Research and resources to guide humanitarian response are not always at our fingertips at the moment we need them most – when a crisis hits. Working with our partners, we want to support the sector with at-a-glance information and links that can play a small part in ‘closing the loop’ between research and practice in real time.

Closing the loop: PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS (OCT 2023)

Research and resources for humanitarian response in real time

As these conflicts have played out, there has been distinctive disregard for or ignorance of the international laws, principles, and guidelines that are afforded to civilians during armed conflicts.

Widespread and systematic resulting in massive deaths through acts of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing

Temporary and changing, through isolated or sporadic attacks

Conducted with military grade arms or more rudimentary weapons

Conducted without any weapons, such as deprivation measures or sexual violence

When and Where?

Violence takes many forms

Protected Groups

International Committee of the Red Cross 
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
 Médecins Sans Frontières
 Centre for Civilians in Conflict

UN Security Council meeting, Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed

“How the world is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since the Second World War and 2 billion people – a quarter of humanity – live in places affected by such conflict.”

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres

“If civilians have suffered the deadly effects of armed conflict for too long. It is time we live up to our promise to protect them - the terrible truth is that the world is failing to live up to its commitments to protect civilians; commitments enshrined in international humanitarian law.”

Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Protection of Civilians

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – Geneva Convention (IV) on the Protection of Civilians – specifies the relevant protections afforded to civilians during conflict
- Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas – adopted and endorsed by 83 States in November 2022
- ICRC – International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts – provides information on the protections afforded to civilians from the use of new technologies in armed conflicts
- From Principle to Practice: Protecting civilians in violent contexts: a field handbook – provides practice examples and tools for building the protection of civilians into both humanitarian and military operations.
- Norwegian Refugee Council – Principles under Pressure – provides information on counterterrorism measures and how they impact the delivery of humanitarian services
- International Crisis Group’s Hold Your Fire podcast

International Humanitarian Law

- ICRC – Customary International Humanitarian Law Database – provides a database on all customary humanitarian laws including those regarding the distinction of civilians
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Compilation of military policy and practice – specifies the particular rules relating to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and the humanitarian implications of such acts

How You Can Support

- International Committee of the Red Cross
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- Médecins Sans Frontières
- Centre for Civilians in Conflict

For more information, please get in touch with us via info@humanitarianadvisorygroup.org