

PEOPLE ON WAR

Country report Philippines

ICRC worldwide consultation on the rules of war

Report by Greenberg Research, Inc.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

About the People on War project

To mark the 50th anniversary of the modern Geneva Conventions (on 12 August 1999), the ICRC launched its People on War project with the aim of building greater respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. At centre stage is a worldwide consultation giving the general public a chance to air their views on the many facets of war. The idea was that civilians and combatants alike would be able to share their experiences, express their opinions on what basic rules should apply in war, discuss why those rules sometimes break down and look at what the future holds.

With this in mind, the ICRC commissioned Greenberg Research, Inc. to design a research programme that would enable people to be heard in the most effective way possible. Under the guidance of Greenberg Research, ICRC staff and Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers carried out this consultation in 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia/Abkhazia, Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia and South Africa), conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews, group discussions and national public opinion surveys. Surveys on the basis of a questionnaire only were conducted in a further five countries (France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States) in order to reflect these people's perceptions of war.

Greenberg Research analysts then prepared a series of Country Reports on the basis of the findings. The reports open up this new, important discourse to a wider audience, while remaining conscious of the need to protect the safety of all those who participated.

By making this consultation public, the ICRC hopes to initiate a local and international debate on the humanitarian aspects of war – a debate that should be joined by the major political players, international and non-governmental organizations and aid specialists.

Greenberg Research, Inc.

Greenberg Research is an opinion research firm that has worked for over two decades to help organizations and leaders around the world advance their goals in the face of rapid change. It specializes in using advanced methods of opinion research – surveys, focus groups and in-depth interviews – to help form strategies for political parties, corporations and non-governmental organizations.

Greenberg Research has extensive experience in Europe and the United States, but also in the Middle East, Asia, southern Africa and Central and South America. It has conducted research in war-torn, politically complex and remote settings. In its work for corporations and non-governmental organizations, it has explored a broad range of global issues, including landmines, genetic engineering, climate change, race and gender relations, trade and information technologies.

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| <p>The opinions expressed in this report are not those of the ICRC. The ICRC retained Greenberg Research, Inc. to design and oversee the People on War consultation. Greenberg Research compiled and analysed the results and is responsible for the content and interpretation.</p> |
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Country context

For more than 20 years, the Philippines has been the site of localized armed conflicts, which have affected some areas of the country while leaving most of its territory almost untouched. On the southern island of Mindanao, Muslim groups have battled to establish an independent Islamic government, in a conflict estimated to have left a minimum of 50,000 dead.¹ In other parts of the country, a 20-year conflict between the communist guerrillas of the New People's Army (NPA) and government security forces has claimed at least 40,000 lives.²

During the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos (elected in 1965), localized conflicts in the Philippines flared up against a background of economic inequality and corruption. The concerns of Filipino Muslims (Moros) about Christian settlers occupying their land spurred the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1968, which launched a rebellion that at its height brought two-thirds of the Filipino army to Mindanao. Unable to quell the MNLF, Marcos was forced in 1977 to grant a degree of autonomy to the region and invite Muslim leaders to occupy positions of authority in the regional government. Later, splits among Muslim nationalists led to the formation of dissident groups, who continue to demand full independence for the region.

In the 1970s, the country became increasingly destabilized by violence and corruption, and there was an escalation of the armed struggle by communist forces. The NPA, which had formed in 1968, waged an ongoing battle to overthrow the government in Manila, launching intermittent attacks on government and military targets and consolidating local power bases. By appealing to landless peasants and concentrating its presence in the poorer regions, by the mid-1980s the NPA had amassed a combined guerrilla force of more than 20,000, which enabled it to survive despite fierce suppression by the security forces.

In 1986, a popular uprising resulted in the overthrow of the Marcos regime and the democratic election of Corazon Aquino. Over the next few years, NPA support dropped dramatically in the face of continued suppression by government security forces and a decline in popular interest. In the past decade, a combination of land reform, growing economic prosperity and reduced regional violence has brought greater stability to the Philippines than it has seen for a generation.

Prospects for continued peace are promising. In 1995, government-initiated talks with the NPA led to a preliminary peace agreement. And in the south, several peace agreements have also been signed in Mindanao, although the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continues to press for independence. Peace talks between the government and the MILF and the NPA were ongoing at the time of writing this report.

¹ Brogan, P. *World Conflicts*, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press Inc., p. 236.

² *Ibid.*

Country methodology

The findings in this report are based on a consultation carried out by the ICRC in the Philippines. The project was overseen by a multinational research team from Greenberg Research, with the participation of a local partner, Social Weather Stations (SWS), a public opinion research firm based in Manila. With their help and guidance, ICRC staff and members of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) conducted the various components of the research. These were as follows:

- Eight **focus groups** (FG), for which participants were recruited by specially trained ICRC staff. Professional moderators affiliated with SWS facilitated the groups in Tagalog and Cebuano. The moderators received additional training and instructions from senior Greenberg Research staff. Sessions were held with the following groups: displaced women (Kidapawan City, North Cotabato); Muslim teachers of mixed gender (North Cotabato); MILF fighters (Maguindanao); Christian farmers (Davao City); Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) (Davao City); Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) soldiers (Davao City); NGO workers (Davao City); and NPA detainees (Muntinlupa City). The focus groups took place between 25 and 28 January 1999 in a variety of sites ranging from the PNRC office and the government army barracks in Davao City to the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa.
- Twenty-four **in-depth interviews** (IDI) carried out by ICRC and PNRC staff. Half of these interviews mirrored the composition of the focus groups; the ICRC selected the other half. The latter group consisted of a broad range of people, including police officers, farmers, schoolteachers, NGO representatives, and others more directly affected by the conflict. Greenberg Research trained ICRC staff on how to recruit participants and how to conduct a structured, 45-minute interview. Each interview was audiotaped in the local language or in English and later translated into English where necessary. Interviews were conducted between 30 January and 15 February 1999.
- A **national quantitative survey** of 1,100 respondents of at least 18 years of age and stratified geographically according to population. The survey was conducted in five local languages throughout the country. PNRC volunteers carried out the survey under the supervision of Greenberg Research. All volunteers received training from senior Greenberg Research staff and SWS. Greenberg Research, in conjunction with the local partner, established the geographic regions that are discussed in this report. The survey took place between 24 January and 13 February 1999. Percentages reported here are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.2 percentage points (at a 95 in 100 confidence level). Results in smaller segments, such as the 302 interviews for particular areas, are subject to an error of +/- 9.1 percentage points.³
- In addition, Greenberg Research commissioned SWS to carry out a **parallel national quantitative survey** among 1,000 respondents. The aim of the parallel survey was to identify areas of potential bias and shortcomings in the ICRC survey. The parallel survey took place between 24 January and 6 February 1999. Differences between the two surveys will be indicated as needed in footnotes throughout the report.

