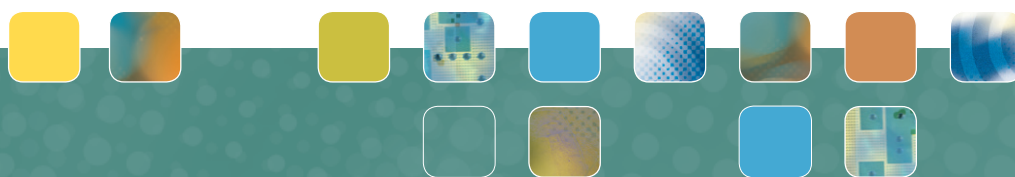




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Military planning and assessment guide for the protection of civilians



Alexander William Beadle and Stian Kjeksrud

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Summary

This report is a practical guide for military staff officers involved in the planning, execution and assessment of military operations where protection of civilians is or may become an objective. It aims to help bridge the gap between the importance of protecting civilians in today's military operations and the lacking ability to do so on the ground. This guide provides guidance on which aspects to consider during different phases of a regular planning process, as well as advice on 'how' military forces can be used to protect civilians.

Protection of civilians is no longer simply about avoiding collateral damage. Military forces are increasingly expected to protect civilians from perpetrators of violence who deliberately target them as part of their strategy. There are many different ways of using military force to protect civilians in both the short and long term – but their utility will always depend on the particular type of threat civilians are facing.

The guide uses seven scenarios that describe situations where civilians are faced with fundamentally different types of threats (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN, POST-CONFLICT REVENGE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT, PREDATORY VIOLENCE, and INSURGENCY). On basis of these scenarios, the guide lists key questions and planning implications for the most common planning steps and tools used by military planners, such as factor-analysis (time, space, force), Centre of Gravity (COG)-analysis, and assessment of various Courses of Action (COAs).

A principal recommendation is the need to better understand the perpetrators of violence. Why do they attack civilians, what kind of strategies and tactics do they employ, and which military capabilities do they require to continue? These are key questions that planners need to answer – not only to identify which military responses will protect civilians most effectively, but also how to reconcile protection-considerations with other objectives, such as defeating an insurgency.

Operations assessment of the degree to which civilians are being protected also requires a broader understanding of success. There is little point in measuring the number of civilian casualties caused by own forces alone, if the primary threat comes from perpetrators that deliberately target them. The expected outcomes of failing to protect civilians, however, will also vary enormously from one scenario to another.

Norsk sammendrag

Denne rapporten er en praktisk guide for militære planleggere og operasjonsanalytikere i operasjoner hvor beskyttelse av sivile står sentralt. Beskyttelse av sivile kan være hovedmålet for hele operasjonen (som i Libya), en av flere målsetninger (som i Afghanistan), eller en potensiell risikofaktor. Bakgrunnen for utviklingen av denne guiden er et økende behov for å kunne bedre forstå hvordan militære styrker kan brukes mer effektivt til å beskytte sivile på bakken i dagens operasjoner. Dette krever at man forstår både potensialet og begrensingene i hva militære styrker kan gjøre for å beskytte sivile. Det finnes i dag lite veiledning i eksisterende doktriner og konsepter om hvordan dette kan operasjonaliseres i praksis.

Denne guiden beskriver hvordan beskyttelse av sivile kan tas med i en vanlig planleggingsprosess for militære operasjoner. Den gir både veiledning om hvilke aspekter som må tas stilling til i ulike deler av en planprosess, samt konkrete råd om hvordan militære styrker kan brukes. I dag handler ikke beskyttelse av sivile lenger bare om å unngå unødig sivile tap som følge av egne handlinger – men i stadig økende grad om å beskytte sivile fra aktører som bevisst angriper dem. Imidlertid kan truslene mot de sivile i operasjonsområdene variere betraktelig – og dermed også nytteverdien av militærmakten i de ulike situasjonene.

Guiden tar utgangspunkt i syv scenarioer som beskriver ulike situasjoner hvor sivile kan måtte beskyttes mot fundamentalt forskjellige fysiske trusler (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN, POST-CONFLICT REVENGE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT, PREDATORY VIOLENCE og INSURGENCY). På basis av disse scenarioene utledes det nøkkelspørsmål og anbefalinger under ulike planfaser og plansteg som er typisk for de fleste militære planleggingsprosesser, som faktoranalyser (tid, rom, sted), tyngdepunktsanalyser og vurdering av ulike handlemåter.

Rapporten understreker viktigheten av å forstå aktørene som angriper sivile. Hvorfor angriper de sivile, hvordan angriper de, og hvilke militære kapabiliteter er angriperne avhengige av for å kunne fortsette? Dette er nøkkelspørsmål som planleggere må besvare for å kunne identifisere hvilke militære tiltak som kan redusere trusselnivået mot de sivile, uten å gjøre mer skade. Beskyttelseshensyn må også kunne balanseres mot andre målsetninger i en operasjon, som for eksempel opprørsbekjempelse.

Vurdering av måloppnåelse av beskyttelse av sivile må også gjøres mye bredere enn i dag. Det hjelper lite å telle sivile tap egne styrker er ansvarlige for hvis det er angriperne som står bak den store majoriteten av sivile tap. Det er likevel enorme forskjeller i hva man kan forvente vil skje med de sivile om man feiler i ulike scenarioene.

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Preface

This document is the main product of a two-year Concept Development and Experimentation (CD&E) project conducted at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) in collaboration with the Norwegian Joint Headquarters (NJHQ) and the Norwegian Defence International Centre (NODEFIC). It is a practical guide intended for military staff involved in the planning or assessment of operations where protection of civilians is an objective.

The guidance and advice provided here draws on five years of research on the role of military force in protecting civilians, including fieldtrips to conflict-affected areas, close interaction with military planners, and numerous case-studies of conflicts where civilians have been targeted.¹ The main reason for developing this guide has been the so-called ‘implementation gap’, which is used to describe how civilians have not become much safer in today’s operations – despite an unprecedented strategic importance attached to their protection. This gap has largely been attributed to a lack of guidance on ‘how’ protection can be operationalized.²

This guide represents one attempt to bridge this gap, by drawing on recent efforts to develop such guidance as well as findings from our own research.³ It approaches the question of what military forces can and cannot do to protect civilians based on what happens on the ground, rather than whether the operation is conducted within a United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union (EU), African Union (AU) or other institutional framework.⁴

This is because the answer to ‘how’ military force may be used with greater utility to protect civilians, ultimately depends on why and how a particular perpetrator attacks civilians in the first place. Each type of perpetrator and threat will require distinct military responses to protect civilians. Thus, as part of the development of these guidelines, a number of generic scenarios have been identified to capture the range of situations. Using these scenarios, the guide seeks to explain which military responses may work in which particular situation.

¹ For an updated list of publications, see: <http://www.ffi.no/no/Prosjekter/CHIPS/Publikasjoner/>

² See Holt, V., Taylor, G. & Kelly, M. (2009), *Protecting Civilians in the Context of UN Peacekeeping Operations* (New York: DPKO & OCHA); Bellamy, A. J. & Williams, P. D. (2009), ‘Protecting Civilians in Uncivil Wars’, *Working Paper No. 1* (Asia-Pacific Centre of the Responsibility to Protect); Giffen, A. C. (2010), *Addressing the Doctrinal Deficit* (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center); Williams, P. D. (2010), ‘Enhancing Civilian Protection in Peace Operations: insights from Africa’, *Africa Center for Strategic Studies Research Paper No. 1* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press); and Giffen, A. C. (2011), *Enhancing the Protection of Civilians in Peace Operations: From Policy to Practice* (Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence).

³ The most important contributions are the Mass Atrocity Response Operations (MARO) Handbook (2010) by the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School and the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI); Military Planning to Protect Civilians – Proposed Guidance for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (2011) by Max Kelly with Alison Giffen at the Stimson Center; and the Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide (2013), also developed by the PKSOI.

⁴ See Beadle, Alexander William (2010), ‘Protection of civilians in theory: a comparison of UN and Nato approaches’, *FFI-rapport 2010/02453* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment), and Kjeksrud et al. (2011), ‘Protection of civilians in armed conflict: comparing organisational approaches’, *FFI-rapport 2011/01888* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment).

The intended users of this guide are military staff officers involved in the planning, execution and assessment of military operations where protection of civilians is or may become an objective. All guidance and advice provided is intentionally structured according to planning phases and tools familiar to most military staffs. At the time of publication, this guide has been abbreviated into a separate annex on the protection of civilians, which is under consideration for the new NATO doctrine on Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (AJP-3.4). A version is also intended to be tailored to the context of UN operations for use during educational courses at NODEFIC.

The present document is the full version of the military planning and assessment guide for the protection of civilians. The underlying research is documented in three separate reports:

- Beadle, Alexander William (2014), 'Protection of civilians – military planning scenarios and implications', *FFI-rapport 2014/00519* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment)
- Våge, Anders Skeibrok (2014), 'Violence against civilians: case-studies of perpetrators', *FFI-rapport 2014/00520* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment)
- Våge, Anders Skeibrok (2014), 'Operations assessment for the protection of civilians', *FFI-rapport 2014/00966* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment)

The first report outlines the planning scenarios and military implications used to inform the guidance and advice provided in this guide. The second report looks at six actual perpetrators of violence and how they have acquired the ability to attack civilians (Libya, Syria, the Taliban, al-Shabaab, the Lord's Resistance Army, and a tribal conflict in South Sudan). The third report explains how the degree to which civilians are being protected can actually be measured.

Whilst the contents of this guide is based on most recent research, the insights provided here will continue to be improved, nuanced, and updated in light of new conflicts and attempts to protect civilians in future operations. As for the guide itself, the plan to experiment and validate with its use during actual military planning exercises in the future.

This final version of the guide is the result of multiple rounds of feedback from both military practitioners and experts on protection of civilians. The authors are especially indebted to feedback from P. A. Armitage (DCDC), D. Raymond (PKSOI), T. Heier (NDCSC), C. G. Cooper (NDCSC), S. N. Hansen (NJHQ), P. Vindheim (NODEFIC), and the Operational Experimentation and Operational Analysis branches at NATO ACT. This work would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance and encouragement of N. Toverød (ACT), K. Pedersen (NODEFIC), L. Mages (DEFSTNOR), and V. Holt (US State Department). Colleagues at FFI have also provided important feedback throughout the entire process.

Finally, the authors are grateful to the Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN for facilitating fieldwork in South Sudan in November 2012, especially P. Rønning, P. Krokeide and K. Kveli, Ine Måreide at the Norwegian Embassy in Juba, as well as UNMISS personnel in Juba and Bor, who took the time to discuss with us issues that have only gained further importance since.

1 Introduction

Protection of civilians has become an increasingly important objective in today's military operations. At the same time, protection of civilians is no longer simply about avoiding 'collateral damage' or assisting with the delivery of humanitarian aid. In today's armed conflicts, military forces are increasingly expected to protect civilians from perpetrators who deliberately target civilians as part of their strategy and are responsible for the majority of casualties. Failure to protect civilians from these actors may represent a threat to the entire operation and have serious strategic consequences, regardless of whether the mission is explicitly mandated to protect civilians or not.

In the future, protection of civilians may arise as an objective in operations across the entire conflict spectrum, but the usefulness of military force will greatly depend on the particular type of threat civilians are under. Most military operations today suffer from a lack of guidance on 'how' to protect civilians from different types of perpetrators, which has produced a gap between the political and military-strategic necessity to do so and the ability to make civilians safer on the ground. Thus, there is a need for greater conceptual understanding of protection of civilians during the regular planning, execution and assessment of military operations.

1.1 Purpose

This guide helps military commanders and staff officers operationalize the objective of protecting civilians in operations across the entire conflict spectrum. First, it provides **guidance** for planners on which aspects must be considered during key steps of the planning process ('key questions'). Second, it provides **advice** on 'how' protection of civilians can be achieved, based on lessons from previous operations and what is likely to work given the particular threat civilians are under.

The guide is relevant to all levels of command – strategic, operational, and tactical – but it is particularly tailored to planners at the operational level, because this is where the lack of guidance has been identified as most acute.⁵ In particular, the intended audiences are members of operational-level planning groups, such as Joint Operations Planning Groups (JOPGs) at Joint Forces Command (JFC) in NATO, at mission headquarters level in UN operations, or at national joint headquarters.

