The plight of civilians trapped in war is one of the greatest challenges of our times. All agree that providing relief alone is insufficient. The international response must equally focus on measures to provide greater protection to civilians.

But what measures? Short of armed peacekeeping, one option is to deploy unarmed international staff - human rights monitors, ceasefire observers, protection staff with humanitarian agencies - who through their presence will deter abuses.

To be effective, however, those deployed must pursue proactive strategies to deter abuse, encourage local actors and support reform efforts.

This manual describes these strategies. It is the first comprehensive study of these issues, based on hundreds of interviews and an analysis of 9 separate missions, covering a range of institutional mandates.
Field strategies for civilian protection

Liam Mahony
This book is dedicated to all those who are struggling for their lives, their dignity and the integrity of their families and communities in situations of widespread violence and abuse. It is they who take the greatest risks and invariably find the most creative and durable solutions for confronting these and transforming the situation for continuing peace and reunification.

Such challenges:

and respect their courage and resilience in the face of violence and abuse. It is they who are entitled to the justice and dignity that others have taken for granted.

and guarantees that the most severe and durable

family and community in situations of widespread violence and abuse. It is they who are entitled to the justice and dignity that others have taken for granted.

This book is dedicated to all those who are striving through their experience of conflict and the alleviation of its effects dedicated to the promotion of humanitarian principles.

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PART I  BEING THERE AND BEING STRATEGIC

2  When field presence protects

3  Information, analysis and strategy building

PART II  FIVE STRATEGIES OF EFFECTIVE PRESENCE

4  Sustained multi-level diplomacy

5  Conscious visibility

6  Active encouragement and empowerment

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Preface and acknowledgements

About the author
The plight of civilians trapped in war and misery stands as one of the greatest challenges of our times. Increasingly, all those engaged in efforts to address this situation recognise that providing material assistance alone is insufficient and that, even as wars continue, measures to provide greater protection to civilians are required.

But what measures? Faced with ongoing abuses of human rights and looming or actual humanitarian crises, advocates and the media demand that something must be done. Short of armed peacekeeping or intervention, never an easy and not necessarily a wise choice, one option is to deploy unarmed international staff, under a variety of institutional mandates, in the belief that their presence will offer some protection against abuse. Several such deployments have occurred in the past two decades, though with mixed results.

Until now, however, there has been no systematic study of the techniques and strategies that these field missions can employ to better the odds to make a difference on the ground and to protect civilian life and property. In launching the project that led to this publication, we wanted to record and analyse this experience, and then present the concepts underlying it so that others can benefit.

In launching the project that led to this publication, we wanted to put flesh on the bones of a theory of field-based protection derived from the experience of the most effective field workers engaged in civilian protection. The model we offer — proactive presence — features the skills and tactics that international field personnel can use to deter attacks on civilians, to encourage and support local communities in their own efforts to ensure security, and to influence governments and authorities to institute and sustain reforms. It is a model that we offer in the hope that those engaged in field missions can learn from its lessons and improve their effectiveness.
A model based on tapping into the synergies between a strategic local presence, well-informed international pressure and indigenous reform movements.

Over 250 interviews were undertaken during research for this book, and they provide most of our information here. Those interviewed include over 100 international field workers with experience in dozens of conflicts, representatives of governments and armed groups in three field situations, and members of civil-society organisations and communities in many countries. We are especially grateful to those civil-society respondents in Colombia, Sri Lanka and Darfur, where we conducted field studies, for taking risks to meet and share their views with us.

In the HD Centre, we aim to continue to offer to improve the global response to armed conflict.

Protection for Civilians in Armed Conflict, which provides humanitarian and international pressure, is a key area of our concern. It is vital that authorities and armed groups in conflict situations respect and honour the laws of war and human rights law, and that humanitarian organisations and international pressure groups support them in doing so.

The HD Centre aims to contribute to efforts to improve the global response to armed conflict. A key area of our concern is the protection of civilians, whether through the direct means of facilitating and encouraging civilian participation in decisions and power structures or indirectly through the provision of guarantees of protection to those who cannot or do not participate directly.

The HD Centre provides strategic advice and practical guidance on a range of issues.

Humanitarian Negotiation: A Handbook for Securing Access, Assistance and Protection for Civilians in Armed Conflict, which provides humanitarian field personnel with an understanding of the basics of good negotiation skills, better equipping them to defend and win acceptance of humanitarian and human rights principles in the field.

Proactive Presence
Protection. An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies, which we co-authored with Oxfam. This book describes the relation of protection to the traditional assistance activities of humanitarian workers, and gives practical advice on enhancing the former without jeopardising the latter.

The present book reaches out to an even wider audience, but with a more specialist message – looking explicitly at those mandated to ensure the protection of civilians and human rights on the ground. We will publish later this year a book exploring the ideologies held by those who prey on civilians, and who appear to disregard basic humanitarian principles.

If our hope that this manual and all our work in this area will assist those endeavouring to ensure that civilians and human rights on the ground are protected, we will publish later this year a book exploring the ideologies held by those who prey on civilians, and who appear to disregard basic humanitarian principles.

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David Petrasek
Policy Director
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
About this manual: audience and approach

The objective of this manual...
Target audience: diverse institutions with the common objective of protection. This manual should be useful to widely diverse international deployments, including security/ceasefire missions, humanitarian missions, human-rights monitoring missions, electoral monitoring missions and complex UN peacekeeping presences, all of which carry out unarmed protection. We use broad and inclusive concepts and terminology, with the objective of rising above any institutionally specific jargon and presenting a general analysis of protection strategies for all. Each organisation will need to adapt these lessons to its own institutional environment and mission. Our objective is to help not only the institutions that send field missions into conflict zones but also the individual members of staff working in the field.

The manual argues that a wide variety of institutions present in conflict zones can and should implement protection strategies in the field (Figure 1.1). Some have question this broad approach, expressing concerns that the complexity and difficulty of protection work should not be underestimated, that professional standards cannot simply be adopted, and that encouraging organisations to do protection work without sufficient commitment, training or professional standards can and should implement protection strategies in the field (Figure 1.1). Some have expressed concern that the field is not equipped to handle the complexities of protection work.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in recent years have also made explicit protection commitments. Other institutions, such as the ICRC, UNHCR, OCHA and UNAMI, have long-standing commitments to protection. However, the implementation of all of these commitments in the field is not uniform, and one still hears, far too often, that ‘protection is someone else’s job’. This manual argues that a wide variety of institutions present in conflict zones can and should implement protection strategies in the field (Figure 1.1). Some have expressed concern that the complexity and difficulty of protection work should not be underestimated, that professional standards cannot simply be adopted, and that encouraging organisations to do protection work without sufficient commitment, training or professional standards can and should implement protection strategies in the field (Figure 1.1). Some have expressed concern that the field is not equipped to handle the complexities of protection work.
The credibility of those who do it well. This concern is reasonable, which is why this manual aims to promote not only a greater quantity of field presence, but also a higher quality and effectiveness of protection work on the ground.

The few institutions that may be currently developing a rigorous approach to protection have insufficient capacity to meet the needs of civilians. A great deal more is needed. The challenge we face is to learn from past experience, and to help each institution capable of contributing substantially to protection strategies to develop the personnel, training, management and strategic resources both to offer more protection and do it well. No attempt can be perfect, but fear of imperfection is not sufficient reason not to try.

Human-rights monitoring missions

Human-rights missions, whether stand-alone missions of the OHCHR or components of a peacekeeping operation, have a clear mandate for protection. There is an obvious overlap between ‘protecting civilians’ and ‘protecting human rights’. The practical activities of these missions, however, have sometimes been too focused on the collection of data on abuses and the production of reports, activities also emphasised in these missions’ training processes. This manual calls for a more comprehensive toolbox, and demonstrates how flexible human-rights missions have used their presence more creatively to achieve protection goals.

Complex peace operations

In integrated missions led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) or Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the activities of human-rights monitors, political officers and humanitarian, civilian police and military components can all contribute to the protection strategies outlined here. These missions tend to bring substantial political weight, allowing field officers to project protective impact much more effectively. Although this study has not focused on armed missions of the United Nations (UN) or coalition-led operations, it has been made clear that the same principles apply. Field officers and humanitarian monitors can all help protect civilians, whether by monitoring, advising or accompanying them in their work.

Ceasefire monitoring missions

Ceasefire missions sometimes have fairly limited mandates. Nevertheless, the inescapable connection between attacks on civilians and the re-escalation of hostilities usually creates a built-in link between a ceasefire agreement and the need to protect civilians. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission is a case in point: it has a classic role of ceasefire monitoring, but this falls within a broader agreement that also articulates broad protection concerns for civilians, opening the door to an active protection role for the mission. Similarly, the Kosovo Verification Mission was able to stretch its ‘ceasefire’ mandate to allow for substantial intervention on behalf of civilians.

Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES

This page contains a section on the introduction of the manual, discussing the credibility of protection work and the need for a comprehensive approach to achieve better protection. The text also mentions the role of human-rights monitoring missions in protecting civilians. It highlights the importance of learning from past experience and developing the necessary resources to offer protection effectively.

The manual aims to promote not only a greater quantity of field presence, but also a higher quality and effectiveness of protection work on the ground. The challenge is to help each institution capable of contributing substantially to protection strategies to develop the personnel, training, management, and strategic resources both to offer more protection and do it well.

The text emphasizes the overlap between protecting civilians and protecting human rights, highlighting how human-rights missions have often focused too much on data collection and report production, rather than using their presence more creatively to achieve protection goals.

Complex peace operations are discussed, with a focus on the role of human-rights monitors, political officers, and humanitarian, civilian police, and military components in contributing to protection strategies. These missions tend to bring substantial political weight, allowing field officers to project protective impact effectively. The text notes that this study has not focused on armed missions of the United Nations or coalition-led operations, but it is clear that the same principles apply.

Ceasefire monitoring missions are also mentioned, with a focus on the inescapable connection between attacks on civilians and the re-escalation of hostilities. The text highlights the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and the Kosovo Verification Mission as examples of ceasefires that have been able to extend their mandates to include active protection roles for the missions.

The text concludes with a summary of the manual's focus on introducing the concepts of protection and the need for a comprehensive approach to achieving better protection.
threatened civilians. Although they often focus on military skills in their monitoring and recruitment, these missions should also develop a more diverse set of protection tools to meet their objectives effectively.

Electoral monitoring missions

An electoral monitoring mission might appear to have a straightforward technical function but, when installed in a conflict zone, it takes on a protection role. Insecurity is often a primary motivation demanding electoral monitoring, which usually has an objective of establishing an environment favourable to an effective vote. Thus, for example, the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) in 1999 was an electoral monitoring mission, but the overwhelmingly primary threat to the planned consultation’s success was the lack of civilian security, which Indonesian authorities could not or would not provide. Thus the mission became by default a protection mission. Similarly, other electoral missions have had to play active roles in protection.

Humanitarian field presence

The combined presence in a conflict zone of multiple humanitarian agencies is often far more extensive than that of purely protective missions. Humanitarians are also often present where there are no explicit monitoring or protection missions at all. Humanitarian protection has already been the subject of significant research, consultation, publication and field experience. Each humanitarian agency needs to sustain its protective capacity while still taking advantage of its non-partisanship and access to victims. Most humanitarians in the field do not want to be silent witnesses. They want their presence to protect, even if that is not their primary mandate. Many of those interviewed for this study cited countless examples of direct and indirect protection achieved by these agencies.

A humanitarian agency has particular latitude when it is increasing the protective impact of its own operations and limiting the protection damage of those operations. It can play a demanding advocacy role, insisting to other agencies that their operations be secure and that they take responsibility for actions that place their staff or programs at risk. A humanitarian agency’s security is part of its protective capacity to influence the impact of its own operations and insist that it safely implement its programs to avert protection damage. This manual encourages agencies to combine their missions.

Beyond specific humanitarian programmes, there are a variety of protection problems linked to an assistance mandate, which give an agency a reasonable justification for an active protection role. Agencies will need to decide for themselves how far they can go, taking into account their own capacities and possible risks to their assistance work. The manual encourages them to consider ways to combine their missions and programs to reduce protection damage.

Complementarity and collaboration

A field mission is seldom a stand-alone player. Ideally, in a conflict zone with many international actors present, there will be a multi-sector approach to protection, which involves identifying and coordinating the various protection tools that can be brought to bear. Each agency, programme and individual has its own approach and methods for protection, which can be complementary or conflicting. Coordination and collaboration among all parties is essential to effective protection.

Proactive Presence

The Combined Presence

Humanitarian field presence

Electoral monitoring missions
Each agency includes protection within its mandate, factors protection concerns into each of its operations, and understands how it can contribute to a broader strategy. Institutions with different mandates need to develop their own approaches to protection—some will be direct, with a role of investigation and denunciation, while others will be more subtle, allowing them to contribute in ways that do not jeopardize their other humanitarian mandates. Coordination should help different agencies develop approaches that are complementary rather than either competitive or contradictory.

Even when there are institutions present with explicit mandates to engage in protection advocacy, their capacity to respond is often insufficient. Each UN country team as a whole needs to cooperate to find solutions to joint problems, in collaboration with NGOs and the international community overall. When the scale of humanitarian agencies’ operations increases, their political weight carries with it an obligation of active participation, including collaboration in joint efforts and independent protection advocacy. This includes sharing information, joint analysis and assessment, sharing resources and responsibilities for advocacy, support, and assistance. Building coordination and responsibility for advocacy, support, and assistance across protection operations is essential, in order to develop coordination, accountability, and responsibility for advocacy, support, and assistance across protection operations.

The international legal framework provides a solid foundation for the various protection activities that might be undertaken by field missions. International humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law set clear and reasonably precise rules on what is permissible in terms of the treatment of civilians and non-combatants, including the protection of civilians, the protection of women, and the protection of children. The international legal framework also provides a framework for the exercise of due diligence by humanitarian agencies to ensure that they are not complicit in violations of international law.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction > Being There > Strategies > Challenges

A review of the current state of protection activities reveals that while there are many challenges and obstacles to effective protection, there are also many opportunities for improvement. The international legal framework provides a solid foundation for the various protection activities that might be undertaken by field missions. International humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law set clear and reasonably precise rules on what is permissible in terms of the treatment of civilians and non-combatants, including the protection of civilians, the protection of women, and the protection of children. The international legal framework also provides a framework for the exercise of due diligence by humanitarian agencies to ensure that they are not complicit in violations of international law.

Chapter 1: Introduction

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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In the past, there were considerable doctrinal debates concerning the appropriate circumstances for the application of either IHL or human-rights law, and some sense of contrasting realms of legal protection. Today it is refreshing to see that, after much field experience, most field missions find practical ways to use both sets of legal standards in complementary ways, playing to the strengths of each. This book makes only passing reference to international legal standards, but our starting point is, of course, that international action to protect civilians should be based in law. International law is a source of standards and forms of protection, and it can be an important tool in the construction of credible and legitimate grounds for pressure to change behaviour harmful to civilians. If we do not deal here with law in greater depth, it is because there are numerous other resources in this field to draw on. Further, research for this manual found little to suggest that gaps in the law form obstacles to protection.

Termology used in this manual

The protection of civilians deployed with the objective of using their presence to improve and enhance other things (see, for example, the work of the Security Council and Security Council resolutions) can be spoken of as proactive engagement. The field missions discussed here take many forms, but they have the characteristic of being international actors with the objective of using their presence to improve, among other things, the protection of civilians.

Methodology, terminology and scope

This manual will, for convenience and to the terms, mission, presence, field, and field workers, ‘field personnel’ or ‘field officers’, although we know that in each institution they have different titles. We have chosen this general approach in our terminology in order to appeal to the widest range of institutional audiences. Proactive Presence

6
### Table 1.1: International missions studied and visited during research for this manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution(s)/mission</th>
<th>Dates studied</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| El Salvador   | United Nations (UN)/ ONUSAL (UN Mission to El Salvador) | 1991 pre-ceasefire | Both missions (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC))
|               |                         |               |          |
| Guatemala     | UN/ MINUGUA (UN Mission to Guatemala) | 1994–97 pre-ceasefire | Both missions (UNHCHR (UN Mission to Guatemala) / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) / Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR))
|               |                         |               |          |
| Haiti         | United Nations (UN) | 1993–94 | Established to monitor human-rights abuses under a military coup d'état. |
|               | Organization of American States (OAS)/ MICIVIH (International Civilian Mission in Haiti) | | |
|               |                         |               |          |
|               |                         |               |          |
| East Timor    | UN/ UNAMET (UN Assistance Mission to East Timor) | May–September 1999 | Both missions (UNHCHR / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) |
|               |                         |               |          |
| Colombia      | OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) | 1995–2005 | Both missions (UNHCHR / International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) |

**Field visits**

Field visits to El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Rwanda, Kosovo, East Timor, and Colombia were conducted as part of the research for this manual. Field visits allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the human rights situation and the role of international missions in these contexts.
control, whereas ‘paramilitary’ refers to unofficial armed bodies under state influence or control.

We have chosen to study interventions of a primarily non-military nature—hence the frequent use of ‘unarmed missions’. This phrase implies no judgement regarding the efficacy or importance of armed peacekeeping missions, but rather that we wish to fill a crucial gap in the existing literature. There has been considerable study of armed peacekeeping, but very little has been done to explain the protective impact of unarmed missions. We recognise that there are many cases where the impact of such missions is evident, but very little has been written about the effectiveness of these efforts. The general strategies here are essential to protection efforts for all vulnerable groups. These strategies are designed to address significant obstacles to protection, and are the basis for our conclusions. They inform our advice to decision-makers and actors on maximising the protection of civilians.

The scope and structure of this manual

The manual outlines effective strategies and tactics for maximising the protection of civilians; it addresses significant obstacles to protection, and lays out the institutional and organisational requirements for implementing effective protective missions. The general strategies here are relevant to protection efforts for all vulnerable groups in conflict areas. Therefore, this approach does not provide specific advice tailored to particular vulnerable groups—such as children, internally displaced persons, or refugees. The general strategies here are essential to all protection efforts for all vulnerable groups. The tools here must be adapted to each context, but the fundamental ideas remain the same.

Table 1.1: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institution(s)/mission</th>
<th>Dates studied</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darfur, United Nations</td>
<td>Multi-institutional, UNMIS (UN Mission in Sudan)</td>
<td>2003–05</td>
<td>Multi-institutional presence under 2003 accord, presence established and function ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan, Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Iceland, Finland, Norway,</td>
<td>2002–06</td>
<td>Ceasefire monitoring, monitoring of détente agreement, under 2005 accord, presence established and function ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>UN Mission in Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ceasefire monitoring, monitoring of détente agreement, under 2005 accord, presence established and function ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ceasefire monitoring, monitoring of détente agreement, under 2005 accord, presence established and function ongoing</td>
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<td>Ceasefire monitoring, monitoring of détente agreement, under 2005 accord, presence established and function ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nor does this book attempt to replace other important resources about many of the activities described. Rather, it calls attention to complementary resources, and tries to put each into context. Several resource boxes are included in the text, presenting selected key sources on relevant topics.

The rest of this manual is in three parts. In Part I, Chapter 2 provides an analytical framework explaining the protective impact of field presence and presenting evidence for the sensitivity of governments and armed groups to such presence. Chapter 3 discusses the need to build protection strategies based on thorough processes of information-gathering and analysis.

Part II consists of five chapters on concrete protection strategies that international organisations, NGOs and governments can apply. These are: sustained multi-level diplomacy (Chapter 4), conscious visibility (Chapter 5), active encouragement and empowerment (Chapter 6), bridging and convening mechanisms bringing parties together (Chapter 7) and public advocacy (Chapter 8).

In Part III, on challenges to effective unarmed protection, Chapter 9 looks in detail at the need to avoid negative impacts while carrying out positive protection strategies, including avoiding the risk of reprisals against civilian contacts. Chapter 10 looks at the challenge of mission security. Institutional challenges and the steps necessary to enable this kind of protection are outlined in Chapter 11.

Chapter 12 presents some concluding thoughts, and the book ends with a detailed bibliography and a note on the methodology used in the research process.

A comprehensive and positive approach

This manual has deliberately taken a positive approach. Drawing on a wide range of experience including not only successes but also very serious errors, we have concluded that these tools of proactive presence need more support and development. We are not singling out individuals, missions or institutions to evaluate and judge past experience, but we are acutely interested in learning from all these cases of both positive and negative experience, in order to improve our own experiences and actions. We hope that experience, both success and failure, will contribute to the development of future protection efforts. We believe that these experiences can provide lessons and opportunities for future efforts.

Interview responses, unsurprisingly, included well-founded criticisms of individual and institutional failures, including incompetence, lack of training, dangerous errors, breaches of ethics, political manipulation, political cowardice and much more. These experiences have contributed significantly to the manual, even if we have not dissected them all publicly. Overall, though, we conclude that these failings do not contradict the promise and potential of the protective tools of field presence. In the few cases where we do call attention to specific problematic experiences, it is only with the intention of pointing the way forward.
This positive approach is not naive. We make no claim that unarmed presence will always be enough, or will always be the right choice when civilian lives are threatened. And the specific chapters below on tools and strategies unequivocally argue that presence alone is not enough: it matters what you do with the presence.

This manual is intended to help each mission to make these choices.
WHEN FIELD PRESENCE PROTECTS
how do we stop abuses against civilians? this manual focuses on proactive protection: actions and strategies that deter or dissuade against abuses, persuade abusers to behave differently, strengthen or expand civilian capacity for self-protection, and foster institutional reform. in some cases proactive presence can even influence the dynamics of conflict or other structures that promote abuse of civilians, thus preventing or protecting against future victimization.

this chapter explains why such an approach is necessary. it lays out a framework for understanding the multi-faceted impact of proactive presence, analyses the mechanisms which make it effective and summarises some of the research results that prove its effectiveness.

need for local presence

people have many mechanisms for self-protection, and the state itself has a fundamental legal responsibility to protect. when these efforts do not produce an outcome of true protection, the international community can and must help.

however, international response strategies often have limited impact because they apply incentives or threats from outside the context of the ground, and do not produce direct pressure on the ground. direct pressure is needed to change the behavior of top-level decision makers. the international community can and must help. welcome of new protection, the international community can and must help. welcome of new protection, the international community can and must help.

13 chapter 2: when field presence protects
Unfortunately, the transmission of top-level international pressure is highly uncertain. States and armed groups have developed nimble counter-measures to sidestep pressure. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2. Decision makers deflect and undermine pressure, using propaganda to destroy the legitimacy of accusing organisations, isolating and stigmatising targeted civilian groups or shifting attention to the actions of their enemies. They also develop buffering mechanisms to absorb and deflect international pressure without overt denials, including the creation of state agencies to deal with international concerns. This ploy allows the state to claim that it is taking all possible measures. Non-state armed groups also create such buffers.

Figure 2.1: Without presence, international pressure can only focus on top-level decision makers. Figure 2.2: Decision makers evade international pressure and obscure accountability.
Their political wings absorbing international pressure, while their abusing military and intelligence wings remain offstage. Abuser states and armed groups also create smokescreens to evade responsibility for abuses, even while admitting that they occur. A common and devastatingly effective smokescreen is the use of paramilitary or death-squad operations—often either under military control or allowed impunity to pursue agendas convenient to the state. In other cases, justifications such as ‘lack of discipline’ or ‘loose cannons’ distance high-level decision makers from the abuses. Banditry and ‘accidents’ also commonly camouflage political attacks. Smokescreens give both the abusing party and its international allies a level of plausible deniability when faced with accusations. In the face of such counter-measures, international response strategies need to be complemented by more targeted and effective protective action.

As illustrated in Figure 2.3, international field presence strengthens the international response to stop attacks on civilians in three crucial ways:

1. **Targeting the entire chain of command:** International field presence projects the visible concern of the international community to the entire chain of command of abuser groups. Field officers interact with all ranks of the military and civilian hierarchy, national and local, to ensure their awareness of international consequences and responsibilities. No other international effort can match a field presence’s direct visibility to ground-level perpetrators.

2. **Revealing responsibilities:** Monitoring and investigation on the ground can help reveal relationships of responsibility among actors, for instance, by following the money. International field presence can also reveal these relationships, for instance, by following the money. International field presence can also reveal these relationships, for instance, by following the money.

3. **Strengthening international commitment:** International field presence projects the international community’s visible concern to the entire chain of command.
between a state and paramilitaries. This increases accountability and, to some extent, combats counter-measures such as smokescreens.

3 Strengthening international commitment

When an attack or harassment happens despite international presence, the international community is likely to react more quickly than if there had been no international presence. Embassies and home governments will engage more forcefully in protection, especially when their own citizens are present in a mission and at risk, adding to pressure on top-level decision makers.

Three key functions of effective presence: deterrence, encouragement and influence

OHR field officer in Colombia

"If a community is completely abandoned, the political cost of abusing someone is nil. If a local official denounces the abuse, the cost is a little higher. But if the international community makes its presence felt, the cost is so high that even a local official can understand the message. If a community is completely abandoned, the political cost of abusing someone is nil."

A large field mission can project power in three basic ways: influence, deterrence and encouragement. Local and international actors, including embassies, can support and endorse these missions' work. Influence – supporting progressive voices inside abusive or negligent institutions – can be a powerful tool for reformers. Deterrence – constraining abuses from occurring in the first place – is always better than encouraging abuses to stop.
A graphic model, based on the concept of political space, can help to explain how international presence can affect the behavior of perpetrators. In a complex situation of conflict, soldiers, government officials, and members of armed groups consider a broad array of possible political or military actions. Each action results in certain consequences, some of which are acceptable to perpetrators, while others are not. The actors perceive some consequences as acceptable, while others they cannot carry out without incurring harsh consequences. Perpetrators’ notions of acceptable consequences can be fluid over time, and will vary greatly among individuals and organizations. Some may be aware of the complex costs of attacking civilians, and go out of their way to prevent harm, while others have interests and motivations for being present in international presence. Effective international presence plays on all of these interests and motivations, reducing the amount of abusable actions that remain acceptable to the abuser (Figure 2.4). The political space for abusers’ actions (Figure 2.4) describes three types of actions: acceptable actions with acceptable consequences, unacceptable actions with unacceptable consequences, and acceptable actions with unacceptable consequences. Perpetrators’ notions of acceptable consequences can vary over time, and will vary greatly among individuals and organizations. Some may be aware of the complex costs of attacking civilians, and go out of their way to prevent harm, while others have interests and motivations for being present in international presence. Effective international presence plays on all of these interests and motivations, reducing the amount of abusable actions that remain acceptable to the abuser (Figure 2.5).
The mechanisms of leveraging international pressure on state actors are widely understood. Civilian and military state actors are concerned with their reputation among other states, and the impact of this reputation on a vast array of political and economic benefits they desire from the rest of the world. Leaders and politicians, anxious emotionally and politically, are concerned for their personal reputations. And often they are concerned for their reputation within the civilian population; since the population may respect and need the international presence, the state may in turn have to be responsive to this popular concern.

What is less commonly assumed, but equally important to recognize, is that armed groups and paramilitary organizations are also sensitive to international concerns. All parties are likely to be concerned if international pressure can cut off their access to goods, money, political support, weapons, or other key resources. Most are sophisticated enough to recognize that their international reputation can affect this access to resources. And they are aware that the international community and the United Nations have the capability to compel international cooperation.

In Catatumbo, we did a visit accompanied by Peace Brigades International. We were stopped at a paramilitary roadblock. The paramilitaries respect international presence. The collaboration with the state is very clear. The paramilitaries respect international presence. They are not powerful enough to stop us. They recognize that the paramilitaries need the international community and the United Nations to protect and defend them. The cooperation with the state is very clear. The paramilitaries are steadily occupying government positions, and this makes the situation more delicate for them.