Before presenting an extensive account of the findings, it should be noted that this report often refers to two important subsets of the population whose experiences and perceptions are quite different from those living in other parts of the country. One group often noted comprises those who live in Mindanao, where much of the conflict has taken place and which was the location for seven of the eight focus groups conducted.⁴ The other group consists of people who describe themselves as living in an area of conflict, and are referred to as such throughout the report.⁵

³ These estimates are based on population values of 50 per cent. Obviously, many reported percentages are lower or higher than that; higher percentages would have a smaller sampling error. For example, a reported percentage of 90 per cent for the total population would have a sampling error of +/- 2.5 percentage points.

⁴ A total of 253 questionnaires were also completed in Mindanao.

⁵ Of the 1,100 people surveyed in the Philippines, 17 per cent report that the armed conflict took place where they lived.

Executive summary

For more than 20 years, a series of localized conflicts has taken place in mostly isolated regions of the Philippines. Outside of the island of Mindanao, armed conflict for many Filipinos is a relatively distant phenomenon. The large majority of the population is not engaged in armed conflict; instead, they view the fighting from a distance.

Given the diffuse nature of the armed conflict in the Philippines, many of the Filipinos surveyed have undeveloped impressions of norms that should govern armed conflict. Consciousness of the Geneva Conventions is low, and there exists little knowledge of the rules of war. This is true even in areas where the fighting is more prevalent and where people are dealing with long-running conflicts characterized by sporadic violence, but with no clearly defined form.

The result is a set of norms that give way when challenged by the violence that is often wrought on civilians. Nearly half (47 per cent) of those living outside areas affected by conflict do not cite anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in armed conflict. That level of tolerance, not surprisingly, declines to 39 per cent among those living in a conflict zone.

While Filipinos generally believe civilians should be protected from conflict, many appear resigned to the fact that civilians often become embroiled. As the focus groups and in-depth interviews reveal, those living in areas of conflict realize that they are caught up in a situation in which all sides use civilians for their benefit. The forces arrayed against them are too powerful and the absence of outside attention allows them to be swept up in the conflict without a real choice.

The main findings of this consultation are presented below:

- **Localized conflicts define the Filipino war experience.** The armed conflict in the Philippines is highly contained and few respondents living outside Mindanao have any real connection with it. Just 17 per cent report that they have lived in an area affected by conflict, 4 per cent participated as combatants and only 10 per cent support one side or other.⁶
- **The principle of limits in armed conflict is not well developed in the Philippines.** Nearly half of respondents, 46 per cent, do not cite anything that combatants should not do in conflict.
- **Filipinos are divided on what provides the basis for limits in war.** Among those who accept the principle of limits in armed conflict, 46 per cent say certain actions should be prohibited because they are “wrong”; of these, the majority (58 per cent) refer to a legal framework, while 48 per cent point to the practical damage and problems they cause.
- **Pragmatism is the driving force behind support for civilian protection among those living closer to the conflict.** In Mindanao, for example, many of those who live in the vicinity of the conflict and have felt its effects are more likely to say certain actions should not be allowed because they would “cause too many problems” (53 per cent) rather than because they are “wrong” (34 per cent).
- **Religious beliefs strongly influence attitudes towards the conduct of hostilities.** Religion exerts a tremendous influence, particularly among Muslims, who are closely guided by their religion on issues related to behaviour in armed conflict. Of those who say certain actions are wrong, almost four in ten (39 per cent) say it is because they contradict their religious beliefs. As evidenced in the focus groups and in-depth interviews, religious beliefs strongly guide the behaviour of both combatants and civilians.

⁶ Respondents were self-defined as combatants if they responded affirmatively to the following question: During the armed conflict, have you ever found yourself in a situation of being a combatant – a soldier or fighter and carrying a weapon?

- **Chaos and upheaval are the dominant impressions of those who live in areas of conflict.** Chaos and upheaval, the splitting up of families, and loss of homes and land are the defining images of conflict for those Filipinos who have experienced it most directly. Many were forced to leave their homes (39 per cent), almost one-third (28 per cent) sustained serious property damage, one-quarter (25 per cent) lost contact with close relatives and 23 per cent had their homes looted. Focus group participants described being forced out of their homes with no time to prepare, sometimes losing a family member and everything they owned.
 - **Support for civilian protection begins to break down when respondents are presented with specific scenarios.** Almost one-third (29 per cent) say civilians should be left alone when combatants attack, but most (65 per cent) accept a broader standard whereby civilians should be avoided as much as possible. In addition, nearly one-third say attacking the enemy in populated villages or towns knowing that many civilians would be killed is just “part of armed conflict”.
 - **Combatants view themselves as the defenders and protectors of their communities.** As revealed in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, combatants see their actions as being governed by the need to defend their people by whatever means necessary. They believe it is justifiable to take action that may put civilians in danger as long as it is done in the defence of their community.
 - **Direct experience of armed conflict affects Filipino attitudes towards civilian protection.** Those who have been left relatively untouched by violence are less understanding of the dilemma faced by civilians in conflict zones and, therefore, willing to accept a broader definition of actions that put them in danger. Those who have been traumatized by violence, on the other hand, look for broader civilian protection; they are less likely than others to see actions such as depriving a community of food and attacking a populated village as acceptable.
 - **Laws are viewed from a national, not international perspective.** Filipinos consider that laws governing armed conflict are based on national rather than international law. Almost three-quarters believe their government or courts should punish wrongdoers, compared with only 10 per cent who place this responsibility with an international court.
 - **International humanitarian law is largely unknown.** Consciousness of the Geneva Conventions is low. Only 12 per cent of Filipinos surveyed have heard of them and few have any specific ideas of what they are about. Of those who are aware of the Conventions, many consider that these rules apply only to conflicts between countries and not to the conflict taking place in the Philippines.
 - **Limited awareness of the rules of armed conflict.** Fifty-one per cent of Filipinos say there are rules so important that people who break them during conflict should be punished. One half either disagree (30 per cent) or are unsure of the existence of these rules (19 per cent).
 - **Mindanaoans are seeking closure.** Respondents from Mindanao – who have felt the effects of the conflict most directly – are looking to close this chapter in their lives. One half (51 per cent) believe those who break the laws should be brought to trial, while 43 per cent believe they should be given amnesty, forgiven or forgotten.
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The Filipino armed conflict experience

The armed conflict in the Philippines consists of a series of localized struggles in mostly isolated regions. In more than 20 years of conflict, the mobilization of the population has been limited, and thus the overwhelming majority of Filipinos remain largely disconnected from the conflict's realities. For most people outside the island of Mindanao their connection to the conflict is through the media rather than personal experience.

