

1-3 December 2020

PAX Protection of Civilians Conference 2020

Summary of Key Themes

Day 1

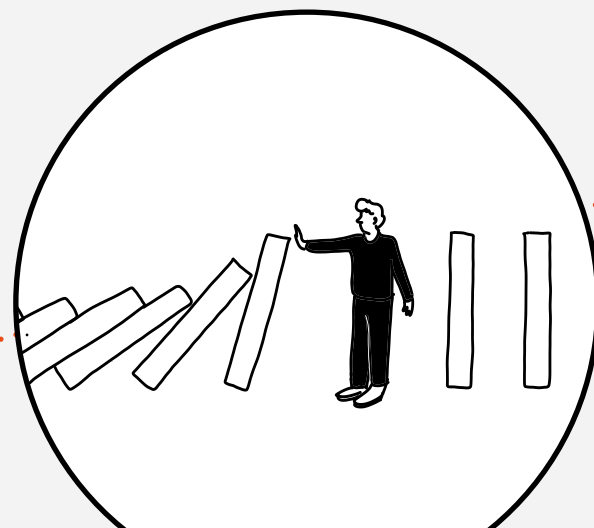
National Contributions to PoC

Day 2

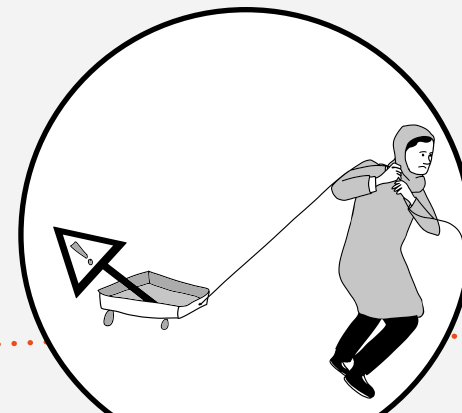
People & Protection

Day 3

Civilian Harm Reverberating Effects



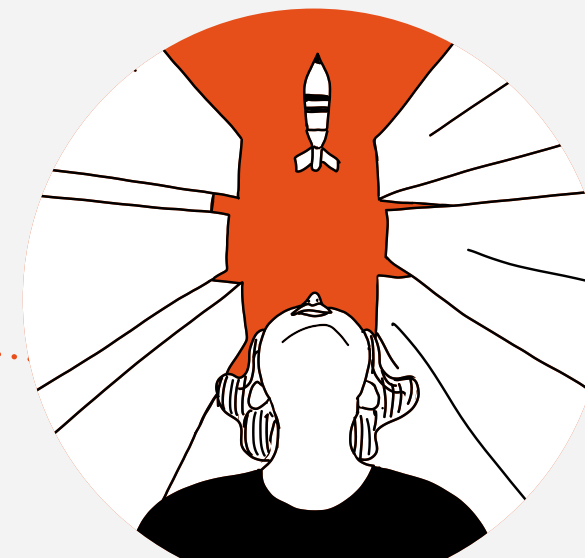
Prevention is key in protecting civilians



The risks in conflict are shifting from military to civilians



Collect and discuss data on human security **with civilians** to identify priorities



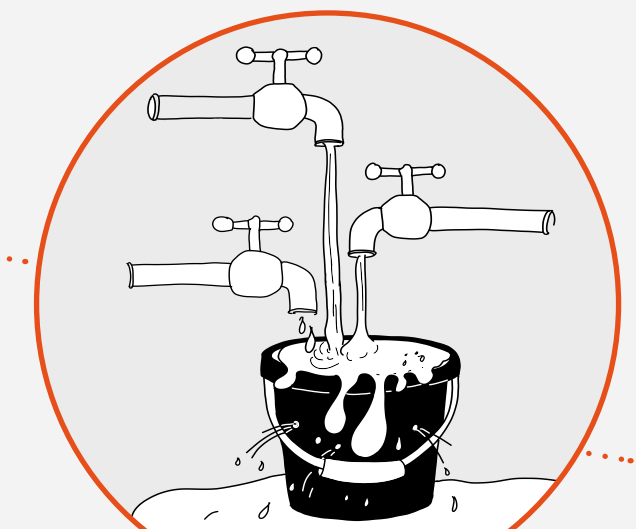
Local perspectives can give policymakers **new insights**