Because it focuses on key planning steps that are common to most military planning processes – such as situational awareness, operational factors, Centre of Gravity (COG)-analysis, and the assessment of Courses of Action (COAs) – the guidance should be relevant for planners in all military operations. Short of utilising the guidelines in a specific planning process, the insights may also be of wider relevance to the education and training of military staffs that need a better understanding of how protection of civilians may become an objective and what it entails in operational terms.

⁵ See fn. 2, p. 6.

1.2 Scope

Protection of civilians is broadly understood as all efforts to reduce the effects of war on civilian life. There are several layers to this, as illustrated by the ‘protection onion’ below, which is often used to illustrate the different aspects of protection of civilians and their order of importance.

The most basic form of protection is from threats of physical violence, which is a prerequisite for all other layers and will be an integral part of any mission seeking to establish a safe and secure environment. The remaining layers are access to basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, medical assistance), enjoyment of human rights (e.g. freedom of speech, freedom from want), and establishing a protective environment in which all of the above are preserved by the host-nation.

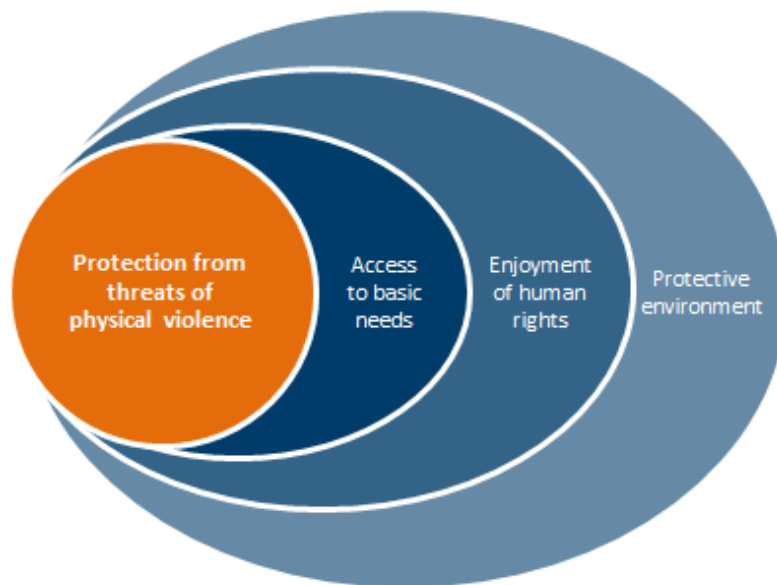


Figure 1.1 The protection onion – outlining the different layers of protection of civilians⁶

The scope of this guide is limited to the provision of protection from threats of **physical violence**. This is because it is the layer where military forces will have the primary role to play, whilst playing a supporting role in relation to the other layers. Importantly, protection from physical violence is not limited to ‘imminent’ threats alone, as is often a caveat in UN peacekeeping operations. This is because even though a threat to civilians may not be imminent throughout the entire area of operations, a military response may still be the only way to reduce it.

The military activities required to protect civilians will not necessarily be very different from regular military tasks – such as area defence, patrolling, and offensive operations. The difference is that people rather than terrain or enemies are at the centre of attention. The criterion for success is that the use of force reduces the current level of threat to civilians, without causing more harm than otherwise would have occurred (akin to the ‘do no harm’-principle). This may require decisive, limited or no application of military force, depending on the nature of threat.

⁶ This particular figure is a minor alteration of Paul D. Williams’ original ‘onion’, which was itself an adaptation of the ICRC’s original ‘egg framework’ from the 1990s. Similar layers have also been reproduced in the Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide (p. 7), but in a slightly different order.

1.3 User instructions

This guide focuses on two key aspects of any military operations process. Chapter 2 provides guidance and advice on how to consider protection of civilians during the **planning of operations**. Depending on the type of operation, this section can be used in its entirety or in segments to ensure that protection is considered during key phases:

- If protection of civilians is the *primary objective* of the entire operation, the guidance and advice listed here will be central to all planning phases. E.g. during a peace enforcement operation invoked by the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)-principle like in Libya (2011).⁷
- If protection of civilians is *one of several objectives*, e.g. during a peacekeeping, counterinsurgency or stabilisation operation (Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, DR Congo, Mali), the guidance will be relevant to certain planning phases – most importantly when assessing when and where in the area of operations civilians are likely to be under most imminent threat and during the evaluation of various Courses of Action (COAs).
- At minimum, the guide should help planners *identify situations where costly protection failures must be avoided*, e.g. to be used by the Red Team during war-gaming.

Chapter 3 provides guidance and advice on **operations assessment** for the protection of civilians. It outlines how to assess the degree to which civilians are actually being protected and proposes relevant measures of effectiveness (MOEs), based on what is expected to happen with the civilians if one fails to protect them.

1.4 Methodology

This guide is based on a military-theoretical approach developed at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), which maintains that it is impossible to answer the basic question of how military force can and cannot be used to protect civilians, without understanding why and how a perpetrator attacks civilians in the first place.⁸ This approach reflects a wider consensus in emerging doctrines, concepts and advice on protection of civilians about the need to better understand the perpetrators of violence against civilians.⁹

However, a challenge for planners is that the manner in which civilians are attacked will vary greatly from operation to operation. Thus, in order to help military staff officers identify and distinguish between situations that will require distinct military responses, all guidance and advice is arranged according to seven generic scenarios where the threat to civilians is fundamentally different.

⁷ R2P concerns *ius ad bellum* (criteria for going to war) in the event of mass atrocity crimes (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity). Protection of civilians concerns a wider range of threats, regardless of the reasons for launching an operation. In Libya, R2P was invoked to legitimize use of force, while protecting civilians was the main objective and a key concern throughout the campaign.

⁸ See Beadle (2011) for the original idea; or Chapter 2 in Beadle (2014) for a shorter, refined version.

⁹ See Kelly, Max (2011), *Military Planning to Protect Civilians: Proposed Guidance for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, September 2011 (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center), and Mahoney, Liam (2013), *Non-military strategies for civilian protection in the DRC*, March 2013 (Fieldview Solutions).

1.5 Scenarios

The scenarios seek to capture the range of possible situations where protection of civilians may become an objective for military forces in operations across the entire conflict spectrum. Each scenario describes a situation where civilians are under a distinct nature of physical threat. The scenarios are summarised below, with the key characteristics of each listed in Table 1.1 (p. 13).¹⁰

It is important to note that these scenarios are only generic. They help military staff understand when, where and how the threat to civilians will be most imminent in an area of operations, based on the different motivations perpetrators may have for targeting them. They also identify which actor is likely to pose the greatest threat. Although civilians are often targeted by multiple actors, one party is usually responsible for the majority of violence. Planners will naturally have to adapt the generic scenarios to the specific context of each particular crisis. These scenarios may overlap within an area of operations, with distinct types of threats against civilians dominating in different areas involving different actors, or the same actors operating differently in certain areas. The scenarios supplement the ways planners normally develop situational awareness of a crisis situation – by providing greater understanding of the willingness and ability of actors to attack civilians and how to consider viable military responses during the planning of operations.

1. GENOCIDE. The gravest threat to civilians occurs when an actor aims to **exterminate a national, ethnical, racial or religious group**. Only governments or militarily superior actors are likely to possess the means required to kill the number of people needed to achieve this objective. Civilians from the targeted group will be under imminent threat of violence wherever they can be found, especially early in the crisis and in areas of large concentrations. If perpetrators succeed, the expected outcome is that the majority of potential victims will be killed (>50%).

2. ETHNIC CLEANSING. A less deadly, but more frequent situation occurs when an actor seeks to **expel a certain group from a specific territory**. The actors are likely to be states or militarily superior actors due to the nature of the objective and means required. Violence is used demonstratively to coerce the targeted group to leave, and to prevent their return by destroying their homes. The threat will be greatest following seizure of new territory and in minority enclaves, corridors or pockets that link the perpetrating actor's ethnic areas together. Fewer people will die compared to GENOCIDE (a few per cent), but the number of victims displaced will be very high (~90%).

3. REGIME CRACKDOWN. A third type of situation occurs when a government or a de facto authority responds to threats against its own survival with **violent repression of the population at large**. Civilians are not primarily targeted on basis of ethnic or sectarian identity, but according to presumed or real affiliation with political opposition. Violence will be most severe where resistance is strongest. The principal threat to civilians comes from the indiscriminate tactics and means used (e.g. conventional weapons against civilian areas). The number of people killed or

¹⁰ For a full description of the methodology, parameters and characteristics of each scenario, see Beadle, Alexander William (2014), 'Protection of civilians – military planning scenarios and implications', *FFI-rapport 2014/00519* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment).

displaced will vary according to the local level of fighting, with many of the dead being combatants rather than civilians.

4. POST-CONFLICT REVENGE. A far more limited, but very common situation occurs in most post-conflict environments as former victims **take revenge against previous perpetrators**. The actors will be individuals or loosely organized mobs seeking to settle scores on a personal basis. The violence is more criminal than strategic in nature (murder, arson, kidnapping, looting). Targets are selected on basis of previous culpability, especially in areas where most abuses have occurred before. Normally, relatively few people are killed (dozens or hundreds), but even low levels of violence can prompt many people to flee if the current victims share a communal identity with the former perpetrators.

5. COMMUNAL CONFLICT. A potentially very violent situation occurs when whole communities engage in continuous cycles of violence, driven by a combination of **revenge and self-protection**. Precisely because both sides are organized along shared communal identities, rather than as organized armed actors, they are unlikely to possess the means to settle conflicts permanently. However, they cannot afford not to retaliate, as this will invite further attacks upon themselves. Conflict may persist for years or even decades, with periodic escalations in violence. Civilians are primary targets for both sides, as the roles of perpetrator and victim shift with each cycle. Women and children are often singled out. The expected outcome is a high number of casualties relative to the community's total population, and rapid displacement of entire communities that flee impending attacks.

6. PREDATORY VIOLENCE. In weak states, armed groups may attack the local population **to ensure their own survival or for profit**. These actors are typically rogue security forces or rebels who have failed to achieve their political objectives, but refuse to demobilize or disarm. Often physically removed from the geographic areas where they may gain support, they have little strategic incentive to limit predatory violence (pillage, forced recruitment, illegal taxation). All civilians are possible victims. Attacks are launched on basis of opportunity, preferring 'easy', undefended targets, especially women and children. Severe torture and mutilation are common to deter resistance. Relatively few people may actually be killed, but the number of abductees and displaced will be high due to the brutality and unpredictability of attacks.

7. INSURGENCY. A common, but different situation involving armed groups occurs when civilians are only targeted **as a tactic**. These perpetrators are usually insurgent groups fighting over political power. Government forces or rival groups are the primary targets, but they still employ a combination of selective violence (e.g. assassinations) to prevent the population from collaborating with the enemy and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and rivals alike (explosives) to weaken popular trust in the government. It may also be intended to prompt an overreaction from government forces. Physical violence is only likely to be the main concern for civilians in contested areas, whilst most have other grievances (e.g. unemployment, corruption). The number of people killed will be relatively low compared to other scenarios. When people flee, they will flee the presence of fighting rather than the presence of insurgents per se.

