

A woman in traditional African attire, including a colorful striped shawl and a pleated skirt, carries a young child on her back. They are walking along a dirt path in a lush, green, rural environment. The image is framed by stylized yellow curved lines in the corners.

REVERSING THE TREND:

Putting Civilians First

CIVIC's 2021 -2025 Strategic Plan

**CENTER FOR
CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT**

RECOGNIZE. PREVENT. PROTECT. AMEND.

We are confronting a grave reality, and yet CIVIC has demonstrated time and time again: there is nothing inevitable about civilian casualties in war.



EU/ECHO/Peter Biro

Cover Photo: Rod Waddington

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE PROBLEM AND THE RESPONSE

Every day, 100 civilians are killed in armed conflict and countless more are harmed.

In 2019, over 20,000 civilian casualties occurred in just ten countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) has been working for almost 20 years to put a stop to this unrelenting harm, devising concrete measures to protect civilians in conflict and other situations of violence. As threats to civilians continue to rise, **CIVIC is adapting the way we work in order to save more lives and match the growing needs of conflict-affected civilians.**

Despite prohibitions under international law, many armed actors deliberately target civilians; others fail to take the steps necessary to protect civilians during combat. Poor governance, human rights abuses, and discrimination against marginalized communities feed cycles of violence and contribute to the proliferation of armed groups. Climate change is fueling resource scarcity, which in turn is triggering population displacement, intercommunal conflict, and gender-based violence. The COVID-19 pandemic risks aggravating current conflicts and precipitating new ones, while deepening existing inequities and rolling back gains made towards gender equality.

Meanwhile, international bodies often fail to match their rhetorical support for conflict-affected populations with meaningful action. Governments that have long championed civilian protection are outsourcing their military operations to less scrupulous forces and irresponsibly transferring weapons to countries with a track record of committing violations against civilians. The general public, particularly in Western countries, is increasingly indifferent to the plight of conflict-affected populations.

Current trends in warfare point to an even more perilous future

for civilians. Major powers are preparing for peer-to-peer conflict with a focus on speed and lethality, despite the risk of widespread harm to civilians. Hybrid warfare - a mix of conventional and unconventional tactics - blurs the line between war and peace and tears at the fabric of societies. At the same time, urban combat operations cause a staggering number of civilian casualties, especially when explosive weapons are used in populated areas.

We are confronting a grave reality, and yet CIVIC has demonstrated time and time again: **there is nothing inevitable about civilian casualties in war.**

Civilian harm can be prevented, minimized, and remedied. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Yemen, we have made a positive difference in the lives of civilians. Improvised explosive devices have been removed from roads. Artillery has been relocated away from civilian homes. Militaries have provided civilians with secure escorts and patrols to protect them from armed opposition group attacks during farming and firewood collection. Governments have adopted policies strengthening civilian protection in military operations; developed specialized military cells that track and respond to civilian harm; and instituted military training programs on avoiding, minimizing, and responding to civilian harm. The United Nations has provided its peacekeeping missions with clearer guidance and better tools to protect civilians. These examples prove that direct engagement with civilians, armed actors, and policymakers can yield life-saving results for civilians caught in conflict.

This document lays out a plan to build on these successes, counteract alarming global trends, and change the course for the protection of civilians for many years to come.



We are happy and never imagined that we could sit side-by-side with the army to deliberate on security issues bothering us.

Community Protection Group member during a Civilian-Military dialogue, Nigeria

First, we have updated our mission statement to align with CIVIC's core focus and strengths. Over the next five years, CIVIC's mission will be **to support communities affected by conflict in their quest for protection and strengthen the resolve and capacity of armed actors to prevent and respond to civilian harm.**

Second, our new theory of change sets out an ambitious five-year goal: bringing about a **significant reduction in conflict-related civilian harm.**

We will achieve this aim by expanding our work with four key stakeholders:

Communities: We will support conflict-affected communities in their quest to achieve protection, based on a deep understanding of the varied protection needs of civilian men and women, girls and boys, and other vulnerable groups;

Multinational bodies and coalitions: We will press multinational bodies and coalitions to prioritize and accelerate action on the protection of civilians, while cultivating a more diverse array of champions to push back against efforts to weaken global protection norms and practices; and

Governments and armed actors: We will build the will and capacity of governments and a range of armed actors to prevent harm to civilians and take responsibility for the harm they cause;

Civil society: We will spearhead and join civil society campaigns to convince governments and armed actors to fulfill their obligations and enact reforms that will result in stronger protections for civilians.

Third, to confront evolving threats against civilians, we will focus on three thematic priorities:



Addressing the devastating human toll of urban warfare



Prioritizing protection in **security force assistance and partnerships**



Developing **new tools and approaches** to assess and respond to civilian harm

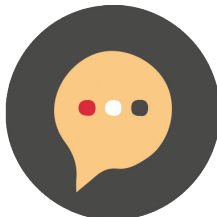
Finally, we will reach more conflict-affected civilians in more geographies by adopting a **“hybrid” business model** and investing in essential tools and capabilities, such as:



Research and analysis



Monitoring, evaluation, and learning



Strategic communications



Staff development

With this Strategic Plan, CIVIC will advance our vision of a world in which no civilian is harmed in conflict.



During the next five years, conflict is expected to become more frequent, brutal, protracted, and fragmented due to a number of overlapping trends in warfare.

