



Improving Community Safety in  
Contested Spaces

Will Bennett

## IMPRINT

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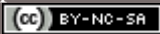
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### Disclaimer:

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Cover picture: We make swings of rockets. Boys playing in Douma, Syria. Tim Alsofi.  This image is licensed under Creative Commons License.

# Improving Community Safety Contested Spaces

**A Handbook for Syrian Civil Society  
Actors**



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# Introduction and Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook complements a larger Berghof Foundation capacity development programme supporting consultation processes on local service provision in communities in north-west Syria. Insecurity in these communities is rife. Live conflict, internal displacement and non-operational services have made people's lives very challenging. In Syria, as we have seen in conflicts elsewhere, ordinary people suffer most from the war and its political complexities. Yet despite the current instability, these people have a right to safety, so this handbook provides some ideas and methods for what civil society actors operating in contested spaces such as north-west Syria can do to help provide it in their communities.

Ultimately, Syria desperately needs a workable peace agreement able to provide this. But people's safety cannot be ignored in the interim. Shifting political sands, where different elites come and go as the violence ebbs and flows, means that providing this is difficult work. But to shirk it is not conducive to peace either now or in the long run. People must be respected and included in discussions about their own security so they can ensure their capacities are pooled and needs met both now and in the future.

It is in this spirit of inclusivity and problem-solving that this handbook is written. It sets out how to use a Community Safety approach. It is designed for use by civil society actors in Syria, but it can be used in other contested areas too.

Community Safety attempts to build human security and contribute to wider peace by bringing people from different backgrounds and institutions together to discuss and address pervasive, and often shared, sources of insecurity. This handbook outlines the key principles underpinning the approach, from analysing conflict to planning, implementing, monitoring and learning from activities, so that practitioners in north-western Syria can deliver Community Safety interventions in ways that are sensitive, safe and contribute both to people's immediate safety and wider peace.

Building on these principles, the handbook also draws on what has worked in similar situations elsewhere. We hope that these examples offer some workable options for practitioners about how they might respond to people's present and unforeseen security challenges in the most appropriate way. This includes suggested techniques to engage with armed groups, using case studies to highlight risks and opportunities and drawing on best practice and previous successes.

However, this is not a one-size-fits-all guide. There is no recipe for delivering security in any space, let alone a contested one. The specific complexities of north-western Syria will require locally led, tailored Community Safety interventions. There may even be times when communities decide not to engage because the risks are too high. Only deep and iterative conflict and context analyses can show exactly what is needed and what is possible at a given time.

That being the case, programmatic flexibility is paramount: peace and security work in contested spaces will not follow typical programme cycles. Instead, the space to try, fail, learn and improve must be jealously guarded, so that communities are able to design and lead interventions that are realistic, relevant and rooted in people's genuine needs.

## How to use this handbook

<b>Conceptual framework</b>	<b>Chapter 1</b> provides a definition of Community Safety. It explains how the concept developed in history and how it relates to the Sustainable Development Goals. It introduces the five-step cycle behind Community Safety.
<b>Community Safety in practice</b>	<p><b>Chapter 2</b> explores each phase of the Community Safety cycle. It starts in <b>Chapter 2a</b> with the preparation phase, addressing questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☰ What is conflict analysis and why is it important?</li> <li>☰ What are main points to consider when forming a Community Safety Working Group?</li> <li>☰ What are the criteria for choosing an area to work in?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Chapter 2b</b> looks at how to identify and prioritise safety needs. It answers questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☰ What constitutes a safety concern and what are the criteria for prioritising an issue to work on?</li> <li>☰ How can we avoid doing harm through our work?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Chapter 2c</b> describes the process of making action plans to address safety issues, by defining objectives, activities and people's individual responsibilities. It answers question like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☰ How can we create a theory of the change we want to achieve and what are steps to turn it into practice?</li> <li>☰ How do we select good indicators to measure success?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Chapter 2d</b> looks at the implementation phase and provides a number of example issues that Community Safety can address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☰ What factors must be considered when initiating relationships with security providers?</li> <li>☰ What can Community Safety efforts do to address proliferation of weapons and casualties of shelling?</li> <li>☰ How can Community Safety Working Groups support service delivery?</li> <li>☰ How can we change security providers' behaviours?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Chapter 2e</b> explores monitoring and evaluation as the last step of the five-step cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☰ What is participatory M&amp;E and who should you include?</li> <li>☰ What challenges must you anticipate when using M&amp;E in contested spaces?</li> </ul>
<b>Living amongst armed groups</b>	<b>Chapter 3</b> highlights that when carrying out Community Safety work in contested spaces, particular consideration must be given to the existence of armed groups. It points out risks and opportunities when engaging with these groups.
<b>Closing words</b>	<b>Chapter 4</b> concludes by pointing out that failures are a normal part of the process and should not discourage efforts to make communities safer.
<b>Annex</b>	<b>The Annex</b> includes detailed instructions on how to use the 'problem tree' conflict analysis tool and provides an overview of selected humanitarian laws applicable in conflicts.

# 1. What is Community Safety?

People should always be at the centre of peace and security work. Unfortunately, security is all too often considered a matter for the state alone, overlooking the fact that insecurity is ‘a personal experience characterised by absence: absence of protection; of paths to redress grievance; of fair access to resources; and of rights’.<sup>1</sup> These insecurities contribute to cycles of violence that prevent people leading safe and dignified lives.

Focusing solely on state-centric security provision also makes little sense in contested spaces with multiple armed and non-armed actors. And so in this chapter, we look at how Community Safety approaches might be used to respond to people’s security needs in ways that are sensitive to and, where appropriate, inclusive of the complex multitude of actors typical of present-day north-western Syria.

Community Safety has quite a long history.<sup>2</sup> It was first described as one of the seven dimensions of human security in the 1994 Human Development Report, which called for a redefinition of security with people at its centre.<sup>3</sup> Since then, it has been used with increasing frequency in both fragile and stable environments to improve people’s safety, and by 2015 its principles could be seen in the Sustainable Development Goals. This is particularly clear in SDG 16, which aims to: ‘*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for*

*all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.*’

Note that SDG16 does not restrict itself to states, but prioritises ‘inclusive societies’ where people and institutions (state and non-state) strive to find lasting solutions to *everyone’s* insecurities. This resonates strongly with Community Safety, which can be described as:

- ≡ A *people-centred and participatory* approach to tackle specific issues causing insecurity, whether they emerge from security, justice, peace or development deficits
- ≡ A *process* that explicitly aims to improve the relationships between and behaviours of communities and security providers and institutions
- ≡ An *end-state*, whereby Community Safety is reached when the mechanisms allowing communities to articulate their security needs exist in conjunction with the local capacity and willingness to respond to them
- ≡ An *accountability* mechanism allowing communities to ensure security actors maintain decent standards

Community Safety works by bringing together people who aim to influence how people experience security and providing a space for each of them to articulate their specific safety concerns and collectively plan improvements.

Because these plans are entirely community-defined, they can encompass anything at all that people consider to be

<sup>1</sup> Bennett W., (2014), Community Security Handbook

<sup>2</sup> We use the term Community Safety throughout, but note that the term is regularly interchanged with Community Security

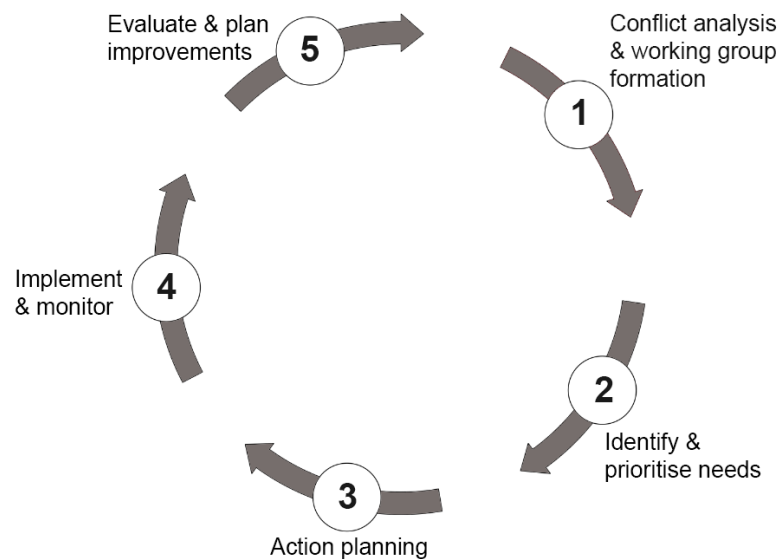
<sup>3</sup> UNDP, (1994), Human Development Report



detrimental to their safety, for example road traffic or mines. However, note that Community Safety operates within the realm of the possible. The activities that

emerge will always be restricted by the available resources (typically money and time) and space to work (time and political space).

The most thorough approach uses a five-step preparatory, analysis, planning, implementation and learning cycle:<sup>4</sup>



The cycle indicates that Community Safety requires ongoing engagement. It repeatedly brings together different members of society to discuss, plan and monitor how to invest their time and resources for the collective safety of the community. This repetition improves relationships between different sections of a community and can establish predictable behaviours and norms that dictate how safety is provided.

Sometimes Community Safety work may seem quite intuitive – you meet, discuss, plan, act and improve. A society may even have existing mechanisms that are

quite similar but called something else. But in contested and volatile environments, working purposefully through these steps helps mitigate the very real risk of doing harm. They also offer a chance to reflect, learn and adapt your work, so that it remains people-centred, safe and contributes towards steadily building the capacity of communities, local authorities and security providers to meet their specific security needs.

The next section will go through how to implement these vital steps in contested spaces.

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from The Community Security Programme Cycle, in supra note 1

## 2. Using Community Safety Approaches in Contested Spaces

The common hope of many people living in contested space is peace underpinned by an inclusive agreement that both ensures people’s immediate safety and sets out a vision for their longer-term prospects. Unfortunately, it is not clear when this will be achieved in Syria. In the interim, Community Safety can not only meet some of the current security needs, but it can also prepare the ground for peace.

Community Safety approaches try to foster common ground between different actors. They are sensitive to

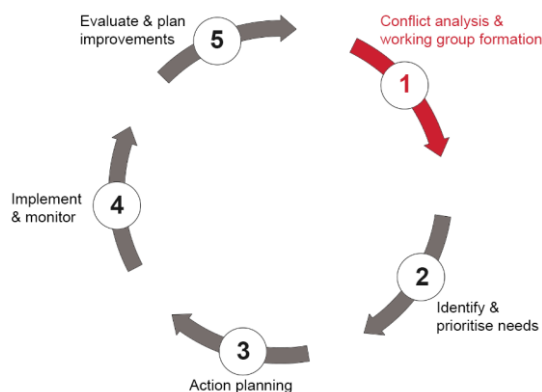
situational realities and strive for incremental improvements that people genuinely need, based on existing capacities and willingness to respond.