Generic scenario	1. Type of actor	2. Rationale	3. Strategies and tactics	4. Relevant mil. capabilities	5. Expected outcome
GENOCIDE Halabja ('88) Rwanda ('94) Srebrenica ('95)	States, or the militarily superior actor	To exterminate a certain group	Destroy existence of a group through several, simultaneous mass killings, deportation, camps, systematic rape to prevent reproduction	Command and control, freedom of movement for special or irregular units, sufficient small arms	Majority of targeted civilians killed (>50%), in relatively short time
ETHNIC CLEANSING Bosnia ('92–95) Kosovo ('99) Kyrgyzstan ('10)	States, or the militarily superior actor	To expel a certain group from a specific territory	Force targeted group to leave through threats, demonstrative killings, brutality, mass-rape, destruction of property	Command and control, freedom of movement for special or irregular units	Only a few per cent killed, but vast majority of victims expelled (~90%); destruction of victim homes and cultural buildings
REGIME CRACKDOWN Iraq ('86-89) Darfur ('03–) Libya ('11) Syria ('11–) Islamic State in Iraq and Syria ('13–)	Authoritarian regimes, or de facto authorities in an area	To control restless populations, on basis of real or perceived affiliation with opposition	Violently repress the population at large, through selective and indiscriminate violence, threats, mass-detention, rape as terror, massive destruction, occasional massacres	Command and control from regime, freedom of movement for regular forces, heavy weapons, special/irregular units in support	Mostly combatant deaths, gradual increase in civilian deaths due to heavy weapons and in accordance with intensity of fighting; large-scale displacement; widespread destruction of population centres
POST-CONFLICT REVENGE Kosovo (post 99) Iraq (post 03)	Individuals or mobs	To avenge past crimes on a personal basis	Tit-for-tat score-settling through criminal acts of violence, such as murder, arson, kidnapping, looting	Freedom of movement for individuals and small groups to access victims	Only a few killed (dozens, hundreds), but groups associated with perpetrator may flee following relatively little violence
COMMUNAL CONFLICT Ituri ('99–03) Iraq ('06–07) Jonglei ('09–)	Whole tribal, ethnic or sectarian communities (possibly with outside support)	To avenge a previous attack and to deter further retribution in order to protect themselves	Attempts to coerce other community into submission through massacres, abductions, raids, destruction of homes and means of survival, often seeking to maximise violence	Freedom of movement to reach other communities, access to deadlier weapons and means of communication is associated with higher lethality	Relatively high number of people killed and abducted, especially women and children; livelihoods stolen or killed; temporary displacement in homogenous areas, more gradual withdrawal to 'their own' in mixed areas
PREDATORY VIOLENCE Renamo ('75–92) RUF ('91–'02) LRA ('94–)	Rebel groups (predatory behaviour)	To survive or make a profit by exploiting civilians	Coerce civilians into compliance through plunder, taxation, forced recruitment, opportunistic rape, brutality, especially against 'easy targets'	Freedom of movement to pick time and place of attack, operational secrecy, outside support, possibly central command	Temporary, but large-scale displacement in affected areas and disproportionately many relative to the number of people actually attacked; many abductions, especially of young adolescents
INSURGENCY FARC ('64–) Taliban ('06–) al-Shabaab ('06–)	Rebel groups (classic insurgents with political or ideological objectives)	To control populations upon which they depend and undermine trust in their rivals	Selective and indiscriminate violence, through threats, targeted killings, bombings, retribution, depending on their level of control	Freedom of movement to pick time and place of attack, access to indiscriminate and explosive weapons	Fewer killed and injured than in other scenarios, most due to indiscriminate weapons; gradual displacement from areas of heavy fighting

Table 1.1 Generic military planning scenarios for the protection of civilians

2 Planning

This section provides guidance and advice on how protection of civilians can be considered during the planning of a military operation. It highlights key questions to help planners determine which aspects will be most relevant in different situations and provides advice on how they can be answered, based on the nature of the threat facing civilians on the ground (using the scenarios).

The section is structured according to three main planning phases, which are common to most military planning processes.¹¹ The purpose is not to replicate the full contents of these phases, but to supplement key steps and frequently used planning tools with additional considerations relating to the protection of civilians (see Table 2.1).

Planning phases	Guidance on the protection of civilians
Phase 1: Situational awareness	Awareness of how protection of civilians may become an objective in different types of military operations (peacekeeping, stabilization, counterinsurgency, and peace enforcement)
Phase 2: Operational appreciation of the strategic environment	How to assess the role of military force in protecting civilians, based on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The particular threats facing civilians in the crisis area (scenarios) 2) The viability of different military response options to protect civilians and likely force requirements (in each scenario)
Phase 3: Operational estimate	Identify key operational issues and implications within a specific area of operations, based on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Operational factors (time, space, force, and civilians) 2) Centre of Gravity (COG)-analysis of the perpetrator(s) 3) Assessment of own Courses of Action (COAs) against the most likely and dangerous perpetrator COA in each scenario 4) Critical events to be considered during war-gaming

Table 2.1 Common planning phases and relevant guidance on the protection of civilians

The order in which the various steps are used in an actual planning process will vary according to the particular organisation, headquarter, planning group, and level of command. Thus, each of the following phases and steps is written in such a way that they may be read independently of each other. The largest phase (Phase 3) is the most operationally oriented, whilst Phase 1 and 2 focus on operational-level input to support decision-making at the strategic level. The subsequent planning phases that deals with the production of planning documents (e.g. the OPLAN) are not included as they are highly organisation-specific and less relevant to protection of civilians, which needs to be considered as early in the planning process as possible.

¹¹ These phases are based on the most recent version of NATO's Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD) (Interim V2.0, 4 October 2013), which outlines a collaborative approach to the military planning process. See also NATO's AJP-5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Operational-Level Planning*. Similar processes are described in the UN's *Planning Process for Military Operations* (DPKO, 2001); the UK's Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 5-00, *Campaign Planning* (July 2013); and the US Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operational Planning* (11 August 2011). Smaller nations tend to adopt the processes of larger allies or multinational organizations, e.g. the Norwegian Armed Forces use NATO's COPD.

2.1 Phase 1: Situational awareness

All planning processes start with an initial understanding of a potential crisis. This is normally a continuous activity at both strategic and operational levels. During this phase, planners should consider whether protection of civilians may become an objective for military forces in a particular crisis area – and how failure to do so may pose a risk to the mission as a whole.

In general, protection of civilians from perpetrators of violence is likely to become an objective in most operations – even those not explicitly mandated to do so. This is due to the frequency with which civilians are targeted in today's conflicts. Whilst nine soldiers died per civilian during World War I, ten civilians die for every soldier or fighter killed in battle today.¹² Aside from being killed, civilians are even more frequently injured, mutilated, sexually assaulted, or forcibly recruited. However, the patterns of violence are likely to vary greatly from one crisis to another.

When developing the initial situational awareness, planners must therefore seek to identify the basic threat to civilians in the area. The key characteristics of the scenarios listed above provide possible indicators and warnings of distinct situations. The type of physical protection expected of military forces will also depend on the type of operation contemplated:

- Most UN *peacekeeping operations* today are explicitly mandated to use military force to protect civilians from 'imminent threats of physical violence'. Aside from this focus on 'imminent' threats alone, the use of force is limited by other caveats, such as to protect civilians 'within their areas of deployment and capabilities', 'without prejudice to the national government', and only at tactical levels and with host-nation consent.
- Most *stabilisation and counterinsurgency operations* conducted by other organisations than the UN are not explicitly mandated to protect civilians. However, it has become an implied task in order to establish a 'safe and secure environment' (e.g. for the US in Iraq from 2006, ISAF in Afghanistan from 2009, and the AU in Somalia from 2011).
- Faced with the most serious threats of violence against civilians, protection of civilians may become the primary objective in *peace enforcement operations* (e.g. Kosovo 1999, Libya 2011). Libya was the first time the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was used to authorise military intervention. Notably, the resolution did not restrict the mandate to protect civilians from 'imminent' threats only, but threats of physical violence in general.

Regardless of the type of operation launched, failure to recognise the actual threat to civilians on the ground has been a principal cause of failure in the past. E.g. mere UN peacekeeping was wholly unsuited to protect civilians in Rwanda (1994) and Srebrenica (1995). Failure to recognise who was killing whom and what constituted the greatest threat meant that NATO was configured for war-fighting as it entered Kosovo in 1999, when the biggest threat to civilians came from acts of retaliation requiring policing and a dispersed military presence. Thus, it is critical to constantly monitor changes in the patterns of violence against civilians before, during, and after the launch of any military operation.

¹² Study by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): Greenberg, S. B. & Boorstin, R. O. (2001), 'People on War: Civilians in the line of fire', *Public Perspective*, November/December 2001, p. 19.

2.2 Phase 2: Operational appreciation of the strategic environment

Once it has been decided to conduct a strategic assessment of a specific crisis, planners have to plan for the conduct of military operations alongside other instruments of power to achieve the desired end state. At the operational level, this usually begins with a systematic assessment of the strategic situation before providing operational advice on potential military responses.

2.2.1 Assessment of the strategic situation

Planners must first provide an operational appreciation of the strategic environment, the main actors and their role in the crisis. During this system analysis, planners must – in addition to regular analysis of belligerent parties and relevant parties – also assess the strategic nature of threat to civilians.

There are four key questions that should help planners cover the most important aspects of the threat to civilians, which can be used to identify the scenario(s) planners are faced with in a given crisis area. These questions may be used to validate initial strategic assessments, and to identify likely enemy Courses of Action (COAs) against civilians at an early stage (discussed in 2.3.3).

1) What type of actor is responsible for the majority of violence against civilians?

Planners should first identify which of the main actors are the perpetrators and who are the victims. ‘Who is killing whom’ may be obvious in some cases – but not always. Whilst all sides are often responsible for violence against civilians, experience has shown that one party is usually responsible for the majority of casualties. Perpetrating actors will fall into one of these categories:

- States (or militarily superior actors)
- Organised armed groups
- Communities (e.g. ethnic, sectarian, tribal)
- Individuals or loosely organised mobs

Planners should note that several scenarios may also take place in different areas involving different actors, or the same actors operating differently in other areas. The roles of perpetrators and victims may also change as a conflict enters a new phase or as a result of outside involvement. In some operations it may be politically impossible to confront the actor responsible for the majority of abuses (e.g. abusive allied host-nation forces the operation is there to support).

2) What is the perpetrator’s rationale for attacking civilians?

Aside from assessing an armed actor’s motivations for fighting other armed actors, planners should also consider how important the deliberate targeting of civilians is as part of that actor’s strategy. All rationales for attacking civilians will lie somewhere between complete dependency on violence against civilians to achieve their objectives (GENOCIDE) and targeting civilians merely as a tactic (INSURGENCY).

There are seven main rationales that perpetrators may have for targeting civilians:

- To exterminate a certain group of civilians (GENOCIDE)
- To expel a certain group of civilians (ETHNIC CLEANSING)

- To control a whole population by crushing all resistance (REGIME CRACKDOWN)
- To take revenge for past crimes (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE)
- To avenge previous attacks and deter further retaliation (COMMUNAL CONFLICT)
- To survive or profit through exploitation of civilians (PREDATORY VIOLENCE)
- To control a population in order to gain support and undermine opponents (INSURGENCY)

Reviewing political statements alone is unlikely to reveal their motivations, as most perpetrators have an interest in hiding their true intentions. Victim statements are also often misleading. The perpetrator's modus operandi will be a far more important source for identifying real motivations.

3) What strategies and tactics does the perpetrator employ against civilians?

Perpetrators use violence against civilians, just as any armed actor does against his opponents. This is what makes them 'perpetrators' in the first place. Depending on their particular motivations, civilians will have to be targeted in certain ways to achieve the intended strategic effect, e.g. through:

- Killings (mass-murders, mass-executions, targeted assassinations)
- Indiscriminate attacks resulting in civilian casualties (suicide attacks, car bombs, mortars)
- Scorched earth tactics (destroying populated neighbourhoods or civilian buildings)
- Sieges (entrapment, starvation, cutting off electricity and water)
- Mutilation, cruel treatment, torture (limb amputation, starvation, detention)
- Sexual violence (systematic or opportunistic rape, enforced pregnancy, sexual slavery)
- Pillage (looting or destruction of livestock, basic needs, and means of survival)
- Abduction (kidnappings, disappearances, forced recruitment)

Most actors use a combination of these acts, but a particular rationale will favour certain tactics.

4) Which capabilities are relevant to the perpetrator's ability to attack civilians?

All armed actors have certain capabilities that enable them to apply violence. Planners should seek to distinguish between capabilities that a perpetrator requires to *attack civilians* from those needed to fight other actors, including an intervening force. Capabilities identified as potentially important to a perpetrator's ability to attack civilians include:

- Advance planning of violence (e.g. complete blueprints, preparations for isolated attacks)
- Top-down coordination of violence (e.g. command and communication, leaderships)
- Ambiguity (secrecy surrounding criminal intentions, whilst mobilising necessary support)
- Freedom of movement (for units executing the violence when and where it is needed)
- Access to relevant military units and weaponry (e.g. conventional heavily armed forces, irregular lightly armed paramilitaries, weapons of mass destruction, small arms)

Which of these capabilities will be most relevant to a perpetrator's ability to attack civilians will vary according to the particular scenario (see the discussion of critical capabilities in 2.3.2).

2.2.2 Assessment of Military Response Options (MROs)

Based on a systematic assessment of the crisis situation, planners at the strategic level will draft a number of suitable, feasible, acceptable and distinguishable Military Response Options (MROs). These outline a series of increasingly ambitious steps using military and non-military means to achieve the agreed objectives, from which only one is selected. At the operational level, the purpose is to provide operational advice on the adequacy, merits and potential for success of the different options – e.g. what military actions will be needed to establish the conditions required to achieve the desired end state, what capabilities will be required, and possible operational risks.