Make local perspectives accessible to a broader audience



A single strike can lead to many **longterm effects**



Many strikes can collectively **compound harm** for civilians

This unique virtual conference convened a global audience of practitioners, researchers, uniformed service members, policymakers, and other experts on the protection of civilians (PoC) in conflict settings. The event focused around three central themes: National Contributions to PoC, People and Protection, and Civilian Harm Reverberating Effects.

For recordings of the conference sessions, additional reflections on the event, and key resources about the event's core themes, please visit: www.protectionofcivilians.org.





DAY 1



Prevention is key in protecting civilians



It's becoming more and more difficult to protect civilians



You cannot be partial in protecting civilians - take off your political glasses



Share insights to learn collectively **how** to best protect civilians



Protection of civilians should be center stage in military interventions and must be applied **inclusively**



Operating in conflict means **taking risks**, but this cannot deter us from protecting civilians



There are more people needing protection than there are those able to provide it

Opening & Welcome + Interactive Interview With Bert Koenders on National Contributions to PoC

What role the international community play in protecting civilians in conflict, and what lessons are still being learned?

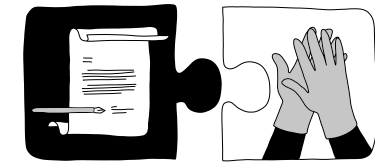




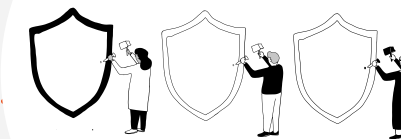
DAY 1



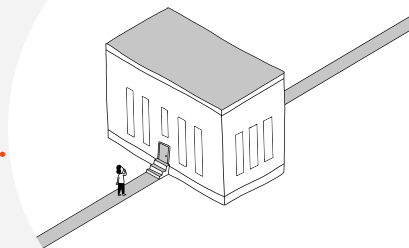
PoC actors should **explore collaborations** in a fragmented security landscape



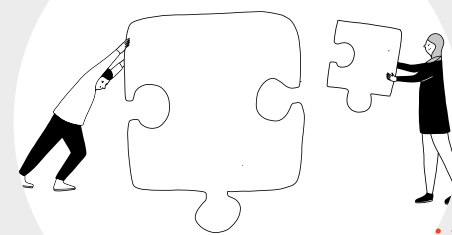
PoC and SSR specialists should connect more to share their knowledge



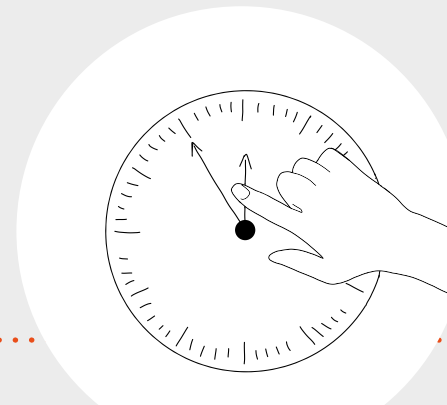
It is important to truly work together and have the same **ultimate goals**



National and international institutions should not be in the way of moving forward



Local and national levels should **come together** and work collaboratively



Be patient and take time to really understand each other



Empower civilians to be real drivers of change in their communities

Workshop: Coherence in PoC Policy and Practice

How can PoC-focused policymakers and practitioners learn from one another and maximize their impact?





