

Newsletter

Creating Safer Space

October 2024



Dear All,

We are very happy to report back from Brazil, where the *Creating Safer Space* exhibition has encouraged university students to reflect on the role of nonviolence in the context of violent conflict.

We are also very pleased to invite you to two events. **Tomorrow**, the UCP/A Community of Practice is hosting an online consultation with *Creating Safer Space*. Looking further ahead, our Research Café in November will explore the potential links between UCP and the debate on Abolition.

Finally, we are very happy to share news from our projects around the world – scroll down to learn more about the role of religious leaders in carrying out UCP activities in Myanmar, engagements with military officers in Papua, and the risks that women, children and young people face who are involved in grassroots artistic-cultural organisations in the context of urban conflict in Colombia.

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

Creating Safer Space Exhibition in Brazil

The *Creating Safer Space* exhibition visited Brazil between 12 and 23 August. It was hosted by the Institute of International Relations, and on display in the Arts and Design Department, of the Pontifical Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio).

The *Creating Safer Space* exhibition explores the unexpected power of nonviolence in the protection of civilians living in the midst of violence. It has previously been on show in Kenya, Thailand, the UK, Colombia, and at the UN Headquarters in New York. More information is available [here](#).



Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Laura Jimenez from the *Creating Safer Space* network accompanied the exhibition to Brazil, and together with Amaya Querejazu, Christine Andrä, and professors from the Institute of International Relations at PUC-Rio, they provided a range of guided tours for students.

The students reflected on the role of nonviolence in the context of armed conflict, the culturally-specific ways of protecting civilians from violence, the usefulness of creative and arts-based research methods in conflict research, and the extent to which *Creating Safer Space* learnings elsewhere in the world resonate in Brazil.

More information about the exhibition in Brazil is available on our [website](#).



***Creating Safer Space* Research Café – UCP and Abolition**

At the next *Creating Safer Space* Research Café, we will discuss the idea of abolition, how this debate may be linked to UCP, and potential avenues for future collaboration between abolition researchers and UCP researchers.

Dr Raquel da Silva (University of Coimbra) and Prof Nerve Macaspac (City University of New York) will present their research on the topic and introduce the session.

Raquel is interested in discussions surrounding the imperative to address instances of police violence. She is particularly keen on exploring reconceptualizations of the understanding of security and its governance in relation to the state policing apparatus by exploring how community-led intersectional politics of care can mitigate structural conditions of violence. Nerve's research explores a relational framework that puts practices of unarmed community self-protection in dialogue with the scholarship of "abolition geography" in rethinking how everyday life might be lived and organized—socially and spatially—that does not rely upon institutions that reproduce spaces of violence.

12.30 – 1.30 pm UTC on **Thursday 14 November**.
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/meeting/register/tZwof-mgrzkiHtPR8KDHgiw4LnnPgg6uN_S9

UCP/A Community of Practice Consultation with *Creating Safer Space*

The [UCP/A Community of Practice](#) is holding an online consultation with *Creating Safer Space*.

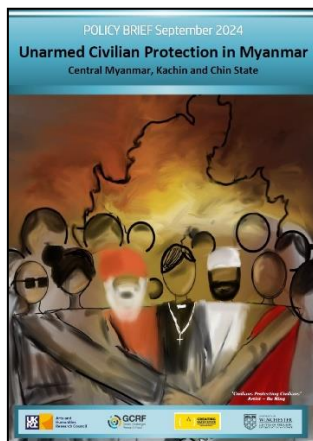
In 2024, *Creating Safer Space* held three regional conferences, which brought together researchers, practitioners, artists, journalists, and policy-makers to share unique research methodologies, findings, and their implications for violence prevention, protection, and peacebuilding initiatives. The conferences were held in [Nairobi \(Kenya\)](#), [Bangkok \(Thailand\)](#) and [Medellin \(Colombia\)](#).

The *Creating Safer Space* Principal Investigator will share key takeaways and insights from the three conferences, and will be able to answer questions and share recommendations for an ever more inclusive practice of UCP/A.

2.00 pm UTC on Thursday 24 October (Tomorrow)

More information is available in the [UCP/A Community of Practice newsletter](#), and here is the [Zoom link](#).

News from *Creating Safer Space* Projects



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 on Unarmed Civilian Protection in Myanmar: Central Myanmar, Kachin and Chin State](#). The policy brief discusses acts of 'Spontaneous' UCP in Myanmar, and shows how these have been intuitive and adaptive, and often emerge from local knowledge, embedded in religious and cultural practices, and kinship relationships and networks. Religious leaders and faith communities have played an integral role in carrying out UCP activities. The policy brief offers recommendations to UCP organisations, policymakers, the international community, and to religious leaders.



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Art that Protects: Networks as strategies for self-protection in the context of urban conflict in the city of Medellín](#)' has published a journal article in *Estudios Políticos*, entitled '[Vulneraciones y riesgos de mujeres, niños, niñas y jóvenes involucrados con las actividades de organizaciones de base artístico-cultural en el contexto del conflicto urbano en Medellín, 2022](#)'. The article is openly accessible in Spanish, and explores the risks that women, children and young people face who live in contexts of urban conflict in Medellín (Colombia) and who are involved in grassroots artistic-cultural organisations.



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Civilian \(Self-\) Protection from Violent Conflict in Papua: Exploring Local Infrastructures and Initiatives](#)' has disseminated its research to Indonesian military officers. This was part of a training programme on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights facilitated by the National Human Rights Commission. Delsy Ronnie, the Principal Investigator of the *Creating Safer Space* project, and the Nonviolent Peaceforce Regional Representative for Asia, shared Nonviolent Peaceforce experiences in the Philippines, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Ukraine, and insights from the *Creating Safer Space* project in Papua. More information is available [here](#).

External News

The UCP/A Community of Practice has launched the [UCP/A Voices Podcast](#). The podcasts have been produced by Laura Jimenez, who is also a *Creating Safer Space* Research Assistant, and Catarina Bezerra.

Humanitarian Policy Group has published a report on [Reducing violence and strengthening the protection of civilians through community dialogue with armed actors](#).

UCP in Palestine (UCPIP) has published an [Assessment Report: The Feasibility of Implementing an Unarmed Civilian Protection Project in Palestine for the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza](#) and an [Assessment Summary](#).

Roger Mac Ginty, *Creating Safer Space* Co-Investigator, has published a policy report on [Long-Term Networks for Peace Breakthroughs](#) and a policy brief [What works? Effectiveness in Mediation and Peacemaking](#).

A Consortium of International Organisations and Universities has launched a [Survey on Women in Agrifood Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa](#). The work is led by Lora Forsythe, principal investigator of the *Creating Safer Space* project Gender-just landscapes.

The Star, a Kenyan newspaper, reports on [How Mathare residents are using unarmed methods to build peace](#).

Carla Albala Habib, who helped with the *Creating Safer Space* exhibition in Brazil, has published a PhD thesis (in Portuguese) on [Building Shalom Salam – An analysis of the role of the joint nonviolent resistance between Palestinians and Israelis and of the creativity of the peacemaker subject](#).

The Middle East and North Africa Social Policy Network (MENASP), a *Creating Safer Space* sister network, has issued an invitation to its end of project conference (online/London), [Strengthening Social Protection, Security and Welfare in the Middle East and North Africa Region](#).

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