



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Policy Position

Protection of Women and Children in War Zones through Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping (UCP)

The Issue

Women and children face significant challenges in times of war and require special protection. Unarmed civilian peacekeeping (UCP) refers to the use of trained unarmed civilians to protect civilians from violence, killing, rape, and kidnapping. All forms of peacekeeping, whether military or civilian, involve the use of various kinds of pressure and influence to change the behaviour of armed actors. This can range from the coercion that comes from the use of weapons to the much more subtle and pacific influences which convince and/or assist armed actors to behave differently. The most successful models are proving to be those that train and deploy multi-national, non-partisan teams comprising both genders, who live and work in the local areas to which they have been invited by civil society. These UCPs rely solely on dialogue with the armed actors themselves to help them behave in ways that will reduce violence and protect civilians. This approach depends on building relationships of mutual trust and understanding. Some strategies call for local, all-women peacekeeping teams.

It is a common assumption that only armed military or police can do the work of peacekeeping. However, parents, teachers, social workers, and community leaders have successfully intervened to stop violent behaviour in the past. The first international peacekeeping interventions by the United Nations (UN) were unarmed 'observer missions.' More recently unarmed civilians have been deployed by the European Union (EU) and by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).¹

Barriers to using UCP to protect civilians:

- A relatively new idea or concept which can result in reluctance of utilisation;
- Lack of training available for those specialising in this area;
- Absence of awareness of its effectiveness; and
- Possible resistance by traditional armed forces and non-state actors.

GWI's position

To promote and encourage the use of non-armed peacekeeping methods.

In order to address the main barriers to the implementation of UCP, GWI urges states to:

1. Mainstream non-armed peacekeeping methods including the use of UCP and observer missions and encourage their use as well as armed military as a viable national defence strategy.

¹ Study conducted by Randy Janzen, Chair of the Mir Centre for Peace at Selkirk College in Castlegar, British Columbia, Canada (<http://selkirk.ca/mir-centre-for-peace/research>). He has developed a database of all unarmed civilian protection activities.



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2. Support efforts for the UN Security Council to incorporate UCP into the implementation of the UN Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and for other states to do the same in their National Action Plans.
3. Urge the UN to include UCP in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.