

## Newsletter

### Creating Safer Space

October 2023



Dear All,

In today's newsletter, we are very happy to announce three new *Creating Safer Space* projects, which will pilot a new participatory evaluation and learning methodology for Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment (UCP/A) in Palestine, Colombia and the Mexico/USA border.

We are very happy to share the new "Toolbox for a Decolonial Perspective in UCP". It is meant to help both researchers and practitioners of UCP to reflect on and discuss the implications of coloniality and other structural inequalities in their work.

We report from the International Gathering of Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment (UCP/A) Organisations that took place from 9-11 October near Geneva, and in which 15 *Creating Safer Space* network members participated.

We also warmly invite you to our next Research Café, to be held on Monday. Drawing upon her experience as Deputy Editor of the journal *Civil Wars*, Dr Sukanya Podder will provide top tips for publishing in academic journals. This will be very helpful to anyone new to academic publishing, and we also very much hope experienced researchers will join us to share their experiences and insights.

Finally, we share more news from our research projects around the world. Learn about the use of tied grasses as a form of early warning and conflict preparedness in South Sudan; how arts and heritage can contribute to our understanding of safeguarding and survival in Colombia; and more.

*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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## Pilot Projects in Participatory Evaluation and Learning

We are very pleased to announce three new *Creating Safer Space* projects. These projects will pilot a new participatory evaluation and learning methodology for Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment (UCP/A).

*Creating Safer Space* is aware of the sensitivities connected with UCP/A and how traditional methods of evaluation are often top-down or output-focused and therefore risk missing important nuances connected with civilian protection efforts. A group of practitioners and scholars have therefore discussed good practice approaches to evaluation, and developed principles that should inform evaluation design.

*Creating Safer Space* held a funding competition in Summer 2023 to pilot this approach to evaluation and learning, and we are happy to announce the three projects that received funding:



Operation Dove / Operazione Colomba received funding for the project [Assessing the impact of unarmed civilian protection in the South Hebron Hills between 2018-2023](#). This project aims to assess the impact of the ongoing collaboration between international volunteers and the Palestinian community in the South Hebron Hills, West Bank.



Masterpeace Cali received funding for the project [Contributions of grassroots organisations to the implementation of unarmed civilian self-protection strategies in violent urban contexts: Towards the security of diverse and vulnerable populations in socio-segregated environments](#). This project investigates the impacts of actions carried out by grassroots organisations in violent and socio-segregated urban contexts in the city of Cali, Colombia.



Meta Peace Team received funding for the project [UCP and Migrants in the US / Mexico Borderlands](#). Using a participatory action research design, this project will engage with organizations serving migrants at the United States/Mexico border to develop tools for evaluating the impacts of unarmed civilian protection and accompaniment to protect migrants in the North American border region.

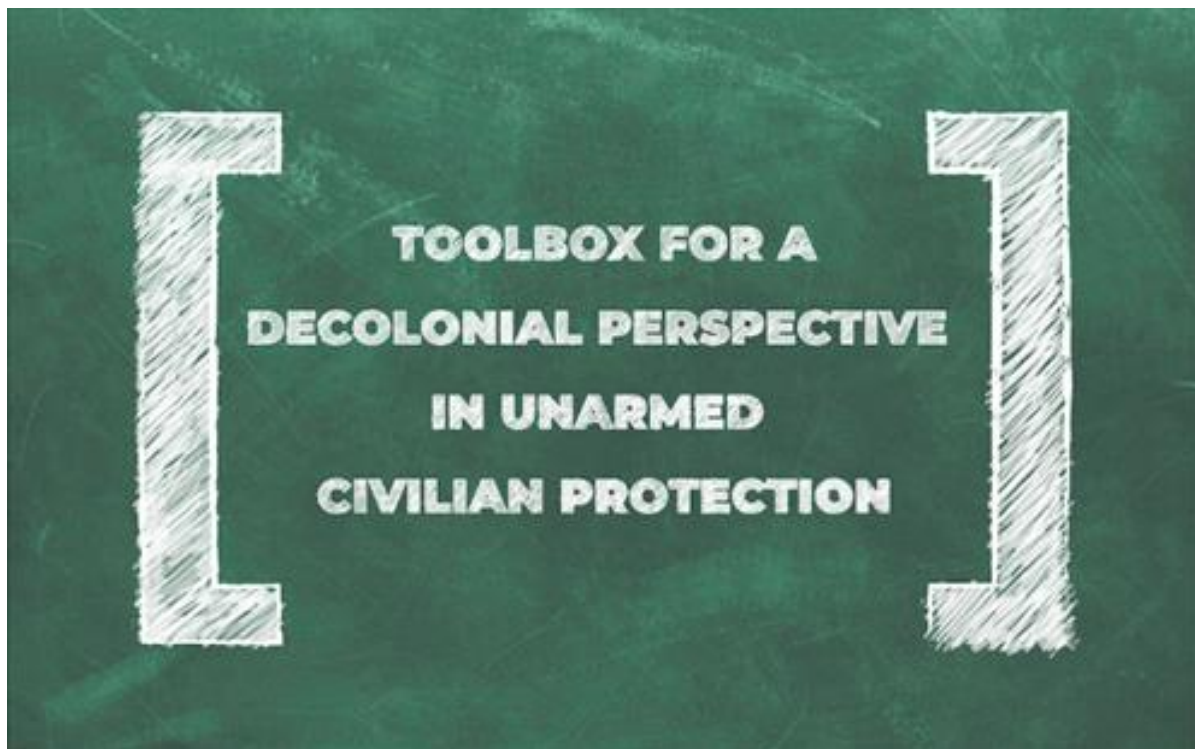
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## Toolbox for a Decolonial Perspective in UCP

We are very pleased to announce the publication of 'A Toolbox for a Decolonial Perspective in UCP'. This toolbox seeks to highlight key aspects that can support decolonization processes advocated by Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) practitioners. It's not a definitive or closed document, but rather a dynamic and open proposal intended to expand through discussion and exchange within our community of practice.

