



Dear All,

We are very excited to share our plans for next week: the *Creating Safer Space* network will be present at the **United Nations Headquarters in New York**, where we will share our research with UN delegates, UN staff, and other interested stakeholders. Our exhibition will be on show at the Delegates' Entrance of the UN Headquarters from 29 April – 3 May, and we will take this opportunity to talk to UN delegates about the fantastic research undertaken by our 26 research projects, and to share publications, brochures and our new series of *Creating Safer Space* policy briefs. Read on to find out more!

We are also very happy to report on our events in Wales in March – our exhibition and our participation in the WOW Film Festival – and to share new publications, resources and news from our projects.

*Creating Safer Space* is an international research network, which aims to understand and support unarmed civilian protection and self-protection amidst violent conflict.

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## ***Creating Safer Space* Exhibition at the United Nations**

The *Creating Safer Space* exhibition will soon be on display inside the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The exhibition will be shown at the Delegates' Entrance of the UN Headquarters from 29 April – 3 May. The official sponsor of the exhibition is the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the UN. Prof. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Prof. Rachel Julian and Dr Nerve Macaspac will accompany the exhibition. They will seek to inform UN delegates, UN staff, and other interested stakeholders about *Creating Safer Space* research and the potential role of Unarmed Civilian Protection in the Protection of Civilians (PoC).



The travelling exhibition, which has previously been on show in Nairobi (Kenya), Bangkok (Thailand) and Aberystwyth (Wales), explores the unexpected power of nonviolence in the protection of civilians living in the midst of violence. The objects, images, and voices originate from a selection of 26 research projects funded by the *Creating Safer Space* network, which have been conducted in collaboration between academics, self-protecting communities and nonviolent civilian accompaniers. The exhibition draws on experiences from Cameroon, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, South Sudan, and Thailand, where civilians are harnessing the power of nonviolence to create safer spaces and work towards alternative presents and futures. Along with the exhibition, there will be a stand with [publications and brochures](#) from *Creating Safer Space* projects

An exhibition event will be held on Tuesday 30 April for members of UN missions and other interested parties, with drinks, nibbles and introductory speeches.

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## Creating Safer Space Policy Briefs

The *Creating Safer Space* network has published a series of policy briefs about our research and our recommendations to the UN and its member states. The policy briefs have been written by *Creating Safer Space* Principal Investigator Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Co-Investigators Rachel Julian and Nerve Macaspac, and draw upon research from 26 *Creating Safer Space* projects. There are five policy briefs to date:

Policy Brief No. 1/2024:

[Nonviolent Community Strategies protect Civilians Across the World](#)

Policy Brief No. 2/2024:

[Community Self-Protection Makes Civilians Safer](#)

Policy Brief No. 3/2024:

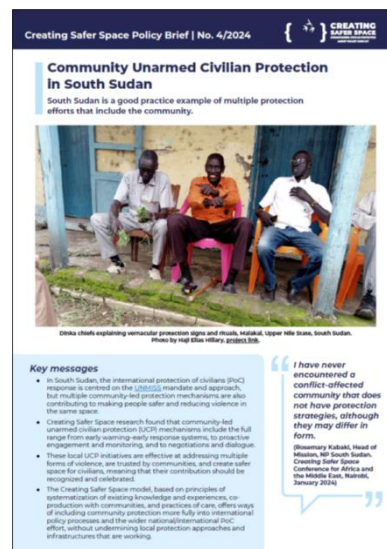
[The Missing Piece of PoC: Local Unarmed Civilian Protection](#)

Policy Brief No. 4/2024:

[Community Unarmed Civilian Protection in South Sudan](#)

Policy Brief No. 5/2024:

[Unarmed Civilian Protection in Post-Coup Myanmar](#)



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## Creating Safer Space Exhibition in Wales

The *Creating Safer Space* Exhibition was on display in Aberystwyth Arts Centre in Wales from 11 – 28 March.

Two students from the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University worked as Exhibition Tour Guides. Emily Pomeroy is a first year PhD student, and Konstantinos Kolokotronis is a Master's student. They provided tours to groups of university students and members of the public. A diverse range of visitors viewed the exhibition, and were moved by the stories and the artwork. Most heard about unarmed civilian protection for the first time.