Colombian human-rights lawyer

BOX 2.1: Interests of armed groups and paramilitaries that promote deterrence

Good international Image

Independent armed groups have international strategies and international interests.

Proactive Presence

18

With respect to international presence, armed groups and paramilitary organizations are also sensitive to international sentiments and international cooperation. The mechanisms of leveraging international pressure on state actors are widely understood. Civilian and military state actors are concerned with their reputation among other states, and the impact of this reputation on a vast array of political and economic benefits they desire from the rest of the world. Leaders and politicians, anxious emotionally and politically, are concerned for their personal reputations. And often they are concerned for their reputation within the civilian population; since the population may respect and need the international presence, the state may in turn have to be responsive to this popular concern.

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Box 2.1: When field presence protects

In transitional situations, paramilitary forces may have their own reasons for wanting to remain in the area. Their behavior can deter violence, by threatening to attack groups and disrupt behavior. Field forces may also provide protection to local populations. In Colombia, the FARC protection and counter-narcotics activities, for instance, help to maintain order. The ENTO in Colombia, for example, has proven effective in providing protection to local populations.

In addition, paramilitary groups often have their own economic interests. Paramilitary leaders often have future mainstream political ambitions. In transitional situations, paramilitaries may be in a search for scapegoats to prosecute. Paramilitary leaders often have their own economic interests. Paramilitary leaders often have future mainstream political ambitions. Paramilitary leaders often have their own economic interests. Paramilitary leaders often have future mainstream political ambitions. Paramilitary leaders often have their own economic interests.
In addition to these leadership-level sensitivities, there are also reasons for middle- and lower-rank perpetrators of any armed party to pay attention to international presence. In a disciplined structure, there may be orders or less direct messages transmitting global concerns from the top down and exerting control over behaviour in the presence of foreigners. Even without overt orders, middle- and low-level agents tend to fear any steps that might not be approved by their superiors or might in any way get them into trouble. An international presence is often a new and unknown factor for these local agents; it creates uncertainty, causing them to inhibit their behaviour. In addition, if for reasons of class, social standing, culture, profession or rank they perceive the international observer to have comparably higher status than themselves, this creates a further inhibition.

Despite these many sensitivities, however, there will still be repressive actions with consequences acceptable to the abuser. The Rwandan government after the genocide, for instance, was far more worried about ongoing insurgency than about international opinion, and did not pay much of a price for some of its abuses. The LTTE in Sri Lanka, apparently for military reasons, kept recruiting children despite consistently high levels of international rebuke and local outrage. The LLL in Sri Lanka was apparently more willing to accept international presence, even when the international community itself did not approve, apparently because it was better protected by the local government. Despite these many sensitivities, however, there will still be repressive actions with consequences acceptable to the abuser.

The crucial role of perceptions

But no one knows exactly where those borders are! This ever-present uncertainty can actually increase the impact of international presence. Each actor is guessing about the possible repercussions of their choices, which makes the possible repercussions of their choices more uncertain. The impact of international presence, therefore, is incremental, not total. Even if presence fails to deter immediately, however, it may in time reduce perpetrators’ perceived political space. International presence moves the border between acceptable and unacceptable action, and thus provides real protection.

Proactive Presence

The Kosovo Mission verifier.

Kosovo Mission verifier.

"Serbian military tanks were terrorising an Albanian Kosovar village with regular tank bombardments. The Kosovo Verification Mission placed a bright orange vehicle and personnel visibly in the town square, 24 hours a day. The bombardments stopped. The tanks pulled away."
prejudice, a reactive attempt to avoid repeating past mistakes – or any number of other psychological factors. They learn by trial and error, and the errors are costly. Increased uncertainty and unpredictability are fundamental characteristics of conflict.6 The arrival of an international mission in the conflict zone shrinks both the real and perceived range of acceptable attacks against civilians (Figure 2.7). An international field presence can guarantee costly consequences of some actions with unacceptable consequences. At best, the abuser will accurately foresee the cost and refrain from attacks. At best, the abuser will accurately foresee the cost and refrain from attacks. At best, the abuser will accurately foresee the cost and refrain from attacks. At best, the abuser will accurately foresee the cost and refrain from attacks. At best, the abuser will accurately foresee the cost and refrain from attacks. 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pay a cost. In Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, for example, the army might have prevented a 1994 massacre of recently returned refugees had it known that the subsequent outcry would force a defence minister’s resignation and speed calls for military reform.

One UNAMET field officer described how the arrival of the international mission in East Timor affected different members of the Indonesian military – each reacting according to their own calculations of the influence of the mission on their political space:

“They [the Indonesian military] had always had the luxury of going unobserved. No monitoring. No reporting. Now everything was different – everything would be known. On Sunday the Premier [sector leader] came to the meeting and said: ‘On Monday we will turn it on. Unless you agree, I can’t let the whole world know....’

Some army commanders might not even agree with their Premier: ‘We will not run the consultation in this region. It will be known. On Monday the Premier will turn it on. The entire region will be affected. We want assurance before we meet with the mission in Thursday. If we don’t agree with the mission, we will not run the consultation.’

800 national officials. On Thursday, Monday was already turned down. We had already agreed. On Thursday, Monday had been turned down. We had already agreed. On Thursday, Monday had been turned down. We had already agreed.

Proactive Presence

To one UNAMET official, it was still all too soon:

‘The mission can represent moral authority that can inhibit abusive action. Morality is one of the factors that affect calculations of choices. People committing acts of violence will usually seek ways to do so without being observed and without blame. If a presence can raise moral doubts, this can inhibit attacks.

Sometimes the international presence represents the political embrace of a country. An example of this is when the UNAMET mission protected the Indonesian government by preventing discrimination in any calculation of the projection of human rights.

The moral authority a mission represents can also inhibit abusive action. Moreover:

‘In one incident, the mission was scheduled to visit. On Monday, August 30. On Friday, the mission had been turned down. We had already agreed. On Thursday, Monday had been turned down. We had already agreed.’
Box 2.2: Factors complicating deterrence

Factors complicating deterrence

Several different factors can limit the deterrence impact of a presence, and must be considered carefully in a mission’s analysis (Box 2.2). These factors include:

1. Poor chain of command

   A poor chain of command cannot communicate pressure efficiently to agents on the ground.

2. Key players, for reasons of education or specific political analysis, may not share the values or make the calculations the international community expects or hopes for.

3. Schisms and power struggles in an armed or civilian institution can eclipse concerns about external consequences of actions.

   For example, in 2005, a split in the LRA in South Sudan led to an increase in LRA killings.

4. If an armed group has economic self-sufficiency and believes it has funding and weapons to sustain itself at war for a long time, it can afford to worry less about today’s international rebuke.

5. Political or military situational changes can also reduce sensitivity.

   For example, when war became inevitable in Kosovo, YUKOs sensitivity to KVM’s monitoring diminished.

6. States and armed parties can develop counter-strategies to neutralize the effect of international pressure or undermine the legitimacy of a mission over time.

7. International actors can send mixed messages, sometimes saying one thing in public and another behind closed doors, and perhaps continuing to deliver mixed messages in ways that undermine the protective impact of the field presence.

   For example, some international actors may continue to deliver arms or development aid to abusers, or maintain silence in the face of serious ongoing abuses. These mixed messages call into question the strength of the international reaction that a mission can threaten to mobilize.

Therefore, international presence will not always be sufficient to reverse policies of abuse in the short run.
In Haiti in 1993, MICIVIH could not persuade General Cedras to allow the return of President Aristide, nor to stop his crackdown on civilian activists. HRFOR did not persuade the Rwandan army to hold back from retaliatory action against accused insurgents, with great civilian cost. The international presence in Colombia or Darfur did not reverse two of the worst displacement crises worldwide. Nevertheless, the deterrence of proactive presence has a positive effect in most cases. Every mission needs strategies to take advantage of the concerns felt by armed actors regarding international pressure. If those strategies also take into account the potential complicating factors, they can effectively find ways to change the behaviour of perpetrators and protect civilians.

Protection is also about empowering people to organise to protect themselves. Civilian integrity and human rights are most readily respected, protected and fulfilled when people and communities are strong enough to assert and claim their rights. In essence, people are their own best protectors. In most situations they seek peaceful solutions to the challenge of self-preservation, but the pressures of violence and repression close off their opportunities for developing those solutions. An international field presence can encourage and strengthen local unarmed strategies. Some communities will choose armed resistance as a result of their struggle, others will resist, and others may feel the threat of the powerful makes them vulnerable and helpless. Thus, protection and encouragement of self-defence is not a one-size-fits-all solution. There must be a range of possible political actions to which they can resort. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose.

Effective international presence increases civilians' range of action in diverse situations. Some communities will choose armed struggle, others will resist, and others may feel the threat of the powerful makes them vulnerable and helpless. Thus, protection and encouragement of self-defence is not a one-size-fits-all solution. There must be a range of possible political actions to which they can resort. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose. They may consider a broad array of possible political actions, in which they ultimately choose.

**Themes**

Encouragement supporting civilians' protection.
Civilians, like other decision makers, face uncertainty about which actions might or might not be acceptable (Figure 2.10). People base their decisions on their own perceptions and estimates of what consequences they might suffer. Lacking certainty about future outcomes, they may base these estimates on a sophisticated analysis, an emotional reaction to a past trauma or any number of other psychological factors.

As a result of this uncertainty, civilians may do things they think are safe, but then get hurt—why walk into unexpected danger? Yet experience a young secretary in Colombia may consider it too dangerous to become a full-time union worker in Colombia, may consider it too dangerous to be an opposition union leader, deciding that it is safer to be just a quiet, rank-and-file member; then she gets hurt again. They walk into unexpected danger. For example, a young lawyer who are civil actions may do things they think are safe, but

Chapter 2: When Field Presence Protects

Figure 2.8: Political space for civilian action

Figure 2.9: International presence increases space for civilian action

Actions with acceptable consequences

Actions with unacceptable consequences

Effect of protective presence

Actions with acceptable consequences

Actions with unacceptable consequences

Figure 2.10: International presence increases space for civilian action
Inhibition is especially strong in situations of deliberate authoritarian terrorism, where nearly all political or social action is repressed; only passivity appears to have acceptable consequences.

The key impact of international presence is that it expands both the real and perceived range of acceptable action for civilians (Figure 2.11). The presence lowers the costs of some previously dangerous actions by deterring abuse. It encourages civilians to be less fearful or inhibited, and thus to carry out actions that were not dangerous but were previously thought to be dangerous. Nonetheless, the presence cannot remove all risk of mistakes. Some actions are now made relatively safe, though civilians may still exercise caution and not take advantage of this receded space. There may be new unexpected dangers: civilians may believe some actions to be safer now, while in fact they are not. They could then make contradictory actions of such grave consequence that the costs of these actions are now made incalculable. Some actions may now make civilians more at risk of mistakes. Some actions are now made extremely dangerous, and thus may be deterred from being taken. Nonetheless, the presence cannot prevent or deter these actions. Therefore, the presence appears to have accessible consequences.

The key impact of international presence is that it expands both the real and perceived range of acceptable action in situations of deliberate authoritarian terrorism, where nearly all political or social action is repressed; only passivity appears to have acceptable consequences.
Influence: Supporting reformers and changing societal attitudes

Policies of abuse are sustained by institutional structures and collective attitudes, within which norms and stereotypes developed to justify those abuses are left unchallenged. An international mission's presence calls these assumptions into question, confronting stigmas and stereotypes, and publicly promoting a message of respect for civilian rights and safety. Through its relationship with the state and armed groups, and through support of legitimate and committed reformers, a field mission can push state institutions to fulfill their roles, rather than serve as buffers to co-opt pressure.

States and armed groups are neither monolithic nor static, and a field mission is in a unique position to identify and support those forces in each institution that can promote policies of respect for civilians. In a government, an army or an armed group, there are always multiple forces at work: internal conflicts, power struggles, and multiple agendas. Institutional behaviour is thus a function of the interplay among multiple actors' calculations and choices. The complex nature of these institutions presents problems as well as opportunities for a field mission's protective presence.

The moral authority of a mission can affect the calculations of people in various parts of a government or societal structure, causing snowball effects. Abuse of civilians is an embarrassment that many would like to ignore, but a visible mission presence does not let them. Meanwhile, when mission staff build personal relationships and overtly encourage individual reformers to join their efforts, these individual reformers can alter the internal discourse in a repressive system.

Figure 2.11: Protective presence increases overall space for civilian action.
Personal connections create channels for moral pressure with protective influence. These small changes accumulate, and to a certain extent people begin adjusting their choices within this new moral reality. Thus, strengthening voices of reform can slowly shift collective attitudes, making attacks on civilians less acceptable.

The complex political and social composition of large institutions presents a field mission with opportunities for constructively influencing decisions that affect civilians. A field mission can develop relationships with decision makers of all ranks, across the geographic territory and in a variety of professional functions. They may need such relationships to influence the pace and direction of institutional change. An international mission, through its legitimacy and its perceived links to multiple sources of international power, can gain the confidence and respect of decision makers to influence change.

Mutually reinforcing impacts

The deterrence, encouragement, and influence functions of proactive protection should be mutually reinforcing. The strength of civil society to protect itself is one of the costs that perpetrators have to consider, so when international presence strengthens civilian capacity to respond, this can further inhibit attacks. Likewise, since the fear of attack can be the major inhibitor of internal change and reform, strengthening civil society capacity to respond is a further inhibitor of change. Likewise, strengthening civil society capacity to respond is a further inhibitor of change. Where international presence is formally placed in a strong position to develop civil society capacity, that strength can be used to enhance the influence of the civil society, whose voice is reinforced by the presence of international power.

The deterrence, encouragement, and influence functions of proactive protection are most effective when combined with other forms of influence. The deterrence function can be reinforced by encouraging actions that further strengthen civil society. Similarly, the influence function can be reinforced by encouraging actions that further strengthen the capacity of civil society to protect itself. The combined effect is a mutually reinforcing process that can lead to significant changes in the attitudes and behavior of decision makers.

Private connections create channels for moral pressure with protective influence. These connections can be used to influence decision makers, both inside and outside of the state. Even inside of questionable branches of the state, there are positive factors and people at work. You can gain their confidence and reinforce their capacities. Over time you become allies towards a common objective.

OHCHR field officer, Columbia

Even inside of questionable branches of the state, there are positive factors and people at work. You can gain their confidence and reinforce their capacities. Over time you become allies towards a common objective.
Does it work?

Every field mission studied in the research for this manual had evidence of positive protection results – including deterrence of attacks, encouragement of civilians and influence over institutions. Civilians interviewed were nearly unanimous in asserting that international presence encouraged their capacity to function in a conflict zone. State officials explained how field missions had influenced government behavior and even helped them to promote reforms or legislation.

Perpetrators are more sensitive than initially assumed

The deterrence impact of international presence on perpetrators is the hardest to measure. It is usually difficult to prove that an abuse has been prevented, as so many other variables contribute to the behavior of those posing risks to civilians in conflict. Subjective measurements using individual impressions can also be misleading. For example, time and again during research, field officers seriously underestimated the effect of their mission on civilian security. They often discounted their influence by characterizing armed parties in specific conflicts as immune to pressure, possessing ‘total autonomy’ or exhibiting ‘pure delinquency’.

Yet the same respondents would then share examples demonstrating that these same ‘thugs’ did indeed respond to international pressure.7 Overall, the evidence suggests that there is usually a good deal more sensitivity among abusers than is initially assumed by those unfamiliar with a given conflict or the complex workings of the parties involved. Box 2.3 provides a summary of the effectiveness of proactive protection in the nine cases studied in detail for this book.

Armed actors routinely showed that they were factoring international presence into their decisions, and there are numerous examples of explicit reactions of moderating behavior. Yet the evidence suggests that there is usually a good deal more sensitivity among abusers than is initially assumed by those unfamiliar with a given conflict or the complex workings of the parties involved. Box 2.3 provides a summary of the effectiveness of proactive protection in the nine cases studied in detail for this book.

The question, therefore, is not if abusers are sensitive to influence, persuasion or pressure, but rather how sensitive they are, to what kinds of influence, and what are the appropriate channels of persuasion or pressure.
Box 2.3: Impact of Proactive Presence in Nine Conflicts

El Salvador: ONUSAL's presence helped to sustain confidence in the peace process, influencing extreme sectors of both sides to hold back from undermining it. ONUSAL negotiated unprecedented access to the Salvadoran legal system, with staff members actively intervening in numerous cases to ensure protection of due process as well as to confront impunity.

Haiti: The initial arrival of MICIVIH brought an 'aura of international authority' which calmed the violence for a period. Later, even as the security situation deteriorated, staff still intervened successfully on behalf of individuals. The 1994 expulsion of MICIVIH II by the de facto government was seen as proof that the regime saw the presence as inhibiting its range of action.

Guatemala: MINUGUA also had an immediate confidence-building effect on local communities. The regular appearance of MINUGUA personnel on their doorsteps forced local commanders and militias to 'internationalise' their local strategies of control and pay attention, despite decades of impunity. MINUGUA reporting and investigations also brought about notable changes in state behaviour. Local communities made strategic use of the MINUGUA's encouraging presence to prevent harassment by state authorities.

Rwanda: Despite the low post-genocide credibility of the international community, HRFOR managed in certain periods to develop a productive dialogue with the government and the military. Rwandan prison officials, despite their suspicions of prisoners as genocidaires or supporters of the Interhamwe insurgency, regularly responded to submissions from HRFOR about prison conditions. In some cases, Rwandan prison officials even requested suggestions and requests from HRFOR to improve conditions. HRFOR's reports were used to develop prison conditions, and the government and the military began to pay attention to the recommendations of the mission. HRFOR observers cite examples of governmental strategies to discredit the mission, as well as the eventual decision of the Rwandan government to expel HRFOR, as further evidence of its sensitivity.

Kosovo: Violence against Albanian Kosovars was much lower during the period of KFOR's proactive presence than during the preceding period, even though KFOR's presence was much lower during the period.

Proactive Presence

and supporting military presence shows on numerous occasions, including improving treatment of detainees, influencing the behaviour of local communities, and shaping the decisions of local authorities. KFOR's proactive presence also helped to sustain confidence in the peace process.

Keystone: Despite initial misgivings and difficulties, the proactive presence of KFOR had an immediate confidence-building effect on local communities. The regular appearance of KFOR personnel on their doorsteps forced local commanders and militias to 'internationalise' their local strategies of control and pay attention, despite decades of impunity. KFOR reporting and investigations also brought about notable changes in state behaviour. Local communities made strategic use of the KFOR's encouraging presence to prevent harassment by state authorities.

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Kosovo: Violence against Albanian Kosovars was much lower during the period of KFOR's proactive presence than during the preceding period, even though KFOR's presence was much lower during the period.
East Timor: UNAMET staff recount almost daily stories of successful protective intervention using the image and clout of the United Nations to face down and negotiate with local militia leaders and soldiers. There is evidence of military orders telling the militias to moderate their behaviour towards the international personnel, and to carry out most attacks away from their watching eyes. Internal military documents to the regional command would warn of upcoming UN visits with orders like 'Disarm for the duration'. During the period of UNAMET presence before the ballot in East Timor, violence against civilians was much lower than in the preceding months, although of course UNAMET itself was unable to prevent the widespread violence against civilians that occurred after the ballot. However, UNAMET's presence during the ballot was instrumental in maintaining calm and helping to reduce the risk to those who voted. The presence of the United Nations, and the respect for international presence that is shared by the Government of East Timor, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) governmen, and the civilian population in general, is seen as a key factor in reducing violence and facilitating a peaceful transition to independence.

Colombia: Although increasing monitoring has neither statistically lowered overall abuses nor moved the country towards peace, evidence suggests that armed actors are calculating costs and benefits and tailoring their behaviour according to the local presence of foreigners. International presence is widely considered one of the only effective protections available to civilians.

Sri Lanka: The Sri Lankan conflict has been heavily internationalised for decades, and the respect for international presence is shared by the Government of Sri Lanka, the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) guerrilla organisation, and the civilian population in general. Despite great frustration with continued ceasefire violations (including many hundreds of attacks on humanitarian workers and dismantling of humanitarian infrastructure by the government), respondents all over Sri Lanka concur that the SLMM presence can deter some violence and provide a deterrent effect. The presence of international organisations is seen as a key factor in maintaining peace and helping to reduce violence against civilians.

Darfur: In the Sudan, international presence led the state to open the Darfur territory to significant international presence in 2004. But the state is very ambivalent, and most international organisations do not feel they are safe operating in the region. However, there have been incidents and diplomatic interchanges showing the Sudanese government's responsiveness to international pressure. The international agencies present have also been able to negotiate agreements with the SLM/A (Sudan Liberation Movement/Army). Many in the civilian population assert that the overall international presence has had a calming effect on the conflict and the risk they face.
Creating sensitivity over time

Even in situations where sensitivity is initially limited, field missions can change perceptions and alter political calculations over time—in some cases even incrementally altering the balance of power. When a mission protects voices of dissent or reform, educates abusive parties and promotes an increase in international concern, it is creating new opportunities for leverage that did not exist at first entry. Abusive parties are actively trying to measure the changing results of international pressure. 

A former Guatemalan defence minister, for instance, described his government’s attempts to analyse changing dynamics in international pressure:

“You have to figure out how to measure the difference between an unimportant chain letter, and a real clamour that’s going to affect the international conscience. And that’s very difficult to distinguish… You have to watch for when it reaches the level of an inter-governmental problem… If they can penetrate the OAS [Organization of American States] we’re screwed, because we’re signers of all these covenants and treaties.”

The longer a presence is deployed, the stronger its dissuading effect should be on perpetrators. Initially, perpetrators might commit repressive acts despite the international presence—a failure of deterrence. But if the political response is sufficient, these perpetrators will suffer unacceptable consequences, and over the course of time, their perception of ‘acceptable’ actions will change. The more severe the political response is, the stronger the deterrent effect will be on perpetrator behaviour—unchecked aggression will no longer be acceptable. Field missions’ pressure on perpetrators can thus change how they act.

In Colombia, the plight of internally displaced people and the need to prevent displacement was forced onto the state’s agenda by international attention and pressure. In both Darfur and Sri Lanka, the pressure of the international community on a local level raised concerns about sexual and gender-based violence to levels that neither the state nor armed groups could ignore.

Some advocates of child protection in Sri Lanka believe that their constant interaction and dialogue with the LTTE is gradually sensitizing the armed group to the problem of child soldiers.

The effects of the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka opened doors for increased contact and communication between international agencies and the LTTE, and in doing so, helped to address the problem of child soldiers. The longer a presence is deployed, the stronger its dissuading effect should be on perpetrators.
To take full advantage of the potential for increased influence over time, a mission needs to counteract the strategies armed actors will use to weaken it, and should watch for emerging opportunities to increase its impact.

The impact of proactive presence on deeper conflict dynamics

While many examples demonstrate how international presence moderates or diminishes abusive behaviour, it is more difficult to determine whether international presence can also systematically reverse abusive strategies that result from deeper conflict dynamics. Some missions have contributed to ongoing positive transformations that were the result of many supportive political factors. Others could only diminish the damage to civilians in steadily worsening situations.

One of the nine missions studied in detail for this book, UNAMET in East Timor, can lay some claim to a decisive role in ending a conflict and reversing a deep pattern of abuse. The political characteristics of the 1999 Consultation on autonomy were unique, and the reversal was only consolidated with a subsequent military presence — and after terrible violence. But the consultation would never have happened without UNAMET, and might have been cancelled any number of times if UNAMET had not sustained its commitment, despite great risks.

UNAMET thus succeeded in protecting a historical process that reversed decades of occupation. But the Indonesian military (TNI) was staunchly independent (and by some accounts xenophobic) and steadfastly opposed to Timorese independence. TNI was committed to a policy of terror right to the end, with its leaders making bellicose speeches calling for violence at rallies observed by UNAMET officers. Neither international pressure nor UNAMET's presence could reverse TNI's policies.

Either because TNI's leaders were convinced of some conspiracy to oust them or out of sheer desperation, or else because they were ordered to leave by their civilian government, TNI was forced to back away from its strategy of destroying the territory, and leave East Timor independent after 25 years of occupation.

I saw a guy tortured in front of my eyes in Gonaives. They arrested him because we went there and gave a talk on human rights. He was taken to a local detention centre. We followed him, but when we went there and saw him, he was in handcuffs.

MICIVIH field officer

Chapter 2: When field presence protects
This leaves us with a complex problem: international presence will probably make a positive difference to civilian security in most conflict settings, but it is not a panacea. There is no guarantee that a large unarmed mission can transform a deteriorating conflict into a flowering peace process – far from it.

The model of political space described above in this chapter is also applicable to the mission itself. Each mission makes its own calculations of desired outcomes and acceptable risks, considering security issues, risks of expulsion and limits of resources and political support – each of which constrain the mission’s ability to occupy maximal political space. Just like other actors, the mission and its staff will be miscalculating and making mistakes, over- or under-estimating risks, sometimes walking into unexpected danger and often excessively inhibiting its own actions.

If proactive presence builds confidence and speeds progress in a promising transition, or slows abuse in a deteriorating one, civilians are better off in both cases. But whether this is enough to justify a large unarmed presence depends on what the sponsoring institutions or governments hope to achieve with that presence, what value they place on the incremental protection and what costs and security risks the international community is willing to bear to achieve increased protection.

A mission’s influence on conflict dynamics must be judged for both its immediate impact and over a longer timeframe, and its strategies must be designed accordingly. All wars eventually end, and all periods of deterioration or stalemate have within them, somewhere, the seeds of change – for better or for worse. An international presence can be judged on the merits of its immediate function of providing protection and on its ability to promote and protect societal initiatives that might help to achieve lasting peace. 

www.ProtectiOnline.org is a webpage of Peace Brigades International's Mainstreaming Protection Programme, and contains numerous sources and links to a wide variety of other protection resources for defenders of human rights, local activists in civil society and international protection missions.

Key resources on protection:

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If proactive presence builds confidence and speeds progress in protecting civilian populations, mission leaders can then work to ensure that the mission’s efforts contribute to the long-term security and stability of the region. This may involve engaging with local authorities to establish a framework for security and stability, or working with civil society organizations to promote human rights and democratic values. 

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Field presence is a necessary supplement to other international response strategies to protect civilians because it targets all levels of the chain of command, reveals responsibilities and strengthens international commitment. Field presence can contribute to the protection of civilians in three important ways.

1. **Deterrence**
   Every interaction with a field mission should influence the political calculations of the perpetrators in a way that changes their perception of their political room for manoeuvre, and transmits the concerns and political pressures of the international community. Armed institutions, be they states or armed groups, have a wide range of motivations which create varying sensitivities to this international influence.

2. **Encouragement**
   Field presence empowers civilians to assert and claim their rights and increases the actions available to them. Both the real deterrence offered by the mission, and the less tangible feelings of safety and solidarity contribute to an expansion of political space for civilian action.

3. **Influencing societal attitudes**
   Field presence represents moral authority that can legitimise institutional and societal reforming activity. It also is in a unique position to identify the entry points for reform.