Protection of civilians is likely to be a necessary condition that must be established in all operations, which will require military force to be used alongside other instruments of power. However, the balance between military and non-military actors will vary according to the nature of the threat to civilians on the ground. Military force will be most important when the threat of physical violence dominates, precisely because non-military instruments of power (e.g. economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, or indictments) are unlikely to reduce the threat. Equally, in situations where the threat is not primarily physical, or there are no actors who deliberately target civilians, the utility of military force to protect civilians without causing more harm will be limited.

This section outlines the role of military force in protecting civilians in each of the scenarios describe above. Different approaches involving varying levels of military force include:

- Assisting with or protecting the delivery of humanitarian aid to ameliorate the crisis (transport; air drops; construction of camps or roads; convoys; securing storage facilities);
- Containment of the conflict (no-fly zones; embargoes; securing weapon depots);
- Deter or defend against attacks on civilians (patrols; escorts; maintain presence; protect safe areas/zones like villages, stadiums, public buildings or camps; interpositioning);
- Coercive use of force against perpetrators (threats; show of force; punitive strikes);
- Attack or defeat perpetrators (strategic air strikes; direct action; war-fighting).

In all crisis situations, it will be critical for planners to understand the potential and limitations of each military response in different scenarios. In previous operations, military options have often been assessed solely on basis of available means and political will, with too little consideration to their actual viability to reduce the threat to civilians on the ground.

The viability of a military response from a protection-perspective is determined by the option's ability to match the perpetrator's willingness and capability to attack civilians in the first place. E.g. during GENOCIDE, the threat of extermination is unlikely to be reduced by anything short of decisive force against the perpetrator's ability to conduct large-scale killings, as these actors are likely to perceive the situation in zero-sum terms. By contrast, during COMMUNAL CONFLICTS, attacks by militias can be deterred, because their primary motivation is to secure themselves. As such, military force can be used to create the conditions for other levers of power to address the perception of insecurity.

Below follows advice on the role of military forces and the viability of different military responses in each scenario, based on the strategic nature of threat to civilians, experiences from past conflicts, and lessons from previous operations. This advice is intended to supplement the regular assessment of MROs with necessary considerations from a protection-perspective. Further operational and tactical advice on how best to carry out these responses is described in 2.3.3.

GENOCIDE

e.g. Halabja (1988), Rwanda (1994), Srebrenica (1995)

In situations where a perpetrator has decided to physically exterminate a whole group of people, **decisive use of military force is likely to be the only viable option to protect civilians.** If perpetrators are not stopped, it can be expected that the majority of potential victims will die.

- At minimum, military force is required to *defend locations* where many potential victims are congregated (e.g. camps, villages, public buildings). This will not, however, remove the threat of extermination against civilians elsewhere, or alter the perpetrator's willingness to continue exterminating. Even coercive use of force is unlikely to work against actors who perceive the situation in zero-sum terms (requiring a 'final solution').
- Once mass killings have begun, *defeating the perpetrators on the ground* is likely to be the only way to reduce the threat of extermination throughout the crisis area. Any options short of this may lead to more deaths, and may only create more opportunities for the perpetrators to kill civilians before they escape. To be most effective, the response must be rapid and decisive to exploit the window of opportunity for saving most lives early on, whilst minimising collateral damage resulting from one's own offensive actions.

A force deployed to this scenario must be able to deploy quickly, configured for a near-combat environment, with robust rules of engagement to use decisive force from the start. Presence on the ground will be essential, since the perpetrating units on the ground are usually organised in small units. Particular capabilities include early warning systems and surveillance to maintain situational awareness in rapidly evolving environments where the costs of failure are very high, as well as close air-support and rapid reaction forces on high readiness.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

e.g. Bosnia (1992-95), Kosovo (1999), Kyrgyzstan (2010)

In situations where perpetrators are expelling an entire population and destroying their homes, it is likely that **offensive military force will be required to reduce this threat.** If allowed to continue, the vast majority of the targeted civilians will be permanently displaced rather quickly.

- At minimum, military forces will have to *defend locations or larger areas* where the most vulnerable victims are located (e.g. in camps, villages, enclaves). This alone, however, will only suspend the threat temporarily, raise the threat elsewhere, and most likely substantially increase demands for humanitarian assistance in these locations.
- Strategic use of force to *coerce perpetrators to abandon ethnic cleansing as a strategy* is likely to be necessary to remove the threat of expulsion permanently in all areas. Coercion is possible because ethnic cleansers, unlike genocidaires, do not view the entire conflict in zero-sum terms, but more in terms of bargaining over territory and

demography. To be effective, the response must not simply seek to raise the costs for the responsible leadership alone, but also degrade the perpetrators' ability to expel civilians.

A force deployed to this scenario must have a military posture that can provide a genuine threat to the perpetrator's ability to cleanse new areas. Airpower will not be able to protect civilians from paramilitaries violently expelling civilians largely undetected from the air and without direct support from conventional forces. Airpower may, however, play an important coercive element in combination with a ground presence that threatens the perpetrator's military superiority.

REGIME CRACKDOWN

e.g. Darfur (2003-), Libya (2011), Syria (2011-)

In situations where a governing authority resorts to violence against its own population to stay in power, **some form of military response will be necessary** to protect civilians from large-scale, indiscriminate attacks that are an integral part of a that actor's strategy of survival. If not, one can expect a steadily rising number of deaths and displaced according to the level of fighting and the likely emergence of other scenarios in parallel (e.g. COMMUNAL CONFLICT, INSURGENCY).

- At minimum, military force is required to *defend opposition strongholds* (cities, villages, neighbourhoods), because these are the areas that regimes are most likely to besiege, bomb or occupy. This is likely to save many lives in the short term, but will only reduce the threat temporarily, as the regimes will feel compelled to crush the opposition before protests spread elsewhere or an armed uprising gains insuperable momentum.
- Military force can effectively be used to *degrade a regime's ability* to crush its own population (e.g. no-fly zones, no-drive zones, safe areas). However, a resolute regime is likely to strike elsewhere or find new, perhaps more destructive, ways of attacking.
- There is a chance that *coercive use of force* to make a regime abandon its strategy of violence may work, because the regime itself may be split about what to do. However, negotiations are likely to be an option of last resort for these perpetrators.
- *Dislodging the regime from power* may be the only viable response to permanently reduce the regime's threat to civilians, since it is an inherent part of its fight for survival.

A force deployed to this scenario must be configured to fight conventional forces. Compared to other scenarios, airpower can in theory play a greater role in protecting civilians, because the heavy weapons and military units used to attack civilians can be targeted more easily from the air.

POST-CONFLICT REVENGE

e.g. Kosovo (post 1999), Iraq (post 2003), Libya (post 2011)

In immediate post-conflict environments, **military forces may be the only units available** to stop the perpetrators. Because the perpetrators are individuals or mobs, they will be practically impossible to confront before attacks are already underway. If left unchecked, the result will be a temporary rise in criminal acts of violence and perhaps disproportionately large refugee flows.

- At minimum, military forces must *defend locations* where potential victims reside (villages, neighbourhoods), particularly in areas where most previous abuses occurred.

- Military forces should also seek to *contain the crisis* through widespread presence to limit opportunities for score-settling and *deter further escalation* into a more violent scenario, where violence is more strategically motivated (e.g. ETHNIC CLEANSING).

A force deployed to this scenario must have a dispersed configuration on the ground to provide static defence and presence in key locations. A very robust posture will be unnecessary, as these perpetrators are unlikely to pose a significant threat. Policing will almost certainly be needed.

COMMUNAL CONFLICT

e.g. Ituri in DRC (1999-2003), Jonglei in South Sudan (2009-)

In situations where two (or more) communities are engaged in retaliatory attacks, whereby the roles of perpetrators and victims constantly change, **military forces are likely to play an important role in protecting either community** as the threat of attack becomes imminent. If not, mortality rates and the level of destruction are likely to become relatively high.

- At minimum, military force is required to *defend against large attacks* from both sides, as this is when most people die. Deterring attacks is possible, because these perpetrators are usually attacking others so as not to die themselves. Inflicting only limited damage on the attackers may be sufficient, since the fighters involved may constitute a relatively large proportion of the community's total population. Yet, military forces tasked only with deterring attacks may end up protecting the previous perpetrator in the next round and thus merely joining the cycle of violence as parties to the conflict.
- Military forces can be used to *provide physical security for civilians and their means of survival*, e.g. through separation, interpositioning, regular patrols, and protecting cattle, which will reduce the perception of threat on both sides. Physical separation (walls, checkpoints) may be the only option during communal conflict in mixed, urban areas.
- At most, military forces may reduce the perception of threat by providing a coercive element to the *disarmament of militias or armed civilians* on both sides. If successful, this can prolong the cycles between attacks and thereby create a window of opportunity to address root causes (e.g. economic competition, social inequalities).

A force deployed to this scenario will need a dispersed configuration of forces to defend key locations or larger areas, and the ability to escalate force in order to preserve or achieve a balance of power between the parties. Situational awareness and rapid reaction capabilities will be critical in rural areas, as the threat to civilians only becomes imminent once an attack is underway.

PREDATORY VIOLENCE

e.g. the RUF (1991-2002), the LRA (1994-)

In situations where all civilians are under threat of random and predatory attacks, **offensive military operations may be the only way to protect them permanently**, as these perpetrators are likely to commit acts of brutality, abductions and killings as long as they are able to operate.

- Military forces can *quite easily deter attacks* through mere presence amongst civilians, as these perpetrators are likely to avoid military encounters when they only seek to plunder. However, they may simply choose to attack civilians in other, less defended locations.

- Military forces will most likely have to *coerce perpetrators to disarm and disband*, e.g. through a combination of strategic communication, show of force, and offensive operations. Inflicting only a few casualties may prompt desertions, as many will be opportunists or forced recruits.
- Military force may be required to *defeat the armed groups*, as it may be hard to coerce perpetrators whose lives depend on killing, abducting and plundering civilians. This would eliminate the threat altogether, and may be the only viable option if the rebels are dispersed, hard to find, and determined to fight.

A force deployed to this scenario will need capabilities to rapidly respond when threats become imminent, as well as offensive air mobility and firepower to pursue and defeat rebels if needed. Situational awareness and early warning systems will be particularly important in rural areas.

INSURGENCY

e.g. Taliban (2006-), al-Shabaab (2006-)

In situations where the perpetrators are insurgents fighting a government or other armed groups, the **role of military forces in physical protecting civilians will be limited** because the primary threat to most civilians is unlikely to be physical. The majority of deaths will typically be due to indiscriminate attacks against government targets, or as a result of retribution for suspected collaboration with the other side.

- At minimum, military forces can help contain the crisis by *supporting non-military efforts* aimed at buttressing long-term security in areas where the primary threat is not physical.
- Military forces will be most useful when *holding and defending areas where the government has dominant, but not complete control*, as these areas are most likely to be targeted indiscriminately by insurgents. In the most contested areas – where neither government nor insurgents have control – insurgents have fewer incentives to target civilians. Here, forces must be most careful to protect civilians from their own actions.
- Military forces are often used to expand government control in insurgent-held areas. However, any challenge to wrestle that control from insurgents is likely to increase the risks to civilians during fighting itself and from the threat of retribution in its aftermath. Thus, one should avoid clearing insurgent strongholds first, as the threat to civilians will be low from the start.

A force deployed to this scenario must be able to operate within population centres, at greater risk to own forces, and with strict rules of engagement to minimise civilian casualties resulting from their own actions. Measures proven to reduce civilian losses in these situations include civilian casualty tracking cells, harm mitigation officers, and restrictions on the use of close air-support.

Outside the scope of these scenarios are actors who conduct operations in violation of the law of armed conflict, but do not deliberately commit war crimes as part of their strategy (e.g. by using civilians as human shields, or killing them by accident). In response, the most that military forces can do is to reduce the risk of collateral damage during own operations. It is flawed to confront these actors in the name of physical protection (e.g. against warlords in Somalia in the 1990s), as this is only likely to do more harm by increasing the threat to civilians beyond the current level.