A special exhibition event, attended by approximately 80 people, was held on the evening of Friday 22 March, with wine, food and live music. In her opening remarks, Angela Hatton, Aberystwyth University Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, discussed the importance of the *Creating Safer Space* network in the context of the increasing need for civilian protection around the world. Patrick Finney, the Head of Department of International Politics, highlighted the *Creating Safer Space* network's difficult journey (born during Covid and affected by subsequent funding instability) and the pleasure in now seeing the network's achievements as part of the exhibition and its contributions to the WOW Film Festival.



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## Creating Safer Space at the WOW Film Festival

The *Creating Safer Space* network has shown a series of films as part of the [WOW Wales One World Film Festival](#), and these are still available to view online.

The WOW Film Festival is the only UK festival dedicated principally to films from Africa, Asia & Latin America, and this is its 23<sup>rd</sup> year of bringing international films to cinemas across Wales.

This year the WOW Film Festival included 9 short films that have been produced as part of *Creating Safer Space* research projects in Colombia, Nigeria and Palestine.

The films were shown in Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Wales. Two of the sessions included discussions with the Principal Investigators of the projects that created two of the films, Dr Marwan Darweish for *Civil protection to stay on our land* (Palestine) and Dr Pier Parisi for *Survive among violence. Stories of the Nasa people in Colombia*.

The films and recordings of the discussions are being shown online until 31 May – [book here](#) with free admission!



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## New Publications

Prof. Rachel Julian, *Creating Safer Space* Co-Investigator, has published an article in the academic journal *Civil Wars*, '[Civilians Creating Safe Space: The Role of Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping in Protection of Civilians](#)'. The article draws on research in Myanmar and the Philippines, and challenges the assumption that only the military can do 'Protection of Civilians' (PoC). The article is available to view open access.

Mel Duncan, one of the co-founders of Nonviolent Peaceforce, has published an article in *Waging Nonviolence*, '[There's a better way to make communities safer — and it's taking off around the world](#)'. The article draws on *Creating Safer Space* research in Colombia, carried out by the University of Antioquia in collaboration with Harlequin and the Jugglers.

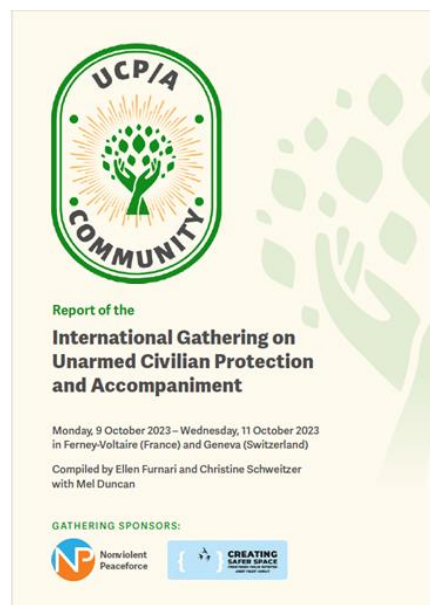
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## UCP/A Community of Practice

The *Creating Safer Space* network is excited to be part of the [UCP/A Community of Practice](#), which brings together people and organisations around the world that are practicing, researching and promoting Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment. We are delighted that Prof. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, *Creating Safer Space* Principal Investigator, has become a member of the *UCP/A Community of Practice* Steering Group.

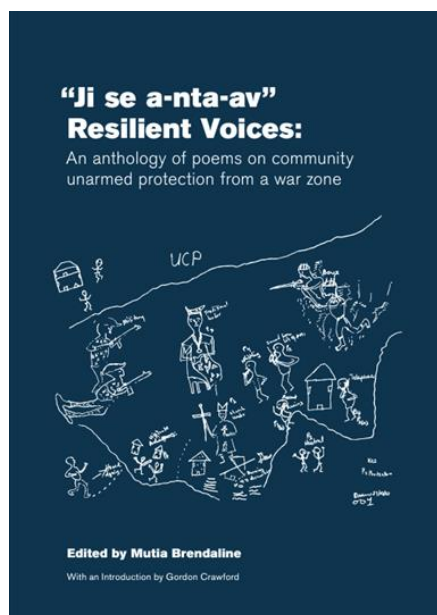
The *UCP/A Community of Practice*, with support from *Creating Safer Space*, has recently published a Report on its last international gathering, which took place in Geneva in October 2023. The report is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).