TRENDS IN WARFARE



GREAT POWER CONFLICT

Major powers are gearing up for conflict with peers or near-peers against a backdrop of intensified global competition. Though direct, large-scale, kinetic war between major powers over the next five years is unlikely, there is a risk of miscalculation and widespread harm to civilians as militaries mobilize for scenarios in which speed and lethality are emphasized. This risk is amplified by these countries' misplaced conviction that precision-guided munitions and the development of lethal autonomous weapons will give them overwhelming military advantage without elevating the risk to civilians.



PROXY WARFARE

Traditional and rising powers are increasingly relying on proxies and local forces to gain political, economic, or security advantage without putting their own soldiers in jeopardy. Proxy forces often operate under the radar and without the same constraints and oversight as conventional forces, resulting in harm to civilians for which there is no acknowledgment or accountability. At the same time, this practice threatens to put arms and capabilities into the hands of partners that are not willing or able to protect civilians.



HYBRID WARFARE

Hybrid warfare -- combining "traditional" kinetic operations, information warfare, and cyber warfare -- is exposing civilians to a variety of new hardships. In addition to physical violence, civilians are subjected to psychological harm and social fracturing, as they are misled by information meant to stoke divisions and exacerbate existing grievances. Given the vulnerability of essential civilian infrastructure like hospitals, water and sanitation systems, and electricity grids to cyber-attacks, hybrid warfare also carries the risk of long-term suffering for civilian populations.



URBAN WARFARE

Conflict has been moving to populated areas at a frightening pace. In cities, civilians account for 90 percent of casualties during war. This is largely due to armed non-state actors' attempts to find cover amongst civilian populations, and militaries' disproportionate use of force to suppress armed groups and the communities that are perceived to support them. Moreover, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas often causes long-lasting damage to essential services, with enduring impacts on civilians' health, safety, and well-being. Yet, most security forces are not trained or equipped to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in urban battles.



INTERNAL CONFLICT

In the next five years, civil wars are likely to remain the most prominent form of conflict. The failure of states and presence of vast ungoverned spaces have run parallel with the rise of armed non-state actors seeking to exploit chaos. When conflict erupts in these conditions, heavy-handed security responses by state forces and brutal tactics deployed by armed non-state actors result in a vicious cycle of violence against civilians.



POLITICAL AND CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Criminal and gang activity outside of war zones accounts for an astounding number of violent deaths each year. Overly militarized approaches to countering criminal behavior and excessive use of force in responding to peaceful protests, health crises such as COVID-19, and other forms of disorder magnify the threats civilians face. As security forces are tapped to perform functions for which they are improperly equipped and poorly trained, harm against civilians is likely to increase.

THE IMPACT ON VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

While warfare trends affect all civilians, particularly vulnerable populations will continue to experience disproportionate impacts.

Women and girls

Women and girls are the primary victims of conflict-related sexual violence, a risk further exacerbated in situations of forced displacement. In most contexts, survivors of sexual violence, widows, and female-headed households face stigma associated with their experiences, often resulting in alienation from their families and communities.

Children

In 2018, more than 12,000 children were killed or maimed in conflict, the highest number ever recorded by the United Nations. Children suffer death and injury as a result of direct attacks as well as recruitment and use as child soldiers. Tragically, in conflict settings, children experience extreme forms of abuse and trauma, including sexual violence, trafficking, and displacement.

Older persons

Due to mobility difficulties, health conditions, and disabilities, the elderly often face obstacles fleeing situations of violence or accessing critical, life-saving assistance and services. Older persons also face heightened risks of human rights abuses, particularly when they are abandoned by family or caregivers and forced to fend for themselves.

Persons with disabilities

CIVIC's research has shown that persons with disabilities do not have the same access to protection strategies, like fleeing, as those who are fully mobile. They are often left behind by the caregivers they rely on, making it harder to access food and other essentials. In addition, lack of access to healthcare during conflict can result in delayed rehabilitation, illness, injury, or death for persons with disabilities.

Members of the LGBTQ community

The violence and discrimination perpetrated against LGBTQ persons worldwide is aggravated during armed conflict. LGBTQ people are frequently victims of sexual violence, torture, and targeted killings at the hands of armed actors.

Indigenous people and ethnic and religious minorities

Indigenous people and ethnic and religious minorities are frequently subject to attacks and atrocities during war and other situations of violence. In some cases, ethnic cleansing may be the objective of a party to the conflict; in others, racist, nativist, or nationalist groups may take advantage of violence and insecurity to target indigenous groups and ethnic and religious minorities.

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UNAMID Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran



WHO WE ARE

Our History

CIVIC has been a vital and unique player in the Protection of Civilians movement for almost two decades. We emerged in 2003 when a young activist and humanitarian named Marla Ruzicka recognized that civilians were being injured and killed in large numbers by US combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan -- without any formal acknowledgement of their suffering. Marla resolved to give voice to each and every civilian harmed and obtain amends for their deaths, injuries, and losses of homes and livelihoods. Undaunted by the powerful interests arrayed against her, Marla worked with members of Congress to create the first-ever US-funded programs dedicated to rebuilding the lives of civilians harmed in US combat operations. Just two years after she founded CIVIC, Marla was tragically killed by a suicide bomb in Baghdad while advocating for civilian war victims.

Honoring Marla's legacy, CIVIC has kept an unflinching focus on the protection of civilians in conflict. Today, CIVIC has a presence in conflict zones and key capitals throughout the world where it collaborates with civilians to bring their protection concerns directly to those in power, engages with armed actors to reduce the harm they cause to civilian populations, and advises governments and multinational bodies on how to make life-saving and lasting policy changes.