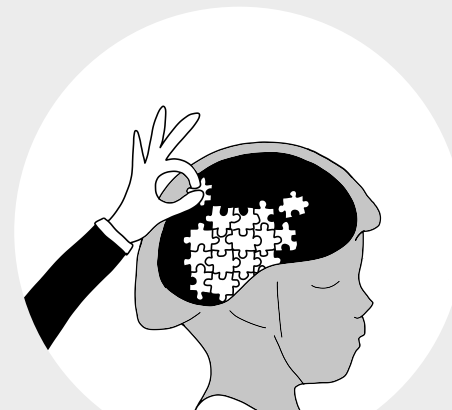
DAY 1



Prevention is key in protecting civilians



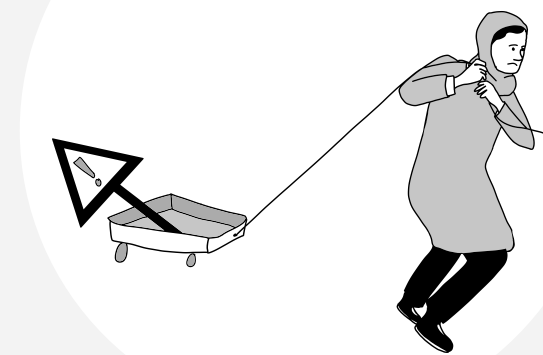
Access to information is key to conducting relevant analysis



Those serving in missions need to develop a **PoC mindset**



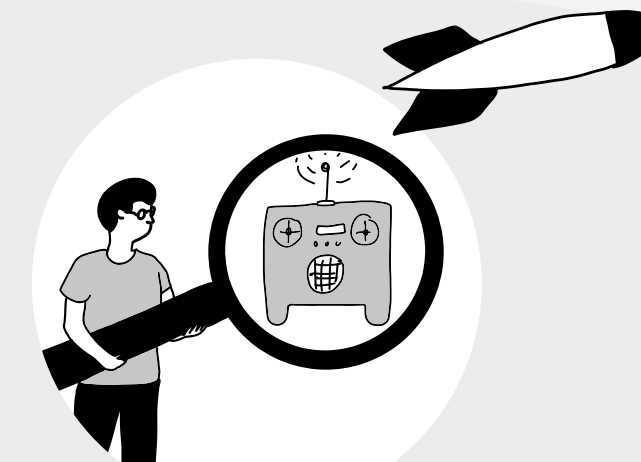
The PoC field needs to **collect and share** lessons learned



The risks in conflict are **shifting** from military to civilians



Treat the **root causes** of insecurity, not just the symptoms



More research is needed into **remote warfare** and the implications for civilians



If we talk about military awareness, we have to talk about PoC as well

Presentation: Lessons Learned on PoC Experiences from Germany + Presentation: Lessons Learned on PoC Bilateral and Special Operations Forces in the UK

What can the experiences of countries like Germany and the United Kingdom teach others about being effective “champions of PoC”?





DAY 2



We need shared and comprehensive definitions of human security, and a clearer sense of who is **responsible** for providing it



Communication and trust among relevant stakeholders are necessary for human security



Every context is different, so involve **local perspectives**



Human security goes beyond only physical safety, but includes economic, food, health, environmental, community, and political security components



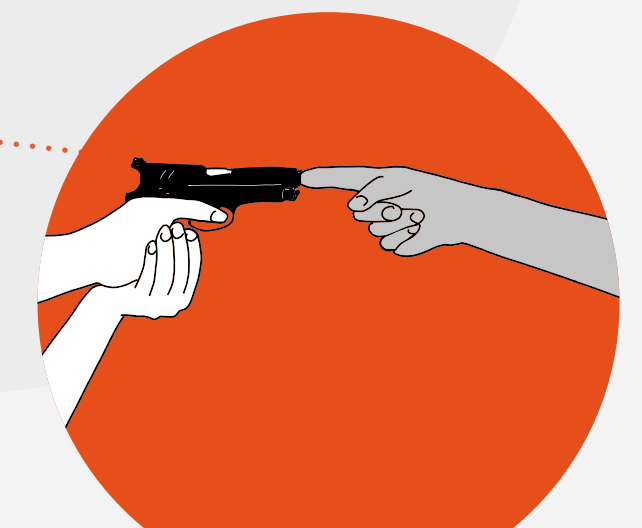
Human security responses should have **military and civil** components



Civilians have a lot of **capacity** to protect their own communities



Empower civilians and elevate their voices



The **absence from fear** is the foundation of human security

Introductory Opening: What Is Human Security?