2.3 Phase 3: Operational estimate

The operational estimate is the third and most operationally oriented phase of a military planning process. A prerequisite is the receipt of a strategic planning directive, which initiates planning for one military response option. The purpose of this phase is to determine the operational problem that must be solved and identify key factors that will influence the achievement of objectives. This information helps planners develop suitable operational designs and the mission analysis briefing, which seeks to validate the assigned mission, operational objectives and operational framework in compliance with the force commander's initial intent.

Below follows guidance and advice on how to identify and address key operational-level factors that will influence the ability to protect civilians against different types of perpetrators. This is done by highlighting key aspects of operational factors (time, space, force, civilians) relating to protection of civilians, possible perpetrator Centres of Gravity (COGs), and likely perpetrator Courses of Action (COAs) against civilians as a basis for assessing the viability of own COAs to protect civilians in each scenario. Critical events that should be included during war-gaming are listed at the end. This will help planners develop operation designs that are more suited to protect civilians from perpetrators of violence, even in operations where this is not the primary objective.

2.3.1 Operational factors

Whenever protection of civilians is an important aspect, planners must always consider when (time), where (space), and from what/whom (force) that the threat to civilians will be greatest within the area of operations. Civilians and their coping strategies may be a factor to consider in themselves.

Key questions

- How imminent is the threat to civilians?
- Where is the threat to civilians most imminent?
- What military capabilities do perpetrators require to attack civilians in the ways they want?
- Who are the civilians, where are they, and where are they moving?

Four key questions regarding time, space, force and civilians are listed on the right. The role of information is treated as an integral aspect of each factor (including civilians) where relevant.

Time

With regard to the factor of time, the most important aspect for planners is to determine *how imminent the threat to civilians will be*. UN operations are usually mandated to protect civilians under 'imminent threat of physical violence', whilst the urgency of the threat is usually not specified in other operations (even though time may well be of the essence). The immediacy of threats to civilians will be determined by the type of threat they are under in different scenarios:

- The threat to civilians will be *imminent* in those scenarios where perpetrators are dependent on attacking civilians as quickly as possible to achieve their objectives (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING). These perpetrators tend to escalate the violence very quickly once a conflict has broken out, because gradual escalation may allow their victims to flee, mobilise resistance, or allow intervention to occur before they have achieved their objectives. The time frame

available may only be days or weeks. Even if violence is already underway, rapid action to protect civilians will still be needed to stop further killings or expulsions.

- The threat to civilians may *suddenly become imminent and then subside* in situations where the timing of attacks comes in response to certain conditions. Perpetrators may be driven to attack by the perceived loss of control over a population (REGIME CRACKDOWN, INSURGENCY), by the opportunity provided in an immediate post-conflict environment (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE), in retaliation for a previous attack (COMMUNAL CONFLICT), or by the lack of supplies (PREDATORY VIOLENCE). These actors do not pose an imminent threat in entire areas of operations, or at all times. Once the actors eventually do decide to attack, however, they will pose an ‘imminent’ threat to civilians in need of an immediate response.

Other possible aspects influencing ‘when’ civilians may be attacked are *seasonal or environmental changes* (e.g. rainy season preventing communities to launch attacks against distant neighbours, bad crops that may force rebel groups to attack civilians more often), and the local availability of *early warning systems* that enable information about imminent attacks to reach both victims and military forces in advance (e.g. through text messages).

Space

With regard to the factor of space, the most important aspect is *where in the crisis area the threat to civilians will be most imminent*. Planners should identify ‘protection hot spots’ (areas where civilians are most likely to be attacked). In all scenarios, the hot spots will be population centres (cities, towns, villages or neighbourhoods). However, some populated areas will be more exposed than others, depending on the criteria according to which perpetrators select their targets:

- Perpetrators who target *specific ethnic or sectarian groups* (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, COMMUNAL CONFLICT), will have to attack geographical locations where these people are found. The most likely hot spots in these scenarios will be minority enclaves inside perpetrator territory, corridors or pockets that link the perpetrator’s communal areas together, and in border areas close to their communal brethren.
- Perpetrators who target civilians *based on affiliation with certain actors* will target locations where the connection is strongest. This is likely to be areas where an actor’s control is being challenged (REGIME CRACKDOWN, INSURGENCY) or where past crimes were most frequent or severe (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE).
- Perpetrators who *target civilians more at random*, either to reap the immediate benefits (PREDATORY VIOLENCE) or simply to destabilise the security situation (INSURGENCY), will be relatively unlimited in where they attack civilians and thus harder to predict.

Other factors influencing ‘where’ civilians will be attacked in certain ways include the *geographical shape of the theatre*, which may exclude certain scenarios (e.g. an island cannot be completely ethnically cleansed without organising transport or killing all). Even though the crisis area as a whole may fall into one scenario, perpetrators may escalate violence in isolated areas of particular strategic importance, e.g. by expelling or exterminating certain groups of civilians

rather than suppressing them to minimise the potential for resistance. This will create *local scenarios*, e.g. Srebrenica (1995) was an act of GENOCIDE within an ETHNIC CLEANSING scenario in Bosnia.

Force

With regard to the factor of force, planners should not restrict their analysis to the perpetrator's military capabilities vis-à-vis other armed actors (including an intervening force), but also his military capabilities against civilians. The most important aspect will be to identify *which particular military units or weapons are responsible for the majority of violence against civilians*, as these are the ones that protectors will have to target for protective effect.

In scenarios where the perpetrator is a *state or state-sponsored*, the units mainly responsible for violence against civilians will be conventional or irregular forces coordinated from above:

- During GENOCIDE and ETHNIC CLEANSING, the units conducting the killing and cleansing operations are usually mobile and lightly armed *special units* or *irregular forces*, whilst conventional forces play a more supporting role in terms of area control, logistical support and reducing risks. The irregular units usually have autonomy to permit plausible deniability.
- During REGIME CRACKDOWNS, *conventional forces and heavy weaponry* will play the main role in suppressing both armed and unarmed resistance, due to the massive and indiscriminate firepower required to crush all opposition. In authoritarian regimes, the most well-equipped and best trained military units are often dedicated solely for the protection of the regime from internal threats (e.g. the Revolutionary Guard in Iran; the Khamis Brigade in Libya; the 4th Armoured Division in Syria). Here, *irregular forces* play a supporting role as particularly loyal troops, force multipliers, and to minimise risks for conventional forces in urban areas.

In scenarios where the main perpetrators are *organised armed groups*, the main killers of civilians tend to be the armed group's regular members, or particular types of tactics or weapons used:

- During POST-CONFLICT REVENGE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT and PREDATORY VIOLENCE, the primary violators are individuals or members of organised armed groups who kill, plunder, destroy, brutalise or abduct civilians or civilian possessions.
- During INSURGENCY, the principal causes of civilian death may be the manner in which insurgents operate (civilians as human shields, firing into crowds), or the indiscriminate types of weapons used (e.g. mortar fire, improvised explosive devices, or suicide attacks).

Whether there are *armed civilians* or *armed groups fighting on their behalf* may make it harder for perpetrators to succeed and provide possible 'partners in protection', but the traditional force ratio of 3:1 between attackers and defenders generally does not apply in these situations. The perpetrator's *type of leadership* (e.g. the degree of support from the armed forces and previous record of violence against civilians) and existing *ethnic or sectarian fault lines* within military ranks are also likely to influence their willingness to target civilians.

Control over popular means of communication (e.g. state TV, radio or internet) will be primary enablers for perpetrators to *mobilise support for violence*, e.g. spreading hate messages or threatening statements online. The same means of communication may also, however, be exploited by intervening forces to *encourage defection* amongst perpetrators, *counter radicalisation* amongst moderates, and *reduce the perception of insecurity* in situations where fear itself is a key driver of violence (COMMUNAL CONFLICTS).

Civilians

Civilian may be considered as a factor in themselves. Civilians usually follow one of three coping strategies during armed conflict. They flee, resist, or co-exist with the perpetrators. Fleeing is most common, but the causes of flight will vary and should be taken into account:

- In scenarios where civilians are primary targets – e.g. targeted on basis of group identity (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, COMMUNAL CONFLICT), real or perceived affiliation with a previous perpetrator (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE), or just because they are easy targets (PREDATORY VIOLENCE) – civilians are likely to flee the presence of the particular perpetrators. Even rumours of a perpetrator’s presence may prompt many to flee.
- In scenarios where specific groups of civilians are less targeted (REGIME CRACKDOWN, INSURGENCY), but where the main targets for both sides are enemy combatants, civilians primarily flee the presence of fighting rather than the presence of one or the other actor.

A key aspect for planners is to understand *where civilians are fleeing to*. Civilians often have very context-specific coping strategies, based on the alternatives available. In general, most people on the run tend to flee towards cities or towns, which leads to the multiplication of the original populations. Civilians are also likely to expect military forces to protect them by virtue of their presence, which often attracts large numbers of internally displaced around military bases. Alternatively, civilians may disperse into the bush, which is common in certain parts of Africa.

The spread of information technology has made it *easier for victims themselves to document war crimes* being committed on the ground, which makes it harder for perpetrators to conceal their actions and less necessary for interveners to prove that violence is actually taking place. The strategic communication campaign by NATO during Kosovo (1999) was simply not necessary in Libya (2011). In most crises today, there is rarely a lack of information on civilians under threat.

A potential danger is that the rapid dissemination of information may cause violence to spread more quickly, as conflict in one area may trigger conflicts along similar ethnic, sectarian or tribal lines elsewhere (e.g. how COMMUNAL CONFLICT broke out in numerous locations within days during the crisis in South Sudan in late 2013). The result may be a faster, more observable escalation of violence against civilians in future conflicts, which may require responses from military forces in missions that are not explicitly mandated to protect civilians in the first place.

On the following page, Table 2.2 lists examples of protection-related aspects that may be relevant during a factor analysis, with deductions and conclusions that may be drawn from them.

Factor (a fact with implications)	Deduction (what is the significance?)	Conclusion (what can be done?)
Time – A specific ethnic group of civilians is likely to be targeted for extermination or expulsion within days or weeks (GENOCIDE)	Failure to protect civilians under threat is likely to cause a massive loss of life, as well as jeopardise the legitimacy of the entire operation and organisation	Unlike traditional planning where a comfortable threshold of capabilities must be assembled in advance, ‘speed’ must be emphasised over ‘mass’
Time – Civilians associated with former perpetrators will be targeted as the regime falls (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE)	Attacks must be prevented or stopped when the threat becomes imminent	‘Mass’ and ‘speed’ must be balanced more evenly, with an emphasis on ability to respond rapidly as threats suddenly arise
Time – Civilians are not under imminent threat of violence anywhere (INSURGENCY)	Hasty military operations against insurgents are likely to be counterproductive	‘Mass’ is far more important than ‘speed’ in terms of protecting the population
Space – Perpetrators need to expel civilians in locations X, Y and Z (ETHNIC CLEANSING)	Protection of civilians in X, Y and Z is urgently required	These key locations should be prioritised above others
Space – A regime is launching offensives into rebel-controlled areas (REGIME CRACKDOWN)	Civilians associated with the rebels in these areas are in most need of protection	Insurgent strongholds are more important to protect than ethnic enclaves
Space – Civilians are mostly targeted at random (PREDATORY VIOLENCE)	Predicting where civilians are under imminent threat will be next to impossible	Concentrating forces in some locations will not necessarily protect more civilians
Force – The primary perpetrators of violence are paramilitaries operating in the area (ETHNIC CLEANSING)	Targeting conventional forces will have little protection-effect	Operations must be designed to deny paramilitary forces freedom of movement rather than destroy conventional units
Force – IEDs represent the main cause of death in the area of operations (INSURGENCY)	Countering the threat from IEDs will be the single most effective way to reduce civilian casualties	To protect, operations should target IED factories rather than the insurgents themselves
Civilians – Civilians of rival ethnicities are congregating outside military bases	There is a danger of either group being attacked if COMMUNAL CONFLICT breaks out in the area	It may be necessary to separate these groups to reduce perception of threat from both sides
Civilians – Civilians have abandoned villages X, Y and Z	There are no civilians in these areas to protect	There is no point in maintaining forces in these locations, unless civilians are expected to return

Table 2.2 Examples of operational factors that may impact the protection of civilians

2.3.2 Centres of Gravity (COGs)

Centre of Gravity (COG) is a commonly used tool to identify the strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities of relevant actors. COGs are primary sources of actors' moral or physical strength, power and resistance.¹³ A distinction is often made between strategic COGs, which represent the primary strength of an actor to achieve his strategic objective (e.g. ethnic nationalism, the power of a regime, will of the people), and operational COGs, which are normally a dominant capability that allows him to achieve his operational objectives (often specific armed forces).