Our New Mission and Vision

CIVIC envisions a world in which no civilian is harmed in conflict. We support communities affected by conflict in their quest for protection and strengthen the resolve and capacity of armed actors to prevent and respond to civilian harm.

Our Beliefs

- Civilians are not “collateral damage” and civilian harm is not an unavoidable consequence of conflict -- civilian harm can and must be prevented.
- Civilians are not merely victims of conflict but have agency and influence in ensuring that their protection needs are met.
- Civilians experience conflict differently based on several aspects of their identities, including gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ethnicity, and language and therefore have different protection needs.
- Armed actors are responsible and must be held accountable for preventing and addressing civilian harm.
- Direct engagement with armed actors and civilians is necessary to significantly reduce harm and improve protection outcomes for conflict-affected communities.
- Working collaboratively with a wide range of partners and in coalitions is critical to accelerating global action on the protection of civilians and reducing public tolerance for civilian harm.

THE POWER OF WOMEN ACTIVISTS

When establishing Community Protection Groups in conflict zones, CIVIC regularly emphasizes the importance of including women as members of the group to raise and address issues that specifically affect women.

Massuda, a women's rights activist, lives in an area of Afghanistan which is largely controlled by the Taliban. She is Deputy Chief of the District Women Council, a space for women to get together and raise issues they face, including lack of access to education, poor healthcare, and sexual abuse. Knowing the importance of this space for women in her community, Massuda was devastated when the Taliban warned them to stop conducting all gatherings, claiming that they were “against Islamic Law”.

Massuda raised the issue with the local Community Protection Group, of which she was also a member, and asked for assistance in connecting with the Taliban. The Group helped to mobilize respected elders and elite Islamic scholars, who were able to make these connections. Accompanied by community elders to ensure her safety, Massuda personally met with the local Taliban commander and, after a long and heated meeting, convinced him that the workings of the Women Council are in alignment with Islamic law and that women should be able to go to other women to discuss family- or women-related problems. Shortly thereafter, the Women Council resumed its important work.

OUR THREE PILLARS OF PROTECTION



PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Protection of Civilians (POC) is the overarching goal of CIVIC, and includes all efforts to protect civilians from conflict-related harm. CIVIC currently has three main mechanisms for achieving POC: Civilian Harm Mitigation, Community Based Protection, and Protection of Civilians from Other Actors.

COMMUNITY BASED PROTECTION

Community Based Protection (CBP) recognizes that civilians are agents of their own protection, and uses engagement with communities to strengthen their resilience against conflict-related harm.



CIVILIAN HARM MITIGATION

Civilian Harm Mitigation (CHM) includes all measures taken by armed actors to prevent, minimize, and address civilian harm resulting from their own presence, activities, and operations.



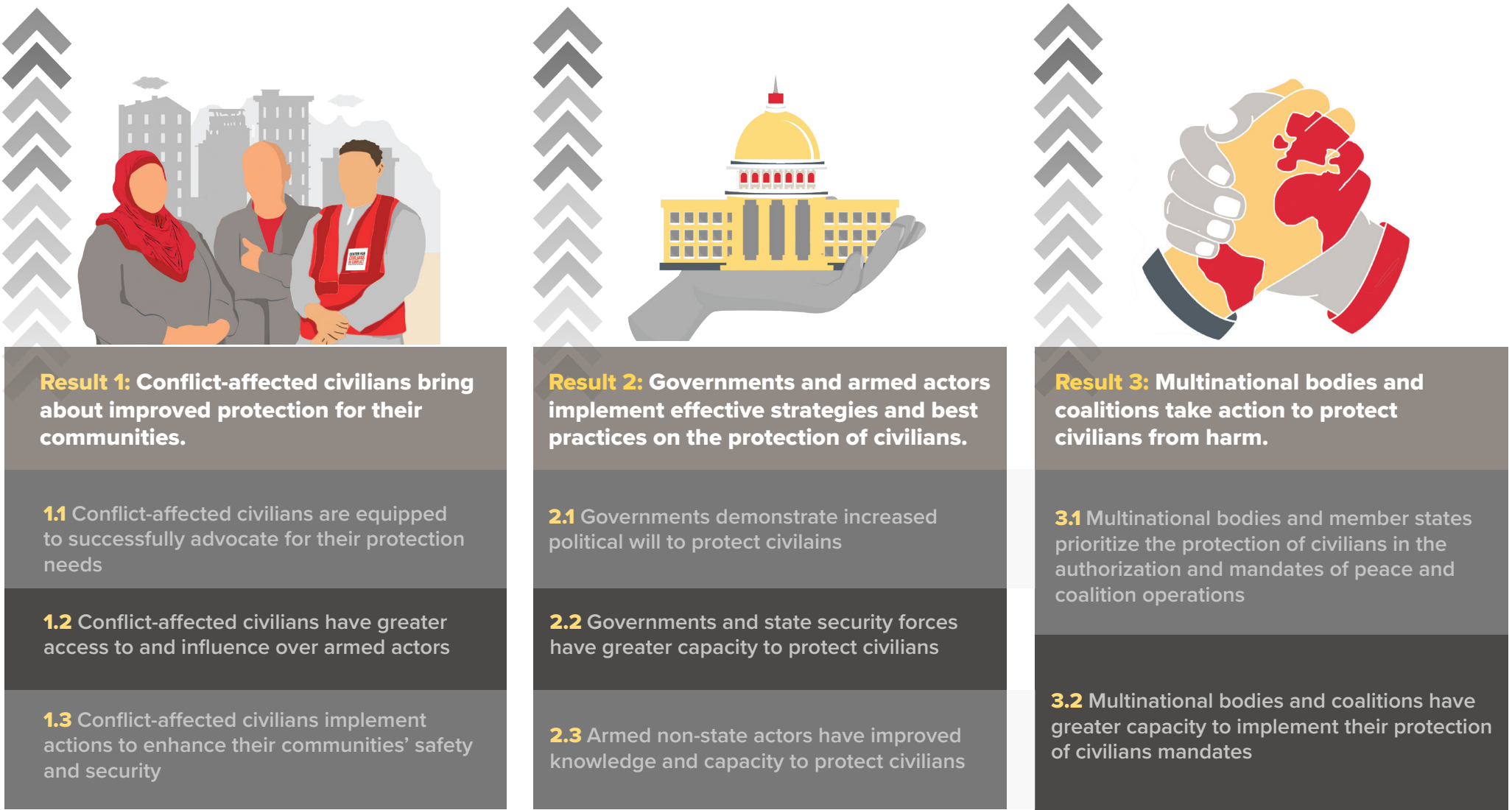
PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS FROM OTHER ACTORS

