffing of the cell and on the importance of including the capability to make amends to civilians unintentionally harmed by AMISOM operations.

The tracking cell will begin operation in early 2015, becoming the second such unit in the world and the first for African forces. AMISOM will be better able to understand the impact of its operations on civilians and provide a continuous feedback loop for commanders, helping them prevent harm to civilians during military operations.

We are confident this work will strengthen the capacity of the peacekeeping operation and can contribute to reducing the ongoing cycles of violence. We will deploy staff to Somalia to train the cell’s consultants and staff and monitor the cell’s implementation.

**African Union**

After collaborative work to strengthen the AU’s civilian harm mitigation capacity—particularly through our work with AMISOM—we see a unique opportunity to establish a formal partnership to ensure policies, tools, and training are in place each and every time the AU deploys a mission.

We believe that the AU is critically important as a leader in developing progressive practices on civilian protection and response. While it has been at the forefront of adopting policies to improve civilian protection, there is more work to be done to ensure those policies are ready for immediate implementation, and that troops are trained on advanced tactics before deployment. In 2015, we will seek a formal relationship with the AU for creating practical guidance and training, so that protection tactics can be quickly implemented down the chain of command.
Central African Republic (CAR)

In March 2014, CIVIC conducted a scoping mission in Bangui. During this mission we met with representatives from civil society, governments, and international organizations, and the African Union mission (MISCA) to assess current civilian protection and harm mitigation mechanisms, and to advise in the drafting of the United Nations peacekeeping mandate.

We conducted post-mission briefings and advocated at the State Department and UN Secretariat on how civilians could be better protected by the UN and AU peacekeeping forces. CIVIC’s recommendations were highlighted by the US in remarks to the UN Security Council. In September, Humanitarian Exchange magazine featured an article that we co-authored with a colleague from the Stimson Center. The article suggests ways that UN peacekeeping forces can better prioritize and implement the protection of civilians in CAR.

In 2015, we plan to continue our work in CAR by amplifying local perspectives on civilian harm and conducting advocacy in support of stronger Protection of Civilians (POC) coordination and mechanisms within the UN mission (MINUSCA) and more robust policies and tools that all parties to the conflict can develop to proactively protect civilians.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

CIVIC persuaded the UN to include language on mitigating the effect of military operations on the civilian population in the Force Intervention Brigades’ (FIB) mandate – marking the first time the UN had offered such guidance. This has prepared us to work in the DRC during 2015, including an in-country assessment and scoping mission on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)’s current policies. As the only UN mission with an offensive mandate, we are committed to sharing our best practices with the mission on tools, training, and policies.

EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been a key cause of death, injury, and destruction of infrastructure in Afghanistan, Gaza, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Ukraine. CIVIC made presentations at an experts’ meeting jointly hosted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Norwegian government, and at a UN meeting on the best practices and precautions that militaries have taken in using explosive weapons.

Civilian flee from the site of an aerial bombardment in the Karm Homed neighborhood of Aleppo, Syria. Photo by Nicole Tung
A woman shops at Gao’s recently rebuilt “Washington Market.” The market was completely destroyed during fighting between French and Malian forces and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) forces in February 2013.

Photo by Thomas Martinez
NATO Policy

After several years of CIVIC advocacy, NATO took a groundbreaking step by creating the Office of Human Rights and Armed Conflict. This office is expected to help build a high-level, sustained focus within NATO HQ on civilian protection and harm mitigation, as well as other important human rights issues in modern conflict. CIVIC is considered a top advisor to the office.

We traveled to The Hague to participate in a NATO-organized conference on human security, where we discussed the importance of adopting and implementing standing policies on civilian harm mitigation. We also contributed to work by NATO’s Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre to compile and analyze lessons identified in Afghanistan and how these lessons should help inform future NATO operations.

US Policy

In the US, our goal remains the creation of permanent policies on civilian harm mitigation within US defense operations.

We continue to work toward the creation of a senior advisory role at the Pentagon that focuses on civilian protection and harm mitigation in armed conflicts in which the US is engaged. And we had a major success. After eight years of consideration, Congress passed Sec. 8127 in the 2014 appropriations bill requesting that the Secretary of Defense create a standing amends program. This program would provide financial payments to civilians harmed incidentally during US military operations. Whenever the US enters a new conflict, appropriate response measures would already be in place and would not need to be reinvented.

We wrote about why this program is needed in *Just Security* (April 2014) and what it means for civilians. In addition, CIVIC’s involvement as a leading advocate on amends was featured in the *Radio Lab* podcast, *Worth* and an article in *Buzzfeed* on drone strikes in Yemen.

DRONES

As part of a NGO coalition on drones, CIVIC engaged with the US National Security Council on the need for and provision of post-harm assistance to drone victims. In addition, we advocated for an independent assessment of whether the presidential policy guidance to minimize civilian harm from use of weaponized drones is being appropriately implemented.
The Peoples’ Perspective: Civilian Involvement in Armed Conflict

Under international law, it is forbidden to target civilians, “unless and for such a time as they take direct part in hostilities.” The legal concept, and how it should be implemented, has been debated for decades by military commanders, government officials, humanitarians, lawyers, and academics. They have often focused on definitions, legality, criteria for targeting, and key questions as to who is legally immune from direct attacks and what activities qualify as participation. These discussions have consistently lacked the voices of actual civilians in conflict-affected countries.