Failure to protect civilians will always represent a vulnerability to one's own COG, as it may threaten the legitimacy of an operation or lead to withdrawal of host-nation consent. Opposing forces, however, are usually assessed in terms of their strength or capabilities vis-à-vis own or allied forces. If protecting civilians from a certain actor is an objective, planners must also assess that actor's ability to attack civilians. Failure to do so may lead to operational designs that defeats an enemy successfully, but fails to protect civilians in the process. E.g. NATO's 78-day bombing of Serbian forces in 1999 eventually coerced Milosevic back to the negotiating table, but at the same time failed to stop paramilitary units cleansing the vast majority of Albanians from Kosovo.

Planners should – in addition to the regular analysis of an actor's strengths or weaknesses – also consider possible capabilities, requirements and vulnerabilities in terms of attacking civilians:

- **Critical Capabilities (CCs).** Depending on a perpetrator's strategic rationale, he will require the capability to attack civilians in certain ways that help achieve his overall objectives, e.g. the ability to kill civilians in large numbers in order to exterminate them.
- **Critical Requirements (CRs).** Attacking civilians will also necessitate certain requirements, which may or may not be the same as those needed to target other armed actors. The more strategically dependent a perpetrator is on targeting civilians, the more of his CRs will be directly linked to his ability to do so. Which requirements are critical to attack civilians?
- **Critical Vulnerabilities (CVs).** Some of the CRs, which a perpetrator is critically dependent on to attack civilians purposefully, may also be influenced, denied, degraded or destroyed. How may these vulnerabilities be exploited to protect civilians?
- **Centres of Gravity (COGs).** Only in the most violent scenarios is an armed actor's centre of gravity likely to be directly linked to violence against civilians. In these cases, the strategic COG is likely to be the main source of willingness to target civilians, whilst the operational COG is the actor's dominant capability to inflict that violence. To permanently remove the threat to civilians, both will have to be influenced. Against perpetrators for whom violence is only instrumental, the COGs may be entirely unrelated to the violence against civilians. Yet, the perpetrators will still need certain requirements that can be degraded by outsiders.

Table 2.3 describes typical perpetrator CCs, CRs, CVs and possible COGs in different scenarios.

¹³ This definition is based on the work of Joe Strange, e.g. see Strange, Joe & Iron, Richard (2004), 'Center of Gravity: What Clausewitz Really Meant', *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 35, pp. 20-27.

Aims. All COG-analyses begin with an assessment of the actor's aims, which should include how civilian targeting may be a part of an actor's overall objective. All motivations for targeting civilians will range somewhere between being entirely *intrinsic* to an actor's objective (GENOCIDE), or simply *a means to a different end* (INSURGENCY). The distinct rationales in each scenario provide a useful starting point.

Centres of Gravity (COGs). Against perpetrators for whom violence against civilians is intrinsic to their overall objectives, the strategic COG is likely to be the main source of willingness to target civilians, e.g.:

- A racial ideology or an extreme form of nationalism (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING).
- An authoritarian leadership determined to save themselves at all costs (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- A greedy rebel leadership (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).

The operational COGs will typically be:

- Militias or paramilitary forces executing the violence on the ground (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- The most loyal armed forces dedicated to protecting the regime (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Access to valuable resources or financial, often external, backing (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).

Critical Vulnerabilities (CVs). Critical requirements that can be influenced and thereby reduce the ability of perpetrators to attack civilians in different scenarios:

- Civilians in 'hot spots' can be defended (perhaps the most effective short-term measure in all scenarios).
- Perpetrator leaderships can be influenced or physically targeted to degrade coordination of violence (most likely to work in GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Factions within ruling elite or between ranks concerned about own survival can be manipulated (especially REGIME CRACKDOWN, but also PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- Conventional forces most willing to target civilians can be destroyed (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Basic military functions such as mobility, C2, logistics, facilities and supply lines can be targeted to

Critical Capabilities (CCs). Capabilities that are likely to be *critical* for perpetrators in different scenarios:

- To conduct large-scale massacres at several locations simultaneously (GENOCIDE).
- To conduct demonstrative violence that prompts certain groups to flee (ETHNIC CLEANSING).
- To concentrate significant firepower against population centres (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- To conceal atrocities (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- To generate a level of popular support or tolerance for violence (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING).
- To spread fear amongst civilians at large (INSURGENCY).
- To forcibly recruit civilians as soldiers, servants or transporters (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- To control resource-rich areas for illicit exploitation (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- To extract resources from a civilian population (PREDATORY VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY).

Critical Requirements (CRs). Requirements that are likely to be *critical* for perpetrators to attack civilians in different scenarios:

- Top-down planning and coordination of violence by political and/or military leaders (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Intelligence on the location of intended targets (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, POST-CONFLICT REVENGE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Paramilitaries, militias or criminals that execute the violence (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING).
- Access to sufficient small arms to kill civilians in large numbers (GENOCIDE, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Popular support from family, tribal, religious or ethnic loyalties (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Very loyal forces (REGIME CRACKDOWN).

- undermine ability to attack (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Arms depots can be secured and access to weapons needed reduced (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Chaos that facilitates freedom for score-settling can be stabilised (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE).
- Early warning systems can detect and deter attacks on civilians (especially in rural COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Perception of threat among ethnic groups can be reduced through separation (COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Commitment to continue fighting likely to be easily limited if confronted (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- External support can be cut (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- Resource-rich areas can be seized (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- Military bases from which attacks are launched can be identified and targeted (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- Victims can be armed to protect themselves (short-term, dangerous measure possible in all scenarios).
- The effectiveness of the most deadly tactics can be reduced, e.g. destroying IED-factories (INSURGENCY).
- Sufficient manpower and highly destructive weapons to clear large area (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Basic military functions, such as mobility, C2, logistics, facilities and conventional combat power (REGIME CRACKDOWN).
- Access to indiscriminate, explosive weapons (INSURGENCY).
- Freedom of movement to attack larger populated areas (GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING, REGIME CRACKDOWN, COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Freedom of movement to select time and place of smaller attacks (PREDATORY VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY).
- Freedom of movement to target individuals (POST-CONFLICT REVENGE).
- Outside monetary, armed and political support, or revenue from exportation of valuable resources to continue activities (PREDATORY VIOLENCE).
- Population as source of recruits, labour, extortion, intelligence, finances, operational support (PREDATORY VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY).

Conclusions. Some general observations that can be drawn from the above:

- Denying perpetrators of GENOCIDE access to sufficient deadly weapons is likely to reduce their ability to kill *en masse*, whilst military superiority to conduct demonstrative violence is sufficient in ETHNIC CLEANSING.
- Targeting conventional military targets and functions are likely to have greater effect in REGIME CRACKDOWN-cases than ETHNIC CLEANSING and GENOCIDE, because the perpetrators are more dependent on regular forces to conduct violence. By contrast, it is unlikely to have much effect on the threat to civilians in other scenarios.
- Denying the opportunity for score-settling is perhaps the only vulnerability that can be exploited in POST-CONFLICT REVENGE, e.g. by limiting freedom of movement around likely targets when order is not easily restored.
- There are many different viable options to reduce violence against civilians during PREDATORY VIOLENCE.
- Denying freedom of movement is the only critical requirement that all perpetrators will be dependent on.

Table 2.3 Examples of perpetrator COGs, capabilities, requirements and vulnerabilities

From a protection-perspective, it may also be useful to conduct COG-analysis for the **civilians** at risk, whose centre of gravity is likely to be their ability to survive and must be supported. Critical capabilities may be the ability to flee, to co-exist with perpetrators, or to resist – with subsequent requirements and vulnerabilities, depending on their particular coping strategy. The usefulness of COG will be limited when there is no dedicated enemy (for impartial actors like the UN), or if militarily defeating an actor is not the best way to protect civilians. In these cases, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)-analyses may be more suitable.

2.3.3 Courses of Action (COAs)

A key step of the operational estimate is to determine how best to carry out operations that will accomplish the mission effectively. This is done by developing alternative Courses of Action (COAs), which are analysed and compared on basis of their viability and risks. It begins with an evaluation of each proposed COA against the most likely and most dangerous opposing COA. This may lead to a refinement of initial COAs proposed at an earlier stage.

If protection of civilians is important, planners must – in addition to opposing COAs against own or allied forces – also consider possible **opposing COAs against civilians**.

This section describes the most likely and most dangerous perpetrator COAs against civilians in each scenario, which can be used to help determine how best to carry out operations that will protect civilians in the process.

Key questions

Regarding opposing COAs

- What is the most likely COA *against civilians*?
- What is the most dangerous COA *against civilians*?
- How may the perpetrator react to outside interference *against civilians*?

Regarding own COAs

- Which COAs may *reduce* the threat to civilians?
- Which COAs may *increase* the threat to civilians?
- What are the *risks to own forces* of seeking to protect?

This includes advice on who is important to protect early on, which operational or tactical actions are likely to work in the short or long term, what constitutes ‘high-value targets’ from a protection-perspective, and possible actions that may increase rather than decrease the threat to civilians. Awareness of both the limitations and potential of various military actions will also help planners identify how protection of civilians may be balanced against other objectives, such as defeating insurgents.

GENOCIDE

e.g. Halabja (1988), Rwanda (1994), Srebrenica (1995)

In this scenario, the **perpetrator’s most likely COA** will be to kill members of the targeted group as quickly as possible, wherever they can be found. Killing everyone is both the most likely *and* the most dangerous COA, and may take precedence over fighting other armed actors in the area.

- Perpetrators tend to *eliminate moderates and victim leaders* first, before *amassing potential victims* in locations where they can be killed in large numbers, e.g. through mass arrests, by spreading rumours that make members of the targeted group amass amongst their own, or by encircling or entrapping victims to prevent their escape (e.g. at public buildings, roadblocks).
- Once the extermination phase is underway, *mass killings will escalate very quickly and simultaneously* in areas of high victim concentration. Alternatively, deportation operations or labour camps may be used to make people fall away through natural decline in inhospitable terrain or forced work at construction sites where chances of survival are intentionally minimal. Mass-murder will usually persist until all victims have either died or fled.
- In response to outside intervention, perpetrators are likely to *intensify violence* against civilians, as this will directly threaten their strategic objectives.

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- *Protecting moderates and leaders of the victim group* early on is likely to limit violence and enhance civilian coping strategies, but will only have real effect before the genocide begins.
- *Defending locations* where victims are concentrated (stadiums, public, religious buildings) is likely to save many lives, but will only shift the threat elsewhere. Providing larger *safe zones/areas* may also work if victims are concentrated in certain geographical areas. If victims are dispersed they will be harder to protect, but also harder for perpetrators to kill.
- A lasting reduction in threat can only be expected by *confronting the mobile and often lightly armed mobs, militias or paramilitaries* that execute the violence. Targeting their leaders will not necessarily stop these units, as they may continue to operate once prepared and activated.
- Securing arms depots, disrupting communication between units, and restricting freedom of movement in victim areas will *degrade their ability to kill in large numbers*. Targeting conventional units and infrastructure will have limited effect, as these are more facilitators.
- Opposition to intervening forces will be relatively low, perhaps only to threaten or test their resolve.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

e.g. Bosnia (1992-95), Kosovo (1999), Kyrgyzstan (2010)

In this scenario, the **most likely perpetrator COA** will be to gradually expel civilians from ethnically heterogeneous areas in order to create an ethnically pure territory. The most dangerous COA will be acts of GENOCIDE, typically in strategically important areas (e.g. Srebrenica, 1995), or that GENOCIDE becomes the only viable final solution for the entire theatre of operations.

- Perpetrators will first *seize control over areas to be cleared*, by political or military means. Most violence will occur in areas where neither side is in majority, or where the victims are in clear majority (especially in enclaves). Elsewhere, less violent persecution is most likely.
- Cleansing operations are more often than not conducted by irregular forces, invited or ordered into these areas. Tactics will be aimed at *making people flee* (occasional massacres, torture, rape), accompanied by the destruction of homes and cultural buildings to prevent their return.
- Conventional forces may be used to establish military area control (e.g. sieges, checkpoints), but irregulars can still operate alone at only slightly greater risk. Larger operations will be *designed to force civilians to flee in certain directions*, e.g. by surrounding only three sides.
- Perpetrators are likely to oppose *humanitarian access* to areas that they want to depopulate.
- In response to outside interference, perpetrators are likely to *escalate violence against civilians* in order to irreversibly cleanse areas before they can be stopped.