Protection of Civilians from Other Actors (POCFOA) are actions aimed at preventing or responding to threats of physical violence against civilians posed by other actors, including armed non-state actors or a government.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

IMPACT: CIVILIANS EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN CONFLICT-RELATED HARM



Cross-cutting Result: Civil society exerts greater pressure on governments and armed actors to protect civilians and take responsibility for the harm they cause.

OUR GOAL: A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN CIVILIAN HARM

Civilians endure physical, psycho-social, and economic suffering during armed conflict. Through a theory of change that is civilian-centric and results-oriented, CIVIC's work over the next five years will contribute to a **significant reduction in conflict-related civilian harm**.

Result 1: Conflict-affected civilians bring about improved protection for their communities



CIVIC has witnessed how civilians in conflict, when provided with the right tools and support, can become powerful agents of their own protection, obtaining concessions from armed actors and achieving concrete protection results.

For instance, in Nigeria, women in CIVIC-supported community protection groups convinced the military to escort community members while farming and collecting firewood; as a result, over 3,500 civilians

were protected from kidnappings, violence, and death at the hands of armed opposition groups. In Afghanistan, a similar committee successfully negotiated with a local Taliban commander to halt the planting of improvised explosive devices along public roads frequently traveled by civilians. In Ukraine, civilians convinced the military to relocate artillery away from civilian homes and essential infrastructure, preventing them from inadvertently being struck by opposing forces.

Using its novel approach to community based protection, CIVIC will ensure that civilians have the knowledge, skills, and access to effectively advocate for their protection needs with the range of armed actors operating in their communities. We will also support concrete protection initiatives, like establishing early warning mechanisms or evacuation plans for communities' most vulnerable members. To ensure the sustainability of these efforts, CIVIC will build the capacity of community protection groups, include marginalized groups in all community based protection initiatives, and introduce low-technology tools to help conflict-affected civilians better safeguard their communities.

FOSTERING COURAGE & AGENCY

In Nigeria, Modu Gana, an elderly man, resides in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Maiduguri after being forced to flee his community in Borno state as a result of the ongoing conflict. In the camp, he is neighbors with a member of the CIVIC-supported Community Protection Group, which regularly holds meetings in the camp. A common message raised during the meetings he attended was the need to open communication channels between civilians and the security forces so that civilians may feel comfortable reporting their security needs or security threats directly to the military.

One fateful day, Modu was transporting a large group of civilians in his vehicle when he came to a checkpoint manned by members of an armed opposition group. They ordered him out of the vehicle and stole it, kidnapping 14 other passengers with it. They chose to spare Modu because of his age.

As Modu started to make his way home by foot, he noticed a group of soldiers, waved his hands and shouted until he was able to attract their attention and explain the situation. The military took his information and promised to look into the incident. Three days later, Modu received a call from the military asking him to meet at one of the brigades. Upon arrival he saw his vehicle waiting for him and was informed that all of the 14 passengers were rescued as a result of his efforts.

Modu noted he would not have had the boldness to approach the military in the past, but attending the Community Protection Group meetings gave him the idea and the courage to seek help from the military and notify them of the incident.

Result 2: Governments and armed actors implement effective strategies and best practices on the protection of civilians



Governments have an interest and obligation to prevent and respond to harm against civilians. Yet, their forces -- and those they partner with -- often lack the willingness and capacity to do so. Over time, CIVIC has seen that, when presented with the legal, ethical, and strategic imperatives to protect civilians, governments will often agree to adopt the policies, tools, and techniques that are required to mitigate and address harm to civilians.

For example, after a decade of advocacy by CIVIC and others, the United States agreed to adopt a Department of Defense-wide policy on the protection

of civilians, provide more detailed reporting on civilian casualties, and appropriate \$12 million to enhance the capacity of US security partners to mitigate civilian harm. With CIVIC's mentoring, the Afghan, Nigerian, and Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Governments have instituted extensive training programs on the protection of civilians in military academies and on the frontlines. On average, 90 percent of soldiers trained reported a greater appreciation and understanding of how to prevent and address harm to civilians.

CIVIC will intensify its efforts to build the capacity of governments and armed actors so they can institutionalize protection policies and practices and bring them to scale. While maintaining its focus on militaries, CIVIC will ramp up its engagement with armed non-state actors, law enforcement units that are equipped and act like militaries, special operations units, and private military and security companies -- as well as the external powers that influence them. Our education and training initiatives with these actors will be reinforced by the creation and use of new modules, experiential scenarios and vignettes, and interactive applications -- all designed to strengthen their protection reflexes.