The impact of international field presence varies with changing political contexts, and can be strengthened over time. This study demonstrates these effects in a wide range of conflict contexts, even where security situations were very delicate or deteriorating, or where an armed actor was visibly resistant to influence. The positive result of proactive protection with international presence can never be dismissed. Every situation, no matter how intractable or apparently hopeless, can benefit from a rigorous analysis of the numerous vulnerabilities to leverage and possible entry points. International institutions have to answer hard questions about where an armed actor was visibly resistant to influence, and can be strengthened over time. This study demonstrates these effects in a wide range of conflict contexts, even where security situations were very delicate or deteriorating.
STRATEGY BUILDING
ANALYSIS AND
INFORMATION
The precondition for any effective protection strategy is a constant process of information-gathering, analysis and strategy building – three interdependent and cyclical processes (Figure 3.1). The information-gathering process informs an analysis, which in turn is used to create or amend a mission strategy. Each amended strategy raises new questions, demanding additional investigation and analysis. Even an astute strategy will need adjustment to ongoing political changes.

Figure 3.1: The cycle of information-analysis-strategy

Nothing is static – cycle never stops

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES
Hard strategic choices must always be made among countless possible targets of influence or support. Information and analysis help a mission to use its limited resources for maximum protective effect. Each choice in turn refocuses the next round of analysis, as sub-strategies are built for each target.

This may seem obvious, but insufficient political analysis and lack of strategic planning for impact have been a frequent weakness in past field missions. To do it well, the missions need leadership that devotes the necessary resources and time to each part of the cycle, building the necessary networks for information-gathering, investing the necessary time in analysis, and ensuring that the mission is equipped with the skills to implement effective strategies.

Gathering information and external analysis

A good human-rights report needs data on abuses, while a good protection analysis also needs information on abusers. It needs to be perpetrator-focused, looking at the institutions and people responsible for abuses, and dissecting their chains of command, motivations, and objectives. It should articulate the interests driving their decisions, whether military, political, economic, criminal, personal, familial, or ethnic.

The information needed ranges from a broad understanding of an armed group or state military apparatus, or the international political and economic strategies of a state, down to the local, social relationships of paramilitary gangs in a town. Similarly, to encourage civil society groups to speak out, the mission needs to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and strategies of civil groups. Good information is not just about facts and events. Current facts are good, but the opinions, perceptions, and subjective analyses of other parties must also be included, with each source being judged for its validity and wisdom. The process demands a complex network of sources – some public, some confidential. Some missions, unfortunately, have been criticized for being too disconnected from local realities and local actors to develop an accurate analysis of the situation they hoped to change. In contrast, for instance, according to one head of office, UNAMET quickly developed a trusted local network and used it effectively.

"By the time we got two-thirds of the way through the consultation preparations, we had an excellent information network. The civilian population responded so positively to our presence that we were getting mountains of good and reliable information. Often, I had better information, and quicker, than my government-security counterparts. This was very valuable on an operational level."

UNAMET head of office

Proactive Presence

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Field missions should draw from a wide variety of sources, including:

- Existing protection assessments, including those carried out by local organisations or humanitarian agencies.
- Victims of abuses, civilians in threatened communities, and organisations, witnesses.
- Local organisations who investigate and analyse abuses and conflict.
- Trusted government contacts, formal communication with officials of states, militaries, and armed groups.
- Confidential sources inside, or close to, armed institutions, including non-state armed groups.
- Trusted local analysts who can educate the mission about subtle social and economic factors affecting political decisions.
- Domestic and external international experts with a long history of analysing the conflict or the relevant national institutions — virtually every conflict terrain in the world has been intensely studied and analysed, but these experts are seldom asked to advise the corresponding field missions.
- Humanitarian and other international organisations with staff in the conflict zone or embassies or foreign-ministry contacts with networks and insights about key decision-makers.
- Negotiators involved in dialogue with the armed parties.
- Publicly available information such as newspapers, magazines, organisational documents and relevant national websites — this includes, importantly, sources in the local languages, demanding that the mission invests staff time in monitoring and translating relevant sources for analysis.

Information-gathering must be carried out with caution. Every source must be evaluated for accuracy, bias, and judgment, and not automatically dismissed or accepted. Even a biased source may have important information, and a trusted source may provide a mistaken analysis.

Mission staff must avoid appearing to be too inquisitive, which could give rise to accusations of spying. Where necessary, great care must be taken with confidentiality and protection of sources. (For more information, see Chapter 9, Do no harm.)

Institutions across the political spectrum will try to manipulate the mission through the information they pass on or withhold. Information-gathering must be carried out with caution. Where necessary, great care must be taken with confidentiality and protection of sources. (For more information, see Chapter 9, Do no harm.)

Informal protection analysis tends to reside only in the heads of individual field officers, and institutions lose vital information if they do not create systems to gather and collate these individual analyses, and pass them on for future planning.
Collaborative data gathering

It might seem obvious to suggest that multiple institutions should share information and collaborate on data collection and analysis, but this can be challenging in practice. Different institutions, each with their own mechanisms and formats, would need to develop mutually accessible systems of data collection. Data collaboration requires agreed standards of consent and confidentiality that protect people from the misuse of delicate information, but which do not prevent parties of concern or interest in use of information from conducting their own enquiries. Since each point of contact, whether public or private, in circumstances that do not preclude multiple access to sensitive information, may become an important source of data collection, the need to develop mutually accessible systems of data collection and analysis could be considered a prerequisite for practice. Different institutions could develop a national mechanism to enhance the usefulness of data collection.

In 2004-05 in Darfur, OCHA launched an ambitious attempt to achieve some level of inter-agency coordination of protection efforts, developing data collection formats, organizing protection working groups in each region, and trying to develop a system-wide protection strategy. The initial data collection process proved too complicated for most people to use. More importantly, the data collection was not closely linked to advocacy strategies, which weakened motivation to participate. The process was subsequently reconsidered. The protection working groups also got mixed reviews, in part due to excessive expectations of their impact but also because their deliberations were not systematically linked to subsequent action. Nevertheless, the concept of inter-institutional protection forums for collaboration and sharing at the local level deserves continued development. This could increase the implementation of protection strategies by multiple parties in the same conflict.

Analysis for proactive presence

Protection analysis is political. It requires power and influence, and needs to be informed by a strategic understanding of the power dynamics involved. The analysis should identify the chain of responsibility for attacks on civilians, mapping out channels for applying sanctions or offering incentives to change behavior. It should avoid ideological or conspiratorial theories about institutional behavior, which usually generate naive and incomplete strategies. A subtle analysis of the functioning, motivations and internal organizational realities of abusive institutions can identify points of contact, vulnerabilities to leverage or interests in incentives. Since each institution is unique, so must be the analysis: the channel of influence for the minister of the interior will be different from that for the army, and so on.

Awareness for proactive presence

Proactive presence can be defined as the ability to anticipate and respond to potential threats before they become crises. It requires a thorough understanding of the power dynamics involved, including the motivations, vulnerabilities and interests of abusive institutions. Such an understanding can inform strategies for applying sanctions or offering incentives to change behavior. It should avoid ideological or conspiratorial theories about institutional behavior, which usually generate naive and incomplete strategies. A subtle analysis of the functioning, motivations and internal organizational realities of abusive institutions can identify points of contact, vulnerabilities to leverage or interests in incentives. Since each institution is unique, so must be the analysis: the channel of influence for the minister of the interior will be different from that for the army, and so on.
not be dismissed as unreachable. Sometimes, for instance, even an abusive institution will have reasons to interact constructively with a field mission. Astute military or political leaders sometimes recognise that their subordinates do not always transmit vital information that might result in criticism or discipline, so they may perceive an indirect benefit from the presence of external monitoring of their own agents.

Sometimes institutional behaviour is affected by complex historical, familial or ethnic dynamics, by business competition, corruption or any number of other factors. An analysis has to evaluate the relative importance of the different factors at play in order to identify the most productive strategy, and these factors are seldom purely military. To understand killings in Casanare, Colombia, one needs to know the economic motivations sparked by the local struggles for control over contraband gasoline from Venezuela. To protect in Darfur, analysis must consider the varying motivations and histories of many different ethnic groups and tribes, as well as the role of regional environmental and economic degradation on the conflict. With such local complexities, trusted and skilled national staff can be crucial in developing an accurate analysis.

Conflicts change over time: last year’s analysis may not be valid now, but a mission will only know this if it has its finger on the pulse. For instance, the nature of the Darfur conflict changed dramatically in a short time, and if international agencies did not perceive this change, their strategies became obsolete. Likewise in Sri Lanka, strategies all had to be re-analysed after the 2004 tsunami.

The power of a mission deployed over a large area lies partly in its capacity to adjust its strategies to take into account the nuances of local realities. Cultural, social, political and military realities may vary from one region to another. Local governments can be an ally in one province, and an obstacle in the neighbouring one. The transfer of a new commanding officer into the dominant nearby military can drastically change realities for civilians. When a mission’s analysis encompasses these subtle variations, local impact is enhanced and the cumulative national effect is greater. Without these subtle refinements, a mission is like a surgeon without a scalpel.

In sum, an effective field mission will be one that has a good pulse over the whole area. The leaders of the mission must be expert in the areas they are charged with. They must be able to integrate these local areas into the deployment of their mission. To do this, they must have a strong understanding of the complex dynamics at play and be able to adapt their strategies accordingly.

A field mission must make an equally thorough analysis of the international influences that can be brought to bear, including those of the international community. Missions must consider how their strategies will interact with others and how they can be used to complement or counteract them. The power of a mission deployed over a large area also lies partly in its ability to manage and influence the interactions between different parties.

Chapter 3: Information analysis and strategy building

Introduction > Being There > Strategies > Challenges
Box 3.2: The challenge of analysing non-state armed groups

The legal and political structure of international institutions and the methods of pressure they commonly use are designed primarily to influence governments. They are less well equipped to exploit, or even understand, the sensitivities of independent armed groups. When international missions under- or misjudge the capacities and politics of such groups; or when they dismiss the possibility of leveraging or engaging these groups, they are unlikely to develop the analytical and strategic resources they would need to affect them.

For example, the Interhamwe forces that systematically mobilised a population to murder hundreds of thousands of Tutsis in 1994 fled and dispersed across the border to Zaire, and continued to terrorise Rwanda. After the genocide, the Interhamwe were considered morally ‘beyond the pale’, either morally or physically inaccessible. Although some attempt was made to learn from refugees returning from Zaire, HRFOR was in a fundamentally weak position to develop any clear strategies about this armed group’s continuing influence on protection problems in Rwanda. It lacked information and points of contact, and probably faced security risks had it sought them. As a result, some mission staff relied on the oversimplification that the Interhamwe had been transformed into disconnected bands of uncontrolled killers, despite their recent roots in such a highly organised genocide. Some field officers feel that this lack of contact weakened the mission’s strategic capacity in relation to both the Interhamwe and the government.

Groups operating clandestinely do not make intelligence readily available, and direct contact with these groups is sometimes prohibited or dangerous. Nevertheless, there is always information somewhere, and for any conflict of significant duration there will be people who have made a point of understanding how these groups function. A mission must find these people. If it cannot make direct contact, it must use indirect sources – always taking care not to endanger the sources.

Missions in ceasefire or negotiation settings have easier access to non-state armed groups, and their experience invariably confirms that there are many different political sensitivities and points of leverage. Building on its unique legal status and access, the ICRC has developed careful analyses of armed groups, and while it must necessarily maintain the confidentiality of this role, it often can find appropriate ways to advise other missions based on the lessons learned from its experience and access.

Proactive Presence
Building a strategy for effective protection

A key feature of a complex strategy is the sequencing of activities. For any given problem, the mission needs to look first for the quickest and most obvious move.

**Who are the most influential people in the context?**

- Identify the key actors and their interests.
- Understand their power dynamics.
- Assess their potential influence.
- Determine their capacity for action.

**What are the key elements of the situation?**

- Consider the political, social, and economic factors.
- Analyze the historical context.
- Evaluate the current power dynamics.

**What are the objectives of the mission?**

- Establish clear goals.
- Set measurable outcomes.
- Prioritize the mission’s priorities.

**How can the mission’s actions be framed?**

- Develop a narrative that resonates with the target audience.
- Utilize storytelling techniques.
- Highlight successes and challenges.

**What are the risks and limitations?**

- Identify potential obstacles.
- Anticipate reactions to actions.
- Plan fallback strategies.

**What are the resources available?**

- Evaluate the mission’s budget.
- Assess available personnel.
- Leverage partnerships and allies.

**What are the current trends and developments?**

- Monitor external factors.
- Adapt strategies as needed.
- Stay informed.

**What are the potential outcomes?**

- Consider positive and negative scenarios.
- Plan for various outcomes.
- Adjust strategies accordingly.

**What are the ethical considerations?**

- Evaluate the moral implications.
- Consider the impact on all parties.
- Uphold ethical standards.

**What are the alternatives?**

- Explore different approaches.
- Compare and contrast options.
- Select the best course of action.

**What are the potential consequences?**

- Anticipate potential outcomes.
- Plan for potential setbacks.
- Mitigate risks.

**What are the potential benefits?**

- Identify potential gains.
- Assess the potential impact.
- Prioritize benefits.

**What are the potential drawbacks?**

- Consider potential downsides.
- Plan for potential failures.
- Mitigate risks.

**What are the potential gains?**

- Assess potential outcomes.
- Prioritize gains.
- Plan for potential successes.

**What are the potential losses?**

- Consider potential drawbacks.
- Plan for potential failures.
- Mitigate risks.

**What are the potential risks?**

- Identify potential threats.
- Assess potential consequences.
- Plan for potential failures.

**What are the potential impacts?**

- Evaluate potential outcomes.
- Prioritize impacts.
- Plan for potential successes.

**What are the potential downsides?**

- Consider potential drawbacks.
- Plan for potential failures.
- Mitigate risks.

**What are the potential benefits?**

- Assess potential outcomes.
- Prioritize benefits.
- Plan for potential successes.

**What are the potential losses?**

- Consider potential downsides.
- Plan for potential failures.
- Mitigate risks.

**What are the potential risks?**

- Identify potential threats.
- Assess potential consequences.
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**What are the potential impacts?**

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It is important to have a graduated response – to address a violation at the level it was committed. You can give the perpetrator or his immediate superior the possibility to resolve the case at his level, using the threat of raising it above him or of going public as an incentive to act. At the same time you are showing that you are not there to create problems but to find solutions with him, to work with him. The threat of bringing the case to his superior or going public is itself a useful bullet, which can spare the bullet itself.

Field officer with experience in multiple organisations
A mission should also calibrate its strategies appropriately to its levels of external political support, the strength of its mandate and its level of resources. The stronger the mandate and political support, the broader the range of tools available for use. Strategic planning is a skill and an art, which field officers should learn. It is a well-developed discipline with many fine resources available that need not be duplicated here. International institutions that sponsor field protection missions should promote development of this skill among their field officers and management. The head of mission must have highly developed strategic management capacity, to enhance everyone else’s efforts. This alone is probably not enough, however, because strategic analysis takes time as well as skill, and a head of mission may be too much in demand for other vital organisational or diplomatic tasks to devote enough time to strategic planning. At mission headquarters there should be additional designated people with these political and strategic talents who can really focus time on national strategy development and implementation, and assist each field office in local strategic planning, ensuring a level of coherence and quality control across the mission.

**Chapter 3: Information analysis and strategy building**

**INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES**

**Figure 3.3: Summary of Chapter 3 – information, analysis, strategy**

**Information gathering**

- • Gather data on
  - abuser’s chain of command
  - abuser’s interests (military, economic, international, domestic)
  - strengths and weaknesses of civilian groups
  - sources of international support or leverage
- • Draw on a wide variety of sources
- • Be discreet and respect confidentiality
- • Account for biases

**Analysis**

- • Understand who is responsible
- • Identify channels to influence this individual
- • Update analysis constantly as context changes
- • Analyse possibilities for international leverage
- • Creatively seek channels to understand and influence armed groups

**Strategy**

- • Choose targets (local, national, regional)
- • Choose allies or other forces that may influence or exert pressure on them
- • Design sub-strategies for each target
- • Develop specific strategy for civil society
Summary and recommendations

Clear strategies based on informed analysis require a definite organisational commitment.

A field mission must commit resources and expertise to information gathering and analysis.

Mission leadership and field staff should be selected on the basis of analytical capacity.

Institutions deploying field missions should create structures and processes that make such analysis a required step. A mission should not be allowed to proceed without it.

Analytical and strategic training should involve all of the field staff—so that the personnel making daily political contacts fully understand the strategies their actions must reinforce and promote.

Outsiders should be brought in to enrich this analysis and strategy building, including people with prior expertise in the terrain—regional political experts and specialised academics—as well as strategic-planning professionals.

A field mission should develop and maintain a contact network for local and national security and conflict-resolution specialists with prior experience in the region—regional political experts and analysts.

A field mission should be prepared to enrich the analysis and strategy building of its national staff with political expertise in its planning. Such involvement can take into account their potential biases, while still taking advantage of their analysis.

There should be an explicit effort to gather intelligence about independent armed groups, if such groups are a factor. Whenever possible this should proceed with full transparency and openness, acknowledging that positive contact with armed groups can help understand the metrics that inform all of the field work—so that the mission deploys its resources based on informed and focused intelligence.

A field mission must commit resources and expertise to information gathering and analysis.

Proactive Presence

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PART TWO

FIVE STRATEGIES OF EFFECTIVE PRESENCE

- Protective presence
- Sustained multi-level diplomacy
- Conscious visibility
- Active encouragement
- Convening and bridging

Chapter 8: Public advocacy
Chapter 4: Sustained multi-level diplomacy
Chapter 5: Conscious visibility
Chapter 6: Active encouragement
Chapter 7: Convening and bridging

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES
SUSTAINED MULTI-LEVEL DIPLOMACY
Once the pre-condition of good information and analysis is met (as described in Chapter 3), the first key protection strategy for a field presence involves diplomatic intervention in daily situations and constant discourse with key political actors nationally and locally. These interactions are cumulative and have a ripple effect. They help to ensure that local actors are aware of the international community’s concerns and that their actions are aligned with international standards.

Consider an example: if a local commander has orders to carry out a counter-insurgency campaign, he may know that this will involve repression of civilians. But he may not be directly aware of the international community’s concern about this. If a report is written about his campaign and sits in a file or is only discussed in meetings in Geneva or New York, will he even know about it? Will it affect his strategy? Maybe, but very probably not.

But suppose an international mission field officer drops in to the commander’s office. Over a congenial cup of coffee, the officer shares news of the report. He may even visit before the report is written, inviting the commander’s input. The commander now considers that the field mission will also be having this conversation with his superior officers, local business leaders, and political figures in parliament, as well as contacts in the local and national media. The potential consequences are much greater, and the commander may now consider that the field mission will also be having this conversation with his superior officers.

Political costs of his actions go beyond his immediate responsibility. If a report is written about his campaign and sits in a file or is only discussed in meetings in Geneva or New York, will he even know about it? Will it affect his career? Maybe, but very probably not.

But suppose an international mission field officer drops in to this commander’s office. Over a congenial cup of coffee, he shares news of the report. He may even visit before the report is written. When the commander now considers that the field mission will also be having this conversation, he knows that the results of that commission are going to be a headache for his superior officer. Perhaps now he is thinking about the political costs of his actions.
This is just one example of the fundamental potential of a field presence. With the kind of information, analysis and strategy described in the previous chapter, a complex process of contact and communication can be constructed. This should include not only, for example, an offending commander and the military structure that is supposed to discipline him, and not only national governments that are supposed to control their military, but also local community leaders, business leaders, local government authorities and others. Each contact encourages a change in behaviour. The more long-term and constant the presence, and the more relationships that have been constructed with these players, the more this is possible. The opportunities to influence are everywhere, every day, and a field officer should take advantage of them. When mission personnel are out in public, travelling to remote rural areas, talking to the local mayor or priest or commander, everyone is paying attention and calculating the consequences. And that changes things.

Where there is the political will within a state or armed group to listen, an important communication mechanism can be the use of confidential dialogue and cooperation towards reform. This can influence not only higher policy-making levels but also further down the chain: at the low or middle level a commander may be afraid of being accountable to his hierarchy, and may prefer to resolve an issue quietly at his own level. According to one field officer with both OHCHR and ICRC experience:

"In my experience, engaging even the worst abusers in this manner may yield unexpected results: you give a fellow the choice between solving the issue quietly, among ourselves, based on a gentleman’s agreement – or putting him on the line by raising the case with his superiors. Not only may you solve the issue, but you create a bond of confidence with the fellow. You didn’t expect this result, but you fell into the posture of solving the problem, and the fellow recognized this."

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Sustained contact with local players requires a clear discourse in each case, based on careful analysis of how to influence a particular abuser. This discourse might be as minimal as a formal courtesy visit or introduction, a mention of the field-mission objectives, or expressions of concern about a certain situation. It might involve making explicit requests for better cooperation. When appropriate, it might involve direct or veiled references to carrots and sticks or to international reputation. And in some rare cases it might be effective to criticise candidly and demand action.

Every interaction is a political and diplomatic event requiring a strategy and a high level of communication skills.
Diplomacy is barely noted in training, preparation and strategy building. Mission descriptions, mandates and internal documents do not emphasise it, even though many experienced field officers understand it implicitly. Across the board, there is confusion in practice: field officers interviewed admitted that they got little diplomatic guidance, and they had no idea whether other field officers within their own mission were approaching these interactions in the same way. Some pointed out that the political officers at mission headquarters might not even approve of the various discourse strategies used by individual officers out in the field. And several interviewees felt that to achieve any effective level of local diplomatic intervention, they had to ‘break the rules’.

Similarly, there is seldom a clear directive about how much staff time should be devoted to diplomacy. Within the same mission, personnel from one sub-office may be mostly out interacting externally while in another they are mostly at their desks. And if agency or mission personnel think that this sort of local contact is ‘someone else’s job’ or mistakenly believe that the only important advocacy is what happens ‘at the top’, on a national level, they may not do it at all. Overall, this local diplomacy seems to depend largely on individuals: if they have the skills and choose to use them, it happens, and otherwise the opportunity is lost. Field managers must make the expectations of local diplomacy and networking explicit to all mission staff.

Humanitarian agencies, for example, with their substantial field deployment, have unique opportunities and constraints in carrying out this particular protection role. On the one hand, agencies with a programme emphasis on the provision of assistance or services sometimes face internal hurdles and must overcome institutional resistance and fears surrounding the idea of advocacy, and to some extent international human rights conventions and mandates. However, recent research and case studies have shown that even when organisations are motivated and willing to adopt advocacy, the idea of advocacy can be daunting for field personnel. This book records a growing trend towards adopting a more explicit advocacy and protection approach in its research, and shows how at least some organisations are successfully engaging in this kind of local diplomacy.

Chapter 4: Sustained multi-level diplomacy
Proactive Presence

To uphold mission integrity and sustain relationships with national and military leaders and the diplomatic corps, a field presence needs the highest level of diplomatic political skill in its leadership. The capacity of national authorities to relate to an international mission will vary enormously. Mission leadership needs the versatility to interact with all types of people, always seeking opportunities to further strategies for the protection of civilians.

Key resources on negotiation and communication in the field


Diplomacy with government and military

“...You need channels of communication with your state counterparts. You need to know who to talk to. Maybe you can’t resolve everything, but you should at least go to the right place, know who will pay attention and who will waste your time... With a good relationship, you can call and say, ‘What’s up with this case?’ Without a relationship, you can’t receive everything... You need key channels of communication with your state counterparts...”

Head of sub-office, OHCHR, Colombia

One key long-range objective of a mission is to strengthen a culture of peace and human rights within the host government, and build capacity for civilian protection.
A mission should establish contacts and dialogue with all actors who control territory and people, and who have the capacity to harm the mission or the civilians it aims to help. The mission should gain acceptance and respect for its efforts to help. It cannot succeed by relying on access and respect for the decision makers at national and local levels. These relationships must be developed carefully to assure maximum access and influence, and yet not allow the host state to manipulate or curtail the mission’s independence.

Close governmental relations allow a mission to pressure friendly officials regarding particular cases, situations or political trends. By supporting allies inside the government, the mission can promote reforms in a state structure that is abusing civilians. Thus, the mission is positioned to bring maximal international pressure to bear. Knowing who is who, it can direct this pressure to the right targets, and help others in the international community do the same. After initial setbacks,glomerations should not be discouraged. They should not blame the government for mistakes and setbacks. Rather, they should blame themselves for not learning from the experience they have acquired or not establishing effective, principled positions or adopting a principled position. The mission should make the effort to seek information from the government before making any decision that could offend the mission or the government. A mission’s relationship with the government should always be respectful and as transparent as possible. Even if the mission is critical of government policies, the mission should make sure that the government is aware of its own views.

In any interaction with the government, the mission should make clear that its goal is to improve the protection of civilians from abuses of power. If it needs legal advice, it should consult with the country’s lawyer or legal expert who has knowledge of the government’s legal system. The mission should be aware of the government’s limitations and know how to work within them. A mission cannot expect the government to always act in the mission’s interest. It must be prepared to negotiate its own positions or adjust its own positions if necessary.

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The quality of the ICRC presentation depends on a profound and open understanding of the issues at stake for the group. ICRC respondents stress the importance of demonstrating a clear understanding of the mission’s responsibilities.

Box 4.1: Relationships with the Military

Relationships with the military can be particularly important, and particularly difficult. When missions have military allies and security partners on the ground, it is often difficult for the military’s information channels. Missions need to be careful in developing relationships with the military, keeping in mind that military officials may be less open to special cases and more cautious with regard to security and confidentiality. Missions with the military can be particularly important and potentially

...
ONUSAL, MINUGUA, SLMM, KVM, and UNAMET all had direct contact with armed groups due to the international negotiations in progress, enabling ongoing communication of protection messages and channels for dealing with other concerns as they arose. Conversely, in Colombia, direct communication with armed groups is legally prohibited for all but the ICRC, making communication by others much more difficult. As a result, the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations must work to establish contact with the dominant state and its military, and security concerns must therefore be considered in communication with armed groups. Security can be a very delicate matter in the eyes of the dominant state and its military, and security concerns must therefore be considered in communication with armed groups.

**Controlling bias**

Communication with armed groups can be a very delicate matter in the eyes of the dominant state and its military, and security concerns must therefore be considered in such contacts. Security must be dealt with strategically at the operational level, considering also that lack of contact with an armed group may also pose a security risk to the mission. A protective field mission is always subject to accusations of bias, even though our intention through this manual is to advise maximal contact with armed actors and those who influence them. Mission staff and civil-society observers alike believe that Colombian armed groups “have ears” in enough places to get messages. But, outside the ICRC, there is no evidence of any systematic attempt to transmit a coherent message or discourse to these groups, other than through the formal written human-rights reports of the OHCHR mission. (This is discussed further in Chapter 8, Public advocacy.)

Even though our intention through this manual is to advise maximal contact with armed actors and those who influence them, a mission must still be cautious about getting too close. A protective field mission is always subject to accusations of bias, even though our intention through this manual is to advise maximal contact with armed actors and those who influence them. Mission staff and civil-society observers alike believe that Colombian armed groups “have ears” in enough places to get messages. But, outside the ICRC, there is no evidence of any systematic attempt to transmit a coherent message or discourse to these groups, other than through the formal written human-rights reports of the OHCHR mission. (This is discussed further in Chapter 8, Public advocacy.)

Humanitarian officer, Colombia

Humanitarian officer, Colombia

"Look, this guy with you is the cousin of a paramilitary, so we're not alone in the conversation, the conversation would have been different. You're the cousin, but, I'm still in charge of the international aid and not alone there to make a decision. And, in my experience, this is my responsibility. I'm the one who makes it."

"You look like a cousin, he's a cousin. He works for this organisation, so we're not alone in the conversation and he's cousin, but, I'm still in charge of the international aid and not alone there to make a decision. And, in my experience, this is my responsibility. I'm the one who makes it."