The conflict affects only a very small minority of Filipinos directly: just 4 per cent say they have been combatants, 17 per cent report having lived in an area of conflict and an even smaller number, 10 per cent, have chosen a side.⁷ The substantial majority (76 per cent) report that they lived outside the boundaries of the fighting. In Mindanao, almost one-third of those surveyed report living in a conflict zone (31 per cent).

Yet people living in Mindanao and in areas of conflict have resisted joining the conflict either as combatants or by choosing sides, even though they could easily have been drawn in, given its proximity. The vast majority of those living in areas of conflict wish to maintain their neutrality and try to stay out of the fighting. Just 10 per cent of those in areas of conflict are combatants and only 15 per cent have chosen sides.

The image that emerges from this research is of a conflict in which fighting erupts quickly and without notice, and with no clear geographic parameters. Civilians feel caught in the middle, and describe a situation in which they are often used as pawns by both sides.

We obey the laws enforced by the government because we are under the government. But those on the other side would say things against the government so that we, the civilians or farmers, are caught in the middle. That's why it is very difficult for us. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

My only wish is that the government would see to it that the military will not hurt the civilians so that they won't think of joining the NPA. My wish for the NPA is for them to stop recruiting civilians. Like me, I did not experience any harm from the military. If they recruit me to join, naturally my life as a farmer will just become troubled. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

Because we are not on either side, we are in the middle. That's why I won't agree that I will be included in their quarrel. I am a civilian, I am working well. If they include me in their encounters, I really am not in favour. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

I see *barangays* [small administrative division] along the highway where there are many civilians, and the military stays there. They know that they have enemies; what if their enemies attack them, the civilians will get involved. Even in our schools, imagine they're in the school campus. The elementary school is beside the high school building, and the military has occupied one of the elementary school buildings. What we mean is, if the military is protecting us, they shouldn't do those things, since it creates many conflicts. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

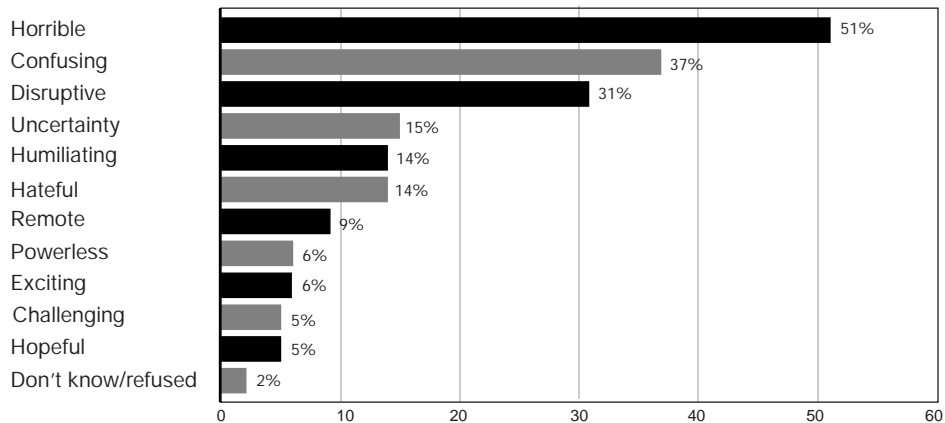
Because at times they believe that the civilians are [coddlers] of those rebels. Like what he said that even if they're not a part of it they are still attacked. Because they think that they hide the rebels, so that sometimes happens. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Chaos, upheaval and the uprooting of families without notice dominate impressions of the armed conflict among those surveyed. Respondents primarily describe the armed conflict in the Philippines as "horrible" (51 per cent), "confusing" (37 per cent) and "disruptive" (31 per cent). Others mention the "uncertainty" generated by the fighting (15 per cent) or describe it as "hateful" (14 per cent) or "humiliating" (14 per cent).

⁷ Respondents were self-defined as combatants if they responded affirmatively to the following question: During the armed conflict, have you ever found yourself in a situation of being a combatant – a soldier or fighter and carrying a weapon?

FIGURE 1
Personal description of the armed conflict

(per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)



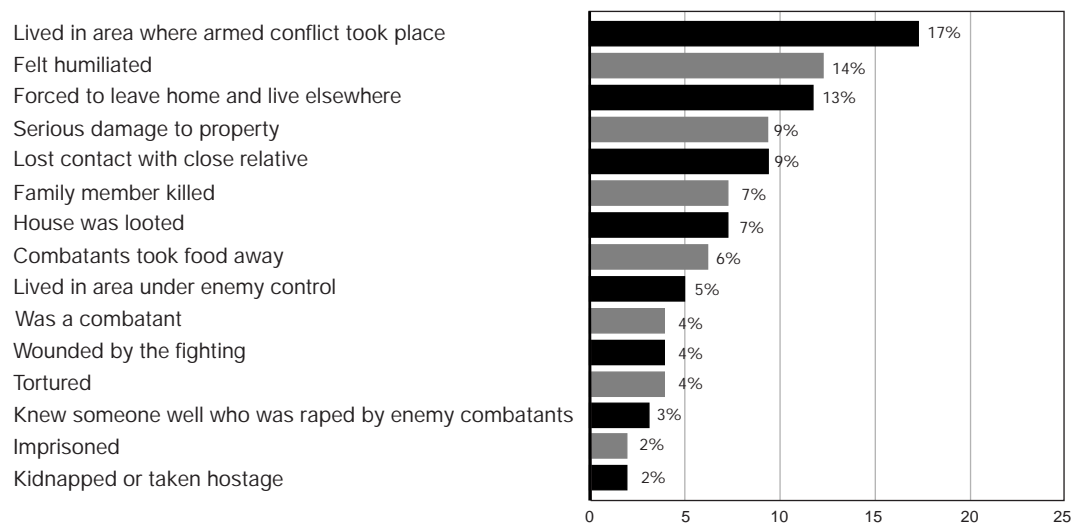
Question: Which *two* of these words best describe the armed conflict for you personally?