“I’ve served in the army for over 27 years. We’ve never been given instructions to protect civilians. (CIVIC’s) training made me feel guilty for all those operations I took part in where we didn’t account for civilians. We will make sure to pass on this knowledge to our soldiers.”

Director of Training at Brigade 107, Marib, Yemen

Result 3: Multinational bodies and coalitions take action to protect civilians from harm



Multinational bodies and member states must take bold and urgent steps to close the gap between their rhetoric and behavior regarding the protection of civilians. While most United Nations peacekeeping missions are mandated to protect civilians, they are not given the necessary resources -- like gender advisors, protection of civilians specialists, or air assets -- to implement this mandate effectively. Likewise, when multinational forces and coalitions are authorized, deployed troops often have poor guidance and insufficient capacity to protect civilians.

With appropriate support, change is possible. CIVIC worked with the African Union Mission to Somalia and the regional G5 Sahel Joint Force to establish specialized capabilities to track, assess, and respond to civilian harm. With these capabilities, forces have the power to detect patterns of harm; make changes to policy, doctrine, and practice to avert civilian casualties in future campaigns; and provide amends to civilians harmed as a result of their presence, activities, and operations.

Going forward, CIVIC will continue to advocate for prioritizing the protection of civilians in the authorization of peacekeeping and other multinational operations and ensure that these missions have the resources, personnel, assets, and other capabilities required to implement their protection of civilians mandates. Furthermore, in our engagement with multinational bodies, we will cultivate new champions in the Global South to counter the narrative that civilian protection is merely a Western concept. By building a broader constituency for the protection of civilians, CIVIC will help defend against efforts to weaken global norms and practices.

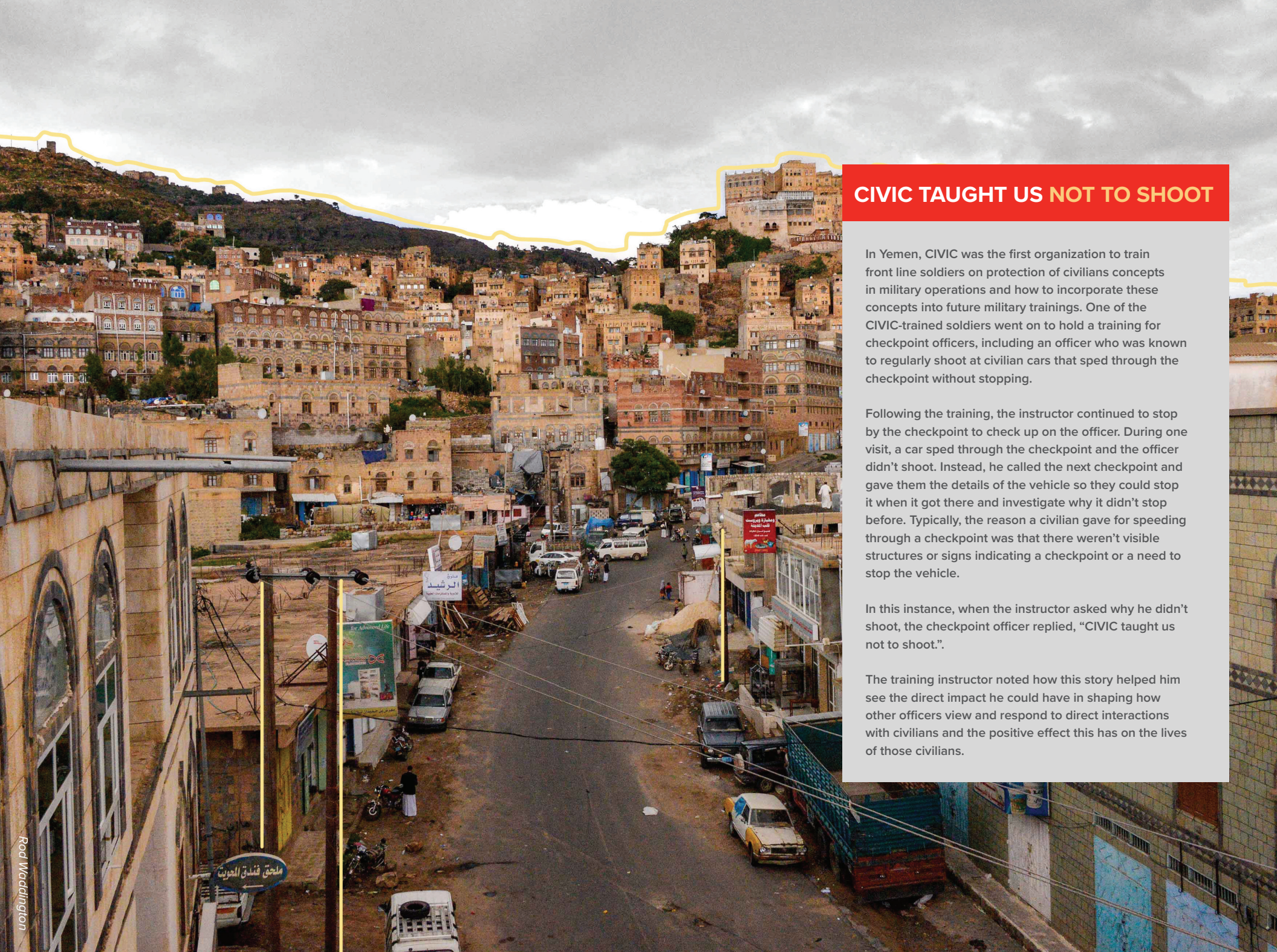
Cross-cutting Result: Civil society exerts greater pressure on governments and armed actors to protect civilians

Our times have been aptly characterized as “the age of impunity.” After witnessing persistent violations in South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere, concerns have been raised about the “erosion of International Humanitarian Law” and a growing indifference to the plight of conflict-affected populations.