The *UCP/A Community of Practice* also has a new [website](#).



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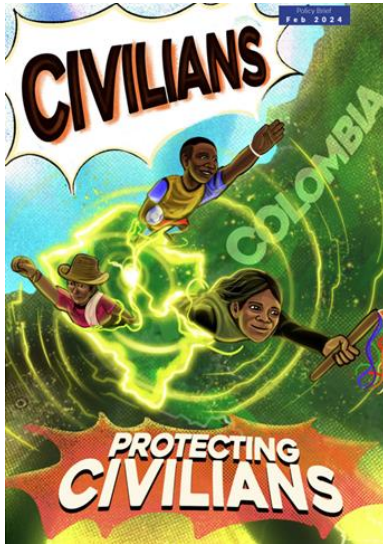
## News from *Creating Safer Space* Projects



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Exploring unarmed civilian self-protection in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict](#)' has published a booklet with poetry and drawings, entitled: "[“Ji se a-nta-av” Resilient Voices: An anthology of poems on community unarmed protection from a war zone](#)", edited by Mutia Brendaline. The poems and drawings are all written and drawn by civilians living amidst the current conflict in the English-speaking North West and South West regions of Cameroon. An introduction is provided by Prof. Gordon Crawford, the Principal Investigator of the project, who highlights how "[t]he poems' authors (anonymous to protect their security) outline their experiences, hardships and traumas, as well as their courage, resilience and agency in protecting themselves and others against violence."

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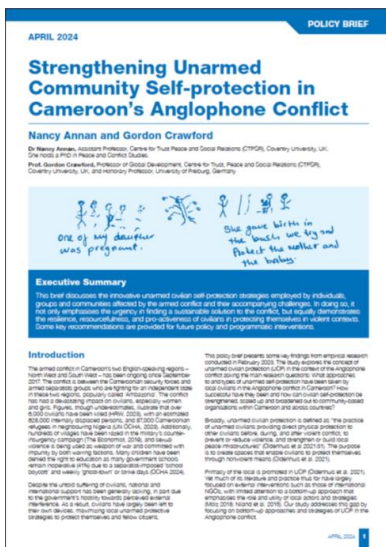




The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Understanding Community-level Spontaneous Unarmed Civilian Protection \(UCP\): A Comparative Study of Initiatives in South Sudan, Myanmar and Colombia](#)', has published a policy brief based on their research in Nariño, Colombia, entitled 'Civilians Protecting Civilians'. The policy brief was launched at an event in London that included the participation of the Ambassador of Colombia to the UK and officials from the UK Foreign Office, who reflected on the recommendations provided. The policy brief was published by Rodeemos el Diálogo and written by Karen Arteaga Garzón and Andrei Gómez-Suárez, with illustrations by Sebastián Bucheli. The policy brief is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Assessing the impact of unarmed civilian protection in the South Hebron Hills between 2018-2023](#)' reports that tensions in the South Hebron Hills are very high: the last month has seen raids and violence by armed settlers, sometimes in military uniform, supported by the IDF and Israeli police. Palestinian, Israeli and international activists and human rights defenders are increasingly targeted, and some are banned and expelled from the country. Operazione Colomba reports in [English](#) and [Italian](#) and has a [photogallery](#). The picture to the left is of young women and a 10-year-old girl in temporary custody because they were grazing sheep on land in At-Tuwani.



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Exploring unarmed civilian self-protection in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict](#)' has published a policy brief, [Strengthening Unarmed Community Self-protection in Cameroon's Anglophone Conflict](#). The policy brief is written by Dr Nancy Annan and Prof. Gordon Crawford, and it demonstrates the resilience, resourcefulness, and pro-activeness of civilians in protecting themselves in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict. It advocates that external bodies, both national and international, should learn from these protective measures adopted by local actors, and provide appropriate support.

Creating Safer Space  
Department of International Politics  
Aberystwyth University  
Penglais Aberystwyth  
SY23 3FE, Wales, UK

Please contact us on [creating-safer-space@aber.ac.uk](mailto:creating-safer-space@aber.ac.uk) to unsubscribe from this mailing list.