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A mission can minimise the risks of perceived and real bias by:

- negotiating agreements that allow it access to all population groups and armed parties;
- ensuring that close contacts with victims are well documented and monitored; and
- conducting proactive presence to foster confidence and build relationships.

The Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM), for instance, despite the fine work of many conscientious monitors, was perceived by many as too close to the KLA. It was even accused of sharing military intelligence and helping to prepare the way for NATO’s attack on Yugoslavia. KVM monitors with human rights experience questioned the way in which the mission publicly exploited a massacre in Racak by jumping to conclusions and rushing to press with accusations against the Yugoslavian government, a move which could have had a significant impact on the mission’s credibility and effectiveness.

The support for independence was so prevalent among the East Timorese as well as within the international community that it would have been impossible to field a mission without a preponderance of personnel who personally supported independence, so UNAMET was very vulnerable to accusations of bias. When the victims of violence are mostly of one ethnic group in a conflict, such as in Darfur or Sri Lanka, international humanitarian or protective missions will usually have more contact with this group. Assistance or protection to victims based purely on need inevitably associates a mission more with whichever side of a political division has more victims.

A limited mandate, analysis or work plan can also create a bias. If a mission can

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A limited mandate, analysis or work plan can also create a bias. If a mission can
taking care that its methodologies and language skills do not implicitly favour or give greater access to one group over another ensuring balance in any aspects of mission staffing that might project a signal of bias externally protecting its independence from the political agendas of its sponsoring states – this can be difficult but a mission’s ability to carry out protection impartially may require it to confront contrary decisions of its own sponsoring institutions or states.

not allowing any mission personnel to pursue intelligence or military functions for their own government sustaining transparent and respectful relationships with different sectors of society – if a mission is invited in by government, a good relationship with civil-society groups can help to overcome perceptions of bias avoiding too much contact with any one group undertaking thorough analysis – this is essential, as ignorance and poor analysis are seldom unbiased in their impact.

Even with the greatest of care, accusations of bias will happen. When they do, the mission needs to assess their merit: if they are based on real problems, it may be advisable for the mission to take corrective action, altering something about its structure, objectives or activities to achieve greater impartiality. If the accusations are false or malicious, the mission needs to defend itself and its objective commitment to impartial protection. Those whose abuses are being observed will often seek to de-legitimise the observer. A mission needs to foresee these accusations and be ready to react.

A mission will be stronger if it develops a reputation of being fair and impartial. A mission that is viewed as too biased, one-sided or partial will often lose the trust of its audience, even if that audience is not directly affected by the mission’s work. A mission that is perceived as impartial is more likely to be taken seriously by its audience, leading to greater influence and impact.

Communication techniques

Diplomacy can involve a wide variety of actions, including direct pressure, indirect pressure (‘hinting’), humour, politeness, subordination or humility, praise and stressing mutual objectives or developing solutions together. One field officer describes field communication with authorities and perpetrators as ‘theatrical’: a performance of politely nuanced threats aimed at instilling concern in abusers about the future consequences of their actions. Another mission leader describes the importance of developing a relationship with authorities and perpetrators as a means of affecting change: ‘we need to be able to develop trust and understanding with them, not just to tell them what to do, but to work with them to achieve a common goal.’

Holding this ground, a mission has the space to convene different players, give voice to the voiceless and make impact.
You can't [convey pressure] very directly. You can allude to the concern of the international community or the forthcoming report to the General Assembly. And certainly at the junior level, you can do a sort of name-dropping, refer to your last discussion with the commander-in-chief or remind them that you have channels that go to their superiors, but you have to do that fairly subtly. Putting things in writing is also important because it can reach more people than your immediate interlocutor, and you can copy it elsewhere and so on.

UNAMET field officer

Indeed, in tense and constantly changing situations, field staff trying to decide how best to communicate and achieve their objective must be adept at improvising. Once "at the scene" — how to deal? Cracking jokes, killing time, being polite; having a good command of the local language was indispensable. Ask for coffee. "What a beautiful evening!" Small talk and small talk until the tension ebbed away. You had to adopt a style of subordination and subservience. Long-winded praise. I would just try to wear them down. Stressing our "mutual objectives..." They would get so bored with me! But I was never disrespectful. I think we impressed them with our commitment to the improvement of living standards in the world. I would just try to wear them down, stress their own problems. "I think we've got to do something about this..." Small talk until the tension ebbed away.

UNAMET field officer

Sometimes the immediate target of influence is not so easily identified or talked to. For example, where widespread civilian displacement is threatened, a mission visit to a region might not target a particular individual but rather be used as an opportunity to contact many different parties, each having the potential to influence the situation indirectly. In some cases a government might use its own communication experts to influence a mission's impression of Indonesia's commitment to the peace process. In other cases, a government might use its own communication experts to influence the mission's impression of the government's commitment to the peace process. For example, where widespread civilian displacement is threatened, a mission visit might be used as an opportunity to contact many different parties, each having the potential to influence the situation indirectly. In some cases a government might use its own communication experts to influence a mission's impression of Indonesia's commitment to the peace process.
personnel from the foreign ministry and military liaisons to deal with UNAMET and the international community.

"Now that was a two-edged sword, with advantages and disadvantages. It was partly there to handle us, but in some cases it did act to facilitate our communication, and probably more than that - because those were people who had been trained in the international community, and probably more than that - because those were people who had been trained in the international community.

**Box 4.2: Mission language skills**

The ability of international personnel to speak local languages can be a crucial asset. Past mission practice has been erratic: if the local language was English, Spanish or French, a mission might benefit from fairly high levels of proficiency among its expatriates, but most others depended on local translators. Language allows for intervention and, without it, you can't really hear the other side and you don't get the nuances of a situation. Local translators are not always reliable, mission staff cannot ascertain their quality, and in any case the interaction is unnatural and inhibited. As a general principle, the usefulness of international field officers increases dramatically in relation to their local language skills.
Diplomatic communications can be carried out by a single institution or jointly. When multiple institutions show up together at meetings and project a similar protection message, the impact can be much greater, while the political risk to each individual institution is lessened.

One subtle way to transmit a protection message in contacts with authorities and armed groups is simply to ask questions about civilian safety. Such curiosity links the specific programs of an institution with a more general concern about civilian security. Similarly, a humanitarian mission—regardless of its specific programs—should always express visible concern for the safety of its own staff and those of its local partners. However, the mission should also link this concern to civilian safety overall, by calling attention to the programmatic resources and other support provided by the institution and how it is relevant to the protection of civilians.

The communication strategies described in this chapter require analytical, political, and diplomatic skills. Specifically, mission staff must be able to:

- Identify a range of actors—including broader governmental and local authorities—and develop clear, specific protection messages that must be adaptable and defensible. These messages should be adapted to the experience and expectations of each actor.
- Develop and adopt clear, consistent messages that are understood by each of these actors.
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Summary

Individual initiatives are lessened, and diplomatic efforts are lessened. However, the impact can be much greater, while the political risk to each institution is lessened. Diplomatic communications can be carried out by a single institution or jointly.
create a culture of respect, transparency, mutual consultation and open handling of accusations

master different communication techniques, such as direct pressure, indirect pressure, humour, politeness, humility, praise and stressing mutual objectives.

This is a tall order, and every field officer cannot be expected to be a master diplomat — such a combination would normally be necessary recruitment for large missions. But it is exactly because these skills are complex and difficult that the institution needs to emphasise them in training and in ongoing field practice. Every field officer can improve their interpersonal skills in reaching and in maintaining high practice. Every field officer can improve the protocol line for every situation, but they can learn a great deal from others if the mission commits to helping them.

create a culture of respect, transparency, mutual consultation and open handling of accusations
They [the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission] need a larger force. They are too far from incidents. They can’t get there fast enough. They need to be more available. When they are close by, there is kind of a guilty feeling: “We might get caught by the monitors.” This is not so strong if they are too far away.

A mission should visibly project both political power and moral authority. International concern has to be considered in their political calculations. In essence, a mission’s presence in a war zone, every sight of the mission reminds observers that the communities have friends in high places. This alone in itself generates a level of protection because what it says is, “These communities are not alone. They have friends in high places.”

For the communities this [visibility] generates a reflected protection. Why? Because the simple fact that they see a UN vehicle travelling the roads, through the villages, through zones of high conflict – the simple fact that one of these blue vests is going to go ask after the local troop commander – this alone in itself generates a level of protection because what it says is, “These communities are not alone. These communities have friends in high places.”
The UN missions studied in El Salvador (ONUSAL), Guatemala (MINUGUA), Haiti (MICIVIH) and East Timor (UNAMET) each created a visible ‘aura’ that affected the national consciousness immediately. Interviewed for this book, an officer of the Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) described its presence as complete saturation.

“We were visible 24/7. Driving through every single village. No locale was off-limits. When something happened we could set in motion an immediate response.”

KVM officer

It costs money to project such visibility, requiring offices, vehicles and people – and ideally rapid deployment of these to make an impact. Slow deployment has hampered many missions, forcing them to recuperate from an initially weak image in order to build confidence among civilians. This dual audience can cause a dilemma at times – it might seem strategic to emphasise meetings and contact with government and military officials, at the expense of visits to civil-society groups or rural villages. If a mission locates its office in the richest part of town, close to facilities and circles of power, it may be much less approachable or accessible.

Mission visibility is intended to sustain constant concern in the minds of abuser parties, and also to build confidence among civilians. This can quickly become a source of resentment if the mission needs to overcome the temptation or imposed restrictions that limit its visibility to certain less dangerous areas. Security concerns should of course be a key factor in planning geographic projection of mission visibility. The mission therefore needs good security analysis based fundamentally on detailed political analysis of the changing conflict dynamics in each region. (See also Chapter 10 on security challenges.)

In Darfur, for instance, the vast majority of international attention and visibility was situated around larger towns and IDP camps, with very minimal presence if any in smaller towns and villages. The mission therefore needs good security analysis based on detailed political analysis of the changing conflict dynamics in each region. (See also Chapter 10 on security challenges.)

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Visible reactions at decisive moments

If a particularly difficult situation arises, there is a call from the civilian population for help or presence, the willingness and speed with which the international mission responds has important consequences not only for protective impact but also for building trust and credibility. MICIVIH, KVM and UNAMET, for example, showed the Haitian, Albanian, and Timorese population that they were ready and willing to respond to urgent calls, go to dangerous places and intervene quickly to try to protect. On the other hand, if a mission’s response is too slow or too-often negative, refusing aid because it is ‘outside our mandate’, the trust in the mission felt by threatened groups and communities will be damaged. This creates a dilemma for many missions – especially in settings of frequent crises and limited human resources – because the desire to build up longer-term commitments or projects can legitimately constrain the resources available for crisis response. High-profile events also create high expectations of results, and a mission must take special care not to make promises it cannot keep, nor to respond instinctively to a situation unless it has a commitment and capacity for follow-up. Such crises are nevertheless moments when a very focused and intense, short-term use of presence can have a particularly notable protective impact, sending a powerful and memorable signal of solidarity to the victims. Unfortunately, mission decisions to reduce visibility may also affect protection – negatively. The most notorious example is the UN decision to reduce its presence in Rwanda at the beginning of the genocide, the clear message of impunity and encouragement to the genocide perpetrators. This dynamic can arise in much smaller and subtler ways; therefore, whenever a mission decides to reduce or move its presence in a given area, it should carefully consider the possible negative messages of these decisions.

Each mission should consider a wide variety of mechanisms for visibility, and use each according to how it fits into its broader strategy and according to current security considerations. Four possible mechanisms include: the installation of regional or local offices, the use of special visits or commissions, direct accompaniments and encouragement to the population to act. Unfortunately, mission decisions to reduce visibility may also affect protection – negatively. The most notorious example is the UN decision to reduce its presence in Rwanda at the beginning of the genocide, sending a clear message of impunity and encouragement to the genocide perpetrators. This dynamic can arise in much smaller and subtler ways; therefore, whenever a mission decides to reduce or move its presence in a given area, it should carefully consider the possible negative messages of these decisions.
ment of threatened individuals or groups, and the use of a humanitarian-assistance function as protective visibility. Each of these is discussed in turn in the next four sections. (Chapter 8, Public advocacy, looks at other strategies also related to visibility, including use of the media.)

Deploying regional or local offices

The research findings were unequivocal that a field mission has a greater influence on protection if it can deploy its staff to the maximum in zones of conflict, making itself accessible to the population and to all levels of authority, and with the mobility for staff visits to any locality quickly. ONUSAL, MINUGUA, MICIVIH, HRFOR, KVM and UNAMET all deployed the majority of their staff to regional offices throughout the country. SLMM and OHCHR/Colombia, with fewer resources, still put an emphasis on field offices. A mission sub-office is a microcosm of the national presence, and has more direct and daily contact with regional or local authorities and greater access to more communities, also being able to make prompt local responses.

When a mission functions only in the capital, the middle echelons of power have less need to pay attention. But when regional or local commanders know they will get regular visits from the mission next door, and the local communities know that this office is only a few hours away if they need help, the opportunities increase dramatically for all the communication interventions described in the previous chapter. Agencies intervening directly with the LTTE in cases of abduction or forced recruitment, for instance, stressed that the closer they were to the local events, the greater their success rate in freeing people.

A deputy director of the local office of HRFOR noted, for instance, how different the conflict dynamics were from one region of Rwanda to another, and how different the relationship of local actors. HRFOR staff, for instance, stressed how different the conflict dynamics were from one region of Rwanda to another.

"The worst thing that could happen would be for the UN to ignore the war."

Colombian civil-society lawyer

Even with limited resources, missions have developed sub-office strategies. SLMM compensated for its limited size by establishing part-time ‘Point of Contact’ offices in communities where it was not permanently stationed, making weekly visits to these offices to receive complaints and reports. Where there are multiple international or local offices in a conflict area, the mission must develop a clearly defined role and function. KVM, UNAMET and HRFOR, for instance, have repeatedly stressed that all international and local actors involved in a conflict must clarify their role and the nature of their intervention. Each of these must be clearly defined in terms of what it can and cannot do. The local mission has to be much better positioned to establish a local presence that can better influence...
Short visits, special commissions or delegations

Civil-society groups and others vehemently criticise missions that install themselves in a region but are then virtually invisible, missing opportunities because of bureaucratic decisions to stay indoors. In Colombia, for instance, the most common request to every international mission was that they get out to rural areas more, and visit more communities. A visit by an international mission to an isolated region sends a message to perpetrators. It thus opens spaces and encourages local action. These visits might be carried out independently by the field mission, or on a multi-partite basis. Sometimes the participation of an international mission can allow multi-party investigatory commissions to go where national actors would not otherwise venture. This facilitates visits by government officials to regions that, because of guerrilla presence, they had previously considered off-limits. Well-timed visits may even significantly alter civilian choices.

"After a grave event, the fact that a commission goes and pays attention — this is a very important factor for a community, encouraging them not to just flee and displace themselves."

Civil society representative, Colombia

Chapter 5: Conscious visibility

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES
Mission visits may well provide the only access local people have to a mission or to the international community. Many people cannot easily travel to the area or even the provincial capital to make a report, as such trips are often impossible for logistical, financial or security reasons. In some cases in Colombia, mobility was so controlled by armed groups that villagers could not travel at all, and the only time they saw outsiders was during such mission visits.

Proper follow-up to such visits is essential. Unfortunately, in particularly intense conflicts, sporadic visits may increase local vulnerabilities and fears. In Colombia, for instance, many respondents stressed the need for follow-up, sustained presence, or at least frequent regular visits to communities. If a mission intends to intervene in a delicate situation it should be ready to keep in touch, in order to reduce risks of repetition of the pre-visit problem or of reprisals resulting from the visit. It also needs to demonstrate that it will do something. Local people are often willing to bear some level of risk if they believe their interaction with the mission has a chance of helping.

"Sometimes we don’t even know ourselves what happens after these visits… People want to know how much lobbying resulted, what impact they had in terms of transforming the political situation, and in terms of protection."

International aid agency representative, Colombia

In situations of widespread abuse, a mission will never have the resources to visit every community in need. It must prioritize according to which visits are likely to have the greatest potential to protect the greatest number of people, and according to which will most effectively promote the mission’s national protection strategy.

Direct accompaniment

Direct accompaniment is a highly targeted and labour-intensive method of protective presence, aimed at protecting particularly threatened individuals, communities, or organizations. It involves literally walking or travelling with a threatened individual, living in threatened communities, or being based at the location of a threatened activity or organizational office. The impact is the same in principle as other protective presence; but much more focused. Accompaniment exclusively identifies and profiles the threats faced by the threatened individual or community, and takes action to protect them.
protected person or group, saying loudly, in effect, 'Don't touch this one!' Because close or regular accompaniment of specific people or groups is so labour-intensive, it is usually reserved for cases of very high risk, or people whose survival is perceived as critical to broader strategies—such as high-profile civil-society leaders, exemplary community efforts or key witnesses in a delicate legal case. The political motivation and recognition of the personal stake of each case and the political presentation and narratives of the potential actors, along with the security needs of each site’s personnel, require a careful analysis of the security needs of each case.

Peace Brigades International has rigorously developed this tool, offering daily accompaniment to many threatened civil-society activists, or having its volunteers living in vulnerable communities that are developing new strategies to confront conflict. Numerous personnel of other missions also cited examples, including accompaniment of complainants or witnesses in sensitive rights cases, staying overnight in IDP camps or with recently resettled refugees, or hosting and living in safe-houses for victims of sexual violence. Humanitarian agencies sometimes use partner relationships to facilitate a subtle level of direct accompaniment in threatened communities where they have assistance projects. The ICRC accompanies joint medical missions into conflict zones, providing protection to more vulnerable national medical groups while also collaborating in the medical task.

‘This raises our profile a great deal. Because to go to a village with the United Nations gives us a high level of protection. Especially because the UN has such close relationships with the state and carries such respect.’

Human-rights lawyer, Colombia

Accompanying threatened groups can be both politically and physically risky, but it has demonstrably saved lives and sustained organisations and communities. Guatemalan refugees, for instance, refused to return from Mexico until they got the Guatemalan government to agree to allow them direct accompaniment in every resettled village—which was provided by dozens of international NGOs and local groups. Government officials, who were accustomed to working away from the government, confirmed that the process restored refugees’ trust in the government’s commitment to their rights. Numerous groups in conflict areas attest that their survival would have been in doubt without the direct presence of international organisations. This would have been double or quadruple the work for international and national partners. While the goal of international NGOs is to work with local communities to build a high level of protection, especially in situations where the UN has a visible presence, the local context is important. Humanitarian organisations of other missions often work in the same communities and consult with local volunteers to develop new strategies to confront groups. Human rights organisations have developed new strategies to confront armed groups, often working in close cooperation with the ICRC. These efforts are fostering a new culture of protection in a number of countries in the region; legal cases are being brought to bear on groups and armed forces.

Chapter 5: Conscious visibility

Human Right Lawyer, Colombia

No one should be required to do this work without the consent of the person or group they are protecting, and without a clear agreement as to the form, level and extent of protection they need. The consent of the person being accompanied, or in the case of a group, the group’s leadership, is essential. The person being accompanied should feel free to access services and information, as well as to make independent decisions. The person or group being accompanied should also be able to determine the level and extent of protection they need, and should have access to legal advice and support. The person or group being accompanied should also have access to medical care, education and other services, as well as to information and support. The person or group being accompanied should also have access to legal advice and support. The person or group being accompanied should also have access to medical care, education and other services, as well as to information and support.

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resources it requires. It takes a lot of people to offer intensive accompaniment to even a small number of organisations or communities, and there will always be many more in need than could ever be accompanied. While it is an important part of the tool kit of a protective presence, there are limits to the number of people who can be accompanied. That is where the resource-limited problem is also a numbers problem: how many people can you deploy? How much security and protection can you offer and to whom? How can you offer security and protection that is meaningful, effective and useful? The answer seems to be a mixture of direct and indirect accompaniment, with a careful balance between the two. Direct accompaniment functions can be an important part of the tool kit, but they also need to be used strategically and sparingly.

Humanitarian presence and visibility

Humanitarian assistance and visibility

Humanitarian needs assessments can also be key opportunities for international presence. When you go into a particular zone to protect a community, and then help them rebuild a school, you can go back every week to see how the school is doing. This gives you the justification to travel through zones the UN was not passing through before, through checkpoints and all. We get a sustained contact with the community, and hear their concerns. UNHCR representative in Colombia

Humanitarian needs assessments can also be key opportunities for international presence.
ships, and that the partners will be supported politically by major international players such as the World Food Programme or other UN agencies, this knowledge becomes a political factor in their calculations about how to treat the communities and partners concerned. Implementing such a projection of power through partners may require some careful consideration of 'labelling' – how partners identify themselves and their relationships with sponsoring international agencies.

Personnel from partner agencies should also be offered training in how to manage and communicate this relationship when working in the field.

Summary

A field mission that successfully projects itself visibly throughout a conflict territory should seldom be asked, ‘Who are you?’ People should have seen the mission before, heard about its visits elsewhere, known people who have been to its sub-offices, or been told by their boss to pay attention to its visits. Of course, a mission cannot be everywhere at all times, so it must prioritise its visibility and movements according to their potential to protect the greatest number of people, and according to their usefulness in achieving the overall objectives of the presence.

Key methods for achieving effective visibility include:

- developing other institutionalised mechanisms of presence, such as regular points of contact and scheduled rounds
- responding rapidly to crisis situations with visible visits showing solidarity and concern
- deploying sub-offices throughout the territory, where they can be seen and visited
- ensuring regular visits to conflict-prone rural areas, and guaranteeing follow-up to prevent reprisals
- when necessary and feasible, providing direct accompaniment for persons
- carrying out regular visits to conflict-prone rural areas, and guaranteeing follow-up
- responding rapidly to crisis situations with visible visits showing solidarity and concern
- developing other institutionalised mechanisms of presence, such as regular points of contact and scheduled rounds
ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT
Many groups would disappear from fear without this monitoring.

Colombian NGO lawyer

Civilians are not merely the beneficiaries of international efforts for protection. They are protagonists in their own protection. A field mission's efforts, therefore, should both complement and strengthen civil society's capacity to develop its own strategies for addressing abuses. This will include using protective presence to help people overcome their fears about civic activism, supporting communities and organizations in mobilizing to promote protection objectives, and confronting the polarisation and stigma that isolate and paralyse targeted social groups.

A profound lack of protection often reveals something seriously wrong with the relationship between a government and its people - that the people do not have the organisational capacity or power to control their own government. This is a problem of protection that requires some kind of intervention.

...and violence. Unprotected communities are much more vulnerable to manipulation through fear, intimidating communities, encouraging communities, in certain situations and context. Hence, some of the most impressive cases of standing up to terror, for instance, come from well-organized, cohesive communities. Effective strategies for confronting situations where these efforts are utilized are essential in any serious strategies for communities. Where solutions are found through collective action, these sorts of efforts often provide the means for addressing abuses. This will require new processes of intervention that build on existing structures in local communities and societies, culminating in local solutions. The role of international efforts, therefore, is not merely to provide the benefits of international efforts for protection...
with the state. Otherwise, reforms within the government or attitude changes among abusers may not last.

The political-space model described in Chapter 2 above shows how civilian actions are constrained by both repression and fear. This is a self-reinforcing process, because any restrictions on public or organised action limit the capacity of a community or society to respond to or sanction abusers. In short, violence inhibits the community's ability to protect itself, and a field mission should seek to counteract this. Conversely, each courageous action by civilians that confronts these inhibitions has a collectively reinforcing effect, pushing away the constraints that others perceive to be limiting their actions.

"Here, nothing will happen to you as long as you don't say anything."

Campesino from Urabá, Colombia

In some communities in conflict zones, fears are so great that people will not speak of them, and civil society cannot organise a response. In such situations the international community may be the only factor that enables people to talk about their problems and to seek solutions.

"We should be thinking more about joint missions, where the stronger organisations bring a presence that carries protection to local and national groups, but at the same time these national groups bring their experience and knowledge and capacity—which in itself really protects the international presence." International monitor, Colombia

Reversing stigma and isolation

Communities or sectors of society are especially in need of protection and encouragement if they have been stigmatised and isolated by the stereotypes of abuser groups or the dynamics of the conflict. For instance, in Colombia, civilians in a conflict zone are routinely suspected of 'collaboration' with the armed party in control of the territory. Each time territorial control shifts, these suspicions can have deadly consequences.

But those who have experienced these suspicions can have deep emotional scars. In the aftermath of the conflict, the Community Action Team identified grass-roots organisations to work with communities, particularly those that had been isolated.

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genocide and support for the insurgency. The Guatemalan Army carried out systematic public disinformation campaigns to convince local residents that refugees returning from Mexico were all guerrillas. Displaced people are often automatically suspected of being politically responsible for their misfortune, while union activists and members of human-rights NGOs are routinely labelled ‘guerillas’ or ‘terrorists’.

Chapter 6: Active encouragement and empowerment

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES

Box 6.1: Case examples of encouragement and civil-society relationships

MINUGUA had conscious strategies for strengthening civil society, and used its rural presence to encourage local groups. These groups in turn developed strategies to use the mission’s presence, inviting it to events and key meetings, or advocating for mission investigations.

In 1993–94, repression forced most Haitian activists into hiding, notwithstanding the MONTRH presence. Although the mission appreciated the value of civil society’s pressure on the state, it feared that the local people’s expectations were beyond its ability to fulfill them.

In Rwanda, encouragement of civil-society organizing by the mission appears to have been limited to a few NGOs in the capital, as mission personnel perceived rural civil society as too weakly organized to create an effective partnership.

In 1998–99, the ethnic Albanian population saw KVM as an ally, but the mission was not there long enough to strengthen civil-society capacity.

While the international presence in Darfur had been active in supporting NGOs, it was noted that the mission’s support for civil society had been less effective.

SLMM did not regard the strengthening of civil-society capacity as falling within its mandate. Many local respondents voiced high levels of disillusionment with the mission’s perceived distance from civil-society groups, and urged it to develop closer links.

OHCHR and MINUGUA were working closely, and their relationship was often praised. However, OHCHR’s presence in Colombia was described as firm and engaged in countless joint activities. In fact, encouragement is a two-way process, as human-rights groups pointed out that the OHCHR presence itself is in part the result of years of civil-society pressure on the state and the international community.
These stigmatising stereotypes are resilient – once in people's minds they don't go away easily. An international mission can set a counter-example by its own behaviour, making contact with isolated and stigmatised groups, and finding opportunities to break down the stereotypes:

"These communities were completely stigmatised, and the UN visits helped confront this. These visits were important even though they were short. In 1997, they verified the collaboration of paramilitaries and police with civilian groups. In fact, the paramilitaries directly threatened the commission. But the commission helped open up people's voices."  
— Colombian church worker.

Problems in mission relationships with civilians

Problems in mission relationships with civilians can sometimes arise from a lack of good intentions or from a genuine desire to respond respectfully to civilian needs. A good relationship:

- Encourages open communication between the mission and the communities.
- Ensures that the mission is responsive to the needs of the communities.
- Provides support for the well-being of the mission.
- Acknowledges and respects the cultural diversity of the communities.
- Is open to feedback and willing to learn from the communities.

Problems in mission relationships with civilians can arise from:

- Civilian perceptions of pro-government bias, due to technical and political relationships with ministries.
- Lack of transparency – the appearance of secrecy can provoke distrust.
- Excessively rigid or bureaucratic responses to civilian requests.
- Cultural insensitivity.
- Inability to speak the local language.
- Alienating statements or behaviour by mission staff, showing apparent contempt for local civil society.
- Violation of local ethical standards and codes of conduct (for example, visiting brothels, excessive drinking, dating local people).
- Poor analysis, raising doubts about the mission's capacity to help.
- Neglectful treatment of information and sources.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their activists, allowing them to absorb the activists into a high-paid role in the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their engagement and resources.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their independence, allowing them to become dependent on the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their capacity to help.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their voice in the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their rights to participate in the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their influence over the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their power to influence the mission.
- Depleting civil-society organisations of their ability to influence the mission.
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- Depleting civil-society organisations of their capacity to influence the mission.
Perhaps worse of all, international organisations sometimes absorb and repeat stigmatising stereotypes against domestic groups or communities, either through carelessness or as a result of trusting biased sources of information. Given the perceived ‘neutral’ credibility of institutions concerned, careless repetition of stereotypes can be particularly damaging. All too often, international personnel repeat government suspicions of local NGOs, or allege links to a guerrilla movement. An international mission should ensure that its formal and informal messages do not unconsciously exacerbate the stigmatisation and isolation of certain groups. If other international organisations engage in such stereotyping, they should be confronted and urged to change their approach.

When [they] refuse to talk with us, saying, “I can’t have a relationship with you because of our neutrality”… this sends a signal that they believe we have links with the guerrillas, and this signal puts us in danger.’

Local NGO lawyer

Encouragement without raising false expectations

Unless encouragement is linked to a real improvement in security, a mission can encourage excessive risk-taking. Local activists interviewed for this book reported that, under the stress they face, they often cannot pay careful enough attention to security precautions, and that a useful role of an international presence would be to help them learn security skills, for example through workshops. An international presence cannot use ‘non-substitution’ or ‘local empowerment’ as an excuse to renounce core responsibilities, or fail to take practical steps to improve security. And, when a mission does not take enough attention to the dangerous circumstances under which they are located, it can undermine the potential interventions of local organisations. For the book’s examples of successful encouragement (encouraging democratic movements to hold safe elections or human rights defenders to undertake dangerous investigations), a mission can only succeed if it is capable of providing robust support to local groups and individuals in danger.
where it felt that its protective impact was not significant enough to justify the risk to its staff. The mission first pulled out of all the provinces, and then held on in Dili until a military intervention was mandated, and until it could evacuate the national staff and IDPs hiding in its compound. Here, the UN policy of encouragement – firmly supported by the leadership of Timorese civil society – arguably increased civilian vulnerability to subsequent massacres. Some argue that UNAMET should never have made such an unequivocal promise, since it could not guarantee the protection implied. In contrast, subsequent feedback from Timorese activists shows that encouragement was a worthwhile risk, given that it helped to end an occupation that had already cost tens of thousands of Timorese lives.

Box 6.2: A key national actor – the Catholic Church in Latin America

In all the Latin American cases studied, the Church has been very active in protecting civilians. Although the state is the legal duty-bearer, the Church has been an unparalleled source of information, analysis and influence. In many countries, the Catholic Church has been able to maintain contact with all parties in conflict, and with communities throughout a territory. In some cases, Church involvement has featured the top institutional hierarchy, but even without such leadership, local priests and dioceses have actively protected civilians.

The Church is often the only national institution maintaining contact with all sides in a conflict. In these situations, the Church has been a source of information, analysis and influence, and has often needed international protection. Missions should make a special effort to understand such influential institutions and assess whether they need a special protection presence.

Encouragement is thus a complex issue – who decides how far to go? A mission should, of course, never actively encourage excessive risk-taking by civilians, nor overstate its own protective value. But civilians will make their own choices about whether to feel encouraged by a presence, and which risks to take. An international mission cannot stop local people from choosing to take risks, and arguably shouldn't even if it could. In the face of repression and conflict, risk-taking is essential to any process of change.
The mission needs to ask at every turn: who in civil society is affected by this problem? Who is already taking action (or should be) on this problem? What alliances and collaborations are going to move us forward towards a solution? What is the best role for this mission within this broader context?

A mission should encourage complementary strategies by other actors, both international and national. The concept of proactive presence is by no means reserved for the international community: reputable national institutions (religious, professional, civic) can also use their status to protect weaker and more isolated groups. A field mission, therefore, can encourage influential members of society such as business owners, entertainers, diplomats, clergy and others to engage in protective presence and advocacy, or can encourage the presence of high-ranking officials or local celebrities at events relating to people at risk. The mission should generally use its clout both by giving direct protective coverage and also by encouraging and supporting local protection efforts.

There is a variety of steps a mission can take to pursue these objectives:

- Include civil-society sources in information-gathering, and local advisers in analysis, where appropriate.
- Develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of local civil-society organisations and support their building and strengthening.
- Never settle for the simplistic analysis that there is no organised civil society to engage with; keep looking.
- Provide protective presence as needed for vulnerable or stigmatised communities.
- Develop mechanisms or platforms to involve civil society directly in the mission’s work.
- Develop mechanisms for regular dialogue with key civil-society groups.
- Pay attention to how mission behaviour can strengthen or damage civilian trust.
- Control expectations through transparent dialogue with civilian groups, in order to avoid excessive risk-taking.
- Consider organising joint missions with local and national groups.
- Support civil-society efforts, both grassroots and professional, that contribute to human rights and protection.
- Offer skills-building support on security and protection, international law, human rights, and other topics.

Summary

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CONVENING AND BRIDGING
You need to open spaces that bring together communities or NGOs who

convene activists have a protection function when they do not yield any

Chapter 7: Convening and bridging

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the state or armed group, their credibility and thus their quota of protection increases, as this relationship symbolises a political cost to anyone who might consider an attack against this person or group.

Subtle, low-intensity bridging

Shuttle diplomacy

Simply having relationships with multiple parties opens up opportunities to transmit concerns and seek solutions, without even bringing the parties together. As one Colombian NGO activist explained, ‘The fact that the OHCHR sustains close relationships with NGOs and communities — this also builds confidence with state functionaries, assuring them that we are not all their enemies. We are more able to talk.

Field officers from the Human Rights Mission for Rwanda (HRFOR) set up desks inside prisons and established direct relationships with prisoners. But these same officers were regularly meeting and socialising with prison officials, building up a rapport. This rapport opened up many opportunities for the effective transmission of concern to prison officials and for seeking solutions together. Given the tragic prison conditions, every incremental change or early release had life-saving potential.

In some polarised situations, this ‘shuttle diplomacy’ is recognised explicitly by the parties involved. Sri Lankan police and civilians alike pointed out that they had no channel for talking to the LTTE guerrillas, and they respected the role of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) as a formal go-between in local situations where communication was essential to defuse tensions.

‘With the armed forces it has been difficult for us, as there is a lot of tension between civil-society groups and the armed forces. But they [the UN] have played the role of intermediaries. We speak to the OHCHR office, then between civil-society groups and the armed forces. But they [the LTTE] haven’t spoken to them. This is a problem. When we are not able to talk, sometimes we cannot hear each other and the communication channel is not open. This is a problem,”

Civil-society lawyer in Medellín, Colombia

Getting more voices heard

Civil-society groups often face a situation where they cannot get any audience with the state or with an armed group; or if they do achieve such audiences, all they receive are accusations of subversive activities, and they may be labelled as traitors by their own communities for trying to communicate with ‘the enemy’. UNHCR protection officers in Sri Lanka recounted numerous examples of bringing the voices of non-governmental organisations or human rights groups to the UN, for whom this was an opportunity for finding a productive dialogue. The OHCHR has an important role in bridging the gap between those seeking solutions and those who could provide them, often opening up a first opportunity for a productive dialogue.

Proactive Presence

Civil-society lawyer in Medellín, Colombia

Consider an example of this process of bridging.

increases in the preferences of armed groups to engage with the UNHCR, the OHCHR, and the states engaged with them. This is often facilitated through the OHCHR’s role in bringing different parties together and seeking solutions.

Shuttle diplomacy

Consider an example of this process of bridging.
Likewise, for state authorities, an international mission’s willingness to maintain contact with civil-society groups gives these groups a credibility that makes state authorities more willing to listen. As one civil-society representative explained to a field worker, ‘If you will bring this issue up at the meeting, then I will be able to talk about it.’ When it works, groups, previously ignored, finally feel their voices are heard. Over time this can evolve into a real dialogue, to some extent humanising a polarised situation.

Bringing a guest

Doors tend to open for an international mission, and sometimes the mission can usher other people through. It can recommend to civil-society groups that they invite officials to collaborate on initiatives. Or it can bring civil-society voices into greater contact with state mechanisms. For instance, support for Rule of Law programmes can encourage the involvement of legal experts from within national civil society, thus allowing a technical-support relationship to develop. It can also support initiatives that encourage greater collaboration between civil-society and state mechanisms. For instance, after a government official participates in such a trip, it is much easier for citizen groups to initiate legal cases against the state authorities. And it can create a permanent relationship between civil-society actors and law enforcement and can encourage greater collaboration and communication.

The experience of working together (as described in Chapter 5) can be particularly useful.

Multi-party delegations

More intensive and structured convening

Multi-partite delegations

The technique of making visits (as described in Chapter 5) can be particularly useful.

Multi-party delegations

More intensive and structured convening

Chapter 7: Convening and bridging
Convening meetings and discussions

An international presence can sometimes defuse polarisation just enough to create a neutral space where moderate leaders can be heard and find some common ground to quell tension. These might be informal or confidential meetings, or larger consultations where different voices share the floor. In the east of Sri Lanka, for instance, both the SLMM and the NGO Nonviolent Peace Force proactively convened Tamil and Muslim community leadership when communal violence broke out, effectively preventing escalation. In Darfur, respondents described a unique and reconciliatory gathering of African and Arab nomad sheikhs, convened and accompanied by an international agency’s protection officers. Such consultations and accompanying events can be difficult, controversial and sometimes disillusioning, but they can also move the parties towards some real progress. Conversely, an international presence can be helpful. Conversely, such meetings might be brought by different actors under different rules, or even in different countries. The responsible party might enforce or negotiate and address the concerns of civilians. The experience of field missions in different cases across various inter-sectoral working groups, thematic commissions and other structures shows that proactive engagement with the local community can build trust and relationships. And it can also help to address the concerns of civilians.

Workshops

Skills workshops, in addition to their capacity-building impact, can be mechanisms for bridge-building and also protection. For example, in Colombia, a workshop facilitated by the OHCHR mission in 2015 helped to build trust between the police and civilian activists. In the case of a Colombian issue, a workshop provided a platform for police and civilians to exchange ideas and develop strategies that could benefit civilians. Such workshops can also serve as a mechanism for developing joint initiatives, in addition to their capacity-building impact.

Long-term joint initiatives

Various inter-sectoral working groups, thematic commissions and other structures have facilitated joint initiatives, in which different parties accept responsibility for working together and addressing the concerns of civilians. The Colombian case study was particularly rich with examples of these initiatives over the years. These joint-working experiences can be difficult, controversial and sometimes disillusioning, but they can also move the parties towards some real progress. Conversely, an international presence can be helpful. Conversely, such meetings might be brought by different actors under different rules, or even in different countries. The responsible party might enforce or negotiate and address the concerns of civilians. The experience of field missions in different cases across various inter-sectoral working groups, thematic commissions and other structures shows that proactive engagement with the local community can build trust and relationships. And it can also help to address the concerns of civilians.

Proactive Presence

And the ability to address for vulnerable groups, some police actors are committed to setting the tone and standards. And the OHCHR mission has played a key role in the eyes of the police. For example, in overlooking a particular initiative, the police have taken note of the OHCHR mission’s role and have been working closely with the mission on various issues. The OHCHR mission has also worked with the police on specific issues, such as youth and drug problems. These kind of relationships have been established, and the OHCHR mission has helped to sensitise the police on these issues. In addition to organizing police training and outreach, the OHCHR mission has also worked with the police on specific issues, such as youth and drug problems. These kind of relationships have been established, and the OHCHR mission has helped to sensitise the police on these issues.
Here at the regional level it has been possible [due to OHCHR presence] to organise working groups and discussion with the Fiscalia, with the head of the Procuraduria, the interior ministry and the mayor’s office. This has worked very well, enabling us to overcome many misunderstandings.

In this line of work there is sometimes a tendency to believe that all who work for the state are the enemy, and for them to think that everyone in social organisations is the enemy as well.

The field officer involved in this initiative stressed that the impact is only seen over time. ‘We’ve met every two weeks – for over two years now. It requires constant nourishment and mutual learning. Now we are starting to see results. I am certain there are some actions of the army… that finally after being dealt with by this committee have resulted in some investigations. There are constant meetings about concrete problems and situations.’

Joint mechanisms for early warning and prevention

In some cases, a field mission can help to create structures intended to identify escalating situations that will adversely affect civilian communities and mobilise a preventive and protective response by multiple actors. These early-warning structures bring together government, civil society and international players to diagnose local risks, produce timely reports and recommend preventive action by the authorities.

Joint mechanisms have been disappointing in some cases, however. Activists for IDP rights, Colombia

We spent two years working out a protocol with UN, the government, the ICRC and the Church, on protection of communities at risk. We had hoped to produce timely reports and recommend preventive action by the authorities. In academic terms, it’s an excellent work, but of no use in practice, because the government has impeded its implementation.

In other cases, joint mechanisms have been successful in bringing together government, civil society and international players to diagnose local risks, produce timely reports and recommend preventive action by the authorities. In some cases, joint mechanisms have been disappointing in others.

OHCHR field officer, Colombia

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Other mechanisms have integrated the efforts of the humanitarian community, both international and national. For instance, the negotiation of human rights agreements has traditionally been carried out by the government and international players. In some cases, joint mechanisms have been disappointing in others.

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to assistance has been an avenue for collaboration among Church, humanitarian, and protection actors, together with states and armed groups. These accords can establish ongoing monitoring mechanisms that sustain these connections.

A mission must, of course, take care not to raise unrealistic hopes in ineffective or co-opted mechanisms, because disillusionment can counteract the positive benefit of cooperation. However, when these efforts are even partially successful, they place international and governmental support on the policies of both states and armed groups, which, in turn, can diffuse the impacts of threats to the state's civilian security. They also bring together civil-society, religious, government and international actors who share an obligation or concern regarding civilian security.

**Box 7.1: Key government allies: the example of the Colombian Defensoría**

International intergovernmental missions in Colombia have provided substantial technical support to the Defensoría, an ombudsman-like body established by the government, as well as to a special human-rights branch of the Fiscalía (justice ministry) ostensibly devoted to prosecuting human-rights cases. This support is defended on the grounds that these institutions are promoting the rule of law, changing state behavior from within, and supporting reformers. In the absence of any progress towards a political solution in Colombia, however, such government mechanisms have made little difference to the near-total impunity that exists in Colombia for abuses against civilians. Members of staff within these institutions span the political spectrum from honest reformers to paramilitary allies. The few defensores who dare to challenge the paramilitary movement, or the army’s close link to it, are routinely harassed, driven into exile, removed from their positions or killed. Despite some honest prosecutors, the Fiscalía is accused of being politically co-opted, and it too has suffered threats and harassment.

In such settings, a close alliance with a governmental ally might be a delicate matter.

**Proactive Presence**
Some international institutions understand themself as an important bridge for an international mission. The mission can pull them into investigations, delegations and commissions; it can demand some level of accountability from these bodies. This interaction can help to bring potential allies within the state apparatus closer to the victims of abuse and to understanding their situation, and it can create channels of communication between victims and the state. At a minimum, calls for accountability can help bring to light the impotence or inaction of failed government mechanisms. And at best, active co-operation with honest reformers can create new structures and change institutional attitudes.

International bridging

Relationships between local actors and other international mechanisms and players also have a protection function, and again the unique position of an intergovernmental field mission can enable such relationships. A mission can facilitate interaction between influential international actors and local or national officials who have either a direct protection duty or who are possibly associated with abuses of civilians. These contacts are not only a reminder of the clout of the mission and the political costs of abuse, but they can also be a positive status symbol for the officials seen to be meeting important international figures. These contacts can help progressive functionaries inside abusive institutions to find additional international support for reform and legitimate protection efforts. For example, one creative technique for supporting promising reformers is to arrange to have them invited outside the country to international conferences, consultations and trainings, where they can make contact with influential international figures or delegates, gain exposure, and support for reform and protection efforts. For example, one careful selection of speakers can help to convey the importance of protection to these influential figures. These contacts can help to bring local officials into contact with other prominent international figures or delegates, who can also be a positive status symbol for the officials seen to be meeting important international figures.

Civil-society groups appreciate every possible chance to meet with special rapporteurs or other international figures or delegations visiting the country, and the field mission can and should facilitate this. A field mission can also facilitate civil contact with representatives of embassies – in capital cities, or when embassy staff travel to regions. An even stronger relationship can develop if the mission can facilitate visits by embassy officers and other intergovernmental representatives to the regions of conflict, where they can come into direct contact with communities and locally threatened groups. As before, every visible contact with these influential international actors adds to the political protection available to threatened groups.

Some international institutions understandably fear jeopardising their neutrality and will choose not to promote local groups publicly. If so, they can promote local groups privately and through their informal channels. The mission can encourage such channels by providing a mission can encourage such channels by providing

International bridging
in the field mission's interest, because external networks can carry out independent lobbying and advocacy in the international community, building up protection for the groups concerned. They can provide types of political support that are outside the mandate and capacity of a field mission, but that can have direct and complementary protective impact. And when these local groups have their own networks of support, they are less likely to need to call on the field mission when they are facing a crisis or threat. Furthermore, any increase in the level of international solidarity for civil-society groups may also yield an increase in international political support for the mission itself.

**Summary**

Convening and bridging strategies bring together polarised actors and facilitate dialogue between local or national actors and international players. These strategies require constant observation of these diverse interactions and sound political analysis in order to identify the right opportunities to improve relationships and give leverage to vulnerable civilian groups.

Mission staff should be trained in the strategic use of the whole array of bridging tools.

- Shuttle diplomacy – being in contact with polarised groups, or with both victims and perpetrators
- Enhancing the voice of marginalised groups
- Raising issues that can be dangerous for local groups to raise
- Organising multi-party delegations or investigations involving both civil society and government
- Organising multi-party delegations or investigations involving both civil society and government
- Engaging local-level actors in order to improve relationships and provide support for local level actors
- Engaging in order to improve the right opportunities to improve relationships and provide support for local level actors
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- Engaging in order to improve the right opportunities to improve relationships and provide support for local level actors
- Creating or supporting early-warning mechanisms that assemble representatives from government, civil society and the international community to diagnose local risks and identify preventive action
- Facilitating contact between local or national actors with influential international groups, including visiting delegations, rapporteurs, and the diplomatic corps
- Using programmes of direct technical assistance with the state to provide additional bridging opportunities with direct protection benefits.
All of these strategies draw on the unique credibility that an international presence can possess, a credibility that inspires confidence on the part of civil society while also opening doors of communication to armed parties and governments. This potential, when fully realised, can yield creative solutions for the protection of civilians.
PUBLIC
ADVOCACY
Public reporting and advocacy are perhaps the most traditional tools of protection. Public exposure is a political cost to an abuser, and public encouragement is an incentive for reform. Globally targeted advocacy by a field mission can increase the level of international political attention and pressure being applied by others, generating additional future political costs. These strategies are broadly acknowledged as powerful, though not all of the missions studied took full advantage of them. Yet even in the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), one of the least public of the missions studied, field officers pointed out, 'The only threat we have is to show the statistics'. ICRC respondents stressed the complementary value of other organisations' public approaches.

Every public strategy, whether it involves human-rights reporting, using the media or organising public events, has associated risks and drawbacks, which are evaluated differently by different institutions. Each mission will need to choose its own approach, according to its view of how best to contribute to protection in the given problem area. The concept of strategic sequencing discussed in Chapter 3 is important in planning work on public advocacy, as the solution to a short-term problem may not require high-level intervention. Each mission needs to be aware of different institutional mandates and their respective roles and priorities, which are often on different timelines. The concept of strategic sequencing assists in identifying the best timing and approach for different missions.

Chapter 8: Public advocacy

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES
When a combined message of multiple institutions might be stronger and more effective.

When using public advocacy, it is important to avoid the temptation to create a shock for its own sake. Information should not be released too early, after insufficient investigation, as this can affect the credibility of all future advocacy. The objective of the advocacy is not the headlines, but a concrete improvement in the situation, and each message should be crafted with this in mind.

Benefits and risks of public advocacy

The value of public advocacy and reporting

Careful public advocacy can enhance a mission’s protection of civilians in many ways:

- Sanctioning abusers through public exposure
- Giving positive reinforcement to reformist factions
- Establishing a mission as a credible authority on civilian-protection needs
- Setting the tone of national debate on civilian protection
- Helping to create appropriate expectations of the mission within the local population
- Reducing local suspicion and counterfeiting accusations of bias or hypocrisy
- Promoting awareness of protection needs and human rights
- Encouraging involvement of civil society in the promotion of protection
- Raising the profile of isolated groups and individuals in need
- Promoting awareness through publicity and media coverage

Risks of public advocacy

Public advocacy can, however, sometimes create friction and even result in retaliation. Missions considering these strategies also have to weigh the risks, including:

- Retaliation against the mission by accused armed actors, including threats, harassment or attacks that could limit the possibilities of implementing other protective strategies
- Stampeding innocent civilians, increasing the threat of human rights abuses
- Expulsion of the whole mission, or individual personnel being declared persona non grata

The value of public advocacy and reporting

Careful public advocacy can enhance a mission’s protection of civilians in many ways:
Strengthening international concern

Colombian civil-society activist

We have seen 20 years of recommendations that are never complied with. The only things that are ever complied with are those things associated with the greatest amount of international pressure.

Chapter 8: Public advocacy

A lack of information provided will or could reflect poorly on the international community to step up its commitment.

The protective impact of a local presence is enormous, but is greater if the local actors fear that their names might be showing up in international reports, potentially causing complaints from their superiors. A mission strategy can make this more probable through a variety of external mechanisms, including globally distributed reports, international media campaigns, direct lobbying with other governments or linkage to international legal mechanisms.

If this risk of exposure of abusers exists, it can serve as an incentive or subtle threat that can enhance all the communication and diplomatic efforts described in Chapter 4. In other words, a public-advocacy strategy is useful even when it is not.
The international community is missing a significant opportunity for both protection and support. Sometimes, international actors like to act as if they have access to ad-hoc, quick responses from international bodies, but in reality, many international field missions lack the necessary resources and support to make a real impact.

Box 8.1: Creating international political will

Creating international political will is a key role for international missions. In the missions studied, there were diverse approaches to international advocacy.

- **Haiti:** MICVILH's regular public reports helped to build international interest in a large-scale intervention in late 1994, even though the willingness to intervene had been missing during the crises of 1993.
- **Central America:** MINUGUA and ONUSAL used both regular public reporting and informal diplomatic communication to sustain an international critique of implementation of the peace agreements.
- **East Timor:** UNAMET bolstered international will sufficiently to assure continued pressure on Jakarta. Its risk-taking presence gave its messages legitimacy, making it difficult for the regime's propaganda to work.
- **Kosovo:** KJM exploited incidents in Kosovo to build international support for NATO's intervention.
- **Rwanda:** HRFOR provided regular briefings to the donor community in Kigali, but with little impact on overall support for the RPA government. When the RPA expelled the mission, there were no voices of protest from any major international player.
- **Colombia:** OHCHR-Colombia actively publicises reports and lobbies internationally, and the local international community is engaged in international advocacy.
- **Central Africa:** OHCHR-Central Africa provides reports and lobbies internationally, and the local international community supports this advocacy.
- **Sri Lanka:** OHCHR-Sri Lanka maintains diplomatic relationships in Colombo, but is only minimally engaged in international advocacy.
- **Darfur:** When various UN voices raised the alarm of near-genocide in Darfur in 2004, the pressure opened up access to a substantial field presence. More recently, many international field personnel have been wondering where the advocacy pressure has gone, and do not feel that they have access to ad-hoc, quick responses from international bodies.

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Proactive Presence
Fear of expulsion or reprisal

The fear of expulsion or loss of access commonly holds back organisations with a field presence from getting more actively involved in public advocacy and promoting greater international action. Some protection officers in Darfur noted a dynamic of ‘anticipatory obedience’, wherein the Sudanese government had effectively silenced advocacy with vague hints of sanctions affecting access, or simply by making advocates feel ‘pushy’. Some missions, including MICVH and HRFOR, have suffered expulsions, and their public reporting arguably contributed to this. Field officers were nonetheless quite proud of the times when their missions had been outspoken about abuses, at the risk of expulsion, and thought it was the right thing to do.

The fear of reprisal is often overstated. In our interviews in North and South Darfur, even NGOs that have been fairly vocal in their advocacy assert that although this may increase their risk of harassment, they did not see this significantly affecting their ability to deliver services. Although there were some incidents and examples of apparent closure of access, the connection between advocacy and losing access is generally very tenuous. The more common pressure faced by humanitarian organisations is the harassment of their staff. One observer referred to this as a ‘calibrated harassment’, a counter-strategy against the Sudanese government’s efforts to keep the peace in the country by maintaining a credible international presence.

A mission, always measuring the political space available to it, must take calculated risks. A host state will most often not want to suffer the political cost of expelling a credible international presence, despite having threatened to do so. Conversely, states are sometimes so interested in the image benefits of having an international presence that a mission might even use the threat of voluntary exit as a means to demand ‘meaningful presence or no presence’. This means that the parties must be ready to accept the cost of expelling a mission as a credible threat.

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In order to gain respect throughout the mission, the mission must be tough with waivers, conditions and disagreements, and that must be tough with waivers, conditions and disagreements. The mission must be tough with waivers, conditions and disagreements. The mission must be tough with waivers, conditions and disagreements.

Local civilian groups in Colombia, interviewed during a period when sources close to the government were hinting at expelling the UN, were nearly unanimous in their call for greater outspokenness by all international missions present. They felt it was worth taking some risk of expulsion, arguing that little would change in Colombia if the international community remained indifferent to the conflict.

Similarly, fear of reprisal against local contacts also forestalls public action, but committed local activists often see the risk as worth taking. As one Sri Lankan Muslim community leader replied, when asked whether more public SLMM action on complaints would put local complainants at greater risk, ‘As a community we are willing to face that risk. If nothing is public, people get more and more disillusioned.

A state will more often resort to a lesser reprisal, such as harassment, or quietly expelling individual mission members rather than an entire mission. Field personnel say that the inhibiting fear of being dubbed persona non grata, by getting too close to controversial protection issues, can result in a great lack of initiative, and that to avoid controversy, protection issues can result in a great lack of initiative.

A state may resort to blackmailing the mission or bluffing it by requesting the departure of one of the most active members of its team, for whatever reason, while underlining the virtues of the mission, its great work otherwise, etc., so as to create divisions within the mission. This is the mission’s balance of influence, as is the mission’s balance of influence, as is the mission’s balance of influence.

A state must refuse to be dictated to on its staffing policy by the host government – full stop. No professional and credible staff should be expelled individually, as these are the mission’s main contacts. The mission must refuse to be dictated to on its staffing policy by the host government – full stop. No professional and credible staff should be expelled individually, as these are the mission’s main contacts.

Proactive Presence
All staff need to be protected against these attempts – and know that as long as they are doing their professional duties, they will be protected by their own hierarchy. They absolutely need that support to keep morale up and, with it, the strength and courage to continue the struggle.

Closing the space for dialogue

Another thorny dilemma of public advocacy is that it can alienate key contacts and cut off dialogue with accused abusers. Chapters 4 and 7 argued that communication with the abuser institution is critical to protection, and that missions can even build enough trust to convene divergent groups and solve problems. These strategies require open channels of communication. ICRC respondents, for instance, often point out that the quality of dialogue necessary to achieve their objectives is difficult to sustain in parallel with active public criticism. Other agencies recount times when abuser groups ‘punished’ a mission for its public criticism by simply shutting the door for a while. More often than not, public criticism will galvanise those in the government who are aware that the reports were not only due to active criticism of the government by the Rwandan government for some of its public reporting and support. This perception of the Rwandan government for some of its public reporting and support, transparency and respect are important here. HRFOR, for instance, has managed to continue both public criticism and close relationships with both sides by establishing procedures before presenting results.透明度和尊重在这儿是重要的。例如，HRFOR曾经因公开报道而受到卢旺达政府的严厉批评，并因此同意对其报告进行审核，直到政府先审查其报告。这一做法被视为显示出尊重的同时也保护了该组织。建立持续和定期的接触机制有助于解决这些担忧，从而使问题能够得到讨论，而不是被搁置。

In some cases, the explicit protection goals of a mission may make it more practical. In other cases, protection opportunities may be described in more general terms. In both cases, the costs of losing protection may be high. In theory, public advocacy could have a net negative effect, if the protection benefits it produces are outweighed by the costs of losing other protection opportunities.

This is a powerful dilemma, because no one has yet proven empirically that one strategy produces better protective results than another. But some missions have managed to continue both public critique and close relationships with criticised parties. There are reasons, after all, why abusive actors tolerate or even want the mission there, and resulting diminished dialogue may often be temporary.

Transparency and respect are important here. HRFOR, for instance, was harshly criticised by the Rwandan government for some of its public reporting, and subsequently came to an agreement that its reports would not go public until the government reviewed them. This agreement meant that its reports could not be published until the government reviewed them. This agreement helped to maintain the respect and relationships that were needed to continue both public critique and close relationships with the Rwandan government. Establishing ongoing and regular processes for contact between the mission and authorities or armed groups can help. A ceasefire monitoring mission or complex peace presence, for instance, may have a clear political mandate to establish rapport with the parties. This objective requires an ongoing rapport that may appear to collide with the friction that can result from public criticism. It is important to maintain a particular set of relationships between the parties. This objective requires an ongoing rapport that may appear to collide with the friction that can result from public criticism. It is important to maintain a particular set of relationships between the parties.
The risk of silence

For these and other reasons, some institutions choose to avoid or minimise public advocacy. Human-rights NGOs, both international and local, are generally very critical of this choice. They argue that the proximity of a field presence to abuses carries with it a moral responsibility to speak out, especially since an abusive party, by hosting a mission’s presence, may be seen as co-operative, and this could actually strengthen its hand to carry out abuses. If there are enough international actors present, the public advocacy of one organisation can support the quiet advocacy of another. But a problem arises if too many leave the public role to ‘someone else’.

When a situation is too dangerous for local people to speak out, and every international agency stops talking, all that remains is silence.

Techniques of public advocacy

Public reporting on abuses

The issue: factors with which to weigh the advantages of public reporting in order to influence the actions of

with an eye to weighing the advantages of public reporting in order to influence the actions of abusive parties. Such factors include the potential efficacy of the public advocacy, the message, the target audience, and the relationship between the two. The UN Security Council (UNSC) or the Human Rights Council (HRC), for example, have the ability to influence abusive parties through resolutions and recommendations. Public reporting can promote all of the positive objectives listed above in this chapter, and for this reason it frequently forms part of a protection strategy. However, if public advocacy is not effective, it may be

Techniques of public advocacy

Public reports can take many forms and call for a variety of responses. They may be

Institutional and general audiences
Key resources on human rights monitoring

There is a wide literature available on human rights monitoring. Substantial references to training resources can be found in these websites and publications.

**Consolidating the Profession:** The human rights field officer (www.humanrightsprofessionals.org). This is a research, training and capacity-building project in support of enhanced delivery of services by human rights field operations, convened and facilitated by the University of Nottingham Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC). This webpage has many of its own research resources, as well as up-to-date links to dozens of other key resources on topics which can be planned according to the particular effect: information collection, report preparation and dissemination.

**Human Rights Education Association** (www.hrea.org). Numerous links to training resources on monitoring, fact-finding and human rights education.


**O’Flaherty, Michael (ed). ‘The Human Rights Field Operation: Law and Practice.’ Ashgate (forthcoming).**


The reporting process has three key stages, each of which can be planned according to the particular effect: information collection, report preparation and dissemination.

**Information collection:** Classic human rights ‘monitoring’, as used by the OHCHR for instance, encompasses much more than reporting. The process of gathering information itself protects, independent of any resulting report. It creates a justifiable framework for the kinds of communication and visibility strategies described in Chapters 4 and 5. Just the knowledge that a mission is carrying out a particular investigation can generate changes in perpetrator behaviour.
While pursuing accurate data, field officers must of course take great care about the confidentiality of information, protecting the identity of victims who could be targeted for reprisals. Interviews must be sensitive to the emotional state of the victims, who may suffer secondary trauma in recounting their experiences. For other victims, the opportunity to tell their story in a setting where they believe it will help to advance national and international pressure and concern is cathartic and empowering.

Report preparation:
A public report – even a formal human-rights analysis – is a strategic message. A powerful report should augment national and international pressure and concern, and force abusers to act. It should be written in a readable and persuasive format and style. A powerful report should contain explicit recommendations on how abusers can make amends. Such recommendations should be discussed in a transparent and perspicuous format, and should be published in a readable and persuasive format.

Regular, periodic reports show a mission to follow progress and changes. Experiences of ONUSAL and MINUGUA, for example, showed how the publication of periodic reports could become an important political event in the country. Regular, periodic reports allow a mission to follow progress and changes.

Proactive Presence:
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Humanitarian assessment in Darfur
Michael Heller Chu
Special investigations are a particular kind of thematic report. In most cases, there is no possibility that a field mission will respond to or investigate all abuses. Instead, it chooses one or a few emblematic cases for in-depth investigation. These investigations can affect the national and international debate, and the recommendations they yield should influence abuser behaviour towards a whole range of past or potential future victims.

Dissemination:
In some missions, there may be too much emphasis on the value of published reports as the main reason for a field presence. In an endeavour where most outcomes are frustratingly intangible, written documents are reassuringly measurable products; however, this solidity is deceptive. A file cabinet full of reports will not change anything. They are useful only insofar as they are acted upon. International missions need a dissemination and publicity strategy to fulfil the potential of their painstaking monitoring and writing. This includes dissemination to the general public, as well as to embassies and other influential circles, so that others with high-level access to abusers may echo the messages and priorities. With a well-planned presence deployed, and a good system of periodic reporting, a competent mission can earn a unique position as a credible authority on civilian protection needs and rights abuses in a country. The OHCHR mission in Colombia, for instance, has over time become a powerful influence on the national debate on human rights and civilian protection. Nongovernmental organizations are now in the national debate on human rights and civilian protection. The OHCHR mission in Colombia, for instance, has over time become a powerful influence on the national debate on human rights and civilian protection. The OHCHR mission in Colombia, for instance, has over time become a powerful influence on the national debate on human rights and civilian protection. With a well-planned presence deployed, and a good system of periodic reporting, a competent mission can earn a unique position as a credible authority on civilian protection needs and rights abuses in a country. The OHCHR mission in Colombia, for instance, has over time become a powerful influence on the national debate on human rights and civilian protection. 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Working with the media

The use of print, radio, television and web-based media can be a powerful multiplier of a mission’s message, both nationally and internationally. Although some missions choose to stay under the radar, it is generally not in a mission’s interest to be unknown or misunderstood, as this tends only to generate suspicion. A good media strategy can help a mission to control its public image, and to respond actively to detractors.

At the most obvious level, media releases and broadcast public events can publicise a mission’s public reports or its positions on critical events. With mission support, local media can promote awareness and encourage the involvement of civil society in the protection and promotion of human rights. For instance, field missions can support and participate in regular programming on the air, and have an interactive presence on the web in the local language. A regular media presence enables different kinds of public messages for deterring abuses, and creates opportunities to support and give a higher public profile to groups in need of protection or support.

Each mission needs to decide how best to work with the media. Here are a few general recommendations:

- There are countless good resources available to help organisations learn to develop and control their contact with the media. Use them; don’t reinvent the wheel.
- A mission should establish an active relationship with the media, but not to the point of being ‘managed’ by them.
- A mission should have press officers with the professional skill to handle public communications. This recruitment should not be an afterthought. These skilled officers should coach other mission members in dealing with the media.
- Local media can provide researchers and help organisations learn to develop and control their contact with the media.
- Handling local media demands fluent local language skills.
- Media strategy must adapt to the local context. For instance, in a country with low literacy, use of the radio can be critical.
- A mission should have press officers with the professional skill to handle public communications. These skilled officers should coach other mission members in dealing with the media.
- Each mission needs to decide how best to work with the media. Here are a few general recommendations:

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Chapter 8: Public advocacy

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES

able sources they can contact in times of developing crises. If you want them to use your message, make sure they consider you a credible source and know how to contact you quickly.

Key resources on working with the media

- Institute of Peace and War Reporting (http://www.iwpr.net/).
- Institute for Media Peace and Security (http://www.mediapeace.org/).

VIP visits

Visits from VIPs (very important persons) are key opportunities for influence, with the mission's officials asking for visits with VIPs that will benefit the mission. When VIPs are involved, their participation can lend legitimacy and protection to the mission. When VIPs mention concerns about protection or mention specific threatened communities or organizations, this gives greater legitimacy and protection to those communities or organizations. When VIPs mention concerns about protection or mention specific threatened communities or organizations, this gives greater legitimacy and protection to those communities or organizations. When VIPs visit threatened communities or organizations, the visit can help clarify priorities for protection and further support the mission's efforts to enhance protection.

Public events

A mission can enhance both its image and its protection message through the sponsorship of public events such as celebrations, conferences, memorials, and other public gatherings. Such events are a good opportunity to stress the mission's positive promotional messages in the public eye, and they give visibility and legitimacy to both the mission and the groups and local individuals who participate.

VIPSVisits
The potential influence of public advocacy on protection is widely recognised. It is not the answer to all problems however, and it comes with certain risks or dilemmas that each organisation needs to evaluate. These include potential threats to key contacts and retaliation against the presence or local contacts. Public advocacy can address these problems and act as a catalyst for change by actively seeking the support of the international community, helping to highlight issues and mobilise collective efforts to keep open the space for dialogue. The potential influence of public advocacy on protection is widely recognised. It is also important for mission personnel to be familiar with a variety of public advocacy tools and techniques.
Every institution operating in conflict zones needs to recognize the high level of uncertainty inherent in its actions. Good intentions do not necessarily yield good outcomes, and examples of errors and unintended consequences are well documented. Field missions need to be constantly alert to this risk and need to exercise both discipline and good judgement to avoid hurting the people they intend to help.

Six categories of risk for international missions

1. Individual behaviour and codes of conduct
   - The behaviour of mission staff has direct consequences for the protection of civilians: individual security lapses can put both the field officer and others at risk; failure to maintain required confidentiality can put witnesses and sources under direct threat of reprisal; inappropriate or insulting cultural behaviour can create risks for the field officer or their local associates. Other behaviours may not directly create protection risks, but they can undermine a mission’s credibility and goodwill in the eyes of local actors. Codes of conduct are useful tools for helping field officers maintain required confidentiality, but they often lack rigorous screening processes to prevent predictable problems, or don’t enshrine enforcement procedures for cases of non-compliance.

2. Insufficient political information and analysis
   - The process of analysis outlined in Chapter 3 can only help to create good policy if informed by a sufficient level of political information and analysis. This means that donors and recipients of aid need to recognize the need to create good policies that avoid causing harm.
mission is more likely to put itself and its local contacts in danger if it does not have good political analysis and good local sources. But counter-examples abound of missions being highly disconnected from local sources. Without a multi-faceted network, the mission will not only lack crucial information for avoiding mistakes, but it will also be much more vulnerable to manipulation by a single 'apparently good source', with no point of comparison. Ill-informed missions are much more easily swayed by rumours and uncorroborated information.

International institutions may be injecting substantial resources into the local economy, as happens in large humanitarian operations. Insufficient socio-political analysis can prevent a mission from seeing how resources are being diverted, or possibly contributing to the control of illegitimate leaders.

Lack of learning

Many mistakes are understandable and reasonable – anyone walking into an unpredictable conflict situation is likely to make them. These errors become less justifiable, however, when they are made repeatedly – even within the same organisation or during the same conflict. The lack of clear and organised learning from past mistakes is a key reason why so many missions are repeatedly confronted with situations they have already encountered. Without some consideration of findings on witness protection within OHCHR, other missions risk repeating mistakes on witness protection that have been encountered by others with whom they might have been able to consult. Without learning from past mistakes, missions are in danger of repeating the same errors.

For example, monitoring missions have encountered the need to improve witness protection: monitoring missions do not always have the necessary expertise in witness protection, and some missions have failed to carefully monitor and ensure that witness protection is adequate. Some missions have had to provide training to witnesses or develop guidelines on witness protection, and some missions have had to change their approach to witness protection, sometimes as a result of tragic errors that might have been avoided. While there has been some consolidation of guidelines on witness protection within OHCHR, other missions still face challenges in improving their witness protection efforts.

Unintended consequences

When a mission has other programming in addition to protection, it needs to ensure that its other activities do not undermine its protection goals. For example, humanitarian assistance can be a source of inter-communal conflict, and the distribution of resources can be a source of conflict. Humanitarian assistance can also be a source of political manipulation, as seen in the example of the Darfur conflict, where local partners were used to control the mission's image.

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Chapter 9: Do no harm

Introduction > Being There > Strategies > Challenges

Humanitarian communities and the initial OHCHR field presence concentrated nearly all of their initial attention on IDP camps. The consequent marginalisation of the rural people who had not fled their homes provoked a strong perception of favouritism and bias, further fuelling existing inter-ethnic resentment.

A short-term solution to a serious problem can have negative long-term costs or side effects. In a case of conflict-caused destitution in Darfur, for instance, large providers of relief resources such as WFP, ICRC and UNHCR quickly became the most powerful economic players in the region. This made them an attractive target for infiltration by armed groups and government alike. In addition, such a massive economic infusion in a crisis must be accompanied by a long-term analysis of its implications for the economic and political future of the entire region – something that seldom occurs.

Similarly, an electoral monitoring mission may find that the local technical capacity for administering an election resides primarily within certain elite groups or particular ethnic groups. The mission needs these skills, yet this programming objective could collide with a need to project an unbiased approach.

Key resource on avoiding negative impacts

Mary B. Anderson’s Do No Harm: How aid can support peace – or war calls attention to the diverse negative impacts of the operations of the international relief community. The Do No Harm manuals and parallel workshops developed practical programming recommendations, in particular to avoid the risk of international aid and presence unintentionally fuelling violent conflict, and to ensure that aid supports local capacities for peacebuilding and conflict reduction. These lessons are still of vital importance to both the humanitarian community and all those involved in the relief effort in the field of human rights.

The book is available from Lynne Rienner Publishers (http://www.riendlibrary.com). For more information on the Do No Harm project and workshops, see the web-page of the Collaborative for Development Action (www.cdainc.com).

Undermining local efforts

One of the most important benefits of networking and thorough analysis is to allow a mission to respond to immediate attacks against civilians and needs, while also strengthening the long-term capacity of a community to protect itself. Unfortunately, international actors often distrust well-organised communities, fearing them to be politically biased or in some cases corrupt. Still, they are the only

Conclusion

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Large missions may have the best of intentions when it takes over from national actors the collection of human rights data, which may indeed be extremely dangerous for local people. Nevertheless, the risk exists that such substitution will weaken civil society’s capacity to develop its own monitoring mechanisms to keep its government accountable. Large missions, such as in Kosovo, may find that they have drafted the entire educated local elite into UN service positions, completely disabling the society’s capacity to achieve a post-intervention equilibrium. Every mission needs to develop the capacity to analyse the long-term possibilities of local structures before jumping in to substitute for them, and could sometimes develop hybrid solutions.

**Risk of reprisal**

“We have to be very careful in speaking with people in the communities. Not because we think they are linked with armed groups, but because we know that those groups are watching to see with whom the community speaks. We have seen examples of reprisals afterwards. And in a small village, there are no secrets. Everyone knows who talked to whom.”

Humanitarian field officer in Colombia

If an armed party regards an international presence as an obstacle to its objectives, one of the least costly ways to undermine the presence is through reprisals against its more vulnerable local contacts. When HRFOR staff distributed a questionnaire in a prison, and then made the mistake of leaving copies in the prison, those who completed the questionnaire received harsher treatment. In Sri Lanka, civilians who report any problems with the LTTE are routinely harassed and threatened, so much so that the majority of complaints will not show their names to be used or heard. Civil society organizations with the LTTE are continuously harassed and intimidated, so much so that the majority of complaints will not show their names to be used or heard. Large missions such as in Kosovo recruit the entire educated local elite into UN service positions, completely disabling the society’s capacity to achieve a post-intervention equilibrium. Every mission needs to develop the capacity to analyse the long-term possibilities of local structures before jumping in to substitute for them, and could sometimes develop hybrid solutions.

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Once the international presence is gone, there tends to be a reaction, because the paramilitaries see the contact with internationals as a challenge to their control. So the international accompaniment needs to be a little more permanent.

Local activist, Colombia

Despite concerns about reprisals, most activists believe that international visits are necessary and helpful, and that the net protective result for communities visited by an international mission is positive. Missions must find ways to minimise the risk of reprisal without curtailing protective action. This often involves visiting under more discreet circumstances to avoid the risk of naming local sources in public reports. Sometimes, on public visits, a mission will focus its itinerary on talking to authorities, allowing local civilians to seek more discreet means of contacting the mission and offering more protective measures away from the eyes of the community.

People often feel that a commitment of follow-up and future visits is some assurance that whatever they do will be noted in the next visit. More importantly, a field mission needs to listen to the local needs in the next visit. More importantly, a field mission needs to listen to the local activists and civil society groups about security and discretion-related concerns and witnesses, and honour their concerns about security and discretion.

The most dangerous thing is arrogance; you have to enter into relationships with some sense of humility and respect and caution.

Mission field officer

A particularly sensitive need is to protect witnesses and key sources that provide information to a field mission about abuses and perpetrators. The OHCHR is developing a detailed manual on this:


Key resource on protecting witnesses and sources

Local activist, Colombia
In the polarised and volatile setting of a conflict zone, however, no level of effective presence can eliminate entirely the risk of retaliation. The international presence by nature or design encourages people to organise and take risks, and therefore inevitably increases some vulnerabilities even as it adds protection. The field mission and local organisations should be chosen to sustain communities. Multiple and sometimes contradictory institutional agendas in complex pro-

mission should detect these contacts and source from any threat.

Summary

Field missions can take deliberate steps to minimise the risk of negative impacts:

- Codes of conduct should be created, taught in staff training and used to monitor and enforce compliance.
- Thorough analysis should consider possible negative impacts, including those from experience.
- Multiple and sometimes contradictory institutional agendas in complex pro-
- Excessive risk-taking can arise if they recognise the need to act where necessary. 
- Effective risk management requires an extra effort to predict and avert unplanned consequences of the mission's actions.
- Codes of conduct should be created, taught in staff training and used to minimise the risk of negative impacts.
Promoting security and smart risk-taking

A field mission in a conflict zone is inevitably a dangerous undertaking. International missions have suffered threats and attacks too numerous to list. In Rwanda in 1997, for instance, five HRFOR personnel were killed, and other staff members received death threats for taking on sensitive cases. UNAMET had at least 14 local Timorese staff murdered, and local militia leaders kidnapped MINUGUA observers. National personnel of international NGOs have been killed in Darfur. In other settings, international staff members have endured a variety of serious abuses, including ransom kidnapping. Yet even these casualties pale in comparison to the losses of international personnel in conflicts such as Iraq.

Clearly, a field mission must prepare competent candidates with seasoned security strategies. Every mission needs to make sure that it studies such guidelines, and prepares its own mission-specific security analysis based on particular political and local conditions. Staff members must have the opportunity to study these, and there should be a process of ensuring discipline in their implementation.

Security preparations cannot eliminate risk, however. A protection mission unwilling to take risks would achieve nothing, and the mission's risks are usually few in comparison to the dangers facing local civilians. When international personnel go where the local people are in the greatest danger, their own risk factors naturally increase, but so does their protective impact.

Therefore, security strategies should promote smart risk-taking. A mission will make the greatest difference when it gets out of the safe neighborhoods of the major cities and makes itself present where the trouble is, interacting with victims as well as perpetrators. Security strategies must make this interaction as safe as possible, but should not prevent it, where the risk can be mitigated. Thus, for

Chapter 10: The security challenge
instance, in KVM and UNAMFI, the default assumption was that the risks were manageable. Whenever possible, these missions responded to calls for help, travelled to sensitive or dangerous locations to be seen and heard, to talk down the threatening abusers and show solidarity with frightened civilians. Military and police expertise helped to enable the missions to manage risk.

Key factors in a mission security analysis

Among the key factors contributing to a mission’s security analysis are: political analysis, transparency with armed actors, mission neutrality, a network of local allies and support from international actors, and early response to warnings of initial and ongoing threats. Understandably, mission security analysts are political experts who will look at each of these in turn.

Political analysis

The many important technical and practical security guidelines available are not fixed recipes, but rather ingredients of a security strategy that must be devised for a particular political context. Security choices are inextricably linked to a mission’s political analysis. In Haiti, MICIVIH personnel in 1993/4 were surrounded by violence, but their analysis concluded that the mission itself was not a target. This enabled them to participate in delicate cases and trips that had protective impact.

When its personnel were murdered in Rwanda, allegedly by a disgruntled or renegade Interhamwe rebel, HRFOR lacked sufficient information to analyse the implications of the attack. Its cautious reaction, therefore, was to reduce its Proactive Presence.

Key resources on field security


Proactive Presence
rural presence, leaving a vacuum during a time of vulnerable refugee returns. More information or a different analysis might have yielded a different reaction.

In Colombia there were two separate instances of political attacks on expatriates – one by the FARC rebel group in which three North American activists were killed, and another by AUC paramilitaries in which a Spanish NGO worker was killed. If the analysis of these events had suggested a trend or a strategy by either armed group to attack expatriate presence, it would have had a serious inhibiting effect on all protective missions in Colombia. But, in both cases, analysts concurred that these attacks were political mistakes, and that the FARC and the AUC paid a serious political cost in each case, and would be unlikely to repeat the error. Thus, the attacks did not significantly change the security analysis for other foreign personnel in these regions.

Because it is so dependent on political context, security strategy is not easily transferable. Depending on the possible motivations of the armed parties to harm a mission, what might seem rash in one conflict could be perfectly safe in another. But if a mission lacks a rigorous analysis, everything might appear risky (and indeed could be), and the uncertainties can lead to excessively conservative decisions about risk-taking, with the effect of limiting protective opportunities. Security assessments need to be kept up to date. In some settings, ‘no-go’ areas remain off-limits even after the actual security situation has improved. This means that the population in danger in those areas is not benefiting from international presence, even though presence is possible.

Transparency with armed actors

Transparent relationships with armed parties are crucial for good security outcomes. Where possible, indirect means of communication should be developed, while direct communication is prevented by circumstances beyond the control of the mission, this needs to be recognized as a potentially serious security risk. Where direct communication is possible, missions should seek to overcome any potential barriers and to ensure that they are not putting themselves at risk. Communication is a sign of respect; it helps to overcome polarized stereotypes that may exist about the mission, and may deter the risk of the armed group making other misjudgments about the mission. A mission should not proceed unnecessarily by engaging in unproductive discussions with armed groups. Communication with armed groups should be conducted in a manner that is respectful to all parties involved. Communication should be transparent and should not be used to manipulate or distort the intentions of the mission or its role.

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A strong and stop a further escalation of threats.

The presence of international political support in the country’s political process, the presence of the international community’s support in the country, the presence of the international community’s support in the country, and the presence of the international community’s support in the country. The presence of the international community’s support in the country.

An international presence sometimes uses the media or informal contacts to broadcast indirectly its motives, objectives, and even its movements. Sometimes direct contact with representatives of armed groups is possible outside the country even though it is prohibited in the national territory.

Lacking the ability to give advance notice or describe intentions directly, mission field staff tend to put a heavy trust in these armed groups’ capacity for surveillance and intelligence gathering, often assuming that they already know what they are not being told. However, this is not a safe assumption.

Neutrality

In a polarised situation, any perceived alliance with one military institution makes you a potential target of their enemy, as attacks on UN staff in Iraq tragically proved. In Darfur or Colombia, for instance, humanitarians bringing assistance into guerrilla-controlled territory have to be careful that they are not labelled as guerrillas themselves.

Local and international allies

An informal network of trusted local informants can be crucial to mission safety. These allies provide analysis of dangers facing the mission, and at times can pass on discreet warnings to mission personnel about expected events. External political support can provide a key safety net for missions and especially those considering evacuation. External political support can be addressed early, to ensure that a mission’s need to evacuate the area is addressed early. However, if a mission fails to address the threat, the mission may be compromised.

In a polarised situation, any perceived alliance with an international institution can be crucial to mission safety.

Early response

Attacks and threats to a mission are sometimes part of a campaign to undermine its credibility or to destabilise the country. They should be addressed early, to prevent the mission from being undermined. An early response can be crucial to mission safety.

Support from allies

In a polarised situation, any perceived alliance with an international institution can be crucial to mission safety. In a polarised situation, any perceived alliance with an international institution makes you a potential target of their enemy, as attacks on UN staff in Iraq tragically proved.

Nonetheless, however, this is not a safe assumption.

An international presence sometimes uses the media or informal contacts with local, paramilitary, and guerrilla groups, but does so without losing sight of the

...
There is a need for an organized response to a threat or an attack against a protection operation... A protection operation must create that capacity to show its bite and, if necessary, to use that capacity to伤回 quick: its protection depends on its capacity to hurt... In Cambodia, after the first attack against us (armed men kidnapped the 5-year-old daughter of our administrator, shot a bullet in her thigh and dropped her in a dark street in the center of the capital), we created an immediate response network which involved the local press corps, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the local/regional correspondents of the New York Times, Washington Post, Asian Wall Street Journal and several other large newspapers, key UN contacts in NY, and senior officials in different foreign ministries. There were not many, but a short briefing note or a few phone calls were sufficient to mobilize a massive response which scared the government and made it understand the simple message: ‘OHCHR: hands off.’ We did the same with the human rights NGO community when it came under attack, with the simple message: ‘Touching them is touching us.’ There were no further attacks against us or our Cambodian human rights colleagues in the years I was there.

OSCE field officer

Deteriorating security conditions

What does a mission do when a situation deteriorates? In essence, the role of a mission remains the same when conditions deteriorate: It is still there to monitor and protect, and if things are getting worse, more people in the international community are probably listening. The mission can thus help negotiators and policy makers to make informed and effective decisions. The mission can also provide political responses, demonstrating that the potential international cost of preserving political legitimacy is high and that action should be taken to preserve that legitimacy. The mission can also provide political responses that are more direct and timely than the actions of the international community. The mission can provide political responses that are more direct and timely than the actions of the international community.
The field presence continues to be a real-time local voice of international concern, informing the parties on the ground, right down the chain of command, of increasing concerns and steps that may be taken.

Everyone understands that an attack on an expatriate provokes a greater response than an attack on a local person. The international presence raises the stakes both for the armed parties, who must take greater care, and for international actors who will be under greater pressure to act if something happens to the mission.