CIVIC is working to make sure that civilians’ voices are heard in this debate. We are finalizing The Peoples’ Perspective, a forthcoming study on civilian involvement in armed conflict. Based on more than 250 interviews with conflict survivors from Bosnia, Libya, Gaza, and Somalia, it will shed light on their experiences and inject civilian voices into the conversation.

In 2015… and Beyond

Our future efforts must ensure that our work graduates from an innovative niche area to a mainstream field of work with a developed theory and practice.

Standing with Civilians: Growing our Impact, details our vision for the next three years. It is a roadmap for our response to the growing call for our expertise and defines our overarching goal for this period: to improve the protections afforded to civilians in conflicts around the world, working toward the development of a global standard for civilian harm mitigation.

There are four supporting objectives, three of them programmatic and one focusing on organizational growth: 1) Influence governments and armed actors in conflict to implement effective harm mitigation practices. 2) Influence governments, international organizations, and coalitions involved in multinational operations to adopt standing policies on civilian protection and harm mitigation. 3) Advance the field of civilian harm mitigation policy and practices. 4) Expand our reach, influence, and impact by responsibly growing our organization.

You can read about our vision and learn more about our plan for sustainable growth here: www.civiliansinconflict.org/vision

“CIVIC is laying the foundation to grow our reach and impact to better protect civilians in conflicts around the world. You’ll find our staff in the homes of civilians and in the halls of capitals leveraging our research, analysis, and pragmatic expertise to ensure civilians are recognized and protected and harm is prevented.”

—Federico Borello
## Statement of Financial Position Fiscal Year 2014

### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

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### Statement of Activities

#### INCOME

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*CIVIC adheres to generally accepted accounting principles and uses the accrual method of accounting, recognizing income as it is pledged. In the previous two years, CIVIC received multiple year grant awards which were recorded in full in the year they were pledged. Funds were earmarked for expenditure in years stipulated in the grant agreements.*
### Statement of Activities continued

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**TOTAL EXPENSE**  
77,959  107,439  733,042  110,943  1,029,382

*CIVIC 2014 financial reports were independently audited and copies of the full audit are on file and available by request.*
SUPPORTERS

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS
John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Oak Foundation
Open Society Foundations
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
The Countess Moira Charitable Foundation
Trellis Charitable Fund

PROJECT SUPPORTERS
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mali)
Open Society Foundations Regional Policy Initiative (Afghanistan)

CORPORATE SUPPORT
craigslist Charitable Fund
Leoni Industries

GIFTS IN KIND
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
Kolenda Strategic Leadership LLC
Susan Osnos

MAJOR GIFTS
Anonymous
Frances Bertagnolli
Melisa Dulski and Aydin Mohtashamian
Russell Dyk
Sabra Field
Nancy Hechinger
Megan Hull
Humanity United Employee Matching Program
Peggy and Colin Kiernan
Michael Bear Kleinman
Marty and Pamela Krasney
Aryeh Neier
Samuel G. Norquist
Open Society Institute Matching Gifts Program
Paul and Beneva Orzulak
David Quigley
Anil Soni
Tom Wedell
Anne Heath Widmark
Kristele Younes
Peggy and Lee Zeigler
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Mylan

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Humanity United

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Jessica Ginther
Amtrak

Joost Hiltermann
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Thomas McCarthy
Akin Gump

Naz Modirzadeh
Harvard Law School-Brookings Project on Law

Aryeh Neier
President Emeritus, Open Society Foundations

Griff Norquist
Moelis & Company

David Quigley
McKinsey & Company

Kristèle Younès
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Col. (Ret.) Jay M. Parker
April Pedersen
Peter F. Windrem
CIVIC extends special thanks to the many civilians who spoke with us, even in the midst of personal tragedies. We also thank our consultants, who provided valuable services and contributions to our work around the world.

Center for Civilians in Conflict was founded as Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC) in 2003 by Marla Ruzicka, a young humanitarian who recognized the need for an organization focused on the plight of civilians in war. Following Marla’s death from a suicide bomb in Baghdad in April 2005, her colleagues, friends, and family knew that she had created a unique space in the advocacy community that should not be left vacant. CIVIC continues to grow, building on Marla’s foundation.
Families queue for food at a feeding point in Badbaado camp for internally displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Photo by Kate Holt

ABOVE
A girl sits in a school that has been converted into a refuge for internally displaced persons in Jebel Zawiyah, Syria.

Photo by Nicole Tung

“Your team should take immense pride in all the lives you have made directly better thanks to your unrelenting efforts and I can attest to the excellence of your advocacy and approach.”

—Rob Ayasse, NATO official.

THE COVER
Families queue for food at a feeding point in Badbaado camp for internally displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Photo by Kate Holt
Center for Civilians in Conflict works to make warring parties more responsible to civilians before, during, and after armed conflict. We are advocates who believe no civilian caught in conflict should be ignored, and advisors who provide practical solutions to prevent and respond to civilian harm.