These overarching impressions of conflict were echoed in the focus groups. Notably, little animosity was heard in the discussions, even among combatants, and those in affected areas display no sense of hatred towards the combatants. But a clear difference in the dominant images of the conflict emerges between those in affected areas and Mindanao and those living in other areas of the country. In areas where the conflict is more pervasive, participants are more likely to share their experiences of the conflict, while those living outside Mindanao and other less affected areas are more likely to express confusion.

Participants described a number of negative consequences resulting from their experiences with armed conflict. (See Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2
The armed conflict experience

(per cent of total population responding)



One of the most immediate effects was the dispersal of family members and the crushing fear of never seeing loved ones again. Beyond that, the dislocation dramatically affects people's ability to earn a livelihood and maintain a stable home. Focus group participants spoke movingly of the manner in which they were forced to vacate their homes, often having to leave their family members and belongings behind.

Our experience had been difficult because when we left our place at five in the morning last October 18, we were not able to bring anything. Our children were only given clothes and food by the Christians on the highway because we were not able to eat breakfast as the armed group was harassing us. When we reached the centre, we were helped by the priests and nuns. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

Part of my experience in this world is evacuating because of encounters between the NPA and the military. It is very difficult for us to live now because I have five children, we have to evacuate at night, and we have no food because of El Niño. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

It's really difficult during evacuation because you can't bring your things. It's only your children that you can carry with you; everything has to be left behind. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

It was bitter and terrifying. Because we left our home and we only brought a few things with us. You could say that we only brought clothes that we wore because we valued our lives. So we left our possessions, our *carabaos* [cattle], everything. We couldn't get anything from our house because it was set on fire by the military. So every time I remember this, it gives me shivers, as it is still fresh in my memory. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Sometimes they have to leave their houses, sometimes even at night, then they have to leave their other belongings just to leave the place. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

The effects of the conflict are not limited to men who take up arms. Women also bear a huge burden. Not only are they responsible for their families' well-being, but – as men in the focus groups lamented – they are often left behind to run the household amidst the chaos and upheaval. Frequently they must take on the role of sole breadwinner.

Women carry a heavy burden, to be sure, but as the Muslim teachers from North Cotabato explained, they choose rather to focus on the effects of the conflict on the men and children who serve as combatants on the front line.

If the man has no source of livelihood, it's the same. It's heavier for the man. I said that the man's problem is heavier than a woman's problem, because as we said earlier, even if the man is not a rebel but he is suspected to be one, then he has a problem. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Men are more endangered than women because when we talk about socio-economics, men are the breadwinners. Every time there is a confrontation, men are readily affected as to how they can feed their families. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

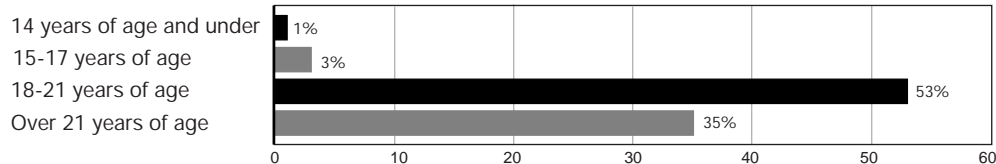
Children in armed conflict

The belief in a separation of combatants and civilians is most evident in the case of children, who are viewed as the most vulnerable victims in an armed conflict. There is a nearly absolute belief that children under the age of 18 should not be combatants (96 per cent). The majority (53 per cent) believe children become eligible for combat between the ages of 18 and 21 years of age. One-third, 35 per cent, believe they should be at least 21 years of age.

FIGURE 3

Child combatants

(per cent of total population responding)



Question: At what age is a young person mature enough to be a combatant?

People speak poignantly of the pain they feel upon seeing children enter the conflict.

It hurts me to see that because it is not right. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

For me it is too painful because I already lost a child and a sibling. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

I pity the young people who join this group. They should be studying for a bright future. They should not be recruited to join and promising them a good future if they joined. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

The conflict between the pain of seeing child combatants and the knowledge that this is sometimes needed in their communities was expressed in the focus group discussions. Muslims in particular were most understanding of the use of child combatants, seeing them as making a heroic gesture for a cause.

The only thing I could say to teenagers is that there is nothing wrong if you join the *jihad* [holy war], but you should also think of your future. You should study since you could get more from that than joining the *jihad*. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

For example, the military will attack a certain locality, violating the human rights of the civilians. Maybe that's the time that even under-age pupils can go to war. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Even if you have two sons, I wouldn't encourage them because I don't have faith in them. But if they were called for something important and for the betterment of the religion, I would encourage them. But if it is against the religion, I wouldn't allow them. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

Differing impressions based on proximity to conflict also manifest themselves in perceptions of child combatants, even though all generally oppose the notion. Those closer to the conflict are more understanding of children becoming combatants at an early age.

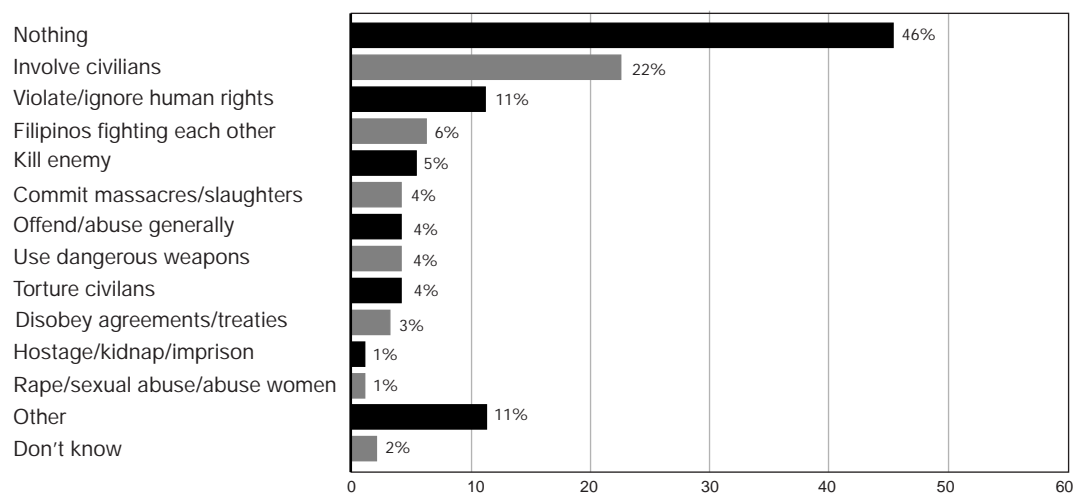
Limits in armed conflict: the starting point