At CIVIC, we know that global and collective advocacy can be effective at countering these trends. In response to escalating violence against civilians in the Central African Republic in 2017, CIVIC successfully mobilized a vast coalition to advocate for

an increase in peacekeeping troops. The UN Security Council ultimately approved 900 additional peacekeepers to stem the violence, and launched a special investigation to strengthen the mission’s ability to protect civilians. Likewise, CIVIC partnered with a number of experts and civil society organizations to encourage NATO to enact a comprehensive policy on the protection of civilians. This policy, adopted in 2016, committed to stronger safeguards to prevent civilian casualties and greater transparency and accountability for civilian harm caused by NATO forces.

We will spearhead and join local, national, and international civil society campaigns to encourage governments and armed actors to fulfill their obligations to protect civilians, increase transparency around civilian casualty incidents, and provide timely and meaningful assistance to repair the harm they cause. We will also develop and widely share a framework for civil society to evaluate governments’ and armed actors’ performance in preventing and responding to civilian harm as the basis for advocacy for reforms that will result in stronger protections for civilians.



CIVIC TAUGHT US NOT TO SHOOT

In Yemen, CIVIC was the first organization to train front line soldiers on protection of civilians concepts in military operations and how to incorporate these concepts into future military trainings. One of the CIVIC-trained soldiers went on to hold a training for checkpoint officers, including an officer who was known to regularly shoot at civilian cars that sped through the checkpoint without stopping.

Following the training, the instructor continued to stop by the checkpoint to check up on the officer. During one visit, a car sped through the checkpoint and the officer didn't shoot. Instead, he called the next checkpoint and gave them the details of the vehicle so they could stop it when it got there and investigate why it didn't stop before. Typically, the reason a civilian gave for speeding through a checkpoint was that there weren't visible structures or signs indicating a checkpoint or a need to stop the vehicle.

In this instance, when the instructor asked why he didn't shoot, the checkpoint officer replied, "CIVIC taught us not to shoot."

The training instructor noted how this story helped him see the direct impact he could have in shaping how other officers view and respond to direct interactions with civilians and the positive effect this has on the lives of those civilians.

OUR THREE THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Based on our analysis of trends in warfare, the threats they pose to civilians, and our core competencies, CIVIC will contribute its expertise and develop innovative tools and approaches in three thematic areas.



Addressing the devastating human toll of urban warfare

CIVIC will prioritize preventing and mitigating civilian harm in urban warfare. To address the specific risks of urban combat, we will play a leading role in international efforts to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; provide specialized training and technical assistance to armed forces to enhance their preparedness to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in urban battles; and increase collaboration between armed actors and humanitarians to plan for, mitigate, and respond to the devastating effects of urban warfare on civilians.



Prioritizing protection in security force assistance and partnerships

CIVIC will call global attention to the unique threats inherent in security partnerships and security sector assistance when recipient forces are not committed to or capable of protecting civilians. Over the next five years, we will seek to convince security assistance providers -- especially the United States and European countries -- to undertake robust risk assessments prior to entering security partnerships, incorporate mitigation measures in their security sector assistance activities, and meaningfully consult with civilians who are most impacted by the provision of assistance to local forces.



Developing new tools and approaches to assess and respond to civilian harm

Using simulations, tabletop exercises, field-based research, and partnerships with civil society, CIVIC will map patterns of harm across operational theaters; understand civilians' perspectives and expectations regarding post-harm assistance; and identify a range of effective and equitable response mechanisms grounded in legal, strategic, religious, and cultural obligations and practices. CIVIC will use this learning to advocate for comprehensive tracking, analysis, and acknowledgement of civilian harm, including the provision of individual and community-wide assistance.