What do we mean by “human security” and how can we use this concept to improve the effectiveness and inclusivity of protection of civilians in practice?





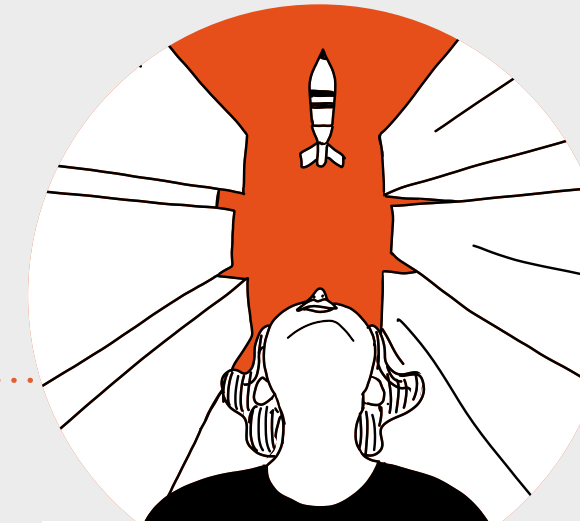
DAY 2



Give local civilians a voice in defining their protection needs



Collect and discuss data on human security with civilians to identify key priorities



Local perspectives can give policymakers **new insights**



Local citizens should be partners when it comes to security issues



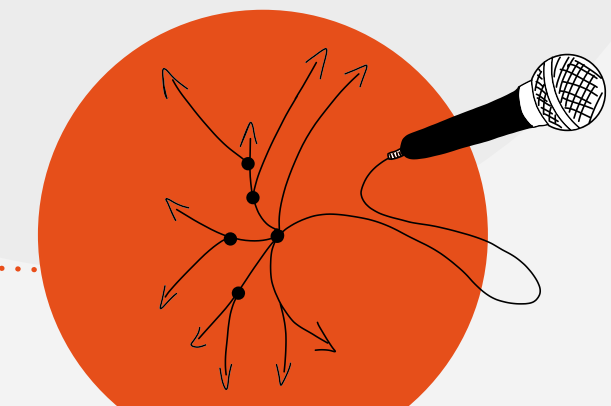
Civilians should **define solutions** to make the results sustainable



We need to improve the dialogue with civilian communities (and actually **listen**)



Work from the bottom up and connect those with **different perspectives**



Amplifying civilian perspectives and creating **feedback loops** will generate greater impact

Presentation: Voices from the Field

How can the PoC field create more opportunities to learn from – and be accountable to – civilians living in conflict?





DAY 2



Make local perspectives
accessible to a broader audience



Communities must be empowered
to work towards **common goals**



We need to break down walls between
political and security institutions and
civilian populations



Educating and engaging **young people**
in civic life is an investment in the future



Use **constructive dialogue** to
bridge the gap between civilians and
authorities



Engaging female community members
brings valuable perspectives and contributes
towards greater **gender equality**



Build and maintain **communication
channels** between different stakeholders

Expert Panel: Community Engagement During Uncertainty

What do experts in Iraq believe are the needs and opportunities to bring civilian perspectives more to the fore?





DAY 2



Work with local research centers and networks to consolidate data



Repetition of research is important to **capture trends** in a constantly changing environment



Minority groups are often marginalized and do not feel heard

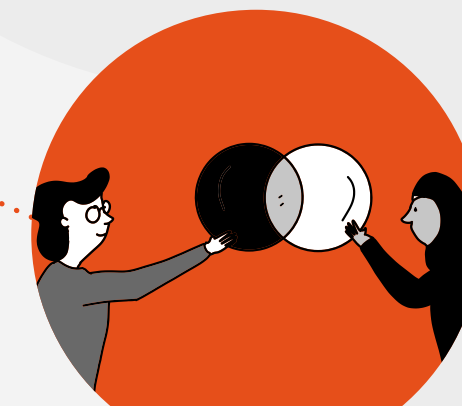


In times of crisis, maintaining cultural and religious practices provides **connection and stability**