While Filipinos overall show general support for the principle of a separation between civilians and combatants, nearly half, 46 per cent, do not cite anything that combatants should not do in fighting their enemy. One in four (26 per cent) say combatants should not involve or torture civilians and 11 per cent say they should not ignore or violate human rights.

FIGURE 4

What combatants should not do

(per cent of total population responding) (open-ended question)⁸



Question: Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting the enemy?

Among those living in areas of conflict, however, limits on combatants are viewed differently, likely as a result of their direct experiences. In areas of conflict, a majority (69 per cent) cite actions which combatants should not take, most of which offer some form of civilian protection: involving civilians in general (31 per cent); human rights of people (11 per cent); abuses (7 per cent); stealing or destroying property (2 per cent); hostage-taking (1 per cent); and involving children (1 per cent).

A firm belief in the principle of civilian protection helps define the limits that Filipinos believe should be set in armed conflict.

They are not connected with the rebels; they are also not connected with the military so they should not be involved. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

Probably one rule that is violated is when the gunfight occurs in the midst of civilians. Firing of guns should not be allowed here because you have to safeguard the right of the civilians. Unfortunately, these encounters happen in areas where there are many civilians. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

That's it, they should not touch the civilians. As much as possible, they should avoid harming civilians. Because they are defenceless, they are not armed and civilians are not the enemies. If I were the civilian involved, I would be pitiful. (IDI, store owner, Quezon City)

Generally speaking, you should not include innocent people in any kind of conflict, they should not be involved. Like cutting off their food supply, medicines. Even our government cannot do that. They should not involve everybody. (IDI, imam, Quiapo)

⁸ Respondents were free to volunteer their own answers rather than picking from a list. As a result, the number of Filipinos who responded "nothing" (46 per cent) most likely encompasses those who meant to say that there should be nothing that is prohibited in an armed conflict, as well as those who were unable to volunteer a specific response or specific action.

Filipinos are split when asked to explain why they oppose actions against civilians. Their responses divide almost evenly between saying such actions are “wrong” (46 per cent) and they “cause too many problems” (48 per cent). But pragmatism dominates among those who live in an area of conflict. People living in Mindanao feel the practical effects of the conflict directly and believe certain actions cause too many problems (53 per cent versus 34 per cent who say they are wrong) – readily citing destruction as the main problem they cause.

As focus group participants in Mindanao attest, support for limiting attacks on civilians is often derived from a desire to alleviate the devastating impact the conflict has had on their lives. They simply want to keep their families intact, earn a livelihood and live a peaceful life.

Yes, and the result is poverty. The first affected are the farmers. The businessmen only sell in town when they have things to sell, if not, it does not matter to them because they are just in town. But with the farmers, we live and farm in the mountains, so it is very difficult for us because we have no mode of transportation. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

Nevertheless, what they’re saying is true. We don’t have peace. My child who is 13 years old still can’t go out for a walk. We are having a hard time looking for a means of living since we can’t go out because we’re afraid. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

Because now we cannot work because we have to evacuate now and then. We have a hard situation. How can we find food for our children? (IDI, mother of a victim, Mindanao)

They worked and had a good livelihood. Then when the rebel group came, automatically the military came in and their livelihood was disrupted. They were given enough time by the military not to accept that group in their midst, but the residents continued to accept them, so that their place became known as “no man’s land”. So some of our neighbours who transferred there did not wait any more, they just left. They had to leave their good livelihood, their work, even their animals because of that conflict. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

That’s why farmers are affected because they can’t visit their farms any more out of fear and the result is hunger. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

Religious beliefs also have a tremendous influence on Filipinos’ attitudes towards civilian protection, particularly among Muslims. Islam is a guiding force that overrules all else in their eyes. For many, their faith and religious precepts, which forbid the killing of another, stand above all laws and form the core of their morality.

Very sinful. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

No, we have a saying that “Thou shall not kill”. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

You should not take your own life, how much more so for the lives of others. If you do that [take your own life] you’ll commit a sin, more so if you take the lives of others. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Because if you did not kill because God forbids you to do so, you’ll have a prize awaiting you from God. For example, you will be going to heaven if you obey what’s in the Koran. But if you disobey what’s being said, you’ll end up in hell. (FG, MILF fighters, Maguindanao)

This can’t be, for it was said in the Koran, “Don’t kill a person who cannot defend himself”. (FG, MILF fighters, Maguindanao)

In the Koran, you are fully supervised and controlled. Controlled in doing wrong, but very open in doing good. (FG, MILF fighters, Maguindanao)

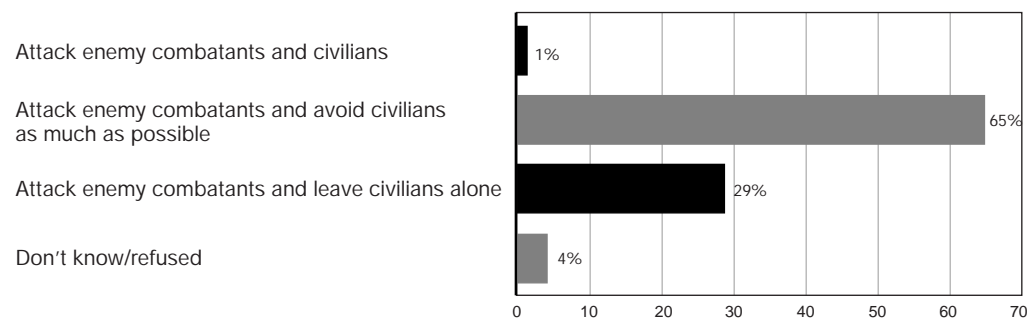
Breakdown of rules in armed conflict

Norms that guide behaviour break down quickly when the questioning moves beyond a general distinction between civilians and combatants. When presented with specific situations, Filipinos are more likely to accept civilian involvement in the conflict. This holds true both in areas of conflict and in areas further away from the fighting. The notion of separating civilians and combatants is almost absolute; only 1 per cent of respondents believe it is acceptable to attack both civilians and combatants. Nearly two-thirds, however, are open to a broader interpretation of civilian involvement; 65 per cent say combatants should “avoid civilians as much as possible”. Only 29 per cent close the door entirely to actions that might involve or harm civilians, saying combatants should attack only combatants and “leave civilians alone”.