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- Providing *safe passage* for civilians to escape will save some lives, but will also help the perpetrator's cause. Forces may also protect safe sites, areas or zones for those displaced inside areas under attack – but this will only work temporarily and if defended robustly.
- *Shows of force and limited offensives* will only protect civilians if they also threaten the actor's ability to continue ethnic cleansing. Targeting *conventional forces* (such as tanks, artillery) may be useful when used to besiege population centres, but will have little effect in stopping clearing operations conducted by irregular units who can operate less visibly.

- *Degrading the freedom of movement for paramilitary units* in areas of victim concentration will have most protective effect. *Targeting the responsible leaderships* can have a coercive effect on their calculus surrounding ethnic cleansing as the preferred strategy, but may have limited effect if they are unable to control irregular units. By contrast, creating a desperate situation may force perpetrators to escalate into GENOCIDE in strategically important areas.
- Risks to intervening forces will be limited (e.g. hostage taking, occasional shelling, threats), as these actors are primarily at war with an ethnic group, not external forces.

REGIME CRACKDOWN

e.g. Darfur (2003-), Libya (2011), Syria (2011-)

In this scenario, the **most likely perpetrator COA** will be to crush all resistance, especially where the threat to the regime is perceived to be greatest, before an uprising spreads or to establish control immediately following the seizure of power. The most dangerous COA will be that perpetrators escalate to acts of GENOCIDE or ETHNIC CLEANSING, which is most likely if the opposition is associated with a certain ethnic group or the regime sees no other way of silencing the opposition than to kill every potential supporter of the opposition.

- Those targeted will first be *opposition leaders*, then *rank-and-file supporters* of the opposition, and eventually the *politically uninvolved population* – as ‘potential’ supporters.
- *Most violence* will occur in areas where opposition is greatest. If it is an armed rebellion, civilians will also suffer during raids, sieges and large-scale destruction of opposition-held areas.
- Unlike previous scenarios, violence will escalate *gradually in accordance with the perceived threat to regime survival* – both in terms of methods employed (arrests, torture, massacre, scorched earth) and weapons used (snipers, raids, air attacks, missiles, WMDs).
- Regimes tend to *deny humanitarian access* to besieged areas, as driving both the population and insurgents out of resistance stronghold may be a key element of the strategy

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- *Targeting traditional military targets* like C2-nodes, infrastructure and heavy weapons is likely to reduce the threat to civilians, because conventional forces will be responsible for the majority of violence in which civilians die. The *most loyal regular units* will be particularly valuable targets, as these are most able and willing to attack civilians directly.
- Coercive force (e.g. punitive air strikes, gradually escalating bombing) is unlikely to work, without posing a genuine threat to regime survival or its ability to suppress the opposition.
- *Dislodging the regime from power* (e.g. through diplomacy, supporting rebels, militarily) may be required to permanently remove the threat to civilians, as few regimes have voluntarily conceded power and will be entirely reliant on violence against civilians to save themselves.
- Operations will involve *higher risks than in most other scenarios*, both due to the nature of forces involved and because any threat to their survival is likely to prompt a greater willingness to fight. It is not given that the best units will be redirected to fight an intervener, as these are often most suited to fight the domestic opposition, with regular forces better used against external threats. These regimes are also likely to raise the costs of any interference by putting civilians at risk (e.g. as human shields both against insurgents and intervening forces).

In this scenario, the **most likely COA** for individuals and mobs out to settle personal scores will be to attack when opportunities arise. The most dangerous COA will be that perpetrators completely destroy any prospects of continued presence for the victims, or that other more organised groups succeed with escalating violence into one of the other, more strategic scenarios.

- Most acts of *violence will be criminal in nature* (murder, arson, kidnapping) aimed at individuals associated with former perpetrators. This violence will probably continue for months and then subside once revenge has been taken and the motivation disappears.
- Acts of violence will also usually be *proportionate to the original crime* ('an eye for an eye') and not intended to send a message to others beyond the immediate victim (kept secret).
- Most attacks will occur *in areas where past crimes were gravest*. If a certain group of people is associated with former perpetrators, that group is likely to be disproportionately targeted.

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- *Pre-emptively targeting* these particular actors will be next to impossible.
- Protection will require *physical presence amongst prospective victims* until the situation has been stabilised (e.g. at 'safe sites', housing complexes, villages, religious buildings).
- Sporadic score-settling can be minimised by facilitating *orderly return of returning refugees*.
- In general, protection will require more *policing* than military action. A permanent reduction in threat will only occur when revenge has been settled or order restored.
- *Risks to own forces will be limited*. Excessive emphasis on force protection is likely to limit the ability to protect civilians, which requires a more dispersed presence. Main threats may come from other actors (e.g. criminals) or the environment itself (e.g. landmines, pollution).

In this scenario, the **most likely COA for both communities** will be to attack in response to a previous act of violence. Communities are unlikely to possess the means to escalate violence (e.g. GENOCIDE, ETHNIC CLEANSING), but an attempt to do so will represent the most dangerous COA.

- In rural, tribal societies, the most deadly tactics will be *raids against enemy villages*. Killing or abducting women and children, plundering wealth, food and livestock, destroying villages, fields and means of production are very common and have a particularly destructive effect.
- In mixed societies, *explosive attacks in areas where members of that community congregate* (markets, churches) are likely to be very deadly. This may lead to a gradual homogenization of the populations in these areas, driven by fear of retaliation and outright threats.
- In reaction to outside involvement, communities may simply *postpone the next cycle of retaliation* until success is more likely, e.g. after the departure of an outside force.

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- Providing *safe passage* out of the area may be a viable, short-term alternative. Tribal communities are unlikely to occupy areas they attack, meaning that the threat will subside.

However, there might not be any village to return to. *Defending population centres* will save those who seek refuge, but those outside the perimeter are equally likely to be attacked.

- Pre-emptive deployments can *deter or prevent militias from reaching their targets*. This can work if communities are separated, but will require situational awareness and mobility. In mixed areas, *physical separation* may be the only viable option until both sides are disarmed.
- *Risks to own forces will be limited*, since communities generally have limited military capabilities and have little interest in fighting an intervening force. International forces may be more trusted than local forces to conduct disarmament, since the latter may be associated with a particular community. However, if perceived as biased or threatening their survival, forces will be opposed.

PREDATORY VIOLENCE

e.g. the RUF (1991-2002), the LRA (1994-)

In this scenario, the **most likely perpetrator COA** will be to attack a civilian population at large, normally in areas where resistance is minimal, at times of their choosing or when supplies are running low. The most dangerous COA in this scenario will be that perpetrators in periods escalate into mass killings or widespread destruction, either to punish the population for perceived collaboration with the enemy or out of desperation.

- Attacks will be *aimed at civilians* rather than armed forces, as it is more profitable and less risky. Women and children are especially vulnerable and ‘easy’ targets. Many will be abducted as transporters, soldiers, or sex slaves. Humanitarian actors are also likely targets.
- Any resistance is likely to be met with *severe brutality* (e.g. mutilation, amputation, torture).
- Larger operations will be aimed at securing *control over resources* rather than the population.
- In reaction to outside intervention, these perpetrators will *avoid pitched battles or encounters*, but may escalate violence against civilians as punishment or due to fewer supplies.

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- *Military presence is likely to deter attacks* (e.g. patrolling rivers where women wash clothes, on their way to collect water, or in crops), but rebels can largely choose the time and place of their attacks, simply by moving on to the next undefended village if resistance is expected.
- A permanent reduction of threat is likely to require *offensive operations* that coerce rebels to disarm and demobilise or defeating them altogether. Here, *traditional counterinsurgency tactics* (e.g. interdiction campaigns to cut external supplies, gradual spread of government control, and framework patrols to neutralise insurgents) will also be useful from a protection-perspective – as the very presence of these actors poses a continued threat to civilians.
- *Strategic communication* making fighters defect can have a powerful protective effect.
- Vulnerabilities that can be exploited include *cutting supply lines from external sponsors* or *expelling the rebels from resource-rich areas* upon which they depend, as these perpetrators will threaten civilians as long as they are able to operate and offer rewards to their members.
- The expected effect of *targeting the rebel leadership* is highly context-specific. In the past, it has led to complete surrender, retribution against the civilian population, or had little effect at all. However, failed attempts to capture or kill these groups are likely to backfire against the civilian population rather than own forces.

In this scenario, the **most likely COA** will be that insurgents target civilians for purposes of population control to gain supplies and information in their own areas, whilst attacking civilians more indiscriminately to destabilise enemy-held areas. The most dangerous COA will be that they abandon their limitations on violence (resorting to PREDATORY VIOLENCE), or rely on violence alone to maintain control or impose a certain regime on civilians (REGIME CRACKDOWN).

- Civilians will be attacked *selectively* to maintain control and deter cooperation with the enemy (abduction, targeted killings), and *indiscriminately* during attacks on government targets (suicide attacks, IEDs and complex attacks). Large-scale indiscriminate attacks are most likely to occur in areas where rivals are in dominant, but not complete control.
- Deliberate targeting of civilians is least likely in areas where no one is in control. However, civilians are often killed by crossfire, as human shields, or explosive weapons (e.g. mortars).

When **assessing own COAs** in this scenario, planners should consider that:

- Military operations should primarily focus on *protecting populated areas* from indiscriminate violence, which is likely to be the main cause of death in government-held areas.
- In insurgent-held areas, *the principal threat is retribution against civilians for perceived collaboration*. Thus, killing local leaders, temporary military presences and provoking fire-fights to flush out and eliminate insurgents are likely to increase rather than decrease the threat to civilians. Planners should also consider the risks of *retribution against civilians by host-nation government forces* that the intervening force may be there to support.
- From a protection-perspective, the best course of action is to *fight insurgents only when necessary and confronted* rather than actively seek battles with insurgents (e.g. the Dutch approach in Afghanistan). One way of reconciling protection with defeating insurgents is to focus first on areas already contested by insurgents (where insurgents have greater incentives to target civilians) instead of going after insurgent strongholds. Doing so will only raise the threat of retaliation and indiscriminate attacks beyond the status quo.
- Insurgent groups are *likely to oppose any intervening force* that support government or rival forces. Large, complex attacks against intervening forces are possible.

2.3.4 War-gaming

War-gaming is often used to assess the potential of one's own COA against the different opposing COAs (at minimum, the 'most likely' and 'most dangerous' enemy COA). The purpose is to identify and correct possible deficiencies – and to anticipate possible significant events. Critical events that planners should consider to avoid critical 'protection failures' include:

- The amassing of civilians outside camps or bases (highly likely in all scenarios, except INSURGENCY), or whole communities that flee in sudden flows and massive numbers in anticipation or resulting from physical attacks (especially during COMMUNAL CONFLICT).
- Escalation into a more violent scenario in certain areas or in the operational theatre as a whole (based on the most dangerous perpetrator COA against civilians).
- Finally, planners should assess the likely outcome of taking no action at all.

3 Operations assessment

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance and advice on **how protection of civilians can be assessed** in the context of a military operation. Operations assessment is ‘the activity that enables the measurement of progress and results of operations in a military context, and the subsequent development of conclusions and recommendations that support decision making’.¹⁴ This requires both an understanding of what constitutes progress and how it can be measured.

If protection of civilians is an objective or a potential risk to the mission, the degree to which civilians are being protected must be measured. This section explains how protection of civilians can be monitored, and what may be relevant measures of effectiveness (MOEs). It is most useful for military staffs involved in the planning, execution or assessment of operations. In particular, the intended audiences are the Joint Assessment Working Group (JAWG) at the operational level in NATO or the equivalent in UN missions, regional organisations, or national headquarters.

3.1 Measuring protection of civilians

Protection of civilians has traditionally been understood as adhering to the law of armed conflict and reducing the number of civilian casualties caused by own forces. In recent years, significant progress has been made to limit collateral damage, e.g. through precision-guided munitions, tracking civilian casualties, and restricting the use of close air-support. However, the main threat to civilians comes from perpetrators who deliberately attack them. Thus, excessive focus on how to avoid killings civilians oneself may undermine efforts to protect against the biggest threats to civilians – and distort the assessment of success (see the example of Afghanistan below).