All this requires, however, that the international community actually supports the mission, and increases this support when it is under fire. As described in Chapter 8 on public advocacy, the mission should be proactively eliciting such support and attention from the international community.

Unfortunately, field officers have often felt that they could not count on such systemic support and that their missions' continued existence was precarious. Several field officers in Colombia, for instance, suggested that a single, major security setback, such as the killing of a UN worker, could lead to a pull-out of the whole UN presence. They had no confidence that a coordinated or robust international response to respond actively and firmly to any harassment of their own mission would be considered. If it were not, the mission could be left with the expectation of weak support that could be self-fulfilling, since the mission may not demand the backing it deserves. Projecting weakness can even invite attacks on a mission, if its detractors believe they can easily intimidate it into leaving. Furthermore, mission personnel are burdened by the fear that 'my mistake will end the mission', and this inhibits daily choices about risk-taking and protection.

Sometimes we see an escalation of harassment against international staff or organizations on the ground, starting with the weaker partners. Larger international missions need to respond actively and firmly to any harassment of their own personnel, or those of partner organizations. They should also have assertive, systemic responses to harassment of other agency or NGO staff members. The 'message' in responding to harassment of international workers should link staff safety with general civilian safety, rather than implying that it is more important to protect international personnel than other civilians.

National personnel and security strategies

National personnel are integral to a mission and its security. They must be selected with care, and their special protection needs must be considered carefully. They can also be a key source of information, analysis, and wisdom about the local context, and their insights can help commanders predict the mission's responses to attacks on non-local personnel. The international community must support and strengthen such sources to support the mission.

The mission's leadership must not only be under external pressure to act in a seemingly impossible situation, but also be a key source of information, analysis, and wisdom about the local context, and their insights can help commanders predict the mission's responses to attacks on non-local personnel. The international community must support and strengthen such sources to support the mission.

The field presence continues to be a real-time local voice of international concern, informing the parties on the ground, right down the chain of command, of increasing concerns and steps that may be taken.
Increasingly higher proportions of local staff. In the protection field, though, there are strengths to the expatriate role, which provides a particular kind of protection to its national colleagues.

Always a delicate procedure, staff selection should never be rushed. It should shun ethnic or political bias, considering the security implications for a mission's credibility, and guard against infiltration. Finally, and equally important in selection of national staff as expatriate field officers, there are basic 'good security' characteristics of caution, discretion, and a sense of humility.

Special security vulnerabilities

National mission personnel and the mission strategists overall need to prepare together for the different security realities faced by national staff members. Consider this blatant example of higher-risk exposure described by a UN officer with experience in East Timor:

"In military documents planning for the referendum, the first priority mentioned is security for the international observers. Way down the list is the goal of protecting the Timorese; 12 or 13 Timorese UN workers were killed. In one case when a few national staff were killed, the UN went in with a helicopter to get the ballot boxes. The Indonesian military man they talked to clearly knew in advance about the planned attack. They asked him, "Why didn't you stop it?" He replied, "I told them clearly: don't harm the internationals." He seemed to think that ought to be enough for us. The orders were clear."

To minimise these vulnerabilities, most presences choose to keep national and expatriate roles distinct, reserving the more delicate protection and intervention roles (such as ICRC delegate or UN human-rights observer) for expatriates, and using national personnel in tasks of promotion, assistance or mission support. As one field worker put it, referring to national personnel, 'The closer to combat, the less we expose them.' Yet, even in the most vulnerable locations, the expatriates less we expose them. Yet, even in the most vulnerable locations, the expatriates tend to be the first to be evacuated.

Systematic and adequate concern for national staff security has been a weakness of international missions, though there has been some progress. For instance, in October 1993, MICIVIH evacuated from Haiti with no security provision or follow-up for Haitian national personnel or local collaborators, a failure that to this day still evinces traumatised emotional responses from some mission personnel.

In Chapter 10: The security challenge, we will look at some of the key issues and challenges related to the protection of national staff members.
Whereas in 1999, surrounded by angry militia in a walled compound in Dili, UNAMET staff held firm, resisting and renegotiating evacuation decisions until the security and the evacuation of Timorese staff and IDPs in the compound could be assured. Nevertheless, in some missions visited in 2005 there were still no special procedures in place for national staff security in the event of evacuation. There are no easy solutions—and sometimes the options for protection are quite limited. Nevertheless, this is all the more reason to think them through carefully in advance. Options such as leaving vehicles and communication equipment behind, identifying safe houses, or organizing systematic check-ins and follow-up, for instance, all require planning and advance commitment. Similar security planning should be happening for a mission’s key local contacts, witnesses and sources.

Local Staff Security Advice

One dynamic often overlooked is the extent to which national personnel and local collaborators directly protect the mission and the expatriates. As one UNHCR field worker insisted: ‘The national staff you travel with are critical. They have better sense. They learn more. They have to be carefully chosen.’ Local personnel, being more familiar with the local culture and politics, pick up cues the outsider misses. Stories proliferate of discreet warnings alerting expatriates to danger. International organisations that secure the services of expert local analysts have a potential gold-mine of security advice, which, if used, will prevent mistakes and improve their overall mission strategies, which, if used, can even save lives. Other options include:

1. Contextual political analysis of local security realities, rather than transferring rigid rules from other settings
2. Transparency and respectful relationships with armed actors
3. Building networks of local security analysts, rather thanrandomly
4. Security measures need to promote smart risk-taking, enabling active protection

Summary

Security strategies need to promote smart risk-taking, enabling active protection for the most vulnerable civilians. This demands:

- Contextual political analysis of local security realities, rather than transferring rigid rules from other settings
- Transparency and respectful relationships with armed actors
- A good network of local allies
- A good network of local allies
- Strong support from international allies
- Financial and logistical support
- A good network of local allies
- Building networks of local security analysts, rather than random

Proactive Presence

In 1999, surrounded by angry militia in a walled compound in Dili, UNAMET staff held firm, resisting and renegotiating evacuation decisions until the security and the evacuation of Timorese staff and IDPs in the compound could be assured. Nevertheless, in some missions visited in 2005 there were still no special procedures in place for national staff security in the event of evacuation. There are no easy solutions—and sometimes the options for protection are quite limited. Nevertheless, this is all the more reason to think them through carefully in advance. Options such as leaving vehicles and communication equipment behind, identifying safe houses, or organizing systematic check-ins and follow-up, for instance, all require planning and advance commitment. Similar security planning should be happening for a mission’s key local contacts, witnesses and sources.

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When the security situation is deteriorating, the mission will need to take extra measures of political self-defence, also encouraging increased international political support and recognising that its protective value for vulnerable civilians will be especially important at such times. Special preparation is required to ensure national staff security, taking into account the increased vulnerability of national mission personnel. When the security situation is deteriorating, the mission will need to take extra...
11

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES
Every field mission studied in research for this manual has suffered from some combination of serious and avoidable weaknesses. These include: insufficient resources, training or preparation; poor analysis; and inadequate international or institutional support. Given what the missions achieved despite such weaknesses, one cannot help but wonder how successful they would be if these challenges were overcome.

If an institution is going to create effective field missions in order to protect civilians, it may need to make some hard choices. Sometimes, institutional changes and some new structures and processes may be required. This chapter will examine the challenges of meeting the following crucial institutional objectives:

- Take a committed approach
- Get the right entry agreement – and stretch it
- Make the mission big enough
- Use the right mix of skills
- Care for morale and mental health
- Provide effective and appropriate training
- Learn from the past and build for the future
- Take a committed approach

*“If is better to be named in this situation.”*
are some prevailing attitudes that limit many institutions' and individual field officers' capacity and confidence to carry out effective protection strategies. First, there is a tendency not to claim credit for the protection that unarmed missions have successfully brought about, because this seems to contradict the general high regard for the protective power of the gun. ‘Well, we couldn’t really protect anyone, because we were unarmed’, was a frequent comment from interviewees. But those making this comment would then invariably share numerous examples in which their interventions changed outcomes, and protected people.

This attitude sends a signal of impotence. If a mission or its staff project the belief that an unarmed presence only indicates the international system’s reluctance to deploy an armed presence, it weakens respect for the mission, and thereby its power. Preventive impact is linked so inextricably to perceptions that this inevitably has self-fulfilling consequences. If a mission does not believe in its effectiveness, why should anyone else?

This is not to discount the potential value of an armed component to a mission. In Darfur, for example, there was strong positive feedback from civilians about the protective role of the African Union’s armed patrols, and UNMIL human-rights monitors have an escort arrangement with African Union troops for some situations. But in many other situations, field officers and local respondents alike pointed out that an unarmed presence was sometimes more dissuasive against violence than an armed one. And they caution against the assumption that an unarmed presence was somehow more dismissive or appeasing to local communities than an armed one. This is not to discount the potential value of an armed component to a mission.

Field officer with experience in Rwanda, Angola and Colombia

It is much better to have civilian missions separate from the blue helmets. Unarmed and armed presences are two distinct tools, to be used independently or in combination, according to the political possibilities available for intervention. Both tools have strengths and weaknesses. The international community needs to be aware of these in designing and implementing field operations, and to consider the strength and weaknesses of both when taking decisions on the division of tasks and responsibilities. This article aims to inform and provoke discussion on these issues in the belief that the more informed and informed decisions are, the better equipped the international community will be to provide effective protection in the future.

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Develop its approaches based on a more nuanced appreciation of different intervention strategies and their relevance to varying contexts, avoiding the oversimplified assumption that the military option is the only ‘real’ protection.

Second, beyond the comparison to armed strategies, there is a more generalised sense of failure and futility within most inter-governmental organisations, which serves to underestimate further the impact of the field missions. Because conflict situations do not necessarily improve, or local actors do not always pay sufficient attention to the international community and sometimes even flaunt their disdain, mission representatives can make the mistake of assuming they have little or no impact.

Third, in situations where there are multiple international institutions in the field, each with a potential for protection, there is a widespread tendency to delegitimise and criticise the efforts of other institutions. This destroys the potential that these allies should have for collaborative and complementary strategies. It creates a natural vulnerability to ‘divide-and-conquer’ strategies by actors who wish to undermine international protection efforts. Protection institutions need the internal discipline to control these turf battles and demand an attitude of respect and collaboration from their own staff towards other institutions.

A sense of futility and impotence in the face of widespread violence can be an occupational hazard. It can be heightened by widespread problems of institutional morale, in which people question deeply and criticise the political will of their own institution, its organisation and management. These concerns prompt fear, pain, cynicism and other emotions that all contribute to the underestimation of impact. Attitudes that discount the value of unarmed presence can influence policy decisions, resulting in reduced willingness to deploy such missions. Modesty and humility can be great qualities for both individuals and institutions, especially in international and cross-cultural settings. But just as blind optimism is naïve, the underestimation of impact can lead to bad strategic choices and to missed opportunities for impact.

The absence of clarity in the terms of reference, the lack of a shared understanding of what is meant by protection, can lead to conflicts in the field. For instance, field missions need to specify clearly what they mean by ‘protection’ and what their mandate is. They need to be clear about their authority and responsibilities. They need to define the scope of their operations and the areas they will not enter. They need to set clear rules of engagement. They need to establish clear baselines for what they can and cannot do.

Getting the right entry agreement – and then stretching it

A mission’s negotiated memorandum of understanding, agreement with the host government or other formal agreement calling for its presence, can either enhance or weaken its options for protection. A wide range of options must be kept open, not only in the formal agreements negotiated with the host state or armed groups, but also in the internal institutional dialogue about ‘what we can, can we do, can we do it more effectively?’ This demands an approach that seeks maximum room to manoeuvre within any formal agreement, and a readiness to adapt to circumstances on the ground. Field missions need the flexibility to respond to new situations and to change their approach as circumstances change. They need to be able to respond to new opportunities and to take advantage of them. They need to be able to change their approach as circumstances change.

Institutions need to be clear about their mandate, but they also need to be flexible. They need to be able to respond to new situations and to change their approach as circumstances change. They need to be able to respond to new opportunities and to take advantage of them. They need to be able to change their approach as circumstances change.

International and cross-cultural settings. But just as blind optimism is naïve, the underestimation of impact can lead to bad strategic choices and to missed opportunities for protection.
full and unimpeded access to the entire territory unconstrained communication with any party in the government, military or armed groups and among civilians, including access to detainees commitments by armed parties to communicate and meet with the mission, and to respond to enquiries commitments by the armed parties to support the mission politically and refrain from actions or statements that would undermine it or put it at risk a clear legal framework, with the authority of international law and treaty agreements unlimited right to gather information no limits or censorship of public statements or reports commitments by the parties for the security of the mission, but no limits put on the mission also meeting its own security needs commitments by the parties that persons who have contact with the mission will not be detained, questioned, placed under surveillance or otherwise bullied the right to choose and prioritise technical-support tasks in the context of the mission’s own protection strategy technical agreements facilitating logistical support and provision of the mission, so that blockages cannot be used to paralyse it (including the use of specified radio frequencies and importation of necessary equipment without taxation or other fees).

The negotiation environment is never perfect, of course. But when these entry conditions are not met, the mission planners need to be acutely aware of the potential costs to the mission. A mission with limited access to territory or civilian groups, or without the ability to investigate atrocities, risks serious illegitimacy. Mission negotiators need to understand how to use international legal standards to insist upon certain minimum operating conditions for a mission’s presence.

UNAMET Field Officer:

When you have poor agreements to back up the presence, then the need for a very multi-skilled civilian presence increases dramatically. In this case, the GOL [Government of Indonesia] was responsible for security, but we had no access or backing to match it.

A field presence also has an implicit mandate based on what it believes it can do or other legal restrictions and indications of necessary capabilities without legal protection or support and provision of the mission. The ability to choose and provide technical-support tasks in the context of the mission’s own protection strategy technical agreements facilitating logistical support and provision of the mission, so that blockages cannot be used to paralyse it (including the use of specified radio frequencies and importation of necessary equipment without taxation or other fees).

A clear legal framework, with the authority of international law and treaty agreements, is essential for the mission to perform its tasks. The mission must be able to act with impunity to support the protection of civilians and to respond to threats. The mission must be able to communicate with and receive support from appropriate authorities, including the government. The mission must have full and unimpeded access to the entire territory.
from the OSCE and NATO it took a very liberal view of that mandate. As one observer put it, ‘We had to “spin” protection and prevention as “verification.”’ And spin they did, putting into practice a very activist protection identity.

UNAMET had no explicit human-rights mandate, and civilian security was formally in the hands of Indonesian authorities, but the mission had sufficient international support, and commitment on the part of its own staff, to take a similarly activist protection approach.

There was no clear consensus on the mandate… We were perhaps lucky our staff were sufficiently foolish to behave as they did – outgoing and interventionist. We did whatever it took, and had coverage for it.’

UNAMET field officer

“You hear of an attack? You jump in the jeep and go stop it. Once the CivPol guy tried to stop us: “We don’t do this. We are not the local police.” We ignored him. We were the police, in fact, as the police were not doing their job of protecting people. Maybe this level of intervention was crazy. But we saw it as part of our mandate.”

UNAMET field officer

The point here is not that protection staff should devise independent strategies that contradict institutional mandates, but rather to emphasise that if a field mission has sufficient willingness, moral authority, and political support from its institutional headquarters, in practice it can have greater control over the interpretation of formal agreements, and thus much greater flexibility to engage in proactive protection.

Nevertheless, the nature of the state and armed groups will limit a mission’s ability to stretch the envelope, and much greater flexibility to engage in proactive protection.

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ONUSAL and MINUGUA, for instance, both had mandates determined by peace negotiations, but were differently affected by the different dynamics of power among the parties. ONUSAL personnel felt that they had the freedom to pursue a much more activist and interventionist role, because the Salvadoran state was weaker than its Guatemalan counterpart, in relation to both the respective guerrilla movements and the international community.

In Haiti the weakness of local governmental structures allowed for relatively flexible and effective local interventions in individual cases.

Rwanda was literally re-creating a governmental system after the genocide, and this situation of flux gave the mission staff many opportunities to offer ‘helpful suggestions’ that could affect the treatment of prisoners.

Chapter 11: Institutional challenges
UNHCR personnel in Sri Lanka, operating under a mandate for helping refugees and internally displaced people, read this as a mandate to respond to abductions of almost any civilians, on the grounds that the dynamic of abduction and forced recruitment was an important obstacle to the return of refugees and IDPs to their places of origin.

With non-state armed groups, the concept of an entry agreement, memorandum of understanding (MOU) or mandate is often much more ambiguous. If a mission is unable to negotiate an agreement that allows it to relate to armed groups that may be committing violations in the country, it faces a political and security dilemma. If it ignores abuses by armed groups, it will be accused of partisanship. But, as with a state, any public criticism of an armed party’s behaviour should be accompanied by some attempt to engage in dialogue. Otherwise, observers, non-governmental organizations and some media may interpret the mission’s silence as evidence of complicity or a lack of concern.

In transitional negotiation situations such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Darfur and Sri Lanka, this dialogue was permissible. But in non-transitional situations of conflict, contact with armed groups is harder to secure, and sometimes explicitly prohibited. In Colombia, for instance, the OHCHR documents and reports on guerrilla abuses, but is prohibited from any direct communication. One observer felt that this was a serious security risk for them. Ideally, a mission should try to achieve a similar level of clarity with an armed group as with a government. A clear and transparent MOU giving the mission a flexible authority to do its work, a clear set of terms of engagement with an armed group, and a mechanism for addressing violations should be negotiated. This would provide a continuous process for monitoring and reporting on violations. In Colombia, for instance, the OHCHR documents and reports on guerrilla abuses, but is prohibited from any direct communication. In some situations, this might be the only way to obtain an account of events. If it were to refuse to engage in dialogue, it would lose its legitimacy. If it refuses, observers, non-governmental organizations and the media may interpret its silence as evidence of complicity or a lack of concern.

A large presence can also aim to make a bigger change in the overall conflict. In transitional negotiation situations, a large presence can have an incremental impact on the particular case, but also a larger impact on the overall conflict. A very small field presence can vary case by case and priority by priority.

Making the mission big enough

A clear and transparent MOU gives the mission a flexible authority to do its work. Whether it is a small group or a large one, a mission should be able to adapt to the situation. If it is a small group, it may be able to adapt more easily than a large one. If it is a large group, it may be able to adapt more easily than a small one.

The mission and its supporters, its staff.

Some attempt to cultivate in delegations. Others argue that groups may misunderstand their purpose and objectives. Some argue that they should be accommodated by the mission, while others argue that they should be excluded. The mission must be clear about its objectives. If it agrees to work with groups, it must also be clear about the limitations of its mandate. If it refuses, observers, non-governmental organizations and the media may interpret its silence as evidence of complicity or a lack of concern.

In large, non-state armed groups, the concept of an entry agreement is much more problematic. If a mission is understood to be committed to an entry agreement, it may lose its legitimacy. If it refuses, observers, non-governmental organizations and the media may interpret its silence as evidence of complicity or a lack of concern.

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How large a presence is necessary? Setting the optimal mission size is a complicated challenge. It will be affected by:

- the size of the country
- the population
- the number of ongoing abuses
- the scale and nature of combat
- security risks
- transportation and other logistical factors
- the variety of tasks the mission engages in
- levels of collaboration and complementarity with other institutions.

For instance, in Darfur the vast area of the territory and the difficulty of travel require more people to ensure adequate coverage. HRFOR had people in most prefectures, but, due to the heavy work schedule, observers seldom made their presence known in rural areas outside the major towns where they were stationed, unless responding to crises. Figure 11.1 gives some rough comparisons of the scale of different missions relative to the population served and land area covered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>International Personnel per Million Inhabitants</th>
<th>International Personnel per Thousand Square Kilometres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>128.59</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>92.69</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka (North &amp; East)</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darfur</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia*</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes OHCHR, ICRC, UNHCR and PBI.

Figure 11.1: The comparative scale of international field missions

Interviews with field staff and management suggest that some missions were judged to be 'big enough' in terms of personnel and deployment of sub-offices – including UNMIL, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, HRFOR, and UNAMET. The KVM was vastly larger than the rest and arguably too large.
In Colombia, the OHCHR had only 28 international staff members and 52 national personnel during the period of this study, and only three sub-offices outside Bogotá. The four largest international organisations with some protection mandate in Colombia, OHCHR, UNHCR, ICRC, and PBI, had a combined total staff of about 160 internationals. Considering that Colombia has a population and area greater than the total of El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Rwanda, Kosovo and East Timor combined, that the conflict affects the entire territory, and that levels of abuse are high, these numbers are very low compared to those for other missions studied. The international protective presence is still largely absent in much of the country, a concern noted by most of the civil-society respondents interviewed.

Most of the Sri Lankans interviewed – including some members of the armed forces – consider the SLMM presence too small and in need of expansion. Interestingly, though, with the huge international humanitarian presence that arrived in the conflict zone after the 2004 tsunami, some respondents commented, ‘We don’t really need more foreign presence here.’ However, since much of that humanitarian presence was not carrying out proactive protection functions, the SLMM and other protection actors remain overwhelmed.

In the missions in which size was not reported as a serious problem, there were at least 15 expatriate international observers per million people in the affected conflict zone. In Colombia there are fewer than five per million, even when combining the four separate institutions. Similarly, the larger missions had about four observers or more per thousand square kilometres, while the density of presence in Colombia is far below.

The preceding chapters’ analysis, though, proposes a more comprehensive range of activities than most missions have engaged in, and this would necessarily require more human resources. So even a mission size previously considered ‘adequate’ might better be considered as a minimum. These recommendations are especially urgent given that political support and the resource support that a mission is getting is often insufficient to allow an effective mission to function. Mission leaders must simply be good managers in order to maximise the potential of a large operation. This requires judicious staff deployment, dynamic linkages and the capability to stand up for the legal and strategic interests of the mission. There is general agreement that a mission needs strong leadership, with good policy.

**Management**

Using the right mix of skills

In the missions in which size was reported as a serious problem, there were at least 15 expatriate international observers per million people in the affected conflict zone. In Colombia there are fewer than five per million, even when combining the four separate institutions. Similarly, the larger missions had about four observers or more per thousand square kilometres, while the density of presence in Colombia lags far behind.

The preceding chapters’ analysis, though, proposes a more comprehensive range of activities than most missions have engaged in, and this would necessarily require more human resources. So even a mission size previously considered ‘adequate’ might better be considered as a minimum, if these recommendations are to be implemented fully.

Management

There is general agreement that a mission needs strong leadership, with good policy, political and diplomatic skills and the courage to stand up for the identity and integrity of a mission and its principles. But beyond this, mission leaders must simply be good managers, able to maximise the potential of a large organisation and provide leadership and guidance to a large staff. Mission leaders must also be able to advocate to ensure that a mission is getting the resource support and political coverage it needs in order to function.

Some missions have suffered from poor management or rapid turnover of leadership. HRFOR, for instance, had five mission leaders in less than four years.
particular challenge for a fast deployment – a mission conceived to respond to a crisis – to find the right leadership. The sponsoring institutions need a roster of qualified mission leaders and managers, ready to be called upon in crisis. Also, in order to consider and plan missions, and ensure consistent quality, the institution needs a high-level manager dedicated and available for their creation. Otherwise, this task is sidelined and not given the attention it requires, and handed to someone without mission-planning experience. Such a designated manager might if necessary perform the role of chief of mission in a new presence, until another qualified appointment can be made.

The same managerial and leadership skills are also needed at the helm of each sub-office. In contrast to a headquarters position, field managers often have to create their own functional structure from scratch, adapt institutional strategies to local conditions and personalities, and manage local and national staff.

Composition of a field presence

There is a strong argument for a mission of mixed professions, to maximise protective impact by taking advantage of each profession’s strengths, especially within the UN system. Civilian police forces, for instance, have experience in handling violent incidents, crisis response and security management. Political officers should come with an ability to handle the strategic analysis needed to guide a mission’s activities within an ability to handle the strategic analysis needed to guide a mission’s activities. Human-rights monitors can recognise and analyse complex dynamics of abuse within a legal framework, helping a mission to create response strategies and credible public reports that build momentum for change.

Complex UN missions have generally recruited from all of these professions, and have used personnel with diverse experience in a variety of roles. In contrast, non-UN ceasefire missions such as KVM and STMM were heavily military. Some mixed missions have made very effective use of the combination of civilian political staff or human-rights monitors and international Civilian Police (CivPol). The UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) used a ‘civilian cadre’ approach for rapid deployment and created police cells from human-rights monitors and international Civilian Police. Other mixed missions have generally avoided this complementary mix, and instead relied on professionals from one profession. However, mixed missions have also been characterised by a drive to develop national police forces and to train local staff to provide the national police with technical support.

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Each profession has its strengths, and its limitation. Such a mix will work best if the mission also institutes internal lesson-learning processes to share skills among people coming from different backgrounds. If the roles are too isolated and there is no sharing of experiences across professions, the mixture may not be as effective.
learning and sharing does not occur, the result could be the 'worst of all worlds' in which each profession makes the mistakes it is not trained to avoid.

In planning mission composition, some attention should be paid to other kinds of balance as well, in order to control perceptions of bias and extend the range of relationships a mission can build. This includes a mix of gender, age and nationality.

Nationality balance can affect a mission in a variety of ways: some people may trust or distrust some field officers because of their nationality; field officers may be perceived to 'represent' the political power and clout of their home country, contributing to the political calculations of local actors; local people may distrust a mission whose racial composition is too different from their own; or, in contrast, they may distrust citizens of nearby states based on past conflicts. These considerations need to be taken into account.

Gender diversity and awareness

The differential impact of armed violence on women and girls is well documented; the fact that the overwhelming number of combatants and security-force personnel who threaten civilians are men (or teenage boys) in itself will present particular risks. Further, continued systemic discrimination on the basis of gender is likely to be present in many countries where a field mission deploys, and this too will have a dramatic impact on patterns of violence and the ability of affected communities to respond.

International staff deployed to protect civilians must be adequately prepared to ensure that gender-specific violence and persecution are anticipated and addressed. This suggests not only gender-sensitive aspects of training, in identifying risks and quantifying violence, but also a commitment to gender diversity in staffing. Missions with insufficient female field staff may find it difficult to respond to the particular risks faced by women and girls in the host country.

Selection and field-officer profile

Experienced field workers from a number of agencies have noted that one of the particular risks faced by women and girls in the host country.

Proactive Presence
ally performed in those missions…') If there are screening criteria, they are seldom integrally linked to the actual needs and context of a particular operation – except for language skills, and even this criterion is not always met. And finally, once people are selected, most institutions deploying missions have no clear processes for evaluating field staff, and, if necessary, for removing a person whose performance may be damaging a mission.

There are positive exceptions: all field missions interviewed in Colombia felt that selection there was well handled. OHCHR staff pointed out that selection processes now include adequate input from the field. The ICRC has a rigorous selection procedure, followed by a month-long induction in Geneva before personnel are sent to the field. An alternative model is that of the Australian International Deployment Group, which selects civilian police based on nominations and recommendations from their superior officers in their departments.