Overcoming **access challenges** in conflict is critically important

Getting reliable data from the field requires talking to **local civilians**, rather than just elites



Stay connected and be transparent towards your research group



Apply an **intersectional lens** to better understand the influences of gender and culture

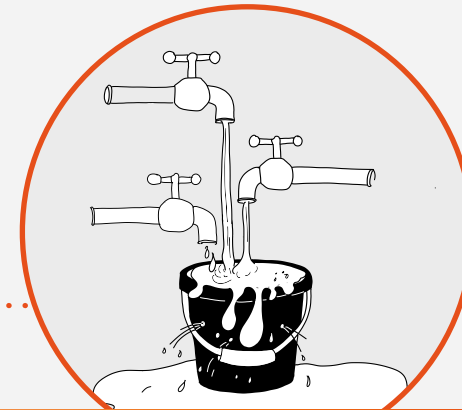
Session: Local Understandings of Human Security: Evidence from the Field

What can we as a field learn from doing comprehensive research with civilian populations in conflict contexts?





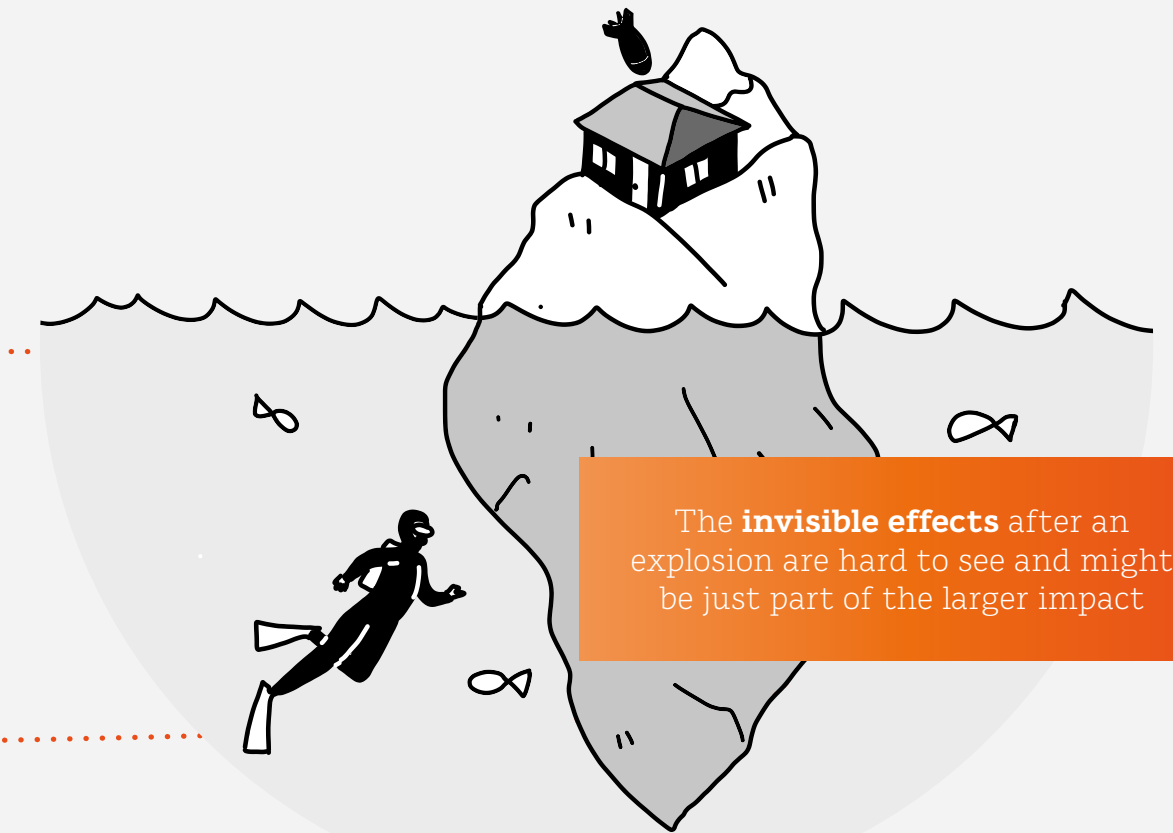
A single strike can lead to many **long-term effects**