This gives Community Safety particular relevance to contested spaces where multiple actors operate and institutional capacities are likely to be weak. Operational challenges in these areas are significant, but it is possible to make headway. This section will demonstrate how each of the five steps in the Community Safety cycle can help.

At each step, consider the following:

1. Include as many local stakeholders as practicably possible throughout to ensure local relevance and ownership
2. Plans need to be realistic, safe and supported by adequate resources
3. Work through existing structures where possible. Integrate your plans with other development and peace efforts that are providing human security
4. Maintain gender and conflict sensitivity at every stage ([see Section 2 for more information](#))

### a) Conflict analysis and working group formation



A conflict analysis is the systematic study of the causes, actors and dynamics behind a conflict, and the linkages between them.

Its findings will inform your Community Safety activities. Analyses are essential for doing no harm and ensuring activities remain sensitive to changes in the conflict context. Most importantly, the analysis helps decide whether Community Safety is even the right kind of approach in a contested space it may be too dangerous, too deliberative, etc.

In addition to existing traditional ways to understand conflict, a mixture of tools such as literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, interviews, observations and mapping exercises is best used to gather information for analysis. See the box below on Rapid Conflict Analysis Tools for some ideas.

### Example: Rapid Conflict Analysis Tools

**Mapping:** This means you visually plot, on a large piece of paper, how the structures, issues and actors at the root of people's insecurity are linked. The map can show entry points (issues and locations) for your work and help you decide who should be involved in your group effort.

**Light literature reviews:** A scan of NGO reports, press reports or donor evaluations can highlight historical and structural drivers of insecurity. It also shows what similar efforts are under way or have been tried previously – helping you avoid others' mistakes and identify unknown opportunities.

**Surveys and focus groups:** These gather people's views on security challenges and opportunities. Plan separate meetings for men and women and any other groups where talking together may compromise security or the quality of the results. Ensure the diversity of participants and opinions. Conflict sensitivity is paramount – talking about safety can be an emotive and dangerous experience.

Source: Saferworld, (2004), Conflict Analysis Chapter in Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Building: Tools for Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment

Of course, doing a conflict analysis and gathering sensitive data can be dangerous work in contested areas and personal safety is the most important concern. If in doubt, do not proceed. There is always more data to collect and questions to ask and the line has to be drawn somewhere. Speed may also be of the essence, especially in rapidly changing environments. But where possible, and as *accurately* as possible, we recommend that a conflict analysis consider and assess the following:

- ≡ **Situation** analysis (what is the recent historical, political, economic, social, cultural, demographic context?)
- ≡ **Causal** analysis (what are the root causes, intermediate causes and triggers of violence?)
- ≡ **Stakeholder** analysis (what are the interests, goals, capacities and relationships of those engaged in or affected by conflict?)
- ≡ **Conflict dynamics** analysis (how do the actors, causes and situation interact?)
- ≡ **Security** analysis (who is providing security, to whom, how and why/why not? What are people's biggest safety concerns? Is Community Safety an appropriate way to address them?)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from UNPBSO, (2013), Conflict analysis for UN Peacebuilding Fund support.

An analysis along these lines should provide you with enough information to answer the following questions, each of which is critical for ensuring that your Community Safety work is as sensitive and meaningful as possible:

- ≡ What are the potential opportunities for improving people's safety?
- ≡ Where should you focus your work?
- ≡ Who should be involved in your working group?
- ≡ How will your work affect conflict dynamics positively or negatively?

Remember, conflict analysis is an iterative process that remains important throughout the cycle. Whilst it is not always possible to conduct analyses in depth, failing to understand changing dynamics can have serious repercussions.

Luckily, putting together a locally representative group (something some organisations call a Community Safety Working Group) offers easy access to a bloc of people and opinions through which you can update your analysis and better understand a situation.

### **Forming Community Safety Working Groups**

Community Safety work is discussed, planned, implemented and monitored in your communities through representative groups. From here, we refer to these as Community Safety Working Groups.

Who should be involved in a working group? This requires some careful thought. Who you decide to include (or not) may create in/out groups and exacerbate conflict dynamics by encouraging spoilers. Establishing groups should not be rushed. Forming trusted, inclusive, diverse and representative groups will lead to better work. Indeed, in many ways, forming a Community Safety Working Group is as important as the subsequent activities it carries out. Things to consider include:

#### **Forming Community Safety Working Groups**

- ≡ Aim for 10-20 members in a group
- ≡ The group make-up must be diverse and represent the whole community
- ≡ Always consider conflict dynamics and actively work to transform them by providing a neutral space for calm dialogue
- ≡ The more diverse the members of the Community Safety Working Group, the more potential they have to 'bridge' between groups and build trusting relationships
- ≡ However, bridging between groups who have conflicting ideas or interests is a delicate operation. Rushing the process might reopen wounds. It may be safer to have two parallel groups at first, or arrange informal pre-meetings. Conflict sensitivity is crucial
- ≡ Including security providers (typically police or non-state armed groups (NSAGs)) improves capacity for meaningful responses but comes with obvious risks. Find the right moment to include them in the process without usurping community plans or creating barriers that exclude other important actors
- ≡ Participating actors may include (but are not limited to) Shura councils, local councils, representatives of tribes, NSAGs, political parties, civil society groups, IDPs, faith-based organisations, trade unions, minority and women's organisations, NGOs, researchers or their institutions, traditional or indigenous groups, business interest groups, or the police or military

Even when following these steps, there may still be contention. If so, consider holding democratic selections whereby stakeholders decide amongst themselves who should be in a Working Group. This can ensure the legitimacy of the group and encourage community buy-in from the outset. However, check for local prejudices, in particular with regard to IDPs – who, as some of the most marginalised people in a community, should be represented.

### CASE STUDY

#### Creating Legitimate Community Safety Working Groups in Georgia

The region of Shida Kartli has been conflict-affected since the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. Community Safety projects aimed to understand and respond to what made communities feel unsafe.

Forming groups was difficult. And so across Shida Kartli, 20 communities each nominated a local person to be their CSWG representative. A local NGO, which had the trust of the communities, led the process. These 20 people then voted on who should be the final 14 in the CSWG. This process ensured the legitimacy of the working group and encouraged communities to trust and use it.

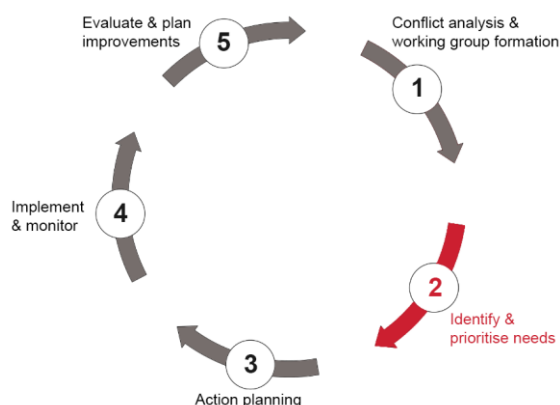
This feeling of legitimacy also made the CSWG members enthusiastic about their work and gave them the strength and confidence to raise their safety concerns with local security providers.

Who should be involved is closely linked to the question of *where* you should work. Again, this decision comes with repercussions, especially in contested spaces, and you will have to balance what is needed with what is possible and safe. We suggest you consider a place that meets as many of the following criteria as possible:

#### Criteria for choosing an area in which to work

- ≡ People need help and you can clearly see some potential work areas
- ≡ There are no blockers powerful enough to completely stop the project
- ≡ Community members themselves want change
- ≡ There are common issues able to unite citizens
- ≡ The repercussions of any mistakes will not present serious risks
- ≡ Progress can be achieved with the available resources
- ≡ There are opportunities for ‘quick wins’

## b) Identifying safety problems and prioritising needs



Once the Community Safety Working Groups are formed and a safe place and time have been found for the groups to meet, they should be given the opportunity to identify and prioritise their own security concerns.

This may take multiple meetings to sensitise the participants to each other or talk through complicated issues. Do not rush things. Let people gradually and safely share security concerns with each other.

Eventually, they should be encouraged to delve a little deeper into these issues and identify some root causes behind them. In contested areas, this can be a fraught process that you must take care does not descend into one group blaming another. Again, this may take a number of meetings.

### What types of issues can we work on?

People’s safety concerns are subjective. Because communities define their own problems and implement their own interventions, Community Safety activities can address almost anything that makes them feel insecure.

By acknowledging this and concerning itself with the full extent of possible sources of unsafety, Community Safety links together security, peace and development. Below are some **example issues** that Community Safety Working Groups in contested areas have attempted to improve. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it in any sort of prioritised order:

- ≡ Poor authority-citizen relations
- ≡ Lack of institutional resources and capacity
- ≡ Lack of public involvement on issues related to security
- ≡ Community tensions
- ≡ Group marginalisation
- ≡ Dysfunctional security or rule of law at the local level
- ≡ Opportunities for income generation and better livelihoods
- ≡ Gender inequality
- ≡ The reintegration of former combatants into communities

Having identified a list of problems and their causes, Community Safety Working Groups then try to prioritise the most pressing amongst them. These should reflect common interests that bridge between sections of the community and security providers.

When prioritising issues, sequencing matters. Addressing violence directly in a contested space may be too dangerous, politically contentious, or simply too difficult. But a collective and iterative conflict analysis should break down violence into its composite drivers and identify safe and possible entry points.

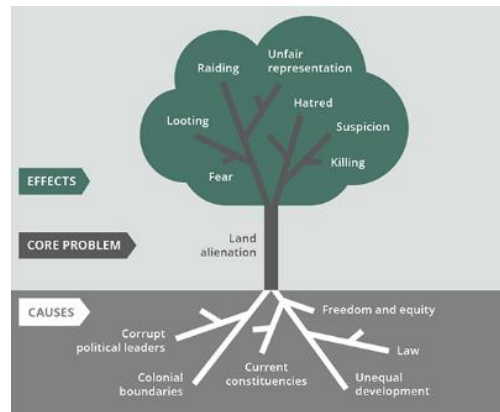
There are many tools available to help you think through and visualise your conflict analyses. Each approaches it slightly differently, but essentially they all attempt to encourage the same level of critical thinking so that you can ascertain how people, power, history, interventions, behaviours, aspirations and conflict all fit together.<sup>6</sup> This will ensure you have a fuller understanding of what needs to change and how your proposed interventions might contribute.

