



The Role of Unarmed Civilian Protection in the Future of Peace Operations: An Integrative Approach

Wednesday, 5 November 2025, 2:00 – 4:00 EST

UN Church Center

777 UN Plaza, New York, NY, 11th floor

Background:

World attention is currently focused on Gaza as the early stages of a peace agreement start to take form. Regardless of progress on the present agreement, an effective, multi-dimensional peacekeeping and protection force needs to be formed and ready for deployment when opportunities are created. The UN and other major players are negotiating phases to de-escalate and then to hopefully rebuild the multitude of systems and structures that have been destroyed during the two-year war. A multinational force has been proposed, the dimensions of which are not defined or decided (i.e. UN-mandated, all Arab States force, hybrid, etc.)

Despite the strong recommendations of the HIPPO report that unarmed approaches must be at the forefront of UN protection operations and the growing record of success of these operations in various conflict zones through the world, little attention, and little more than lip service, has been paid to the role of civil society in consolidating and protecting communities and how the international community can support this. Further, little is known about the civil society-led protection work currently being done in the West Bank, what can be learned from this locally-led protection work, and how it can be relevant and applicable to the future of peace operations in Gaza, as well as more supported in the West Bank.

The session has four aims:

- **Examine** unarmed civilian protection (UCP) work as it has been done by 20+ civil society organizations in the West Bank for years;

- **Explore** how UCP has been successfully scaled up in other settings (e.g. UN mission-adjacent in South Sudan and non-UN mission settings in Mindanao, Philippines) to extract lessons that could pertain to non-traditional operational settings like Gaza and the West Bank;
- **interrogate** what can be learned from this work vis-à-vis Gaza, what the obstacles will be, and how to scale up in support of a stabilization force to meet the immense protection needs in both the West Bank and Gaza; and
- **Discuss** the role that UCP-like measures can play as future UN and other peace operations evolve toward smaller peacekeeping models amid global financial constraints.

The session seeks to contribute to the Review on the Future of All Forms of Peace Operations by reflecting on the history of UN peace operations in mission and non-mission settings in order to identify lessons relevant to the future of Palestine, as well as to the future of non-traditional UN and non-UN peace operations.

Panelists:

Amira Musallam, head of mission/UCPiP - UCP in the West Bank - (in person)

Anton Goodman, Rabbis for Human Rights -UCP and other related work they do in the West Bank and Israel

Yael Sela, Looking the Occupation in the Eye/Mistaclim

Eed Suleiman, Um Al Khair, Musafer Yata West Bank, as seen in Academy Award Winning Documentary, 'No Other Land'

Felicity Gray, Nonviolent Peaceforce - how UCP has been scaled up successfully in UN mission settings (South Sudan) and non-mission settings (Mindanao)

Carol Daniel-Kaspari, The Carter Center - how UCP will be relevant to Gaza and how to start, scale up, and manage its integration into the foreseen governance start-up environment

Open discussion to be guided by the following questions (60 minutes):

- What is UCP doing now in the West Bank? What are the challenges? What is needed to do better?
- What are the challenges expected in Gaza over the coming months and years, and how do they differ from those currently encountered in the West Bank?
- How could UCP be scaled up in the West Bank as well as Gaza? How is this relevant to what the current actors are planning for a mandated mission/all Arab PK mission, hybrid, role of civil society?
- How could UCP work in concert with and support the proposed International Stabilization Force?
- How would UCP operations and practices currently deployed in the West Bank need to change and adapt in light of the escalation in settler and state violence already observed following the Gaza ceasefire?

- What can be learned from other settings, like South Sudan, where UCP deployed with UN Peace Ops and with SPMs, and other settings?
- How can UCP be part of the governance structure being contemplated for Gaza?
- How can UCP contribute to an effective transition to smaller, more cost-effective UN Peace operations?

Co-hosts: UCPiP, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Pax Christi, UN NGO Working Group on Israel and Palestine, Carter Center, Looking the Occupation in the Eye (Mistaclim), Rabbis for Human Rights, OHCHR

Format:

We anticipate undertaking an interactive dialogue rather than the speakers' prepared remarks using the majority of the time in the session. Therefore, we propose the following for a 120-minute session.

10 minutes - Welcome with opening remarks by OHCHR

30-40 minutes - Presentation by panelists

60 minutes - Interactive dialogue and Q&A during which the facilitator and audience will pose questions to generate discussion on key issues

10 minutes- Synthesis and closing

Registration:

For in-person attendance, please register [here](#).

For online Zoom attendance, please register [here](#).

For further information, please contact: gay.rosenblumkumar@gmail.com