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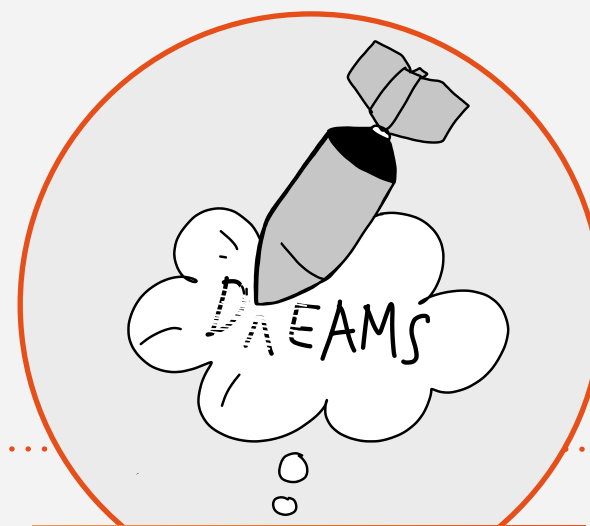
The **psychological consequences** have a much greater effect than is immediately apparent



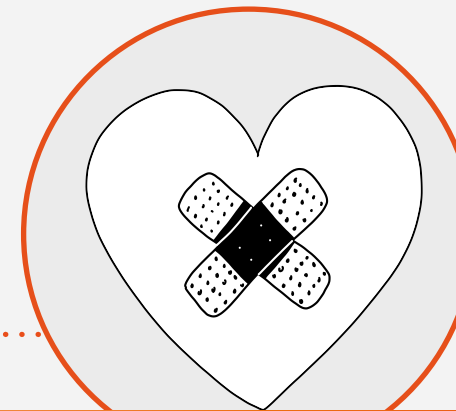
The **invisible effects** after an explosion are hard to see and might be just part of the larger impact