One simple tool is a ‘problem tree’, which tries to understand the causes and effects of particular problems. The tool on the right can also help you prioritise work areas and make sure you’re addressing root causes rather than symptoms (see the Annex for step-by-step instructions on how to use it).

Still, prioritisation is sensitive and different groups may disagree over sequences and needs. The process must therefore be carefully facilitated, with special emphasis placed on the shared safety interests uniting participants. Done early and well, this can set a healthy precedent for future Community Safety Working Groups.

Also consider prioritising some less- sensitive issues initially. This can be a good way to get some quick wins and keep expectations realistic.<sup>7</sup> These may not be the most pressing issues, but they help build trust in and ownership of Community Safety activities and pave the way for addressing more challenging safety issues in due course.

We suggest that authorities should only be included at a time when you are confident that they will not overly influence decisions. But informing them about your activities and coordinating and communicating your plans may be necessary. Make sure you prioritise your own and your community’s safety at all times. You may even conclude that your specific security situation precludes you being able to take any realistic or safe action at all – *and that is fine*.



Source: Herbert S., (2017), Conflict Analysis Topic Guide

## Conflict Sensitivity

### Being conflict-sensitive means:

- ≡ Understanding the context in which you operate
- ≡ Understanding exactly how your work will affect the context and conflict
- ≡ Using this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive ones
- ≡ Minimising risk to anyone connected to your project
- ≡ Focusing on addressing the root causes of conflict

For more information see the Haider, H., (2014). *Conflict Sensitivity: Topic Guide*

<sup>6</sup> Some methods to help you narrow down on an issue to prioritise include using a force field analysis (<https://www.odi.org/publications/5218-management-techniques-force-field-analysis>) or problem trees (<https://www.odi.org/publications/5258-problem-tree-analysis>)

<sup>7</sup> Danish Demining Group (2010), *Community Safety in Somaliland, 2008-10. An Evaluation: Lesson Learned and Improvements for Future Programming*



Not doing anything is a key consideration in being conflict-sensitive, which is based on the idea that every action you take should, at the *bare minimum*, do no harm. A more comprehensive approach aims not just to do no harm but to actively improve a situation.

A core part of conflict sensitivity is gender sensitivity. We will get into why gender inclusion is important for peace and security in the next section, but the process begins with being gender-sensitive from the moment you start working in a conflict-affected area.

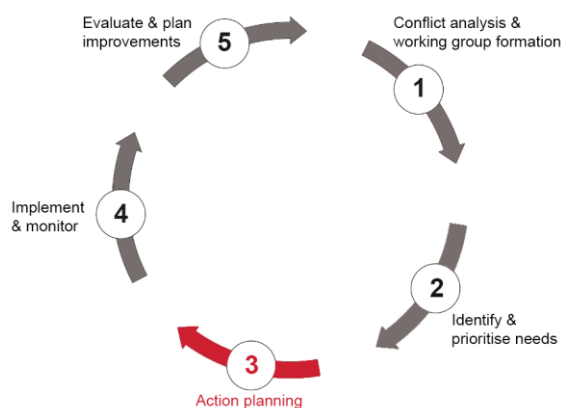
Briefly, this means ensuring that the safety needs of all genders are met. Your work should be based on a solid local understanding of gender norms. Some norms may be contributing to violence and insecurity and need to be carefully transformed. This will take time, but at a bare minimum, gender sensitivity means not entrenching or exacerbating existing norms or inequalities at any stage of your work. Instead, your meetings, discussions, plans and actions should explicitly *promote* gender sensitivity.

### Gender Sensitivity

- ≡ Facilitating the equal participation of people of all genders from a range of backgrounds at all stages of the process and addressing specific gendered barriers to participation
- ≡ Ensuring that everyone’s safety issues are considered equally
- ≡ Creating a safe environment where people feel comfortable to raise sensitive gender issues relating to safety
- ≡ Encouraging respectful and productive relationships between local authorities, security providers and community members of all genders

Source: Watson, C., Wright, H. & Groenewald, H. (2016), Gender Analysis of Conflict Toolkit

### c) Action planning



This section describes the process by which community members, local authorities and security providers articulate the objectives, activities, roles and responsibilities for addressing the prioritised safety issue. We call this Action Planning. It may take more than one meeting, or even require focus groups to be set up ahead of a larger plenary planning session.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Supra note 1



It is the responsibility of the Community Safety Working Group to develop plans that are actually achievable. To this end, we suggest you create Theories of Change. These are concise statements that describe what activities you are planning, what changes you predict they will lead to, and why. Making these statements is simple. But the key thing is to use critical thinking as you do so, clearly spelling out your assumptions about why you want to do something and challenging each other to strike the right balance between ambitious and realistic:<sup>9</sup>

**If...** (we do this activity)

**Then...** (we will see the following changes)

**This is because...** (the reason *why* this activity will cause the changes)

*For example:*

**If...** (we create this handbook)

**Then...** (people living in north-western Syria will lead safer lives)

**This is because...** (it will improve the skills, confidence and networks of people using it, helping them to begin activities that will improve security conditions for people in contested spaces)

You should refer back and root your theories in your original conflict analysis. The more detailed your conflict analysis, the more aware you are of opportunities, sensitivities and risks, and the better your theories of change. You may have one or multiple theories. The key thing is to ensure they provide adequate rationale and direction for your plans and that planned activities keep within the realm of the possible.

You should also identify a few indicators to measure success. They do not need to be complicated, but they are vital to see if your work is making things better – or even worse. In the box below are some indicators other Community Safety programmes have used.

Whether you use these or develop your own, make sure the indicators you use are:

- ≡ locally relevant
- ≡ easy to observe
- ≡ possible to measure

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<sup>9</sup> See Stein, J. & Valters, D. (2012), Understanding Theory of Change in International Development

### Example indicators

#### People's experiences of safety:

- ≡ The proportion of women who feel confident about travelling after dark
- ≡ People's trust in authorities to deliver responsive and accountable services
- ≡ The quality of services delivered to marginalised groups, including IDPs
- ≡ The number of reported cases of domestic violence & gender-based violence
- ≡ Number of families with girls going to school
- ≡ Number of people expressing hope in the future

#### Relationships between the community and security providers:

- ≡ Quality of interactions with security providers in CSWG meetings
- ≡ Number of meetings held
- ≡ Level of attendance at meetings by the community and providers
- ≡ Number of meetings with security providers requested by communities
- ≡ Willingness to report crime or security issues to relevant authorities
- ≡ Willingness of community to hand over suspects/perpetrators

#### The behaviour of security providers towards communities:

- ≡ Number of attacks by security providers on individuals and/or communities
- ≡ Attitude and behaviour when handling sensitive cases, including gender-based violence and violence against children
- ≡ Willingness to visit communities
- ≡ Willingness to assist communities
- ≡ Adherence to proper protocols and procedures

These were created at a meeting of Community Security practitioners from South Sudan, Kenya, Bangladesh, Kosovo, UK, Georgia, Somalia and Yemen in 2014. Adapted from supra note 1

When formed collectively as a Community Safety Working Group, this hopeful process can produce a clear and shared vision against which progress can be measured over time. Theories of change are not rigid. As a group, you can adapt, update or even entirely change them at any point in the cycle if the context shifts or if evidence from your activities disproves your initial assumptions.

Action Planning then asks Community Safety Working Groups to turn these theories of change into workable steps. Setting them out early and communicating them properly to the community can avoid creating unrealistic expectations of security improvements at the local level – because without sufficient capacity to deliver, you will quickly lose people's support and your own enthusiasm.

At a minimum, Action Plans should include:

1. A clear statement of the problem
2. A Theory of Change describing how the problem can be addressed
3. The agreed actions the CSWG will take to address the problem
4. The allocation of tasks to individual working group members
5. Objectives and indicators of progress
6. Regular review dates

Some Action Plans may be quite simple. Others may require significant time and effort. As said, there is almost no limit on the actions available to choose. Advocacy, dialogue, community-based policing, events, activism, training and infrastructural work are just a small selection of the possible options. See the next section for some detailed examples of what has been achieved elsewhere. But whatever you choose, capacity is perhaps the biggest consideration. For any Action Plan to be effective, it must be adequately resourced.

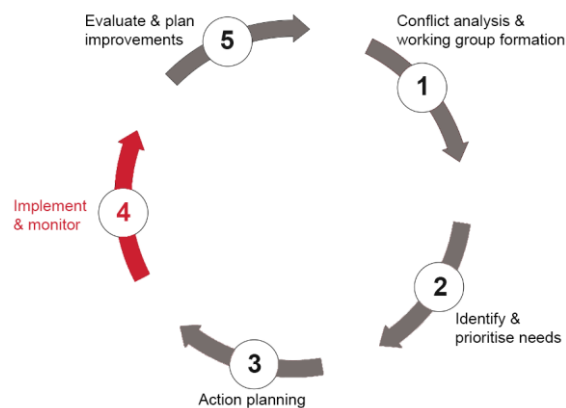
You may also want to think about framing your plans around international processes that are taking place. One example is Sustainable Development Goal 16, which commits to *building peaceful, just and inclusive societies*. This has a few benefits: it can offer ready-made and internationally supported language, targets and objectives from which to draw inspiration; the language and targets are also neutral, meaning they may be more amenable to all Community Safety Working Group participants (and security providers); and aligning with international processes can confer legitimacy on your group's work and make it more likely you will receive support in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Whilst outcomes and plans are important, some of the most significant Community Safety work happens through the process itself. By considering safety as everyone's right, regardless of which local elites are in charge, every member of a community is seen as a valuable agent with assets to contribute to the planning and implementation of joined-up security responses. This simple process of giving people a voice and trying to connect disparate communities, especially in contested spaces, is extremely powerful – as we shall now see.

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<sup>10</sup> Hearn, S. (2016), How to Achieve Sustainable Peace: The Radical Potential of Implementing UN Sustainable Development Goal 16

## d) Implementing Action Plans



Set out in this slightly longer section are a number of examples that may prove instructive in your own contexts.

The activities they describe are varied, ranging from front-line relationship-building with security providers, to improving road safety or advocating for institutional changes.

Transposing lessons and examples from one contested area to another is a speculative exercise. Each conflict runs its own specific course according to its unique context. So it will be up to you to discuss the examples, reflect and then adapt the most helpful parts for your own space and purposes.

This section looks at:

- ≡ Initiating relationships with security providers
- ≡ Identifying and leveraging ‘gateway issues’ to solve bigger problems
- ≡ Addressing the local proliferation of weapons
- ≡ Minimising casualties during sustained shelling
- ≡ Improving local service delivery
- ≡ Community Safety Working Groups acting as peace hubs
- ≡ Changing security providers’ behaviour
- ≡ Including everyone in peace and security processes

### Initiating relationships with security providers

There are likely to be a number of different security providers in a contested space, including non-state armed groups, splinter groups, local militia, foreign fighters, foreign state forces and remnants of police units. Your conflict analysis and planning should help you decide who you intend to approach, how and to what end, but safety is paramount and you must be vigilant to changes in context and personnel that can derail your plans.

*You can find more information on dealing with non-state armed groups in Chapter 3*

In contested spaces, the word ‘security’ may be sensitive, and perhaps understood by providers to mean the protection of their fragile territory rather than the people in it. Consider avoiding using the word, and instead frame discussions around a more neutral term such as *safety* – as we have in this handbook.

When you first meet security providers, it is recommended you listen, delay *full* respect and use the time to rapidly identify common interests or concerns. Initial meetings can quickly help identify providers who may be open to cooperation and even key individuals you suspect might be willing to explore areas where your safety needs align.

When to make these connections is tricky. There are no hard and fast rules. Some recommend making them early to ensure actors feel included in your plans. Others say later when your community groups are a little stronger. You will have to make the call, whilst also recognising that the first contact, whenever you make it, is just the start of an ongoing relationship that will change over time. The primary consideration once you have initiated contact is that actors avoid becoming spoilers and instead develop into partners – as seen in Northern Ireland:

### CASE STUDY

#### Building trust between communities and security providers in Northern Ireland

After the Good Friday peace agreement, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) adopted a new, people-centred, community-based policing (CBP) approach. The aim was to foster trust by recognising people's right to peace and security *alongside* their civic responsibility to contribute to it.

This was encouraging but the policy still had to be implemented. To begin with, communities and the PSNI communicated through a small group of trusted focal points. These were legitimate representatives who were champions of the CBP approach and willing to sit and listen to each other's concerns.

As mutual improvements emerged, the CBP approach gained both public and police support. Community groups began to meet and collaborate with the PSNI to deliver a better service. These meetings improved relations and built trust. They also identified shared areas of concern, which could be more easily addressed by pooling police and community capacities. This sort of partnership put people's needs at the centre of policy.

Years later, evaluations revealed that 'underpinning any successful Community Safety process were clear, concise, continuous, and unambiguous lines of communication' between the public and the PSNI<sup>11</sup>.

For more on CBP, see Stabilisation Unit (2014) Policing the Context: Principles and guidance to inform international policing assistance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-the-context-principles-and-guidance-to-inform-international-policing-assistance>

Source: Byrne, J. (2015), Reflections on the Northern Ireland experience: The lessons underpinning the normalisation of policing and security in a divided society

### Identifying and leveraging 'gateway issues' to solve bigger problems

You cannot rush into solving the most intractable security issues. This is true whether you are working at the community or the national level.

In the Philippines, for example, peace talks between the government and separatists began with the most solvable issue (immediate security/ceasefire) and gradually worked up towards the most intractable one (separatist demands for autonomy).<sup>11</sup> These simpler

<sup>11</sup> Franco, J. (2016), The Philippines: The Moro Islamic Liberation Front - A Pragmatic Power Structure?

problems acted as ‘gateway issues’, establishing trustful working partnerships which, in time, could turn their attention to the more contentious challenges.

This practice of gentle escalation should be echoed in community safety discussions. Encourage people to break down their safety problems into composite issues and talk about them one at a time, clearly and purposefully, starting with the least contentious. For example, one very common gateway issue is providing street lighting so that people feel safe at night. Another slightly different gateway issue was found in the Fergana Valley between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan:

### CASE STUDY

#### Finding common ground over road safety in Central Asia

Communities in the Fergana Valley along the Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan border are divided along ethnic lines. The region was affected by the inter-ethnic violence in 2010, resulting in a very low level of trust between the two ethnic groups and the authorities afterwards.

Community Safety Working Groups in the region struggled to find common ground. The bigger issues about inter-ethnic violence were too polarising. But after a number of sensitising meetings, the group identified road traffic safety in areas close to schools as a common security concern. Children from both sides of the conflict had sadly been killed.

Local communities had previously placed speed bumps in front of schools, but the police and local authorities deemed them illegal and removed them. This strained the relationship between the local authorities, the police and the communities. In response, the CSWG developed an Action Plan to address road safety in conjunction with the police, community members from different ethnicities, parents and local authorities.

It provided a breakthrough. It may have seemed like a trivial problem, but road safety was something everyone could agree was a safety concern. It cut across ethno-national divides and provided a common goal. Prioritising this ‘easier’ problem started a process of reconciliation and dialogue between communities and the police, ultimately paving the way to tackle more protracted sources of insecurity.

A video documenting this project in Russian, English and Tajik can be found here  
<http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/news-article/628>

## Addressing the local proliferation of weapons

Weapons proliferation is a problem in contested spaces. It is estimated that there are 875 million small arms and light weapons (SALW) in global circulation.<sup>12</sup> It is difficult for communities to act on a problem of this scale. But Community Safety efforts can help at the local level by, amongst other things, raising awareness of the dangers SALW pose. They can also establish safe spaces in a community where people agree that arms are not permitted. A good example of this took place in South Sudan:

### CASE STUDY

#### Community security and arms control in South Sudan

UNDP-funded, community-led projects to control small arms and light weapons (SALW) were first launched in South Sudan in 2008. They focused on improving Community Safety by addressing arms proliferation, which was seen as a real cause of vulnerability in towns and villages. They had some success, but it was estimated that between 232,000 and 601,000 illicit weapons were still in circulation in South Sudan in 2016.

New projects in 2017 saw Community Safety Working Groups coordinate with local security providers, civil society groups, religious leaders and elders. They managed to:

- ≡ raise awareness of the dangers posed by SALW proliferation
- ≡ make plans to tackle the demand for SALW by addressing the root causes of local conflicts
- ≡ build communities' capacity to respond to insecurity stemming from the proliferation and misuse of SALW
- ≡ create safe 'no arms zones', such as markets, schools, health clinics and public gatherings so that people had a space to interact safely

Source: UNDP (2011), Community Security and Arms Control in Southern Sudan

## Minimising casualties during sustained shelling

This is one of the key safety concerns for many communities in contested spaces, especially in densely populated urban areas where shelling is taking place. The dangers can be mitigated by going to a shelter, avoiding public gatherings, avoiding being on upper floors, staying at home, crowd-sharing information about dangerous areas and moving away from front lines or staying away from windows during shelling.

There are also steps you can take ahead of time, such as making buildings more resilient, for example by replacing windows with plastic materials, or becoming more familiar with first aid techniques and sourcing what medical kits you can, or building

<sup>12</sup> Small Arms Survey (retrieved 2019), Weapons and Markets.

relationships with security providers who may be able to warn you about impending shelling.

These strategies are not perfect. Shelling can be indiscriminate, shelters may be full, mobile networks down and medical kits scarce. Some communities in contested spaces can also become inured to danger and not take safety as seriously as they once did. But these are some of the more practical approaches that have been used and they can save lives.<sup>13</sup>

This can even be seen in Syria, where one organisation has tried to improve community resilience through education:

### CASE STUDY

#### Conflict preparedness and protection training in Idlib and West Aleppo

Conflict preparedness and protection training for adults and children was provided for 50,000 people by Norwegian People's Aid. The idea was to raise public awareness of basic conflict safety and preparedness measures by providing detailed instruction on the following topics:

- ≡ Home preparation and blast protection safety measures
- ≡ Conflict risk mitigation measures
- ≡ Safe evacuation procedures
- ≡ Basic fire safety
- ≡ Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) risk awareness
- ≡ Improvised survival and first aid solutions in conflict situations

Those who receive training are encouraged to pass on their knowledge through networks and groups like CSWGs so that as many civilians as possible understand how to better prepare and protect themselves against explosive weapons.

Source: Norwegian People's Aid, (retrieved 2019), Conflict Preparedness & Protection (CPP): A framework for building community resilience

## Improving local service delivery

Contested spaces tend to suffer from poor service delivery, but communities can help plug gaps. This may be through workshops, material support, formal training, providing meeting spaces, or information-sharing etc. Many approaches have been tried all over the world:

- ≡ It is common for Community Safety Working Groups to improve security provision by helping providers use their limited resources more efficiently by directing them to where people feel they are most needed.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Morrison, C. (2017), Civilian protection in urban sieges: Capacities and practices of first responders in Syria

<sup>14</sup> BRAC, (2013), Community Safety Pilot Project in Bangladesh



- ≡ Education sectors tend to be severely disrupted in contested spaces. Community Safety Working Groups can help here by providing replacement buildings or teachers to ensure a semblance of education continues.<sup>15</sup>
- ≡ Community Safety Working Groups can also act as a referral service connecting people with the various providers. Community Safety Working Groups in Somalia, for example, referred victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to vital services providing medical, legal or psychosocial support.<sup>16</sup>
- ≡ After being told there was no public budget available, Community Safety Working Groups decided to pay for and build their own police outpost in the Terai in Nepal. They also supplied the police officers with bicycles and mobile phones to help them do their job more effectively.
- ≡ Political violence in parts of Bangladesh has been common during recent elections, and so Community Safety Working Groups provided after-school youth clubs to keep young people safe and teach peacebuilding activities.
- ≡ In Myanmar, it can be difficult for people to access justice. Multiple providers overlap and often the state is absent. To fill the gap, some Community Safety Working Groups have directly helped resolve local disputes. Where the case is deemed too sensitive, they have referred it to the appropriate provider.<sup>17</sup>
- ≡ Advising on public policy is also common across many Community Safety Working Groups. For example in Bogotá, Colombia, some local authorities make policy based on consultations with Community Safety Working Groups, with inputs feeding into policing, justice, health and sanitation services, education and employment strategies.<sup>18</sup>

### Community Safety Working Groups acting as peace hubs

Local communities are usually the first to engage with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in contested spaces.<sup>19</sup> They may also be the only actors that maintain contact with NSAGs when third parties back out for security reasons - something that happened in many areas in Syria. This exposure means communities are often able to keep local dialogues going even as higher-level processes stall.