FIGURE 5

Combatants and civilians

(per cent of total population responding)



When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they... ?

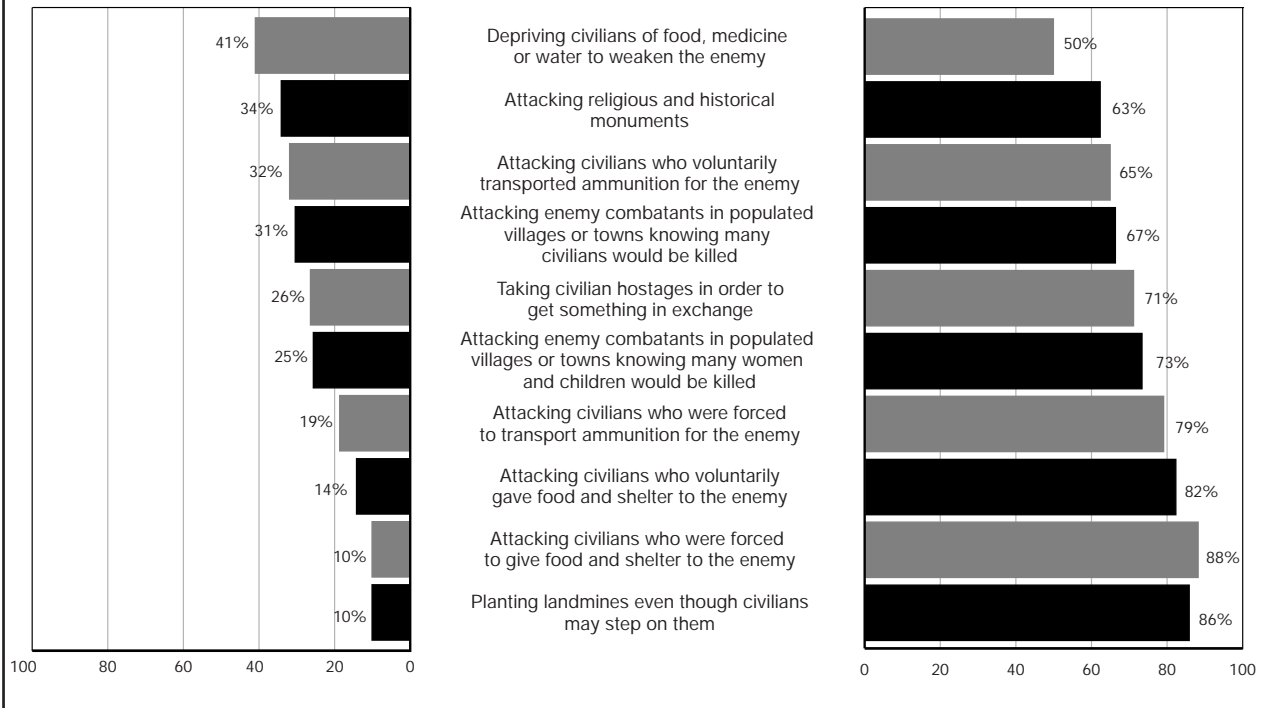
The belief that conflict may threaten civilians is clear when people are asked to judge the acceptability of a range of specific actions that may involve civilians. Asked to judge an attack on enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in which “many civilians would be killed”, two-thirds (67 per cent) believe it is wrong, but nearly one-third, 31 per cent, see it as part of conflict. Similarly, one-quarter (25 per cent) believe it is part of armed conflict even when many women and children would be killed in the attack.⁹ And 41 per cent believe depriving a community of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy is just part of conflict.

Although the large majority of Filipinos reject direct attacks on civilians in many situations, a significant minority believe civilians are open to attack once they become involved in a conflict, even when forced. This is particularly true in the case of transporting ammunition for enemy combatants, which invites the broadest interpretation of civilian involvement. (See Figure 6.)

⁹This number is even higher in the parallel survey in which 37 per cent see this behaviour as part of the conflict even if women and children would be killed.

FIGURE 6
Acceptance of practices in armed conflict

(per cent of total population responding)



Civilian involvement in armed conflict

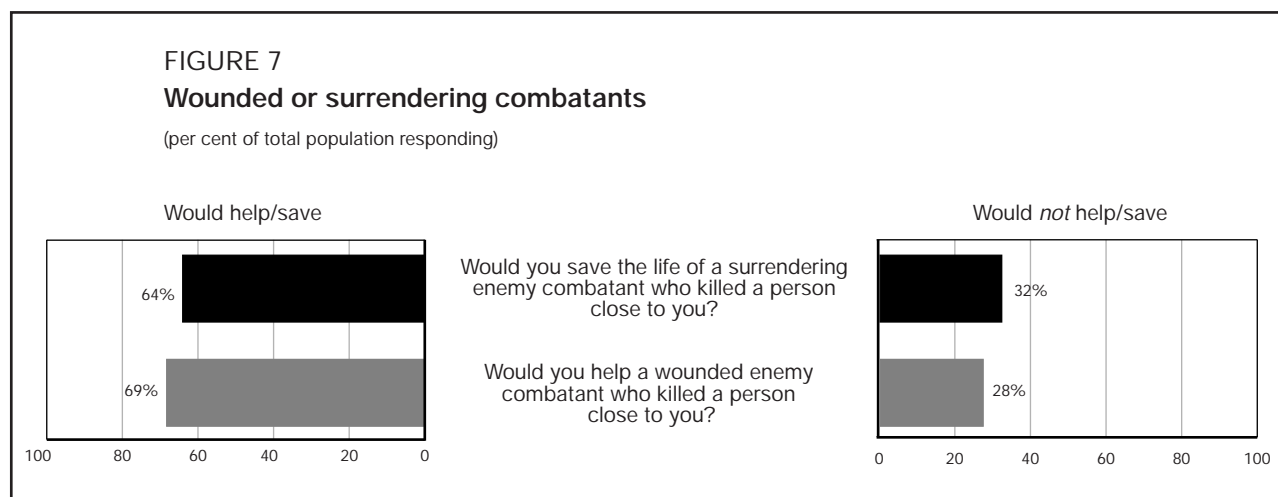
Those living in areas where there is fighting have very different perceptions of how civilians are caught up in armed conflict from those who view it from more of a distance. A farmer caught up in the conflict described the pressure civilians face, often from all sides, to join in the conflict or provide some type of assistance.