Within a second your **whole history** can be erased



It is impossible to get back the **erased dreams**



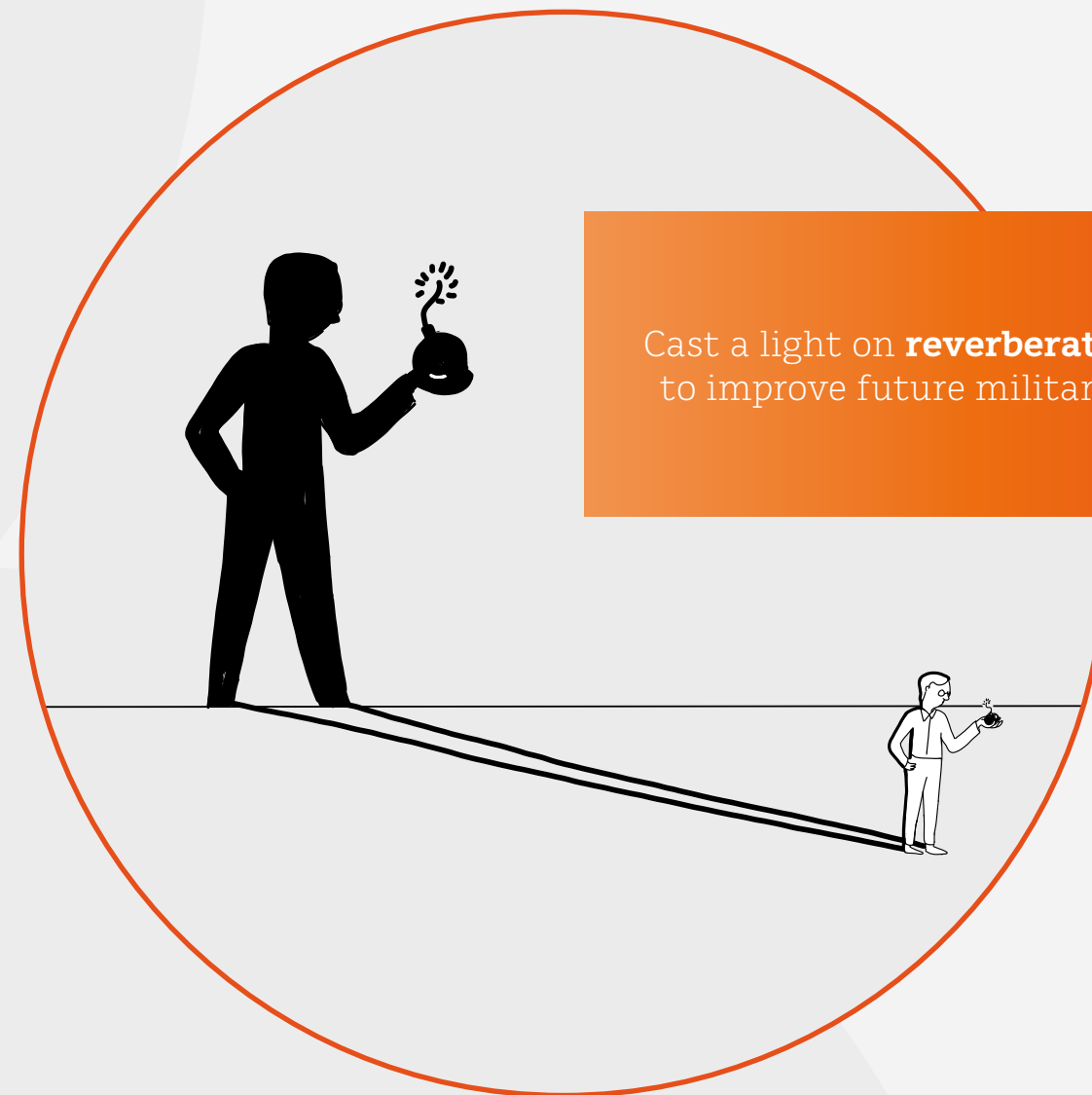
Those who cause harm should ask themselves what they can do to help heal **lasting trauma**



For an in-depth exploration of civilians' experiences in conflict and key recommendations to the field, read PAX's forthcoming **book on Civilian Harm**

Opening & Welcome +
Presentation: The Visible and Invisible Effects of the Violence Used in Mosul +
Presentation: The Reverberating Effects of the Use of Explosive Weapons in Mosul, Raqqa, and Hawija
What are the longer-term and less visible implications of armed conflict for civilians in places like Iraq?

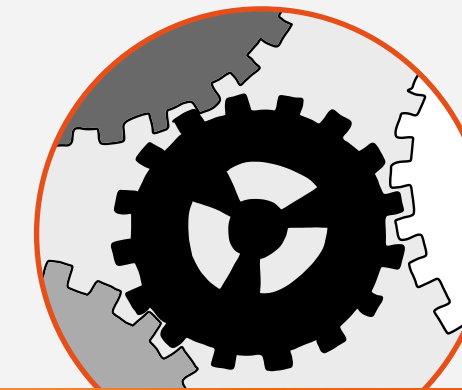




Cast a light on **reverberating effects** to improve future military planning



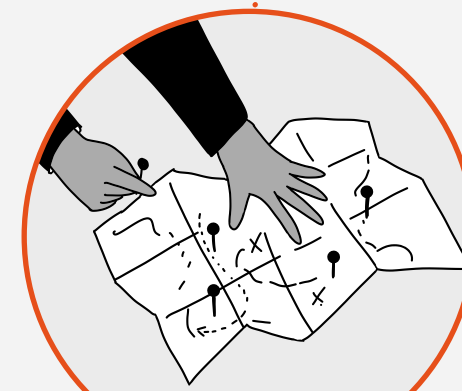
To build resilience, we need to create **adaptable and flexible** models