This can have significant consequences. It is clear that the simple act of talking together can begin to build the cooperation necessary to address complex problems.<sup>20</sup> This can result in more established Community Safety Working Groups becoming safe hubs for different groups and actors to meet and manage insecurity. These backchannels can also prepare actors for larger peace talks. But by improving coordination between local actors and networks, they can also make a difference to people's immediate safety, by:

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<sup>15</sup> UNESCO, (2009), Promoting participation: community contributions to education in conflict situations

<sup>16</sup> IOM, (2013), Gender-based violence (GBV) programme. Somalia.

<sup>17</sup> Denney, L., Bennett, W. & Khin Thet San (2016) Making Big Cases Small and Small Cases Disappear: Experiences of local Justice in Myanmar

<sup>18</sup> Acero, H. (2006) 'Bogota's Success Story', Comunidad Segura.

<sup>19</sup> Haspeslagh, S. & Yousef, Z. (2015), In the midst of violence: local engagement with armed groups

<sup>20</sup> Supra note 1

- ≡ Including local voices and needs in peace discussions at an early stage<sup>21</sup>
- ≡ Building working relationships between parties and establishing a sense of trust that each actor is committed to peace
- ≡ Establishing the logistics, timeframes, agendas and goals of immediate safety plans and more formal talks
- ≡ Introducing the various communities to each other and to their alternative viewpoints
- ≡ Challenging the victim mentality, often pervasive on all sides, which assumes that the other sides only respond to violence<sup>22</sup>

## CASE STUDY

### Instigating local backchannels in preparation for peace talks in Northern Ireland

The British Government and the Provisional IRA (PIRA) in Northern Ireland set up local backchannels during the Troubles. Catholic businessman Brendan Duddy became a crucial link between the PIRA leadership and the British Government during the 1974-75 ceasefire, and this backchannel lasted well into the 1990s. Duddy used his access to the two sides in the conflict to relay both community and leadership concerns and advocate for exclusively peaceful strategies. This link ultimately gave the British Government the confidence to press for a PIRA ceasefire and kick-start the peace process.

Third parties' community representatives can be conduits for peace. By running backchannels, they can also minimise the political risks to either a government or an armed group by providing the cover of plausible deniability. Third-party community actors can also make clear to both/all sides what local needs are and include them in any discussions that develop.

Source: Crouch, J., & Carr, A. (2018), *Lessons and Learning from Historical Peace Processes: A Literature Review*

## Changing security providers' behaviour

Changing security providers' behaviour requires action at three levels: individual, institutional and societal, because even as the changes happen at the individual level, appropriate structures capable of embedding these values must be created as well.<sup>23</sup>

Community Safety aims for all three. It includes individuals in discussions to plan and carry out institutional changes through processes that involve a representative cross-section of society.

Changes are more likely when security actors understand that providing better safety can induce better civic responsibility and behaviours. Recognising this can encourage a

<sup>21</sup> Swisspeace (2015), *Improving Conflict Prevention and Transformation*

<sup>22</sup> Quinney, N. & Coyne, H. (2011), *Talking to Groups That Use Terror*

<sup>23</sup> Lindholt L, De Mesquita Neto P, Titus D & Alemika E, (2003), *Human Rights and the Police in Transitional Countries* p.22.

kind of informal social contract between security providers and the public, with each grasping that upholding security is a shared duty in both their interests.

This reciprocity builds trust, or social capital, which communities can leverage to ask for changes in how security providers behave. Depending on the relationships you have and level you are working at, this can lead to some significant changes, for example in Northern Ireland where communities managed to soften the coercive tactics NSAGs were using:

### CASE STUDY

#### Softening NSAGs' tactics

In Northern Ireland, discussions were held between the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and civil society organisations on restorative justice. Civil society groups were able to demonstrate to the PIRA that its use of beatings and shootings to enforce order among communities was inconsistent with its political ambitions and undermined its commitment to a ceasefire.

This struck a chord with the PIRA, who began to plan alternative ways to keep order in their contested space. The PIRA went on to “collaborate with civil society and develop conceptual frameworks, practical advice and training on Community Safety and how to integrate state police services. This was a key issue in emerging peace talks”.

Source: Supra note 23

Systemic or institutional changes take more sustained pressure. Many communities have used advocacy strategies to try and influence the policies and practices that affect people's lives – in your case, their experience of security.

Successful advocacy is planned and persistent. Successful advocacy aims for and achieves *concrete* changes. It is a process rather than an event and requires determined ongoing messaging and regular monitoring of progress. The steps below can help you design an advocacy strategy that is people-centred, focused in terms of objectives, targets and activities, and allows limited resources to be used effectively.

## Creating an Advocacy Strategy

**Step 1:** Assessing the situation. It is important to understand the context and factors that may affect chances of success

**Step 2:** Establishing clear goals. Map and prioritise the problems that need addressing and the changes you want to see

**Step 3:** Developing targets and an influencing strategy. Describe in detail the changes you want to see, identify who or what you need to influence to make those changes happen, and outline how you intend to do it

**Step 4:** Planning your activity. Activities might include public education, lobbying, campaigns or research. They should be tailored to the goals and targets and based on a sound theory of change.

**Step 5:** Implementation. An advocacy strategy needs timelines, clarity on responsibilities and indicators to track progress

**Step 6:** Monitoring and evaluation. What has been the impact of the work? Have you seen any of your intended changes and why/why not? Has it resulted in any benefits for the right people and was it the best use of resources?

Source: Saferworld and Conciliation Resources, (2011), Advocacy capacity building: a training toolkit

## Including everyone in peace and security processes

Men, women, people with disabilities, IDPs, minority groups, the young and old have different and unique experiences of insecurity and violence and hence unique needs. A person's identity also comes with certain societal norms and expectations about how they should act.<sup>24</sup> These are called *gender norms* and can be highly specific to each locality. Therefore, inclusive representation in your groups is vital to understand these needs and norms in detail.

You may find that some gender norms drive conflict:

*In Somalia, for example, the very weak economy has seen some men struggle to fulfil the customary 'male' role of breadwinner and protector. This has pushed some of them towards armed groups.*

Damaging norms pervade at the international level, too. Women, for example, are severely under-represented in peace negotiations. Between 1992 and 2011, only 9% of negotiators in peace processes and 2% of peace mediators were female.<sup>25</sup> And yet the benefits of inclusivity at *all stages* are clear. There is evidence from Northern Ireland, the Philippines, Guatemala and elsewhere that women improve the quality of

<sup>24</sup> Watson, C., Wright, H. & Groenewald, H. (2016), Gender analysis of conflict toolkit

<sup>25</sup> Castillo Diaz, P. & Tordjman, S. (2012) (eds.), Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence

peacebuilding work.<sup>26</sup> Most tellingly, peace accords are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years when women are directly represented.<sup>27</sup>

So your community groups can and should support inclusion. For example, women and children comprise over 70% of the refugee population in Syria and continue to bear the brunt of the conflict.<sup>28</sup> How will you make sure you cater for their needs?

A word of warning: working at the community level does not automatically mean you are being inclusive. Some communities may have quite conservative views which, unless challenged, may actually undermine your efforts to push for inclusivity and entrench negative norms.<sup>29</sup> Consider how the following ideas might ensure more inclusive work:

### Improving Gender Inclusivity

**Step 1:** Understand how gender roles and relations impact on peace and security in your context

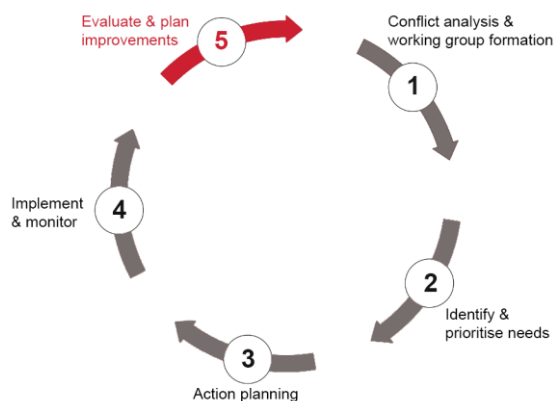
**Step 2:** Identify and adopt ways of working that respect these gender roles and relations

**Step 3:** Don't be part of the problem. Regularly reflect on the inclusivity of your Community Safety processes

**Step 4:** Consider how gender intersects with racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, classism, etc., to see where Community Safety can help

Adapted from Myrntinen, H., Naujoks, J. & El-Bushra, J. (2014), Rethinking Gender in Peacebuilding

### e) Participatory monitoring and evaluation



Monitoring involves periodically collecting information to see if your work is going according to plan. The purpose is to ensure interventions remain high-quality, sensitive and directly relevant and inform any small improvements that may be necessary. Evaluations tend to take place annually, or else when enough time has elapsed for changes to take place, and provide an opportunity for a deeper reflection on your work in order to learn and improve in the future.<sup>30</sup>

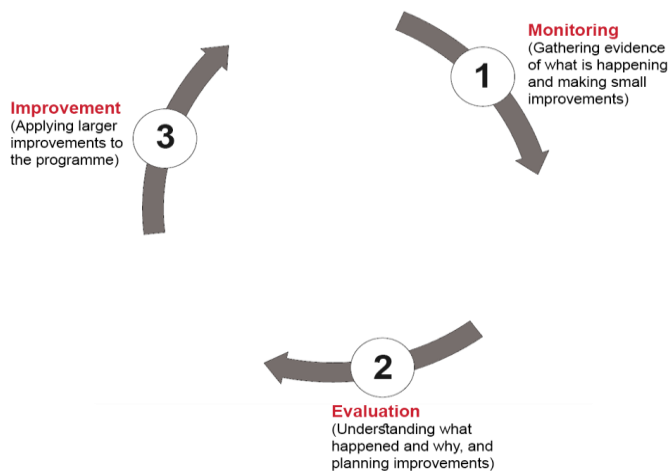
<sup>26</sup> Crouch, J. & Carr, A. (2018), Lessons and Learning from Historical Peace Processes: A Literature Review

<sup>27</sup> O'Reilly, M. Súilleabháin, A. Ó, & Paffenholz, T. (2015), Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes, p. 12

<sup>28</sup> Bruce-Lockhart, A. (2015), Where are the female peace-builders?

<sup>29</sup> MacGinty, R. (2011), International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace, p.52

<sup>30</sup> Adapted from supra note 1



Regular participatory monitoring is central to Community Safety and should culminate with one thorough evaluation at the end of the programme cycle. This M&E process ensures that your work is accountable to Community Safety Working Group members, partners, donors and the wider community members you are helping. It is vital that those in charge of planning and implementing programmes know the effects of their work, be they positive or negative.