They talked to me. They were convincing me to join their group, but I did not because I knew that where they are heading is not good. They told me, "If you'll join us you'll benefit a lot." I replied, "How will it benefit me when you are always on the run, rain or shine, night or day?" And they insisted, "You will benefit, because if we win, we'll be powerful, we'll have equal justice, unlike now where only the rich and powerful get justice." So, what the NPA really want is equal justice so that everybody can live in peace. I told them, "I don't think I can join your group because I have five children." "But if you join us, your family will be supported." And I said, "Even then, because I know that once I join you, my life would hang between life and death. Wherever I go, the law will run after me. I have a responsibility to my family, to feed them three times a day and send my children to school." "Why don't you want to join us, don't you want to see this place in peace?" I finally said, "Yes, I want that but I will just leave things to you. Don't involve me any more because I have a family to look after." (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

Civilians living in areas of conflict know that all support for combatants is not "voluntary" and often they only help because the pressures to resist are too great. This awareness produces a heightened sensitivity and inspires a desire for broader protections than that expressed by people living farther from the conflict.

Those who live farther away from the conflict more readily believe civilians who help combatants give up their right to protection. This is especially true when the assistance given is seen to be voluntary. As a man outside the areas of conflict said, "That's another story. The civilians are like taking sides with the rebels already. They can be attacked because they themselves are now fighting."

The breakdown of norms is perhaps most evident when respondents are faced with the hypothetical situation of whether to help or save a wounded or surrendering enemy combatant who had killed someone close to them. People are torn in this instance and have trouble restraining themselves from taking retribution, making few distinctions between a wounded enemy combatant and one who is surrendering. One-third of respondents (32 per cent) would not help a wounded enemy combatant, and nearly as many (28 per cent) would not save one who is surrendering.¹⁰



These responses reflect the dilemma between what people know is the morally correct behaviour and what they know would be their reaction in the heat of the moment. In many cases, reason gives way to passion, with focus group participants simply stating, "I will kill him."

I'll also kill him; he's already wounded anyway. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Maybe it depends upon the situation. Actually I have not experienced that yet, but due to the sudden burst of emotion, you might do it [kill him]. But if you will not let yourself be carried away by your emotion, you will save him. (IDI, radio broadcaster, Daet)

If he was really the one and I saw him kill my loved one, for example, my spouse, he should really die. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Well, it depends on how you look at it at that precise moment.

(IDI, former MNLf commander, Mindanao)

I could do that [exact revenge]. But if we really think about it, we have a law, we have rights, let the law do the punishing and avoid revenge. (FG, NPA detainees, Muntinlupa City)

It would be really painful, and I would more than anything want to exact revenge. But if you consider human rights, you would be in violation. (FG, NPA detainees, Muntinlupa City)

I think I would still implement the policies of war even if he's the one who killed my wife. (FG, NPA detainees, Muntinlupa City)

¹⁰The parallel survey reflects even more striking results, as nearly half of those surveyed, 45 per cent, would not help a wounded enemy combatant and 37 per cent would not save a surrendering enemy combatant. This may likely be a more realistic number, as people might hesitate to admit this to a Red Cross interviewer.

When they surrender, you cannot shoot or kill them. They're given amnesty, then they're asked as to what are they fighting for. Or if there's conflict within their group already and they got confused on the real idea... when they surrender, they are given amnesty. (FG, AFP soldiers, Davao City)

Like if one is hit and is still alive, being a Filipino like us, we should strive to get that person and bring him to a hospital. (FG, CAFGU members, Davao City)

We will not kill him. (FG, MILF rebels, Maguindanao)

We should attend to their medical needs. (FG, CAFGU members, Davao City)

You cannot shoot or kill somebody who is already wounded or someone who has surrendered already. (FG, AFP soldiers, Davao City)

On this point, there are no divergences between various subsets of the population: women are no more likely to save an enemy combatant than men, a finding also borne out in the focus groups. This is true regionally as well: people in areas outside the conflict are just as likely as those in the affected areas to say they would save such an enemy combatant.

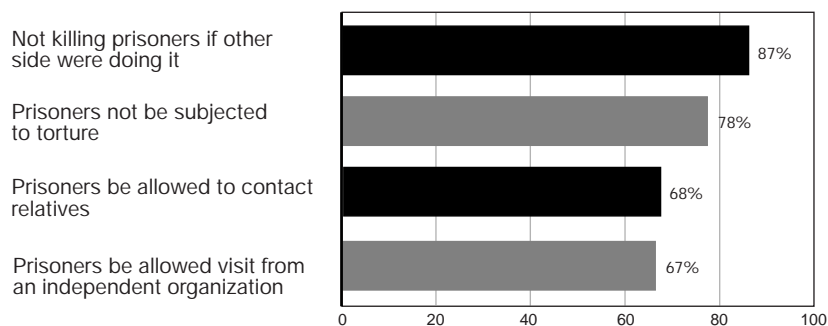
Treatment of captured combatants

Filipinos believe captured combatants have a wide range of rights. Two-thirds of Filipinos (67 per cent) believe captured combatants must be allowed to receive visits from independent organizations. A similar number (68 per cent) say they must be allowed to contact relatives. Less than one in five (19 per cent) would allow captured combatants to be tortured.

FIGURE 8

Captured enemy combatants

(per cent of total population responding)



Question: Now let me ask you how captured enemy combatants should be treated.