To be relevant, assessment of protection of civilians must be conducted more broadly. There are at least six criteria that can be used to measure the degree to which civilians are being protected:¹⁵

- 1) **Access to humanitarian assistance**, which does not represent a physical threat to civilians, but is essential to survive and may be denied by perpetrators through force (e.g. sieges, destroying crops, raiding livestock, using starvation as a weapon of war);
- 2) **Causality figures** in terms of killed, displaced or harmed in other ways (e.g. arrested, abducted, tortured), which tracks the level and type of violence civilians are subjected to;
- 3) **Civilian behaviour** in terms of whether civilians coexist, flee, or fight the perpetrators;
- 4) **Perception of security**, which can be measured through surveys and may be a better indicator of how protected civilians feel, regardless of the number of attacks occurring;
- 5) **Shifts in territorial control**, which is often a significant indicator of the frequency with which civilians are targeted for purposes of population control, retribution, or otherwise;
- 6) **Perpetrator capabilities**, which measures factors directly affecting the actual or possible use of violence against civilians, such as the number of airplanes available to bomb civilian centres or irregular forces that can be used to ethnically cleanse.

¹⁴ NATO Operations Assessment Handbook (NOAH), v.2.0, 15 December 2012, p. 2-1.

¹⁵ Våge, Anders Skeibrok (forthcoming 2014), ‘Operations assessment for the protection of civilians’, *FFI-rapport 2014/00966* (Kjeller: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment).

Protection of civilians in Afghanistan – success or not?

From 2009, protecting the population became a top priority for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. However, both the measures taken to protect civilians since – such as the Civilian Casualty (CIVCAS) Tracking Cell, tactical directives restricting the use of close air-support, night raids and hazardous driving – and the measurements of progress reflect a failure to understand the real nature of the threat facing civilians.

On the one hand, ISAF and Afghan pro-government forces successfully reduced the number of civilian casualties caused by own actions from 41% in 2007 to 17% in 2011, which has left anti-government forces (primarily the Taliban) responsible for the vast majority of deaths. Yet, although these developments have frequently been cited by ISAF as successful protection, the total number of civilians killed *doubled* in the same period (from 1,523 to 3,021 in 2011). Since then, the number of civilian deaths has remained steady at around 3,000, which means that civilians are nonetheless at more risk today than in 2007 – regardless of the fact that the proportion of civilian casualties caused by pro-government forces has remained low (see Table 3.1).

Year	Pro-gov.	Anti-gov.	Total
2007	41 %	46 %	1,523
2008	39 %	55 %	2,118
2009	25 %	67 %	2,412
2010	15 %	75 %	2,790
2011	17 %	77 %	3,021
2012	11 %	80 %	2,768
2013	11 %	78 %	2,959

Table 3.1 Civilian deaths in Afghanistan¹⁶

This is because the biggest threat to civilians in Afghanistan does not come from pro-government forces, but insurgents who deliberately target them. The problem for counterinsurgents in INSURGENCIES such as Afghanistan, where both parties are fighting for control over the population, is that people see the presence of violence rather than the presence of a particular actor as the principal source of insecurity. In Afghanistan, 45% claim that insecurity (including attacks, violence and terrorism) is the primary reason for pessimism – whilst only 7% blame the presence of the Taliban.¹⁷ This becomes a strategic issue when studies show that people who fear for their lives tend to support whoever can provide a basic form of security, regardless of ideological conviction.¹⁸ Despite the fact that insurgents are responsible for the vast majority of casualties, twice as many Afghans feel victimized by foreign force actions (8 %) than militant/insurgents actions (4 %).¹⁹

This illustrates how military operations in INSURGENCIES face a problem when they fail to protect civilians in general – regardless of *who* actually kills them. This needs to be reflected in the measures taken to increase protection and how progress is assessed. Understanding the threat posed by perpetrators holds the key to identifying relevant MOEs for the protection of civilians.

¹⁶ These numbers are based on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)'s annual reports from 2009 and 2012, available at <http://unama.unmissions.org>. Figures from 2011 to 2013 are from the latest report published in 2014, where the figures for preceding years are minimally adjusted upwards.

¹⁷ Asia Foundation's 2011-survey, p. 21. Their annual surveys are available at <http://asiafoundation.org>.

¹⁸ See Kalyvas, S. (2006), *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

¹⁹ Asia Foundation's 2011-survey, pp. 29-31.

3.2 Effects and Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs)

When conducted properly, operations assessment is an invaluable tool for military commanders to measure operational progress and adjust the planning process to reflect developments on the ground. The fundamental purpose of operations assessment is to provide practical input to the decision-makers on the progress of, or need for adjustments to, the current plan of operations. Doing so requires an understanding of what is relevant to measure in which situations, especially in protecting civilians.

Effects are sometimes used by military planners to bridge the gap between objectives and actions, by describing what changes are required to achieve one's objectives, including the capabilities, behaviour or opinions of actors within the operations environment. Effects can be both desired and undesired. Desired effects are 'those effects that have a positive impact on the achievement of objectives', whilst undesired effects are 'those effects that disrupt or jeopardize the achievement of objectives'.²⁰

The criterion for success in protecting civilians is that the current threat to civilians is reduced, without causing more harm than otherwise would have occurred. The desired effect will therefore always be a reduction in the current level of threat, whilst undesired effects will be that the threat is replaced by a different, perhaps more serious one, or that the use of force harms more civilians than otherwise would have suffered. A measure of effectiveness (MOE) is a metric used to measure a current system state and determine whether or not results are being achieved. This requires prior knowledge of what is likely to happen to civilians in different situations. Relevant MOEs can be identified on basis of the qualitative and quantitative descriptions of the expected civilian suffering when protection fails in different scenarios.

Based on the expected outcomes in each scenario, Table 3.2 lists the **desired and undesired effects** that will be most relevant to measure protection of civilians in each of the scenarios – as well as **examples of MOEs**, based on the broader criteria for assessing protection listed above. All of these effects and MOEs will naturally have to be adjusted to the context of a particular conflict, but they provide a starting point for understanding which aspects are relevant to measure and 'how'.

²⁰ See COPD (2013), pp. 1-11–1-12.

Scenarios	Expected outcome	Desired/undesired effects	Examples of relevant MOEs
GENOCIDE	Majority of targeted civilians killed (50+%), in relatively short time	The threat of extermination must be reduced, but not be replaced by increased threat of expulsion	Number of large massacres (500+) Deaths reported per week Number of weapons easily accessible Popular tolerance for violence
ETHNIC CLEANSING	Only a few per cent killed, but vast majority of victims expelled (~90%); destruction of victim homes and cultural buildings	The threat of expulsion and destruction of property must be reduced, but not replaced by extermination instead	Number of refugees or IDPs from a specific ethnic group Number of ethnic villages destroyed Number of reported paramilitary units operating in victim areas
REGIME CRACKDOWN	Mostly combatant deaths, gradual increase in civilian deaths due to heavy weapons and in accordance with intensity of fighting, large-scale displacement, widespread destruction of population centres	The threat of indiscriminate violence from heavy weapons and government offensives must be reduced, whilst increased threat of expulsion or extermination by the government must be avoided (as well as the rise of other scenarios in parallel)	Number of arrests or disappearances Number of civilian deaths per attack Number of conventional armed units deployed in restive areas Number of new refugees fleeing due to violence per month Number of areas denied access to aid
POST-CONFLICT REVENGE	Only a few killed (dozens, hundreds), but groups associated with perpetrator may flee following relatively little violence	The threat from and opportunities for individual score-settling must be reduced, whilst it must not be replaced by more severe strategic motivations like expulsion	Criminal rates of murder, kidnapping, arson, and looting Number of religious/cultural buildings destroyed Number of attacks motivated by other, more strategic reasons
COMMUNAL CONFLICT	Relatively high number of people killed and abducted, especially women and children; livelihoods stolen or killed; temporary displacement in homogenous areas, more gradual withdrawal to 'their own' in mixed areas	The perceived and actual threat of attacks against population centres and livestock must be reduced, whilst either side acquiring the ability to expel or exterminate the other must be avoided	Number of civilians from a certain community on the run Number of mass-fleeing incidents Number of marketplace bombings Number of cattle raids per month Number of women and children killed or abducted Perception of existential threat in each community
PREDATORY VIOLENCE	Temporary, but large-scale displacement in affected areas and disproportionately many relative to the number of people actually attacked; many abductions, especially of young adolescents	Threat of random attacks against civilians must be reduced, without prompting rebels to increase violence out of desperation or retaliation	Number of civilians on the run in the affected area Perception of physical insecurity Number of villages attacked Number of particularly brutal acts Number of children abducted
INSURGENCY	Fewer killed and injured than in other scenarios, most due to indiscriminate weapons; gradual displacement from areas of heavy fighting	The perceived and actual threat of indiscriminate attacks and selective violence by insurgents must be reduced, whilst avoiding an increase in the deadliness of rebel attacks and civilians killed during cross-fire or in retaliation by allied government forces	Number of civilian deaths in total Number of civilians killed by tactic (suicide attacks, IEDs, targeted killings, night raids, close air-support, mortar attacks, cross-fire) Perception of security threat versus other concerns Number of villages changing hands

Table 3.2 *Desired and undesired effects, and proposed MOEs for the protection of civilians*

4 Conclusion

This guide describes how protection of civilians may be considered during the regular planning and assessment of operations. Five broad recommendations will be relevant to all military staff:

- Throughout the entire operations process, there is **a need for greater understanding of the perpetrators of violence** in terms of why and how they target civilians, and which military capabilities they require to do so. Only such an analysis will enable military staff to determine which military responses may be useful in different situations, based on the type of threat civilians are faced with (such as the scenarios outlined here).
- Protection of civilians is likely to be important in any of today's military operations, but it is never going to be the *only* objective, factor or potential risk of failure. Thus, **protection of civilians will always have to be balanced against other objectives and considerations**. Doing so requires prior knowledge of 'how' the military component can be used to protect civilians most effectively, which is currently not found in doctrines intended for other types of objectives. The advice outlined in this guide should therefore be read in conjunction with operation-specific doctrines (e.g. counterinsurgency).
- The ability of military force to protect civilians will also depend on the specific organisational framework of a particular operation (e.g. the UN, NATO, EU, or AU). The advice provided here will therefore have to be **tailored to the particular operational framework of the relevant organisations**, based on their legal, institutional and resource limitations. However, there is a danger of determining military actions solely on basis an organisation's existing approach or institutional limitations, without properly assessing the responses required to protect civilians. In previous operations, practises have often been replicated from one theatre to another, without assessing the suitability of those actions to protect civilians on the ground.
- As outlined in this guide, there are **many possible ways in which military forces can be used to protect civilians in similar situations**, also within the boundaries of a particular operational framework. Military staff should seek to explore alternative ways of using military force to protect civilians, based on each response's ability to reduce the actual threat to civilians, how operations may best be designed to do so, and possible risks – not merely to own forces, but also to civilians (such as outlined in the COAs).
- In the future, **protection of civilians cannot be assessed solely on basis of the number of civilians killed by own forces**. Protection of civilians must be measured more broadly – above all against the increase or decrease in the level of threat posed by perpetrators. An important take-away for operational analysts is the vast variation in terms of the expected outcomes, which provides different baselines against which to measure success.

Abbreviations

ACT	Allied Command Transformation
C2	Command and control
CC	Critical Capability
CD&E	Concept Development and Experimentation
CIVCAS	Civilian casualty
COA	Course of Action
COG	Centre of Gravity
COPD	Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive
CR	Critical Requirement
CV	Critical Vulnerability
DCDC	Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre
DEFSTNOR	Defence Staff Norway
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia – People’s Army
FFI	Norwegian Defence Research Establishment
JAWG	Joint Assessment Working Group
JFC	Joint Forces Command
JOPG	Joint Operations Planning Groups
LRA	Lord’s Resistance Army
MOE	Measure of Effectiveness
MOP	Measure of Performance
MRO	Military Response Option
NDCSC	Norwegian Defence Command and Staff College, part of NDUC
NDUC	Norwegian Defence University College
NJHQ	Norwegian Joint Headquarters
NOAH	NATO Operations Assessment Handbook
NODEFIC	Norwegian Defence International Centre, part of NDCSC
OPLAN	Operation Plan
PKSOI	US Army Peacekeeping & Stability Operations Institute
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RUF	Revolutionarily United Front
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan