

**2021 Economic and Social Committee  
Humanitarian Affairs Segment**

**Implementing International Humanitarian Law: Innovative Programming and Best Practices in the  
Age of COVID 19**

Event co-sponsored by the Swiss Confederation, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Center for Civilians in Conflict

**Friday 25 June from 8:30 to 10:00am (Geneva time)**

This is one of the virtual side events to be convened on the margins of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS), which builds on this year's HAS theme: *“Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021 and beyond: mobilizing respect for international humanitarian law, inclusion, gender, innovation and partnerships”*.

**Background and objectives of event**

In adherence with international humanitarian and human rights law (IHL and IHRL), States' responsibility to ensure the protection of civilians (PoC) can take many forms - legislative, legal or operational. While incremental progress in each of these realms is important, it may fall short of its objectives until it becomes a national political priority spanning strategic, operational, and tactical planning and decision-making. The adoption of comprehensive national policy frameworks, strategies or action plans on protection of civilians as called for by the UN Secretary General in each of his annual reports on the protection of civilians since 2017, presents opportunities to raise the standards from protection of civilians as a matter of legal compliance to protection as a strategic imperative applicable across all types of contemporary warfare. Such initiatives also pave the way for States and non-State actors, including civil society, to develop innovative tools and approaches that aim at translating IHL into practice and taking concrete steps towards better civilian protection; they also represent an opportunity to improve collaboration between New York and Geneva-based UN stakeholders, Member States and civil society partners.

While many PoC approaches have to be tailor-made to specific threats faced in specific environments, these common elements can enable better coherence across national policies and practice ranging from national legislation, adoption of doctrine and training by state security forces, or the development of civilian harm tracking mechanisms, and strengthened civil-military engagement. This requires a continuous dialogue between State and non-state actors and across civilian-military sectors; and outside-the-box and cross-sectoral cooperation between UN and civil society partners.

The side event will bring insights from actors in the field, civil society, community, and military experts coming from various backgrounds and countries; and will share practical, field-tested recommendations, solutions and best practices to respond to civilian harm. It also aims at linking discussions during the ECOSOC HAS with the main takeaways from the New York-based POC week 2021, particularly on civilian harm mitigation.

**Discussion points or guiding questions**

Drawing on the experiences of a variety of innovative initiatives including the creation of an internal Civilian Harm Tracking mechanism by the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), Afghanistan's local community protection groups, and Canada's Dallaire Center of Excellence for Peace and Security, this 2021 ECOSOC HAS side event will discuss ways to better implement IHL at the national level through innovative programming, integrated POC approaches, and increased engagement with civil-society and communities. Since conflict contexts have not been spared by COVID-19, this side-event will also discuss the specific protection threats

posed by the pandemic, and share examples on creative ways communities, militaries, and NGOs found to overcome additional challenges. Panelists will be asked to reflect on the following guiding questions:

- What do lessons from experiences such as those of Ukraine, Afghanistan and Canada reveal for other States and their Civil Society partners? What best practices and innovative approaches to civilian harm mitigation could be further adapted and replicated in other contexts?
- How do large-scale outbreaks impact the national implementation of international humanitarian law by Member States, and what are the best practices/lessons we can learn from the COVID-19 crisis and previous epidemics?
- How can Member States, through their representation in Geneva and New York, support these national level approaches? How could initiatives from Geneva and New York reinforce one another? What synergies could be explored across Geneva and New York?
- What should civil society participation in national level implementation look like in practice? What mechanisms exist to enable this participation? What are the practical and political advantages and risks? What role should civilians play in monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability?

### **Key concrete action points and recommendations/take away messages**

Panelists and participants from the floor will introduce and present best practices in PoC and civilian harm mitigation developed by communities, civil society and governments, including tracking mechanisms, civil-military dialogues, and community-based protection approaches. These examples will guide Member States in the development of their own strategies, looking at possible synergies and adaptations.

This includes in particular four key elements governments are encouraged to include in their national POC initiatives:

- i) A proactive approach to civilian harm mitigation and response in own military operations and security partnerships
- ii) A systematic dialogue with civil-society in various stages of policy development, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation
- iii) Developing military competence in protecting civilians in different operational environments, including urban contexts and open settings
- iv) Better anticipating POC challenges in conflict countries affected by pandemics and large-scale outbreaks, including through strengthened analysis, preparedness, and mitigation measures

### **Format of the side event**

The discussion will take the form of a 1,5-hour roundtable dialogue, during which a wide range of different stakeholders, mainly from the field, will share their experiences and best practices. In order to make this roundtable dynamic and inclusive, organizers will be integrating multimedia resources into the presentation, to stimulate interest and encourage attendees' participation. Participants will be given a space to share their recommendations, and react live to panelists' comments - with the aim of making this roundtable as close as possible of an in-person dialogue. The event will also include one short video or interviews showcasing local staff or local communities in their efforts to strengthen civilian protection in conflict contexts.

*Welcome Note:*

- Beatrice Godefroy, Europe Director, CIVIC

### *Moderation*

- Anne de Riedmatten-Patiño Mayer, Head of Office, Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

### *Introductory remarks:*

- H.E. Dr. Hans-Peter Jugel, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Germany in Geneva
- Ms. Wafaa Saeed, Director of OCHA's Coordination Division

### *Concluding remarks:*

- H.E. DR. Nasdir Ahmad Andisha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the UN in Geneva.

### **Panel composition**

The list of speakers includes a mix of representatives from governments, armed forces, and civil society:

- Colonel Karpov, Head of CIMIC, Joint Forces Command, Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU): the role of CIMIC in civilian harm mitigation; civilian harm tracking mechanisms; civil-military engagement
- Caroline Baudot, Adviser on the protection of civilians in the conduct of hostilities, International Committee of the Red Cross: introducing challenges linked to attacks against health care during armed conflicts and other emergencies and highlighting positive experiences of field-based measures to protect health care
- Sayed Ashraf Sadat, Head of the Community Protection Working Group of Herat facilitated by the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC): introducing practical approaches to gender-sensitive community-based protection; including a 3 min video
- Major Samantha Laplante, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Dallaire Centre of Excellence (COE) for Peace and Security : Creation, mandate and priorities of the COE, in particular its role in supporting CAF implementation of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and Preventing the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers
- Emily Knowles, Civil-Military Advisor: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of protection, and best practices/adaptive programming

We will also welcome statements from the floor (provisional list):

- Save the Children Ukraine (focus: implementation of the Safe School Declaration in Ukraine)
- Andri S van Mens, Councillor, Humanitarian Affairs, Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

### **Background Material (feel free to share links to relevant documents)**

- "Afghanistan: Community Engagement on Civilian Protection", CIVIC:  
[https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/civic\\_community\\_engagement\\_afghanistan\\_final\\_may\\_2019.pdf](https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/civic_community_engagement_afghanistan_final_may_2019.pdf)

- “Falling Through the Cracks: Improving Ukraine’s Assistance to Conflict-Affected Civilians”: [https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2019\\_05\\_UKR\\_REPORT\\_FallingThroughTheCracksFINAL\\_eng.pdf](https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2019_05_UKR_REPORT_FallingThroughTheCracksFINAL_eng.pdf)
- “Barriers and Bridges to Protection, Civil-Military Engagement in northeast Nigeria”, CIVIC: <https://civiliansinconflict.org/barriers-and-bridge-to-protection/>
- “Closing the Gap, Implementation of Protection of Civilians Policies”, CIVIC: <https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/POC-Brief.pdf>
- “Protecting Health care: Guidance for the Armed forces”, ICRC: [https://healthcareindanger.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4504\\_002-ebook.pdf](https://healthcareindanger.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4504_002-ebook.pdf)
- Allies, Partners and Proxies: Managing Support Relationships in Armed Conflict to Reduce the Human Cost of War”, ICRC: <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4498-allies-partners-and-proxies-managing-support-relationships-armed-conflict-reduce>
- COVID 19: as if the war was not enough, ICRC: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/as-if-war-was-not-enough>

## **Speakers’ Bios**

### **Colonel Karpov**

Head of CIMIC, Joint Forces Command, Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU)

### **Caroline Baudot**

Caroline Baudot is the adviser on conduct of hostilities in the ICRC Protection of Civilians Unit based in Geneva. She advises ICRC delegations on their operational protection response and protection dialogue with parties to the conflict on civilian harm related to military operations. Prior to joining ICRC, Caroline spent several years in the field in conflict areas, including Chad, Mali, DRC, Burundi, Lebanon, Jordan, and covering the Mosul military operations, with Oxfam then CIVIC. She previously focused on human rights and international justice issues, working with Amnesty International, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Human Rights Watch and Crisis Action in London, New York and Paris.

### **Sayed Ashraf Sadat**

Sayed Ashraf Sadat is a character who is mostly known for his long background of attempts for promotion of human rights, justice and fighting against corruption in Afghanistan.

He was born in 1983, in Gozare district of Herat province. Sadat has completed school in his hometown, and after the collapse of the Taliban regime he entered to the Literature faculty of Herat University and got his Bachelor degree in Dari language and literature in 2007. Also he received his Master’s Degree in literature from Herat University in 2018.

Along with formal education, he also attended several educational and capacity building programs at national and international level and has awarded by hundreds of appreciation certificates for his volunteer workings with civil society and human rights organizations at local and national level. He has meaningful contact with many international human and humanitarian rights organizations, including CIVIC, Amnesty international. He has participated in IVLP Program in the United States which is a program for outstanding social leaders in 2018.

Since 2015, Sadat has hold on the Provincial manager of Afghanistan Civil Society Forum Organization – Herat, alongside this he is well-known in media and he established to social associations for delivering social services and human rights development. Lastly, he is the elected chief Civilian Protection Working Group of Herat, loud and actively advocates for protection of civilians and respecting of IHL by armed actors in the western zone of Afghanistan.

## **Major (OF-3) Samantha Laplante**

Major Samantha Laplante has served with the Canadian Armed forces for 16 years, and continues to serve today. A combat engineer by trade, she has occupied a range of command, operations, and planning roles within the 5th Combat Engineer Regiment of the Canadian Army. In these roles, she supported formation level, joint, and international training and exercises held across the country and abroad. During her career, she also had the opportunity to lead and manage an infrastructure sub-organization, where she was responsible for the execution of a Department of National Defence infrastructure management program.

Major Laplante has deployed on several domestic response operations, including: two occurrences of flood relief efforts (OP LENTUS) in the province of Quebec, and one operation in support of 44th G7 Summit national security efforts (OP CADENCE). She has also deployed on two international operations, including: Kabul, Afghanistan, with the Canadian Contribution to the NATO raining Mission in Afghanistan (OP ATTENTION); and most recently, with the Canadian Joint Task Force to Ukraine as Officer Commanding the Engineer training Group (OP UNIFIER).

Major Laplante holds a Bachelor in Civil Engineering from the Royal Military College of Canada, as well as a Master's in Conflict Studies and Human Rights from Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She has completed a variety of national and international, military professional development and leadership courses, most notably the NATO accredited Gender Advisor course delivered by the Swedish Nordic Center for Gender in Military Operations.

Major Samantha Laplante is currently working with the Dallaire Center of Excellence for Peace and Security as a member of the Research team. She is also dual hatted as Interim Gender Advisor to Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy.

## **Emily Knowles**

Emily is a consultant for CIVIC, where she is leading the organisation's work on the impact of COVID-19 on civil-military relations and the protection of civilians. She is also a Stabilisation Adviser in Central Mali responsible for local conflict resolution programming and community violence reduction. She is the former Director of the Oxford Research Group's Remote Warfare Programme where she led the organisation's work with the military, and has worked for a wide range of think-tanks and NGOs on stability and governance in fragile and conflict-affected states.

## **Connection details to join the event**

To register, please RSVP using the following link:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_6RhDr5IVQcip6L3CmLGwaA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6RhDr5IVQcip6L3CmLGwaA)

A confirmation email should be sent to you once you are registered. If you have problems registering, please contact Maxence Martin at [mmartin@civiliansinconflict.org](mailto:mmartin@civiliansinconflict.org).

*(Ex: RSVP link and/or meeting platform, such as MS Teams, Zoom, WebEx connection details and password)*

*(Note: As the organizer of the HAS, OCHA will post your side event concept note and the link to your online registration form at the HAS website to facilitate the participation of interested stakeholders in the side events.)*

## **Contact(s)**

	<b><i>Focal Point 1</i></b>	<b><i>Focal Point 2</i></b>
Name:	<b>Beatrice Godefroy</b>	<b>Wendy MacClinchy</b>

Mission or Organization	<b>Center for Civilians in Conflict</b>	<b>Center for Civilians in Conflict</b>
Email:	<b>beatricegodefroy@civiliansinconflict.org</b>	<b>wmacclinchy@civiliansinconflict.org</b>
Phone:		
Mobile:	<b>+41 78 924 07 11</b>	<b>+19 17 805 43 53</b>