If you consider applying for international funding, note that typical security interventions invest up to 10% of project funds and time in M&E. But the best projects embed M&E in their everyday work, routinely observing, adjusting and improving what they are doing.

### Using participatory approaches

Like a conflict analysis, M&E requires collection of data on how your effort influenced your community and its safety. Collecting this safely can be difficult in contested spaces, where movement and access may be restricted. Here we suggest using a participatory evaluation that involves bringing communities together for one or two full days to discuss the effects, challenges and future direction of their Community Safety programmes.

This allows communities to revisit the logic behind their theories of change and amend them if necessary. See the box below for example questions that you might ask. M&E is also an opportunity to test progress against the indicators that the community decided upon during the action planning stage.

As well as providing data to improve future work, participatory evaluations contribute to safety by convening community members in a neutral space to discuss local developments and concerns. This creates better local ownership of projects and ensures *people* determine success according to their own criteria and contextual understanding.

#### Example questions for participatory evaluations

- ≡ What do people consider to be the most significant changes over the last year, and why?
- ≡ What has caused these changes? [[SEP]]
- ≡ Were there any changes that were unexpected or negative?
- ≡ Are the changes sustainable?
- ≡ How could we have done more?
- ≡ How can the programme improve next month/year?

Adapted from supra note 1

## Who to include in the evaluation?

Direct beneficiaries, security providers and key stakeholders should all participate. This can be challenging. If the evaluation is run without being sensitive to local power dynamics, this may result in the views and needs of marginalised groups, such as IDPs or young people, being ignored. The risk is that what more powerful groups say then becomes ‘the view of the community’. Consider holding separate evaluations with marginalised groups if this is a concern.

The process is rarely perfect. The degree and form of participation will differ in each context and depend on what is locally available and appropriate. Cultural and practical barriers may obstruct full participation by all members of a community.

## Challenges of using participatory M&E in contested spaces

- ≡ Fear or cultural norms mean people may not want to speak or share sensitive information
- ≡ Hard data such as crime statistics are likely to be absent, making some changes difficult to spot
- ≡ Conversely, you may be able to see changes but attribution to your activities proves difficult, especially if the context is fluid and actors come and go
- ≡ Some evaluations confuse quantity for quality. For example, ‘more women attending Community Safety Working Group meetings’ is no real measure of whether Community Safety initiatives have ‘increased the meaningful participation of women’ either at those meetings or in society
- ≡ There may be suspicion from excluded groups and individuals about why you are meeting



### 3. Living amongst Armed Groups

Improvements in people's experiences of safety cannot be brought about through technical and institutional reforms alone, even in stable areas. They ultimately require the transformation of relationships and behaviours that drive insecurity.

This ideally necessitates working partnerships between the community and its security providers – including, where appropriate and safe, both state and non-state armed groups (NSAGs).<sup>31</sup>

However, forming these partnerships in contested spaces is fraught with risk. Security providers and the community are often estranged. It is also likely that there will be many diverse armed actors. This may include fighters from the community, from elsewhere in the country, or from other countries or government forces. Definitions of 'security', let alone ways to improve it or prioritise areas to work on, are tough to agree on. Communities may even see the behaviour of some security actors, be they state or non-state, as *the* principal cause of their unsafety.

There will of course be times when the risks of engagement with NSAGs are too high. Perhaps there are red lines that you as a community decide you are unwilling to cross, including risks to personal safety, political differences, ideological stances or any other factor that you deem beyond the pale. If you feel a group crosses these lines, you may decide not to engage with them – *and that is fine*. One example was previously seen in Algeria ([see box below](#)).

But it is unlikely that your choice of whether you engage or not will be final. The relationship will evolve over time, bringing opportunities to improve safety for your community as well as challenges. Furthermore, the longer NSAGs tend to exist, the greater the likelihood that they will engage in more meaningful dialogues. Time appears to soften attitudes.

#### Non-state Armed Groups

The term *non-state armed group* (NSAG) refers to an armed actor that is not part of the state apparatus. It can refer to a wide array of actors from criminal gangs to armed insurgents or government-backed paramilitaries. Many NSAGs have both military and criminal dynamics. NSAGs are also diverse with regard to their aims, strategies, capabilities and social bases. Most are local, but some groups like al-Shabaab and IS, which have aspirations and networks that are both local *and* transnational, challenge these definitions.

This handbook explicitly avoids the words 'terrorist' or 'extremist'. These are politicised and subjective terms that can be exploited to admonish and isolate opposition groups. This serves to discredit a given group for its use of violence without a critical understanding of its motives and behaviour.

Source: Staniland, P. (2014), *Networks of Rebellion*.  
Dudouet, V. (2009). *From War to Politics: Resistance/Liberation Movements in Transition*.

<sup>31</sup> NSAGs are sometimes also referred to as armed non-state actors (ANSAs)



## CASE STUDY

### Deciding not to engage with the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in Algeria

If a community considers a NSAG to be illegitimate, then the group may resort to coercion to retain control. The GIA in Algeria showed little interest in negotiations or in respecting local security concerns.

The GIA formed in 1993 as the result of internal divisions within the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The GIA's position was to oppose and then seize control of the state by force. Violence was an explicit and integral part of the GIA strategy. It also viewed anyone who didn't join the GIA as an 'apostate' who should be destroyed "to purge the land of the ungodly".

The GIA's indiscriminate violence was its undoing. It prevented the cultivation of any significant social anchorage or legitimacy. Because the GIA ambition of creating an Islamic state based upon strict shari'a failed to develop societal roots, it resorted to sabotaging peace processes under the slogan "no truce, no dialogue, and no reconciliation". Communities turned away from it, and in time the group succumbed to other better-supported factions.

Sources: Khattib, S. (2006), *Spoiler Management During Algeria's Civil War*.  
Kepel, G. (2002), *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*.

And so as you plan and implement Community Safety projects, it will be down to you to ascertain which risks are too great and which are reasonable to take in attempting to improve people's experiences of security. Sometimes you may not want to engage. Sometimes security conditions or proscription laws may prevent you from doing so. And sometimes you may have no choice in the matter other than to adopt short-term survival strategies and work with who is there. But where you do engage, make sure that you update and trust your conflict analyses and act accordingly.<sup>32</sup>

To help you, presented below are short discussions of some common risks associated with working with NSAGs. This is followed by some thoughts on well-known opportunities. There are of course others to consider that are not mentioned here.

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<sup>32</sup> Neumann, P. (2007), *Negotiating with Terrorists*

## a) Risks when engaging non-state armed groups

### Legitimising NSAGs

When a community engages a NSAG in discussions about local security, there is a risk that doing so will confer legitimacy on the group, implicitly granting it a kind of quasi-governmental authority over a particular area.<sup>33</sup> Because some NSAGs are guilty of committing violence against civilians, many consider them undeserving of such collaboration.

Community engagement may also be divorced from international expectations or peacebuilding plans and legitimise the ‘wrong’ group who will then be harder to exclude from a peace process. Engagement is therefore rarely encouraged by donors or INGOs.

### Being seen to ‘reward’ violence

Recognising the authority of a NSAG runs the risk of being seen to reward violence. This may lead other NSAGs to believe that continued or even increased violence may result in their eventual recognition too, reinforcing the mantra that violence ‘works’ and perhaps encouraging its reproduction elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> This may spike towards the end of a conflict, when NSAGs are likely to use violence to secure their status and gain a seat at the peace negotiations.

### Personal safety risks

Getting too close to NSAG may endanger you and your community. The groups themselves may be violent or untrustworthy, or else your association with them may, for example, make you a target for opponents of that NSAG.

Depending on the group and the type of relationship you have, close ties may also expose you to gender and religious norms that are at odds with your own beliefs and put certain members of your community at risk. If the NSAG is especially fundamental about these issues, they can exert huge pressure to conform.

Judging whether an NSAG might be a safe and viable partner is tricky. However, this table outlines some indicators to look out for when consider engaging with an armed group.<sup>35</sup> Positive indicators are on the left and negative on the right. It is unlikely that an armed group will fall completely on one side or the other. Different elements of an armed group may also fall on different sides. Use your conflict analysis, networks and judgement to decide whether the moment is right, and prioritise your safety<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Tull D. M., & Mehler, A. (2005), *The hidden costs of power-sharing: Reproducing insurgent violence in Africa*

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, S. & Ricigliano, R. (2006), *Understanding Armed Groups*.

<sup>36</sup> For more on risks and opportunities when engaging with NSAGs: Dudouet, V. (2010). *Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed Groups*. USIP Special Report No. 239, Washington: United States Institute of Peace. Online at <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR239Dudouet.pdf>

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
<p><b>Political power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Are or have been in political power</li> <li>≡ Respect rules of law, provide services</li> <li>≡ Have political institutions, agenda, candidates</li> </ul> <p><b>Territory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Hold territory over time</li> <li>≡ Set up systems within the territory</li> <li>≡ Allow freedom of movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Social and economic support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Enjoy support from a public constituency</li> <li>≡ See settlement of conflict as delivering economic benefits to their region or constituency</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of military force</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Possess without necessarily using force</li> <li>≡ Observe humanitarian law, proper treatment of civilians</li> <li>≡ Troops disciplined</li> </ul>	<p><b>Political power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Disregard for rule of law and elections</li> <li>≡ Political assassinations</li> <li>≡ Intolerant of differences, change</li> </ul> <p><b>Territory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Engage in ethnic cleansing, destruction</li> <li>≡ Have no territory or control over it</li> </ul> <p><b>Social and economic support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Isolate themselves from wider society</li> <li>≡ Derive substantial profit from the war economy</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of military force</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≡ Indiscriminate, high civilian casualties</li> <li>≡ No or little effective command and control</li> <li>≡ Troops undisciplined</li> <li>≡ Troops used to sustain illegal activities</li> </ul>

### Breaking proscription laws

Amongst donors and practitioners, there is thankful consensus that people's immediate safety is important and that it can be brought about by improving the quality of the local security provider(s). And yet where that provider is a NSAG, engaging with it is often held to be out of the question.<sup>37</sup> This is most obvious in the growing proscription regime, which blacklists some groups and legally prevents donors from working with them. This inhibits third-party efforts to engage NSAGs in peace processes or even discussions about local safety concerns.<sup>38</sup> There is therefore a risk that by working with NSAGs you may lose donor funding or else exclude yourself from accessing it in the future. There may even theoretically be legal repercussions, although the chance is very slim.

