

## Newsletter

### Creating Safer Space

January 2025



**CREATING  
SAFER SPACE**  
STRENGTHENING CIVILIAN PROTECTION  
AMIDST VIOLENT CONFLICT

Dear All,

We are very happy to invite you to Creating Safer Space: A Celebration! As our period of funding comes to an end, we look forward to celebrating our achievements together, and looking towards future opportunities – bring a local drink!

If you happen to be in Brussels next week, come along to see the Creating Safer Space exhibition and our associated events: a policy event with speakers from Nonviolent Peaceforce, the European Commission and the Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a brown bag lunch on protective accompaniment and community-led UCP in Colombia, and another brown bag lunch on protecting human rights defenders in South Sudan. All welcome! And, if you happen to be in Tallinn, come along to a public lecture by Creating Safer Space Principal Investigator Berit Bliesemann de Guevara.

We are also pleased to report from Leeds, where the Creating Safer Space exhibition was on show in November.

Finally, we are very happy to share publications from our projects – learn about community-led civilian protection in Cameroon, Thailand, Palestine, Colombia and South Sudan!

## Creating Safer Space: A Celebration!

We are very happy to invite you all to [Creating Safer Space: A Celebration!](#)

Over the last five years, the *Creating Safer Space* network has brought together people from 70 organisations in 13 countries to better understand unarmed civilian protection and self-protection amidst violent conflict. As our period of funding comes to an end, join us to find out more about our work, to celebrate our achievements and to look ahead!

1.00 – 2.30 pm UTC on **Friday 21 February**

[Register here for the Zoom event](#)

Programme:

- **Research Findings and Achievements:** Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Nerve Macaspac, Beatriz Arias and Rachel Julian
- **Keynote Speech:** Rosemary Kabaki, Head of Mission South Sudan, Nonviolent Peaceforce
- **Highlights** from a selection of Creating Safer Space projects around the world
- **Reflections** from the audience

Bring a local drink to celebrate!

**Creating Safer Space:  
A Celebration!**

The Creating Safer Space network has brought together people from 70 organisations in 13 countries to better understand unarmed civilian protection and self-protection amidst violent conflict. As the network draws to a close, **Join us to find out more about our work and to celebrate our achievements!**

**1.00 – 2.30 pm UTC on Friday 21 February**  
Register for the Zoom event [HERE](#)

**Programme:**

- Research Findings and Achievements: Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Nerve Macaspac, Beatriz Arias and Rachel Julian
- Keynote Speech: Rosemary Kabaki, Head of Mission South Sudan, Nonviolent Peaceforce
- Highlights from a selection of Creating Safer Space projects around the world
- Reflections from the audience

Bring a local drink to celebrate!

Please see <https://creating-safer-space.com/creating-safer-space-a-celebration/> for information about the photos.

[www.creating-safer-space.com](http://www.creating-safer-space.com)

---

## Invitation to *Creating Safer Space* Exhibition in Brussels



The [Creating Safer Space Exhibition](#) will be on show at Quaker House Brussels from **4-7 February 2025**.

The reception on Tuesday 4 February from 6pm will include drinks, nibbles, an introduction to the exhibition, and an opportunity to learn more about Creating Safer Space research. Please [RSVP by filling in this form](#).

Three events will be held in conjunction with the exhibition.

A policy event will be held from 5-6pm on Tuesday 4 February, on the topic [Civilians and Nonviolence in Crisis Preparedness and Management: The role of local communities in addressing violent conflicts and humanitarian emergencies](#).

The event is hosted by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and the Creating Safer Space network. Agenda:

- Prof Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (Creating Safer Space network)
- Ms Rosemary Kabaki (Head of Mission, Nonviolent Peaceforce South Sudan)
- Ms Gaëlle Nizery (Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, European Commission)
- Ms Nora Loozen (Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Discussion moderated by Prof Rachel Julian (Creating Safer Space network)

Please [RSVP by filling in this form](#).

A brown bag lunch will be held on Wednesday 5 February, on [Protective Accompaniment and Community-led Unarmed Civilian Protection in Colombia](#). Speakers include Emily Humphreys (Peace Brigades International) and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (Creating Safer Space network).

Another brown bag lunch will be held on Thursday 6 February, on [Protecting Human Rights Defenders: Learning from South Sudan](#). Representatives from the South Sudan Human Rights Defender Network (SSHRDN) and Nonviolent Peaceforce will share lessons about effective protection approaches for human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, and reflect on the challenges of integrating protection concerns in human rights work. They will also share recommendations on how INGOs and donors such as the European Union can better support human rights defenders in South Sudan. Please register by Tuesday 4 February.

---

## Creating Safer Space Exhibition at Leeds Beckett University, UK

The Creating Safer Space Exhibition visited Leeds Beckett University from 4 – 8 November 2024.

The exhibition explores the unexpected power of nonviolence in the protection of civilians living in the midst of violence. The objects, images, and voices originate from a selection of 26 research projects funded by the Creating Safer Space network, which have been conducted in collaboration between academics, self-protecting communities and nonviolent civilian accompaniers. The exhibition draws on experiences from Cameroon, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Philippines, South Sudan, and Thailand, where civilians are harnessing the power of nonviolence to create safer spaces and work towards alternative presents and futures.