This toolbox was developed in the context of the meetings of the Decolonization Working Group of the UCP Community of Practice, led by Nonviolent Peaceforce. The elaboration of the toolbox was supported financially and by team members of the *Creating Safer Space* network.

The toolbox is available in English and Spanish [here](#).



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### ***Creating Safer Space* cohort participates in Geneva Conference**

15 *Creating Safer Space* network members took actively part in an International Gathering of Unarmed Civilian Protection and Accompaniment Organisations, which was held in Ferney-Voltaire, France and Geneva, Switzerland from 9-11 October 2023. Organised by Nonviolent Peaceforce with input from a range of UCP/A stakeholders, this was "the first global gathering of UCP/A practitioners, their community partners, researchers and allies collaborating to advance the UCP/A Community of Practice by creating opportunities to grapple with shared issues, explore creative solutions, and build relationships with colleagues working around the world".

N+ members - from the core network team, different project teams, and the advisory board - were involved in planning, implementing and facilitating the gathering, offered workshops on different UCP/A-related topics including decolonisation, learning and evaluation, looming threats, and peace processes, spoke about UCP and community self-protection research at a policy event for humanitarian organisations and UN member countries, and contributed to the gathering more widely by sharing their experiences and knowledges. The N+ team also organised a small preview of the *Creating Safer Space* exhibition, which shows creative outputs from our projects.

More information about the participation of the *Creating Safer Space* network is available [here](#), and learn more about the Community of Practice process and the Gathering [here](#).

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### **Research Café: Top tips for publishing in academic journals**

At the next *Creating Safer Space* Research Café, Dr Sukanya Podder will draw upon her experience as Deputy Editor of the academic journal [Civil Wars](#) to explain how the publishing process works, and to share some top tips for publishing in academic journals.



This session will be especially relevant to early career researchers, researchers working within practitioner organisations, and others who are new to publishing in academic journals. The session will finish with an open discussion, and we also warmly welcome senior researchers to come and share top tips of your own.

1.30 – 2.30 pm UTC on **Monday 30 October**

Please use a [timezone converter](#) to check your local time.

The session will be held in English and Spanish with simultaneous translation.

Please register for this online **Zoom event** here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zt0tduCsqTooH9WJly0eDTVqoJPoMEsX-lxM>

The aim of this network-wide *Creating Safer Space* Research Café is to enable people in different parts of the world to exchange knowledge and to help build a community of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) researchers and practitioners.

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## News from *Creating Safer Space* Projects



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Strategies for Safety and Solidarity: Understanding protection through creativity in South Sudan and Colombia](#)' invites you to their exhibition at Universidad de los Andes in Colombia. The exhibition is a collective work between artists and researchers, displaying photographs, embroidery, music, cartoons and artistic installations to create a dynamic conversation between Colombia and South Sudan. The exhibition concludes on Friday 27 October. More information is available [here](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Visualising early warning and preparedness in civilian protection: Investigating local vernaculars of community adaptations to insecurity](#)' has been investigating cultural self-protection and conflict preparedness measures in South Sudan. They have uncovered a huge range of cultural practices employed for early warning and conflict preparedness. These are generally distinct among different tribal groups in the country. More information is available [here](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Ritualising protection in conflict: A collaborative visual ethnography of the cultural and spiritual protection practices of the Nasa people in Colombia](#)' shares news from their project. On 26-27 September, the project team convened, jointly with the indigenous authorities of the Resguardo Indígena de Huellas Caloto, a two-day workshop to present and discuss the findings of the Project. These discussions will feed into a draft policy document that will be published soon. More information is available [here](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Strategies for Safety and Solidarity: Understanding protection through creativity in South Sudan and Colombia](#)' has produced a booklet about their research, artmaking and solidarity actions. Their work invites us to consider how the arts and heritage can contribute to our understanding of safeguarding and survival in a fragile context, but also how protecting the arts could be essential to creating a safer society. The booklet is available [here](#).



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Art that Protects: Contributions of artistic-cultural initiatives to the self-protection strategies of young people and women in the context of the urban conflict in Medellín](#)' visited mid-Wales. Four members of the project visited Aberystwyth University, the lead organisation for the *Creating Safer Space* network, and presented their work. More information is available [here](#).

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## External News and Events

**The Loughborough University Institute of Advanced Studies** organised a lecture on the occasion of the launch of *The Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence*, recorded and now available on YouTube, on [The Challenges of Pacifism and Nonviolence in the Twenty-First Century](#), with contributions from Richard Jackson, Felicity Gray and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara.

**The Rights for Time Network** (a sister network to *Creating Safer Space*) is publishing important news from Gaza in their [Newsletters](#).

**The Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence** has published a [Special Issue on Nonviolent Agency in Violent Conflict](#), edited by Jeremy Allouche, Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Felicity Gray; the introductory article is open access.

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.