<sup>37</sup> Supra note 32

<sup>38</sup> Haspeslagh, S. (2013), Listing terrorists: the impact of proscription on third-party efforts to engage armed groups in peace processes. See also Wils, O. & Dudouet, V. (2010), Peace Mediation and Listed Terrorist Organizations: Challenges for Peacebuilding

## b) Opportunities when engaging non-state armed groups

Cognisant of these risks, some people make the case for engagement with NSAGs.<sup>39</sup> This is because engagement carries significant opportunities for improving community safety that in some cases outweigh the risks.<sup>40</sup> These opportunities are discussed here.

### Preventing spoilers

Excluding NSAGs can motivate spoiling behaviour, but talking to NSAGs begins a process of turning them from spoilers into part of the solution.<sup>41</sup> This may hasten an end to violence and improve people's safety. You will have to decide as a community group what course to take. It might involve careful discussions around:

- ≡ Assessing the potential for engagement
- ≡ Designing a strategy for engagement
- ≡ Opening channels of communication and facilitating initial meetings of representative individuals
- ≡ Fostering commitment to local security
- ≡ Protecting the process from the effects of violence<sup>42</sup>

### Incentivising NSAGs to protect civilians

Done well and with due sensitivity, Community Safety Working Group engagement with NSAGs can help to reduce levels of violence and the everyday grievances that are especially damaging to experiences of local security.<sup>43</sup> It can also incentivise NSAGs to take part in broader political dialogues.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, we have seen in Sierra Leone that behaviours of NSAGs can change thanks to functioning and trusting relationships with the community, especially where both share family, clan, tribal or class connections.<sup>45</sup> In these instances, communities can encourage NSAGs to pursue tactics that take the sting out of a situation (see box below on 'Techniques to incentivise'). For example, communities may ask them to:

- ≡ Withdraw combatants from an area
- ≡ Phase out checkpoints and road blocks
- ≡ Introduce symbolic changes, such as changes in the uniforms or attire of NSAGs
- ≡ Incrementally widen grassroots participation in decisions around local security
- ≡ Allow communities or independent bodies (INGOs or NGOs, for example) to monitor the behaviours of security forces
- ≡ Not overreact to isolated incidents of violence by the community<sup>46,47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Supra note 19

<sup>40</sup> Bellal, A. & Stuart, C.-M. (2011), Rules of Engagement - Protecting Civilians Through Dialogue with Non-State Actors

<sup>41</sup> Shepherd, B. (2010), The 'Spoiler' Concept, Conflict and Politics: who 'spoils' what, for whom?

<sup>42</sup> See supra note 22

<sup>43</sup> Mampilly, Z. (2011), Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War

<sup>44</sup> Supra note 19

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Adapted from supra note 22

<sup>47</sup> For more on how to influence NSAGs behaviour: International Committee of the Red Cross (2018). The roots of restraint in war. Available at: <https://shop.icrc.org/the-roots-of-restraint-in-war-executive-summary-2896.html>

## Techniques to incentivise NSAGs to reflect on their actions and engage positively with communities

**Asking NSAGs to articulate their interests and position:** This technique may assist NSAGs in noting inconsistencies between their objectives and their behaviours. It may also offer alternative ideas to address their interests.

**Organising local workshops:** In a workshop, the NSAGs can acquire the skills and expertise necessary for a successful negotiation process. A workshop is also an informal setting, allowing attendees to meet each other less stressfully.

**Providing examples from other conflicts:** Providing examples from similar contexts can help the NSAGs to recognise that non-violent solutions are possible.

**Brainstorming:** Without committing to a set solution, brainstorming allows NSAGs to imagine new ways of operating and even peacefully exit a situation.

**Including broader constituencies:** This allows NSAGs to grasp the human cost of continued violence.

**Bringing in a person of moral authority:** NSAGs are more likely to accept a compromise following an appeal of conscience made by a person of moral authority (a religious leader, elder etc.).

Note: Worth noting that this box would be as relevant for *state* armed groups as non-state.

Source: Lustenberger P, (2012), A Time to Fight, and a Time to Talk? Negotiability of Armed Groups

## Quicker resolutions to conflicts

It is likely that behaviour by all sides in a contested space will fall short of international human rights and protection standards. States may commit crimes against their own populations just as frequently as NSAGs. This cannot be condoned. But breaking these patterns of violence appears far more likely when different sides of a conflict engage (and to an extent legitimise) each other. Communities can help quicken this process.

Not everyone agrees. Some argue that NSAGs should never be spoken to on principle. But this view not only ignores the predicament faced by communities living amongst armed groups; it often rests on misplaced assumptions that a military victory is possible. This is not reflected by recent history in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Indeed, only 7% of the NSAGs that disbanded between 1968 and 2008 did so because they were defeated – whereas 43% did so to comply with political settlements.<sup>48</sup>

Negotiated agreements often begin with hyper-localised dialogues. They have proved an effective approach to improving safety and building peace far more quickly, cheaply and less destructively than by force.<sup>49</sup> There is evidence<sup>50</sup> that leaders of NSAGs are usually “capable of pragmatism and compromise”. They also have a significant stake in (and therefore influence over) how people will experience security in the near future, so excluding them may create new grievances rather than solve existing ones.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Jones, S. & Libicki, M. (2008), How terrorist groups end: Lessons for countering al Qa'ida, p. 19

<sup>49</sup> Supra note 26

<sup>50</sup> Göldner-Ebenthal, K. & Dudouet, V. (2019): Dialogue with Salafi Jihadi armed groups: Challenges and opportunities for conflict de-escalation.

<sup>51</sup> Richardson, L. (2007), What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat

## 4. Conclusion

Hopefully, this handbook has given you some ideas of how to work towards improving people's immediate and longer-term safety in contested spaces.

As said at the beginning, directly transporting lessons between contexts is not really possible. However, some lessons and themes appear to pop up repeatedly, indicating they may carry more explanatory power than others. One of them is how long systemic changes take to emerge. There are setbacks in every context, so it is likely that there will be in yours too. Your plans are unlikely to succeed at the first attempt.

With that in mind, this handbook is, above all, a lesson in the power of gentle perseverance. Communities are here to stay. Each attempt is an opportunity to test ideas and approaches and steadily learn and improve, even if it ends in failure. This process never stops. There is no end point. People's lives can always be safer and conflicts will always need to be managed. So take any early failures not as terminal, but as necessary elements in an endless struggle for peace.

In contested spaces, you must understand the context well enough to know when to act and when to keep your head down. So much security work hinges on timing. Efforts may rumble on, enjoying neither remarkable breakthroughs nor breakdowns. But then things may suddenly change owing to factors far beyond your local control. Accept that there are limits to what a community or civil society group can achieve in a contested space. But take pride in knowing that *anything* you do that improves people's safety and moves the situation towards more lasting peace must be considered a success.

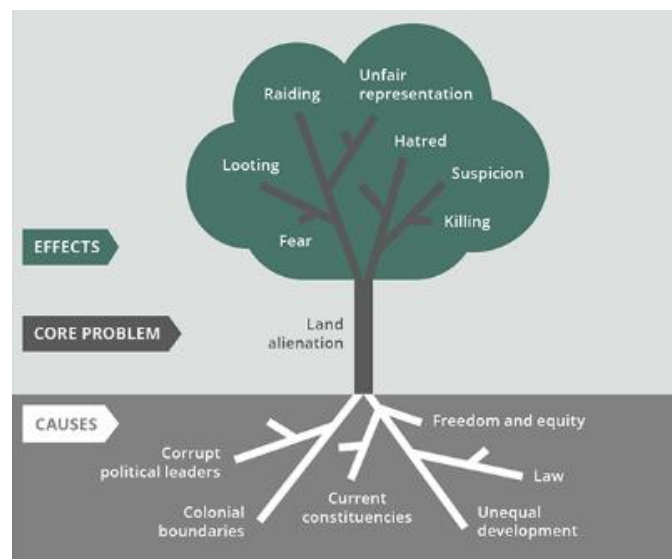
Best of luck.

# Annex

## Further conflict analysis tools

Step by step instructions on how to use a problem tree to identify and prioritise issue areas:

1. Draw a picture of a tree, including its roots, trunk and branches, on a large sheet of paper or a flipchart
2. Give each person several post-it notes and ask them to write a word or two or draw a symbol or picture, indicating important factors relating to their own experiences of safety
3. Invite people to stick their notes to the tree:
  - ≡ on the roots, if they see it as a root cause of insecurity
  - ≡ on the trunk, if they think it is a core problem issue
  - ≡ on the branches, if they see it as an effect of insecurity
4. Someone facilitates the discussion on where the factors are placed on the tree. There is no right or wrong. Where people place their notes is subjective, will be different in different contexts and will change over time. Nevertheless, try as a group to create a shared snapshot of the security challenges as you see them
5. Discuss the links between root causes, problems and effects and how to address them <sup>52</sup>



We also wanted to provide **some suggested questions for use during conflict analyses**. They are divided into categories that, collectively, can help guide your Community Safety work as accurately as possible.

Profile: What is the context that shapes conflict?

1. Is there a history of conflict? (e.g. When? How many people killed and displaced? Who is targeted? Methods of violence? Where?)

<sup>52</sup> Conflict Analysis Tool, (2005), CSS, <http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/Conflict-Analysis-Tools.pdf>



2. What political, economic, social and environmental institutions and structures have shaped conflict? (e.g. elections, reform processes, economic growth, inequality, employment, social groups and composition, demographics and resource exploitation)

Actors: Who are the actors that influence conflict?

1. Who are the main actors? (e.g. the military, leaders and commanders of non-state armed groups, criminal groups)
2. What are their interests, concerns, goals, hopes, fears, strategies, positions, preferences, worldviews, expectations and motivations? (e.g. autonomy, inequality between groups ('horizontal inequality'), political power, ethno-nationalist, reparations)
3. What power do they have, how do they exert power, what resources or support do they have, are they vulnerable? (e.g. local legitimacy through provision of security, power over corrupt justice institutions, weapons and capacity to damage infrastructure)
4. What are their incentives and disincentives for conflict and peace? (e.g. benefiting or losing from the war economy, prestige, retribution for historical grievances)
5. What capacities do they have to affect the context?
6. Who could be considered spoilers? What divides people? Who exercises leadership and how? (e.g. economic beneficiaries of conflict, criminal groups, opposition leader)
7. What could be considered capacities for peace? Are there groups calling for non-violence? What connects people across conflict lines? How do people cooperate? Who exercises leadership for peace and how? (e.g. civil society, religious authorities, local justice mechanisms)
8. What are the relationships between actors, what are the trends, what is the strategic balance between actors (who is 'winning')? (e.g. conflicting or cooperative relationships)

Causes: What causes conflict?