Professor Rachel Julian is Co-Investigator of the Creating Safer Space network and Professor of Peace Studies in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Leeds Beckett University. Speaking about the exhibition, she said:

"Having the exhibition at Leeds Beckett was an amazing opportunity for other staff and students to learn directly from people affected by violent conflict. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from both social sciences and arts courses visited the exhibition and made their own responses through poetry and art. At the public meeting about the project, Gordon Crawford spoke in detail about the work in Cameroon which was fascinating. Visitors to the exhibition included research leaders in the University, understanding the global impact of large research projects, especially those rooted in the affected communities. It was such an interesting week and huge thanks to Creating Safer Space!"



---

---

## Open Lecture at Tallinn University

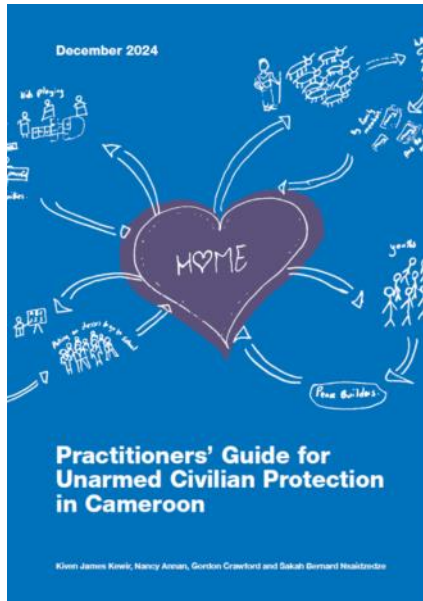
Prof. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Creating Safer Space Principal Investigator, is sharing insights from our research in an open lecture hosted by the Central and Eastern European Security Hub at Tallinn University. The title is 'Creating Safer Space: Exploring unarmed, civilian-to-civilian protection amidst violent conflict', and the discussants are Louise Ridden (Tampere University) and John Buchanan (Tallinn University).

The open lecture will be held at 18.00 on **Wednesday 12 February**, and more information is available [here](#).

---

---

## News from *Creating Safer Space* Projects



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Exploring unarmed civilian self-protection in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict](#)' has published a [Practitioners' Guide for Unarmed Civilian Protection in Cameroon](#). The guide is written by Kiven James Kewir, Nancy Annan, Gordon Crawford and Sakah Bernard Nsaidzedze, and it provides practical tips for local unarmed civilian protection (UCP) practitioners as well as UCP organisations. Drawing on research in Cameroon, the guide provides best practices and guidance that can also be built upon or replicated in other contexts.



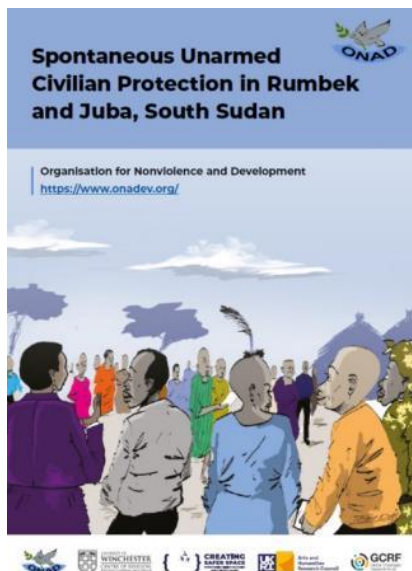
The *Creating Safer Space* project [UCP in Southern Thailand: Developing civilian protection guidelines for violence-prone communities](#) has published a report, [The Research on UCP in Southern Thailand: Developing Civilian Protection Guidelines for Violence-prone Communities](#). The report explores the conflict in Southern Thailand, and community perceptions in regard to peace, violence and safety. It provides recommendations on civilian protection in the region. The report is only available in Thai.



The *Creating Safer Space* project '[Safety and dignity: Enhancing unarmed civilian protection amongst Palestinian communities in the South Hebron Hills \(Masfer Yatta\)](#)' has published an article in *Rethinking Security*, entitled [Frontier Genocide: The West Bank a year after the ICJ ruling on Gaza](#). The article is written by Andrew Rigby, and calls for urgent protection of Palestinians in the Masfer Yatta area, which is experiencing a 'frontier genocide' by Israeli settlers.



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 now published an English language version of its recent working paper, [Intersectionality, Rights Violations, and Self-Protection in the Context of the Urban Armed Conflict in Medellín, 2022-2024](#). It explores the role of art as a powerful form of self-protection in the context of social and armed conflict in Medellín, Colombia. Using an intersectional lens, it analyses the initiatives of fifteen community-based artistic and cultural organizations that have worked in the context of this urban conflict.



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, [Spontaneous Unarmed Civilian Protection in Rumbek and Juba, South Sudan](#). The policy brief is written by Luke Abbs, Flora Francis Bringi and Moses John. It explores the role of peace committees, protection teams and religious leaders in grassroots UCP initiatives in South Sudan, and provides recommendations aimed at supporting 'spontaneous' UCP initiatives while keeping initiatives locally owned.

---

---

## External News

The **UCP in Palestine Project** are seeking an [experienced volunteer grant writer](#) and indications of interest from veteran unarmed civilian protectors interested in serving in Palestine as a paid or volunteer [international civilian protector](#).

The **Nation** has published an article, [Women of peace: The unlikely heroes in end of conflicts in Laikipia's restive area](#).

**Nonviolent Peaceforce** has published [Risk, Protection & Locally-Led Humanitarian Response: Practical Guide to Responsible Partnerships](#) and an associated [Toolkit](#).

**National Catholic Reporter** published an article, [Unarmed civilians seek to de-escalate violence in West Bank](#).

---

---

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.

---