Despite some weak selection procedures, there was a high level of consensus among all interview respondents about what the criteria should be for selecting field officers. Nearly all agree that professional qualifications can be useful, and availability for an adequate minimum stay is vital, but that more intangible personal characteristics, skills and experience are also important for successful fieldwork. These include:

- commitment to civilian protection
- flexibility, being adaptable to the local social and cultural context
- tolerance, respect and cultural sensitivity
- a high degree of common sense
- a sense of humility; and no sense of superiority, which causes problems of communication between staff, and cultural context
- strong analytical skills
- strong and diverse communication and diplomatic skills – especially good local
- a capacity to communicate with the Red Cross-Humanitarian, and experience to demonstrate this
- a sense of humility and no sense of superiority, which causes problems of communication as well as errors in analysis
- an ability to work as part of a team – you need and you have to be part of
- being able to work on a team – you need and you have to be part of
- strong and diverse communication and diplomatic skills – especially good local
- a sense of humility and no sense of superiority, which causes problems of communication as well as errors in analysis
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These traits, gleaned from over a hundred interviews with field staff, cannot all be picked out from a written application, or even from a short interview. Effective selection requires a subjective decision by evaluators with good judgement and field experience.
Some INGOs face this challenge by linking selection to an intensive training process. After a detailed application which includes analytical writing, reflection on past experience by applicants, and long interviews, applicants are immersed in a week or more of training. This training also serves as a final screening, where experienced trainers can tell if candidates lack important qualities for field work, and can recommend that the decision to send them to the field be revoked.

Mission practitioners or leaders from the field should participate in the selection of their own personnel, but unfortunately the geographic distance can limit the depth of contact required for a good judgement. The aforementioned training/screening process also provides a solution to this challenge, if the institution arranges for key people to come from the field to participate as both trainers and selection evaluators.

The mistakes of poorly screened field staff are costly, damaging a mission’s reputation and credibility, and sometimes presenting a serious security risk. Rigorous control over the selection of personnel is a sign of institutional maturity and responsibility. Hand in hand with rigorous selection goes the need for legitimate staff appraisals. This would allow a mission to improve the quality of its work, identify needs for additional training and correct errors of selection, as well as informing the mission of the necessary criteria for future selection.

Adequate and appropriate training for mission personnel

In addition to poor selection, lack of training is a major cause of poor-quality field work. On average, the commitment to training in the missions studied has been extremely low. In many cases, no training was offered at all – or at least the field officers interviewed had no knowledge of it, and had received none themselves. Some missions have offered brief orientation sessions on the ground, often after the field officers have already arrived in the area where their work is to be carried out. The presenters often had no pointers for us, and we were often left in the dark.

Most existing training is criticised for its dry, lecture format or legal character, and its irrelevance to practical field problems. Training is often focused only on transmitting organisational mandates and rules, or political information about the situation; seldom is it focused on improving practical skills. In the worst of cases, the apparent ‘crisis urgency’ of a situation has been used to excuse the omission of training altogether, or of training that was offered. In some cases, the training was offered too late, or in the form of role-plays or simulations that were not relevant to the field work.

There have, however, been some promising exceptions. Many MICIVIH field officers have received an intensive training in Haiti, which included practical exercises and role-plays on culture, politics, and how to interact effectively with the local population. UNICEF and UNHCR have developed general staff training programmes, which include protection components in workshops and seminars as well as distance-learning options.

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The ICRC and NGOs including PBI and the Nonviolent Peace Force all demand substantial off-site training sessions before deployment. Appropriate preparation for a delicate field operation should include a number of different components:

- Off-site training before deployment, both general and mission-specific
- On-site training and orientation after arrival in the mission
- An ongoing mentor relationship with a more experienced field officer
- Periodic training during service, including on specific practical topics
- Regular appraisal processes and de-briefing at the conclusion of service.

### Off-site training before a mission

Before final acceptance for service in the field, candidates should go through an intensive participatory training process. This should serve to familiarise them with the demands of fieldwork, while also giving an experienced training team the opportunity for final selection and screening of candidates before allowing them to serve in the field. Role-plays in particular are a powerful training tool for assessing certain skills of communication, practical analysis and teamwork. This initial training should be skill-focused and general, with an objective of preparing field officers for service in a variety of contexts. It should also promote a clear understanding of the institution sponsoring the field presence, and build morale and loyalty to the institution and its mandate. And it should have a formal assessment process, in which a team of trainers can make suggestions to individuals for additional preparation. An institution that participates in multiple field missions should take advantage of this general training to involve candidates who are likely to serve in a variety of contexts. These joint experiences may cement organisational cohesiveness and morale. Likewise, expectancies from service in one mission can be a source of conflict and confusion among field workers between missions and from experience in other contexts. Field officers must be prepared for multiple mission service and concern for other missions. The purpose of multiple mission service and concern for other missions is to prepare field officers for a variety of contexts. These joint experiences may cement organisational cohesiveness and morale. Likewise, expectancies from service in one mission can be a source of conflict and confusion among field workers between missions and from experience in other contexts. Field officers must be prepared for multiple mission service and concern for other missions.

### Mission-specific training

Mission-specific training can be a separate process aimed at preparing already trained field officers for a specific mission. Or, if new officers are being recruited urgently for a specific mission, it could be a second stage of the initial training process. This training helps field workers to apply general skills and understandings to the specific mission, and it can help to prepare them for the demands of fieldwork in that context. Training also helps field officers to understand the mandate and principles of the sponsoring institution, and to develop a clear understanding of the institutional context. Field officers must be prepared for this process, in which a team of trainers can make suggestions to individuals for additional preparation. An institution that participates in multiple field missions should take advantage of this general training to involve candidates who are likely to serve in a variety of contexts. These joint experiences may cement organisational cohesiveness and morale. Likewise, expectancies from service in one mission can be a source of conflict and confusion among field workers between missions and from experience in other contexts. Field officers must be prepared for multiple mission service and concern for other missions. The purpose of multiple mission service and concern for other missions is to prepare field officers for a variety of contexts. These joint experiences may cement organisational cohesiveness and morale. Likewise, expectancies from service in one mission can be a source of conflict and confusion among field workers between missions and from experience in other contexts. Field officers must be prepared for multiple mission service and concern for other missions.
knowledge of the real conditions, the culture or the politics of the situation they will face. The mission-specific training should prepare all field personnel for a smooth arrival and an efficient transition to initial fieldwork.

Each mission will face distinct needs and demands in terms of security, discretion, communication styles, mission mandate and cultural understanding, for example, and it would be a mistake to assume that either generic training or experience in another mission can adequately prepare people for arrival at a new one. Field officers, and even civil-society respondents, stressed in interviews the importance of field officers with prior experience receiving some clear training in a country’s context before arrival, since they otherwise might have too strong a tendency to apply lessons and strategies from other contexts without appropriate adaptation.

Finally, advance mission training should consciously develop a sense of esprit de corps for field personnel who will later be depending on each other on the ground.

Some suggest that mission-specific training is best done only in country. This has serious risks: field personnel would still be arriving ill informed. In some cases they will not be ready to deal with mission conditions, something they should be persuaded to consider before departure to the field. The field reality is often turbulent and unpredictable, and institutional commitment to rigorous training upon arrival is easily lost in the pressures of immediate demands. Finally, the capacity to absorb a training process immediately upon arrival is constrained by the numerous stresses and uncertainties characteristic of arrival in a new culture and context.

Ideally, arriving field workers will have a chance to settle in briefly before formal training begins. On-site training after arrival

Access and uncertainties characteristic of arrival in a new culture and context mean that a thorough and comprehensive pre-arrival training process cannot possibly prepare field personnel for the challenges they will face. Even well-structured and comprehensive pre-arrival training programs face serious limitations. First, the duration of pre-arrival training must be short; there should be a transition from learning about the mission to working within a mission setting, where field personnel can begin to develop a sense of the mission’s overall mandate and activities. Second, the pre-arrival training must be designed with the specific needs and challenges of each mission in mind, rather than being a broad, generic program that can only provide a general overview of potential issues and strategies. Third, the on-site training program must be flexible and adaptable, able to respond to the specific needs and challenges of each mission as they arise.

Preparation for the mission-specific training should include a thorough understanding of the mission’s overall goals and objectives, as well as an appreciation of the cultural and political context in which the mission will be operating. This should be followed by on-site training designed to address the specific needs and challenges of each mission as they arise, such as language training, cultural sensitivity training, and operational training. Finally, the training should be followed by a rigorous appraisal and debriefing process, allowing field personnel to reflect on their experiences and learn from their mistakes.

Finally, the training process should be flexible and adaptable, able to respond to the specific needs and challenges of each mission as they arise. This will help ensure that field personnel are well-prepared for the challenges they will face in the field and able to make the most of the experience.
be very useful.

When and where feasible, sharing and comparing experiences with other missions can clarify a mission’s understanding and role in the broader inter-mission context. A mission, if it is part of a larger inter-mission network, should regularly receive and disseminate reports on how other missions are addressing similar issues. This would involve the exchange of information, though important, should be carried out in separate seminars. This report should be noted and analyzed, and a common course of action should be outlined. The primary methodology for training complex political work is to be open-ended.

**Training Methodologies**

In order to enhance training, it is important to involve local analysts and professionals, or representatives of beneficiary groups, and to involve substantive dialogue. Some participation in training by mission leadership is important, especially as training can play such an important role in building a mission’s sense of the various perspectives of experienced, active, and local participants. The training process should elicit doubts and fears, and seek constructive means of addressing them. There should be ongoing mobile training units: experienced trainers who travel to the various mission sub-locations to carry out seminars in a flexible manner that can respond to developing needs in the field. Larger missions should consider having an ongoing mobile training unit to facilitate this process.

Periodic appraisal and debriefing of field officers at the end of their service is a responsibility of any institution, and yet it doesn’t often happen. Ideally there should be some link between these processes and a mission’s training unit. The goals of the mission should be tied to the mission’s training unit, and the expectations should be clear to all participants. The training process should bring in outside resource people, including local analysts and professionals, or representatives of beneficiary groups, and should involve substantive dialogue. Some participation in training by mission leadership is important, especially as training can play such an important role in building a mission’s sense of the various perspectives of experienced, active, and local participants. The training process should elicit doubts and fears, and seek constructive means of addressing them. There should be ongoing mobile training units: experienced trainers who travel to the various mission sub-locations to carry out seminars in a flexible manner that can respond to developing needs in the field. Larger missions should consider having an ongoing mobile training unit to facilitate this process.

**Chapter 11: Institutional Challenges**

INTRODUCTION > BEING THERE > STRATEGIES > CHALLENGES
Training should address specific skills that have been generally under-emphasised. As noted above, for instance, training in gender-related aspects of protection is often a crucial gap to cover. Training should also include practice in all the analytical, strategic and communication skills that have been detailed in earlier sections of this book, especially those skills that are not automatically part of the professional education that field workers receive before joining a mission.

Training policy

All of these suggestions depend on one primary policy decision: a serious institutional resource commitment to training. This includes:

- A budget covering personnel, travel and logistics
- Dedicated and qualified training staff both outside and inside the mission
- A time commitment in the work plans of all field staff to spend the necessary time being trained and assisting in training
- Minimum training thresholds, below which a field worker will not be deployed.

The most frequent justification for not making these commitments is lack of resources and time. This is flawed logic, since a proportional commitment to training is necessary at any resource level. Institutions that fail to invest sufficiently in training do not usually fix this problem as their budgets grow – other demands continue to take resource priority. International institutions will not implement better training when they have more money, but when they decide it matters.

Institutions sending protection workers into conflict zones should also consider multi-institutional collaborations on protection training. It would be a useful step to encourage inter-institutional conferences and consultations to begin a dialogue and to some inter-institutional co-operation and standardisation in the fields of training institutions should be developed. The ISPCP, the International Social Protection Council and the PRISMA network are some examples of important initiatives that have been developed in response to the recognition of the problem. As these initiatives grow, other countries should consider

Care for the morale and mental health of mission staff

Care for the morale and mental health of mission staff

Proactive Presence
I was burnt out after three months in Kosovo... I did not think it would be so difficult to live through such a situation.

Numerous factors make mission personnel in conflict zones especially vulnerable to mental-health problems. These include:

- direct security risks – fear for oneself, and the consequent stress of constant security caution
- indirect security risks – constant fear for the well-being of co-workers and local contacts
- direct trauma – living through violent experiences
- secondary trauma – living and working constantly close to victims of trauma
- stressful living conditions – unfamiliar terrain or climate, heat, risks of serious health problems, inadequate housing or facilities for comfort or personal space
- loneliness – distance from loved ones
- stress of collective work – the demands of working as a team, with members all under stress, which generally manifests in internal group dynamics
- cultural stress – unfamiliarity at first, or fatigue over the longer term from functioning within an unfamiliar culture
- institutional stress – frustration with the inefficiency or lack of resources of the mission itself and its inability to respond adequately to the pressing human demand of victims

In over one hundred interviews with field staff, not a single person felt that there was adequate institutional treatment of mental-health needs. One reaction to this was the stoic approach – "You just have to be tough and cope with it yourself." In fact, it appears that few field mission personnel were even warned before deployment that there was danger and stress involved in the work. Applicants to most of these institutions are not asked to reflect seriously on their commitment and readiness for such risks, or their ability to maintain a calm and objective demeanor under increasing circumstances.
But there is a growing recognition that a mission has a responsibility to minimize these health risks by encouraging skills for self-care, mutual support among team members, training for coping with stress, and by providing adequate services for people who have been traumatized or burnt out. A few organizations offer workshops on managing occupational stress to staff, or make post-incident or post-mission psychological support available. In only one case, PBI in Colombia, was there a staff person in the field with the job of providing mental-health support to staff and volunteers.

There are important initiatives underway to develop constructive policies, training, therapies and supportive practices for field workers. Protection field missions must make a commitment to learn, and take advantage of what is being developed by other organizations. The point here is not to re-state best practice in mental-health support for field workers, which is better described elsewhere (see Key resources), but rather that protection missions need first and foremost to make a policy and resource commitment to use the tools that exist.

Key resources on self-care and mental health for field mission workers

Ongoing resource development in this field can be found at these web-links:
- People in Aid (www.peopleinaid.org)
- Action Without Borders (www.psychosocial.org)
- Humanitarian Practice Network (www.odihpn.org)
- Oxfam UK. Managing to Cope (12pp, 2002).
- Post Trauma Stress (4pp, 2002).

Learning from the past and building for the future

Missions and their sponsoring institutions should systematically collect and analyze experiences and learn from them. Most have failed to do so. There is little in place to ensure that one mission learns from the mistakes of past missions, even when the need for it is clear.

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missions are sponsored by the same institution. The transmission of institutional memory and lessons is largely left to individuals. Yet newcomers arriving in the field are often not even given sufficient overlap with their predecessors to learn from recent experiences.

There is a growing pool of experienced field personnel and leadership from past missions. They are each bringing their own lessons from one mission to the next. They also bring their memories of who serves well in different contexts, and these personal links can positively affect selection processes, yielding more qualified mission staff. But this is very ad hoc. Even when a mission has people with prior experience, this is no substitute for systematic lesson learning. Individual memories tend to over-emphasise mistakes and errors, and this tends to bias strategies towards avoiding scandal rather than maximising positive impact.

Some efforts outside sponsoring institutions have tried to improve this situation. The Aspen Institute convened a series of studies and consultations on many of the unarmed missions of the 1990s. In 2002, the Rockefeller Foundation convened a consultation in London of experts in unarmed monitoring, which included planners of upcoming missions. Experienced practitioners have also published numerous articles in journals to preserve important lessons from field experience.

Field missions rarely utilise internal procedures to record and learn from their experiences. They cite the pressing need to prepare for the next crisis, which seems always more urgent than sitting people down to analyse what has just happened, so that lessons from previous experiences don’t have the time to percolate and inform the next crisis. This is a failure of mission management, not an inability to learn from experience. There are missing rounds of experience to extract important lessons from field experience. Lessons are often not shared within the organisation with whom the experience was gained, and lessons learned may not be applied in future missions. This can happen in different ways. In some missions, lessons are shared in a more systematic way, while in others, lessons are not shared at all.

Respect and understand the relative advantages and disadvantages of armed and unarmed intervention strategies.

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Get the right entry agreement – and stretch it

**Aim to secure:**

- Unlimited access to territory, all key players, and information
- Commitments by armed parties to support the unarmed presence, ensure its security, communicate regularly and cooperate on logistical aspects
- A clear legal framework
- Freedom to choose technical-support tasks
- Freedom of expression
- Sufficient political support to allow the flexibility for other activities as necessary to improve protection.

**Make the mission big enough**

- Larger missions have increased political power, protection impact and independence
- Smaller missions can carry political burdens to a processing, which is inherently
- Optimal mission size depends on a range of factors including the size of the territory, its population, the number of ongoing abuses, the scale and nature of combat, the precise role of the mission and the level of complementarity and collaboration with other presences on the ground.
- Effective presence management has the strategic, leadership, and political-led service.
- Effective mission management has the strategic, leadership and political-led service.
- Provide adequate and appropriate training for mission staff.
- Expand the Mission to cover the full spectrum of the field officer’s mission experience.

**Use the right mix of skills**

- Include a range of professional capacities including human-rights monitoring, humanitarian assistance, civilian policing and military-observer skills, and diplomatic/political experience.
- Ensure that mission management has the strategic, leadership, and political-led service.
- Select personnel carefully and rigorously, using intensive face-to-face processes to select and interview qualified candidates.
- Ensure that mission management has the strategic, leadership, and political-led service.
- Commit serious institutional resources to training.
- Expand training to cover the full spectrum of the field officer’s mission experience.
Use experiential and practical training, with interactive methodologies.

Initiate internal and inter-institutional ‘lessons-learned’ projects, linked to training.

Provide opportunities to share and enhance strategies and techniques.

Learn from the past and build for the future.

Care for morale and mental health.

Consciously cultivate a cadre of experience that can mentor new field officers.

Encourage mutual support among team members.

Commit resources to staff care.

Offer training and other adequate services to deal with stress and trauma.
Effective field presence can significantly enhance the protection of civilians. The specific lessons and recommendations of this manual are relevant to a wide range of deployments of international missions and agencies on the ground in conflict zones. The international community needs to take greater advantage of the protective power of field presence, and deploy more such missions.

Protection is a difficult challenge, and this manual provides guidance to enhance its effectiveness. The process of integration with other agencies is critical. We mean integrating the lessons into other internal manuals and training materials. We mean implementing the lessons into training programs. This may mean using this manual as a basis from which to develop appropriate and effective strategies to encourage the protection of civilians. Ideally, they will build these strategies into their own protection of civilians programs. These ideas will contribute to protection only when they are applied in real situations.

Protection is a difficult challenge, and this manual by no means presumes to have all the answers. The tools of proactive presence must be used together with a wide range of other efforts to assist and protect victims of violence and war. Effective field presence can significantly contribute to and enhance the protection of civilians.


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The conclusions in this manual are based on data gathered from a variety of sources including documental and archival materials, in-depth telephone interviews and three field trips. Relevant data from the author’s prior research and practical experience in Guatemala, Haiti and El Salvador was also integrated. Most interviews were tape-recorded, except in some cases during field trips where it was judged that recording would be a security concern or hindrance for respondents. Most interviews were individual, although a number of interviews held during the field trips were in group settings with civil-society organisations and local communities. The coding process included a database of over 700 respondents’ answers to various questions.

Field research included interviews with members of the following four groups:

1) Government officials: including over 20 representatives of state institutions, including several police superintendents and military commanders working in zones of conflict, several former military and civilian authorities, coordinators of humanitarian affairs, human-rights commission officers, public defenders, representatives of ombudsmen’s offices and governors.

2) Armed group representatives: in Sri Lanka and Sudan, due to ongoing peace processes at the time of the research, it was possible also to meet with representatives of guerrilla organisations, the LTTE and the SLA. In Colombia, however, it was not advisable to secure interviews directly with representatives of the Proactive Presence.

3) Community leaders and representatives of civil-society organisations, trade unions and peace activists.

4) Field officers, observers and experts familiar with past missions.

Field visits were made to 14 cities and towns: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Bucaramanga in Colombia; Khartoum, El Fasher, Nyala and Ed Daein in Sudan; Colombo, Kilinochchi, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Katancuddy and Batticaloa in Sri Lanka. In addition, several rural communities near these settlements were visited.

Interviews in the Field:

Interviews were conducted with members of the following four groups:

1) Government officials: including over 20 representatives of state institutions, including several police superintendents and military commanders working in zones of conflict, several former military and civilian authorities, coordinators of humanitarian affairs, human-rights commission officers, public defenders, representatives of ombudsmen’s offices and governors.

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Civil society: The field trips were also the primary vehicle for hearing the opinions of civil society and communities about the role of international presence in their own protection. Dozens of interviews were carried out with individuals, NGO leaders and community groups in both urban and rural settings. These included visits to seven IDP camps or displaced communities in Darfur including both ethnic African and Arab respondents, discussions with NGO consortia throughout Sri Lanka representing diverse ethnic communities, and meetings with dozens of NGO and community representatives individually in all three countries. Where information was available about presumed political or armed-group alignments of NGO or civil-society groups, interviews were secured across the political spectrum. In total these interviews included the distinct opinions or reflections of over 100 civil-society respondents.

Representatives of international agencies, including UNHCR, the ICRC, and NGOs, were also interviewed. The ICRC Director of Protection, and over a dozen representatives of UNHCR, the ICRC, and NGOs were interviewed. Their experiences were critical in understanding the complexities of protection work. In Pakistan, interviews were conducted with the head and deputy head of the UNHCR office, other headquarters personnel, and several field officers. In Sri Lanka, interviews were held with the SLMM Head of Mission and Chief of Staff, other headquarters personnel, and several field officers. In Sudan, interviews were conducted with the Deputy Resident Coordinator, high-level managers from the WFP and UNHCR presence, the UNMIS Director of Protection, and over a dozen representatives of UNHCR, the ICRC, and NGOs. These interviews were critical in understanding the complexities of protection work. In addition to the focal mission of each field study, research also examined the role of other key protection agencies with a presence in all three countries, in particular the ICRC, UNHCR and NGOs Human Rights, and UNICEF Human Rights.

In addition to the focal mission of each field study, research also examined the role of other key protection agencies with a presence in all three countries, in particular the ICRC, UNHCR and NGOs Human Rights, and UNICEF Human Rights. Interviews were carried out with 18 ICRC delegates in the three conflicts, and 13 field officers for UNICEF and UNHCR. Protection-focused INGOs like Peace Brigades International in Colombia and the Nonviolent Peaceforce in Sri Lanka were also included. Additional interviews beyond the field trips were held with 24 former field officers, including two heads of missions. Respondents also included nine other headquarters-based ICRC staff, five OCHA protection staff, seven representatives of international NGOs, academic experts, and additional representatives of DPKO and DPA, as well as experts on the protection of journalists.
For example, UN Security Council Resolutions 1265 and 1296, and various resolutions of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

1 Slim and Bonwick, Protection. An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies; Mancini-Griffoli and Picot. Humanitarian Negotiation: A handbook for securing access, assistance and protection for civilians (see Bibliography for full details).

2 Some relevant references regarding the use of law are provided in Chapter 8 under the discussion of monitoring and reporting (and listed as 'Key resources on human-rights monitoring').


4 Unarmed Bodyguards (see Bibliography for full details).

5 Of all the conflicts and armed parties studied, only in the case of the Interhamwe (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5) were there no apparent indications that the presence of the.HRGFOR was likely to affect the decision-making process in the armed parties' favour. However, Figures 2.6 and 2.7 also take into account that decision-making processes may be affected by the presence of the HRGFOR, but that the effects may not be entirely positive, and may even be negative. The decision-making process is complex and cannot be reduced to a simple set of variables. However, Figures 2.6 and 2.7 also take into account that decision-making processes may be affected by the presence of the HRGFOR, but that the effects may not be entirely positive, and may even be negative. The decision-making process is complex and cannot be reduced to a simple set of variables.

6 This analysis is drawn in part from Mahony and Eguren, Unarmed Bodyguards (see Bibliography for full details).

7 Author interview with Hector Gramajo, cited from Mahony and Eguren, Proactive Presence.

8 Author interview with Hector Gramajo, cited from Mahony and Eguren, Proactive Presence.
For instance, interviews carried out with Formerly Abducted Children of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda revealed important dynamics and tactics of the LRA that could help to understand the protection vulnerabilities of civilians as well as the leadership structures of the organisation.

In a notable counter-example, SLMM personnel have firm management directives to 'get out of the office'. While they are faulted by some for lack of contact with civil society, they are constantly in touch with both armed parties.

While expressing concern about military harassment of a large IDP camp in Darfur, advocates needed to understand that the combination of guerrilla infiltration in the camp with its proximity to the region's major airport was extremely sensitive in military terms.

MICIVIH was apparently the only mission to provide rudimentary tutoring—three weeks of classes in Haitian Kreyol. And UNAMET was able to recruit some political officers who spoke Bahasa Indonesian.

See for example Mahony and Eguren, Unarmed Bodyguards, or Mahony, Side by Side (see Bibliography for full details).

See Pustyntsev, Making Allies: Engaging government officials to advance human rights (see Bibliography for full details).

An important caveat for all our results is that our field visit covered only North and South Darfur, as West Darfur was then declared off-limits for non-mission personnel.

Three weeks of classes in Haitian Kreyol, and UNAMET was able to recruit some political officers who spoke Bahasa Indonesian. WVC was apparently the only mission to provide rudimentary tutoring.

Some political officers who spoke Bahasa Indonesian.

Enhancing the profile of any threatened group or community must of course be done in collaboration with that group, taking into account any possible backlash that could be generated by an expanded profile of the group.

For a spirited day-by-day account of the experience of one Australian Civil Police Officer in UNAMET, describing many such showdowns with guerrillas, see Savage, Dancing with the Devil: A personal account of policing the East Timor vote for independence (see Bibliography for full details).
Proactive Presence

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Working to improve the global response to armed conflict

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About the Author

Liam Mahony is a pioneer in the theory and practice of international protection. His experience includes protective accompaniment work with Peace Brigades International in Guatemala in the 1980s, developing training frameworks for the organization, and co-founding Peace Brigades International's field presence in Haiti. He is the co-author of *Unarmed Bodyguards: International accompaniment for the protection of human rights*, the first book analysing and explaining the tactic of protective accompaniment. Liam has been Lecturer in Public and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and was the series editor of 40 monographs on innovations in the human rights movement – the *Tactical Notebook* series of the New Tactics in Human Rights Project. His recent consulting projects include commissions for the Rockefeller Foundation on recent consulting projects include commissions for the Rockefeller Foundation on the evolution of the human rights movement, the series editor of 40 monographs on innovations in the human rights movement. He has been Lecturer in Public and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and was the series editor of 40 monographs on innovations in the human rights movement – the *Tactical Notebook* series of the New Tactics in Human Rights Project. His recent consulting projects include commissions for the Rockefeller Foundation, the World Food Programme, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. He has been Lecturer in Public and International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and was the series editor of 40 monographs on innovations in the human rights movement – the *Tactical Notebook* series of the New Tactics in Human Rights Project. His recent consulting projects include commissions for the Rockefeller Foundation, the World Food Programme, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CODHES Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento, Colombia
DPA Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
FARC Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia)
HRFOR Human Rights Mission for Rwanda (UN)
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL international humanitarian law
INGO international NGO
KVM Kosovo Verification Mission (UN)
KLA Kosovo Liberation Army
L TTE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MICIVIH International Civilian Mission in Haiti (UN/OAS)
MINUGUA UN Mission to Guatemala
MOU memorandum of understanding
NGO non-government organisation
OAS Organization of American States
OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
OHCHR Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
ONUPLA UN Mission to El Salvador
ONUSAL UN Mission to El Salvador
OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBI Peace Brigades International
TNI the Indonesian military
UN United Nations
UNAMET UN Assistance Mission to East Timor
UNDP UN Development Programme
UNHCR UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF UN Children's Fund
UNMIS UN Mission to Sudan
UNSC UN Security Council
WFP World Food Programme (UN)