1. What are the structural causes of conflict? (e.g. unequal land distribution, political exclusion, poor governance, impunity, lack of state authority)
2. What are the proximate causes of conflict? (e.g. arms proliferation, illicit criminal networks, emergence of self-defence non-state armed actors, overspill of conflict from a neighbouring country, natural resource discoveries)

Dynamics: What are the current conflict dynamics/trends?

1. What are the current conflict trends? What are the recent changes in behaviour? (e.g. conflict acts have increased but the number of deaths has decreased; political violence has intensified around local elections; defence spending has increased; paramilitaries have started running in local elections)
2. Which factors in the conflict profile, actors and causes reinforce or undermine each other? Which factors balance or mitigate others? (e.g. horizontal economic and political inequalities can increase the risk of conflict; uncertainty about succession of the president strengthens party factionalism; cash for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration fuels small arms proliferation)
3. What triggers conflict? (e.g. elections, economic and environmental shocks, economic crash, an assassination, coup, food price increases, a corruption scandal)
4. What scenarios can be developed? (e.g. best-case scenario: a peace agreement is signed quickly and the conflict parties implement a ceasefire; worst-case scenario: local politicians mobilise along ethnic lines in the run-up to elections and political violence and riots increase where groups meet)<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Herbert S, (2017), Conflict Analysis Topic Guide, GSDRC



## International Humanitarian Laws

Below is a list of selected international humanitarian laws applicable to armed groups in intra-state conflicts. They apply to the majority of conflicts in contested spaces.<sup>54</sup> They are here for your reference so that you understand what protection you are meant to have and what actions by parties to a conflict have been deemed illegal. Leveraging these laws and holding people accountable is incredibly hard in contested spaces. But they can provide a framework for conversations and understanding between groups and communities.

### The Principle of Distinction

#### Distinction between civilians and combatants and objectives

- Rule 1.** The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants. Attacks may only be directed against combatants. Attacks must not be directed against civilians.
- Rule 2.** Acts or threats of violence the primary purpose of which is to spread terror among the civilian population are prohibited.
- Rule 5.** Civilians are persons who are not members of the armed forces. The civilian population comprises all persons who are civilians.
- Rule 7.** The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed against military objectives. Attacks must not be directed against civilian objects.

#### Indiscriminate attacks

- Rule 11.** Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited.
- Rule 12.** Indiscriminate attacks are those:
  - (a) which are not directed at a specific military objective;
  - (b) which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military objective; or
  - (c) which employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law; and consequently, in each such case, are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction.

#### Proportionality in attack

- Rule 14.** Launching an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited.

#### Precautions in attack

- Rule 15.** In the conduct of military operations, constant care must be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. All feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.
- Rule 20.** Each party to the conflict must give effective advance warning of attacks which may affect the civilian population, unless circumstances do not permit.

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<sup>54</sup> Henckaerts J-M, & Doswald-Beck, L, (2005), Customary International Humanitarian Law Volume I: Rules, ICRC

## Precautions against the effects of attacks

**Rule 22.** The parties to the conflict must take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population and civilian objects under their control against the effects of attacks.

**Rule 23.** Each party to the conflict must, to the extent feasible, avoid locating military objectives within or near densely populated areas.

## Specifically protected persons and objects

### Medical and religious personnel and objects

**Rule 25.** Medical personnel exclusively assigned to medical duties must be respected and protected in all circumstances.

**Rule 27.** Religious personnel exclusively assigned to religious duties must be respected and protected in all circumstances.

**Rule 29.** Medical transports assigned exclusively to medical transportation must be respected and protected in all circumstances.

### Humanitarian relief personnel and objects

**Rule 31.** Humanitarian relief personnel must be respected and protected.

**Rule 32.** Objects used for humanitarian relief operations must be respected and protected.

### Journalists

**Rule 34.** Civilian journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking a direct part in hostilities.

### Protected zones

**Rule 35.** Directing an attack against a zone established to shelter the wounded, the sick and civilians from the effects of hostilities is prohibited.

**Rule 37.** Directing an attack against a non-defended locality is prohibited.

**Rule 38.** Each party to the conflict must protect cultural property:

### The natural environment

**Rule 43.** The general principles on the conduct of hostilities apply to the natural environment:

**A.** No part of the natural environment may be attacked, unless it is a military objective.

**B.** Destruction of any part of the natural environment is prohibited, unless required by imperative military necessity.

**Rule 44.** Methods and means of warfare must be employed with due regard to the protection and preservation of the natural environment. In the conduct of military operations, all feasible precautions must be taken to avoid, and in any event to minimize, incidental damage to the environment.

## Specific Methods of Warfare

### Denial of quarter

**Rule 46.** Ordering that no quarter will be given, threatening an adversary therewith or conducting hostilities on this basis is prohibited.

**Rule 47.** Attacking persons who are recognized as *hors de combat* is prohibited.

### Destruction and seizure of property

**Rule 49.** The destruction or seizure of the property of an adversary is prohibited, unless required by imperative military necessity.

**Rule 52.** Pillage is prohibited.

## Starvation and access to humanitarian relief

- Rule 53.** The use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare is prohibited.
- Rule 54.** Attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population is prohibited.
- Rule 55.** The parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, subject to their right of control.

## Communication with the enemy

- Rule 66.** Commanders may enter into non-hostile contact through any means of communication. Such contact must be based on good faith.

## Weapons

### General principles on the use of weapons

- Rule 71.** The use of weapons which are by nature indiscriminate is prohibited.
- Rule 72.** The use of poison or poisoned weapons is prohibited.
- Rule 73.** The use of biological weapons is prohibited.
- Rule 74.** The use of chemical weapons is prohibited.
- Rule 82.** A party to the conflict using landmines must record their placement, as far as possible.
- Rule 83.** At the end of active hostilities, a party to the conflict, which has used landmines must remove or otherwise render them harmless to civilians, or facilitate their removal.

## Treatment of Civilians and Persons *Hors de Combat*

### Fundamental guarantees

- Rule 87.** Civilians and persons *hors de combat* must be treated humanely.
- Rule 88.** Adverse distinction in the application of international humanitarian law based on race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, wealth, birth or other status, or on any other similar criteria is prohibited.
- Rule 89.** Murder is prohibited.
- Rule 90.** Torture, cruel or inhuman treatment and outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, are prohibited.
- Rule 91.** Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Rule 92.** Mutilation, medical or scientific experiments or any other medical procedure not indicated by the state of health of the person concerned and not consistent with generally accepted medical standards are prohibited.
- Rule 93.** Rape and other forms of sexual violence are prohibited.
- Rule 94.** Slavery and the slave trade in all their forms are prohibited.
- Rule 95.** Uncompensated or abusive forced labour is prohibited.
- Rule 96.** The taking of hostages is prohibited.
- Rule 97.** The use of human shields is prohibited.
- Rule 98.** Enforced disappearance is prohibited.
- Rule 99.** Arbitrary deprivation of liberty is prohibited.
- Rule 100.** No one may be convicted or sentenced, except pursuant to a fair trial affording all essential judicial guarantees.
- Rule 103.** Collective punishments are prohibited. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>
- Rule 105.** Family life must be respected as far as possible.

## The dead

- Rule 112.** Whenever circumstances permit, and particularly after an engagement, each party to then conflict must, without delay, take all possible measures to search for, collect and evacuate the dead without adverse distinction.
- Rule 113.** Each party to the conflict must take all possible measures to prevent the dead from being despoiled. Mutilation of dead bodies is prohibited.
- Rule 115.** The dead must be disposed of in a respectful manner and their graves respected and properly maintained.
- Rule 116.** With a view to the identification of the dead, each party to the conflict must record all available information prior to disposal and mark the location of the graves.

### Persons deprived of their liberty

- Rule 118.** Persons deprived of their liberty must be provided with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter and medical attention.
- Rule 119.** Women who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of men, except where families are accommodated as family units, and must be under the immediate supervision of women.
- Rule 120.** Children who are deprived of their liberty must be held in quarters separate from those of adults, except where families are accommodated as family units.
- Rule 121.** Persons deprived of their liberty must be held in premises which are removed from then combat zone and which safeguard their health and hygiene.
- Rule 123.** The personal details of persons deprived of their liberty must be recorded.
- Rule 125.** Persons deprived of their liberty must be allowed to correspond with their families, subject to reasonable conditions relating to frequency and the need for censorship by the authorities.
- Rule 127.** The personal convictions and religious practices of persons deprived of their liberty must be respected.

### Displacement and displaced persons

- Rule 129.** Parties to a non-international armed conflict may not order the displacement of the civilian population, in whole or in part, for reasons related to the conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand.
- Rule 131.** In case of displacement, all possible measures must be taken in order that the civilians concerned are received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition and that members of the same family are not separated.
- Rule 132.** Displaced persons have a right to voluntary return in safety to their homes or places of habitual residence as soon as the reasons for their displacement cease to exist.

### Implementation

#### Compliance with international humanitarian law

- Rule 139.** Each party to the conflict must respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law by its armed forces and other persons or groups acting in fact on its instructions, or under its direction or control.
- Rule 142.** States and parties to the conflict must provide instruction in international humanitarian law to their armed forces.
- Rule 143.** States must encourage the teaching of international humanitarian law to the civilian population.

#### Enforcement of international humanitarian law

- Rule 144.** States may not encourage violations of international humanitarian law by parties to an armed conflict. They must exert their influence, to the degree possible, to stop violations of international humanitarian law.

**Rule 148.** Parties to non-international armed conflicts do not have the right to resort to belligerent reprisals. Other countermeasures against persons who do not or who have ceased to take a direct part in hostilities are prohibited.

### Individual responsibility

**Rule 151.** Individuals are criminally responsible for war crimes they commit.

**Rule 152.** Commanders and other superiors are criminally responsible for war crimes committed pursuant to their orders.

**Rule 153.** Commanders and other superiors are criminally responsible for war crimes committed by their subordinates if they knew, or had reason to know, that the subordinates were about to commit or were committing such crimes and did not take all necessary and reasonable measures in their power to prevent their commission, or if such crimes had been committed, to punish the persons responsible.

**Rule 154.** Every combatant has a duty to disobey a manifestly unlawful order.

**Rule 155.** Obeying a superior order does not relieve a subordinate of criminal responsibility if the subordinate knew that the act ordered was unlawful or should have known because of the manifestly unlawful nature of the act ordered.

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