OUR NEW MODEL: REACHING MORE CIVILIANS IN MORE GEOGRAPHIES

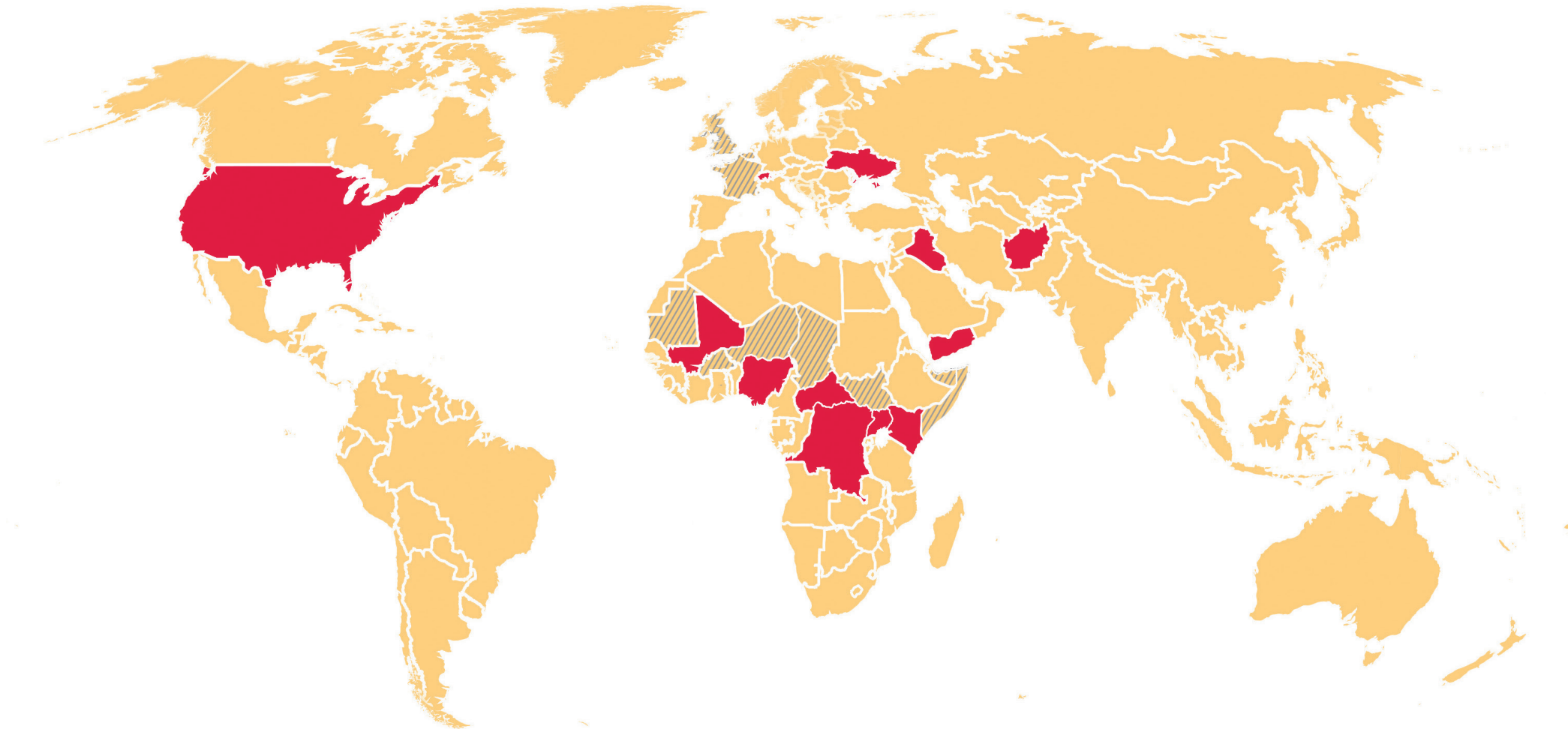
CIVIC is adopting a “hybrid” business model that will allow us to reach more conflict-affected civilians in more environments. In conflict countries where there is fertile ground to achieve major protection breakthroughs and engage with influential actors at multiple levels, CIVIC will undertake comprehensive, in-depth country programs. Where there are time-bound needs and opportunities, we will implement “light touch” and “on-demand” programming, focusing on research, advocacy, and technical assistance. This diversified approach to programming will enable CIVIC to respond to the increasing need and demand for its work around the globe.

CIVIC will maintain its focus on Africa and the Middle East and deepen our advocacy with European governments and institutions, NATO, United Nations bodies and Member States, and the United States. At the same time, we will conduct research and explore opportunities for light touch interventions in Latin America, Asia, and North Africa.

To keep our focus and ensure sustainability, we will put in place exit strategies at the outset of all our interventions. CIVIC will transition to supporting international, national, and local actors to institutionalize best practices and bring them to scale once our concepts have sufficient traction and committed champions.

Hybrid Business Model Definitions				
In-depth Programs:	Light-touch Programs:	On Demand Programs:	Advocacy Programs:	
Full country presence and implementation across multiple themes	Limited presence in-country, primarily focused on research, advocacy, or technical assistance	Flexible capacity within a regional or thematic program team to support ad hoc activities in presence or non-presence countries	Small, steady presence based on the location of the target of advocacy and engagement	

- On the ground presence
- Programmatic engagement



UPGRADING OUR TOOLS AND CAPABILITIES

Achieving the goals outlined in this strategy will require CIVIC to rely on the relationships it has forged with conflict-affected communities and armed actors, leverage the credibility and expertise it has gained as a pioneer in the protection of civilians, and scale up proven strategies and best practices. To do this effectively, CIVIC must invest in the following capabilities:



Research and Analysis

CIVIC will boost its ability to continuously track and assess threats to civilians, drivers of conflict, and the interests and motivations of key actors at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Targeted research and improved analysis will enable CIVIC to identify and respond to the unique protection issues facing marginalized civilians -- including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities -- and directly inform our advocacy efforts.



Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

CIVIC will strengthen its capacity to ensure that programs are achieving their intended protection outcomes, that necessary adjustments are implemented in a timely fashion, and that lessons are captured and shared throughout the organization.



Strategic Communications

CIVIC will elevate its global profile and reach, and galvanize international attention to the plight of conflict-affected civilians, through targeted advocacy and strategic communications campaigns. An audience-friendly website, engaging and credible social media content, frequent and policy-relevant analysis, and an active presence in multinational fora will ensure that civilians' voices are heard and acted upon by those in power.



Staff Development

CIVIC is dedicated to employing a diverse staff, nurturing a culture of inclusion and well-being, and maintaining a structure that empowers staff at all levels. CIVIC's greatest asset is its widely respected staff, who predominantly hail from conflict-affected countries and communities. As such, CIVIC will place a premium on retaining its expert personnel by providing opportunities for them to advance within the organization and build their stature as leaders in the protection of civilians field.