A **systematic approach** is important to be able to make good analyses



Various forms of data must be collected and fit together



Experts should **map critical infrastructure** to prevent unnecessary harm



We need to better **capture and integrate** the data on civilian harm



We have to search for the missing pieces in our understanding

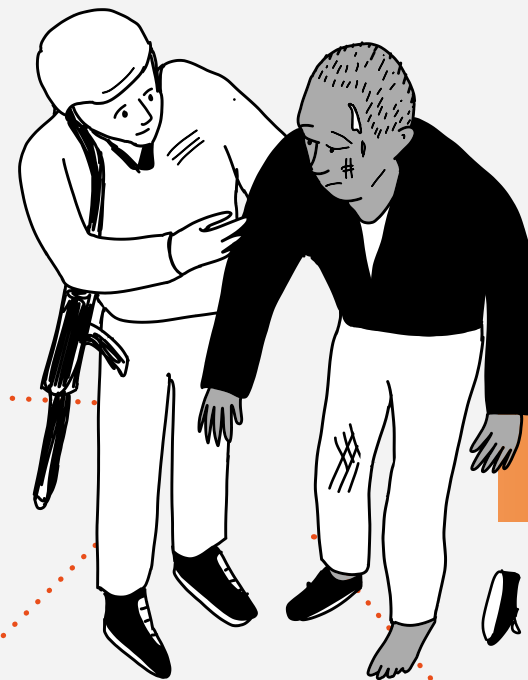
Presentation: Modeling Reverberating Effects and The Frontlines Lab Initiative

How can experts use modern technologies to model the effects of conflict and inform more effective military operations?





A military that **embraces the task** of protecting civilians will benefit from improved conditions and relations



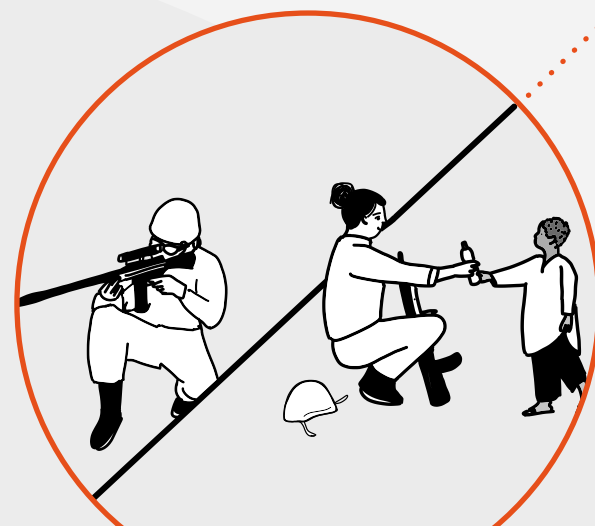
The military is a **first-line responder** to civilians in conflict areas



Those operating without knowledge of the local context will have **blind spots**



Coordination is still too limited when it comes to protection of civilians



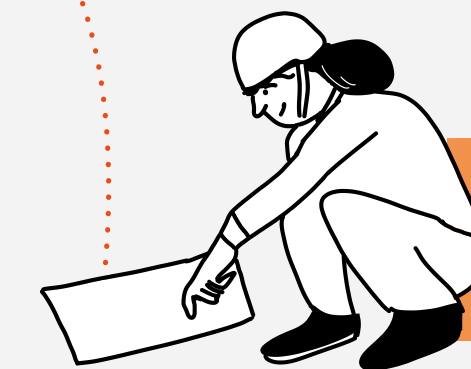
The mindset must be different when it comes to protecting civilians vs acting on a threat



PoC interventions should **mix skill sets** and link different people and institutions for better protection



There is a lot of evidence out there, but we need to **collect and share** it to make it useful



Once we have the data, we need to actually use it have a greater impact

Presentation: Understanding Reverberating Effects + Interactive Discussion: Practical Implications and Recommendations for Military Actors

What do militaries need to understand about the direct and indirect effects of conflict in order to effectively prevent and respond to civilian harm?