Credit: CIVIC Photo/Yevhenia Korolko

OUR UNIQUE VALUE

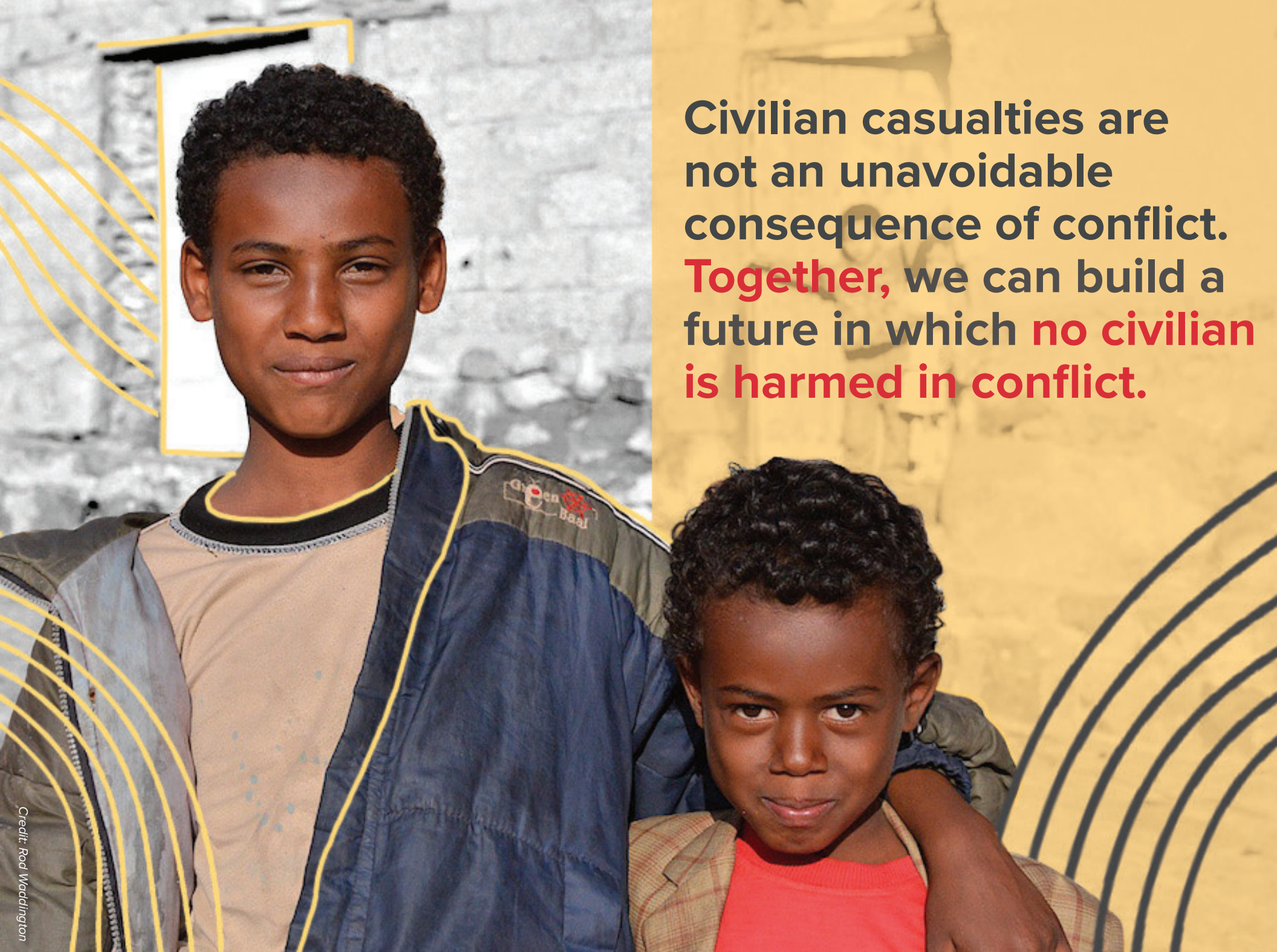
CIVIC's strength is its proven approach and record of improving protection outcomes for civilians by working directly with conflict-affected communities and armed actors.



- Our nearly 20 years of experience demonstrates that civilian harm can be prevented, even in highly volatile conflict environments and with intransigent governments and armed forces.
- Our singular focus on protecting civilians from conflict-related harm and obtaining amends for this harm fills an important gap in the humanitarian and human rights landscape.
- Our field staff enjoy unparalleled access to and influence with armed actors and are effective in closing the gap between conflict-affected communities, armed actors, and political leadership to ensure civilians' protection needs are met.
- Our subject-matter experts are widely respected leaders with deep technical experience, who are frequently called upon to provide training and advice to armed actors, policymakers, and other key influencers.
- Our team is quick to adapt and offer pragmatic solutions to protection challenges, with a keen understanding of security forces' knowledge and capacity gaps and operational realities.
- Our organization effectively combines advocacy, research, and innovation at a global and regional level with applied programming and experimentation in different conflict contexts to affect concrete improvements in civilians' lives.

This Strategy is the result of more than 100 consultations with external stakeholders and beneficiaries from around the world; invaluable contributions from staff members representing all locations, levels, and functions of the organization; two internal retreats; and in-depth discussions with our donors and Board of Directors. CIVIC now has a bold and ambitious plan for the future. **With renewed investment and partnership, we can make this vision a reality for the millions of civilians trapped in conflict.**





Civilian casualties are not an unavoidable consequence of conflict. **Together**, we can build a future in which **no civilian is harmed in conflict.**