The belief in rights for captured combatants is even stronger among people who live in areas nearer to the conflict. In these areas, around three-quarters of those surveyed say captured combatants must be allowed to maintain contact with their relatives and receive visits from representatives of independent organizations.¹¹

Combatants in armed conflict

Combatants' views on civilian protection are premised on rules and law. In focus group discussions, combatants cited the rules that govern armed conflict and maintained that they would prohibit them from taking action against civilians or harming a captured or wounded enemy combatant. Their motivation is clear – they must follow the rules or pay a price. They know this behaviour is against the rules and say that those who break the rules should be punished. Yet, even though they are caught up in this conflict, they, like civilians, display little hatred towards their enemies. When confronted with the situation of a wounded or surrendering enemy who had killed someone close to them, combatants refused to weaken their support for the rules governing armed conflict.

We will bring him to the courts. (FG, MILF fighters, Maguindanao)

We also follow rules in this profession. Like when there is a wounded rebel and he is not able to fight, we have to get him and give him some medical attention. (FG, AFP soldiers, Davao City)

Yes, because you cannot kill as we have laws. I will surrender him to the *barangay* captain or to the police. (FG, CAFGU members, Davao City)

If a person surrenders already, you can no longer shoot him. It's really a violation. (FG, AFP soldiers, Davao City)

This can't be, for it was said in the Koran, "Don't kill a person who cannot defend himself". (FG, MILF fighters, Maguindanao)

¹¹ The findings in the parallel survey differ on this point: 59 per cent believe captured combatants have the right to contact relatives and 67 per cent believe visits by representatives of independent organizations must be allowed.

But the rules are pushed aside when combatants see themselves as the defenders of their communities. Their first mission then is to protect those who depend on them – a mandate that is often in direct conflict with the need to follow rules and laws.

Each group of combatants interviewed sees itself as observing the rules and doing good work, while the enemy is breaking the rules without paying the price. They use this perception to justify taking actions that may break the rules of armed conflict. As the focus group discussions progressed, a broader openness to acts that go against the rules of armed conflict became evident in the name of defence. The reality of conflict, combined with the belief that they are the defenders of their communities, provides combatants with the justification they need to cross the line.

[We fight] because they really want to claim our place, this place of Mindanao, the place of the Moros.
(FG, MILF fighters, Cotabato City)

Mindanao is the richest place, that's why the government of the Philippines wants to claim this from us. (FG, MILF fighters, Cotabato City)

He joined because he was born in Mindanao and it is being taken away from him.
(FG, MILF fighters, Cotabato City)

Geneva Conventions and rules governing armed conflict

Consciousness of the Geneva Conventions is low; only 12 per cent of Filipinos surveyed have heard of them. Among those who have heard of the Conventions, nearly half (41 per cent) do not cite anything specific about them.¹² Those aware of the Conventions say they represent humanitarianism or human rights (13 per cent), protecting peace (11 per cent) and rules of war (10 per cent). In the focus groups, participants who were familiar with the Conventions cited the protection of human rights as their primary purpose.

Like if we were abused by soldiers because we are only poor farmers and after complaining to the higher authorities, nothing was done about it, then we can go to the Commission on Human Rights. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

That we have the right to live in this world even if we are poor. (FG, Christian farmers, Davao City)

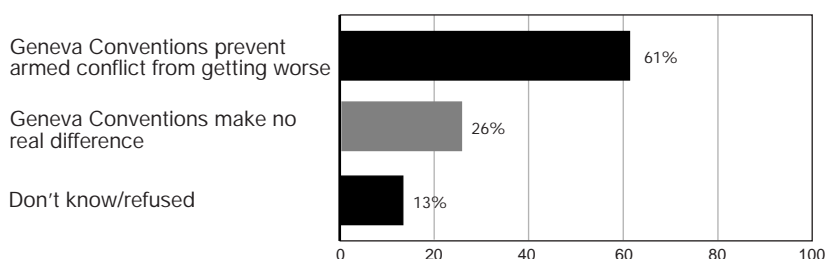
The Geneva Conventions are those who [planned] the protocol of war. Stating that women and children shouldn't be killed. (FG, MILF fighters, Cotabato City)

...they tell us all that they are prohibited and all that are not in fighting. (FG, MILF fighters, Cotabato City)

After a description of the Geneva Conventions is read out, a broad belief in their potential effectiveness emerges. Then a majority, 61 per cent, believe that the Conventions prevent armed conflicts from getting worse. A similar level of confidence is expressed by those living in areas of conflict (55 per cent).¹³

FIGURE 9
Impact of Geneva Conventions

(per cent of total population responding)



Question: Do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions prevents armed conflicts from getting worse or does it make no real difference?

Optimism regarding the potential impact of the Geneva Conventions on armed conflicts increases with education: 46 per cent of those with a less than elementary education say they prevent armed conflict from getting worse, as do 57 per cent of those with an elementary education, 60 per cent with some high school education, and 63 per cent of high school graduates. Those who have done some college or have college degrees are most optimistic, 73 and 72 per cent, respectively.

¹² The NPA detainees interviewed are a notable exception. They are quite conversant with the Conventions and readily discussed their application to the conflict to the Philippines. "For instance the Philippines will now have a civil war between the revolutionary movement and between the AFP, it should always be considered that the citizens should be protected. They should be protected in any war. Articles of war 1 and 2 of the Geneva Convention should be implemented in the Philippines."

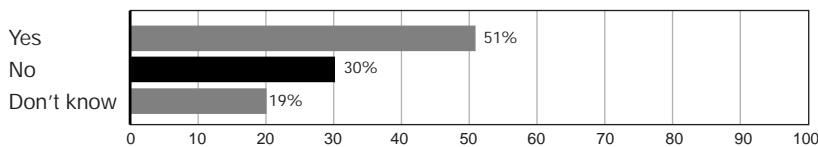
¹³ Respondents in the parallel survey are not so optimistic about the impact of the Geneva Conventions, as just a plurality believe they make a difference (48 per cent).

Among Filipinos overall, there is a limited awareness of rules or laws governing armed conflict. More than half (51 per cent) say there are rules that are so important that, if broken during armed conflict, the person who broke them should be punished; the other half either disagrees (30 per cent) or are unsure (19 per cent).¹⁴ Awareness of rules or laws governing armed conflict is higher among those living in areas of conflict and among those who support a side (63 and 65 per cent, respectively).

The laws people are thinking of are based on human rights and law. They include: respecting life by not killing people (43 per cent); abiding by the law (39 per cent); not allowing rape (37 per cent); respecting treaties and agreements (36 per cent); and not allowing torture (26 per cent).

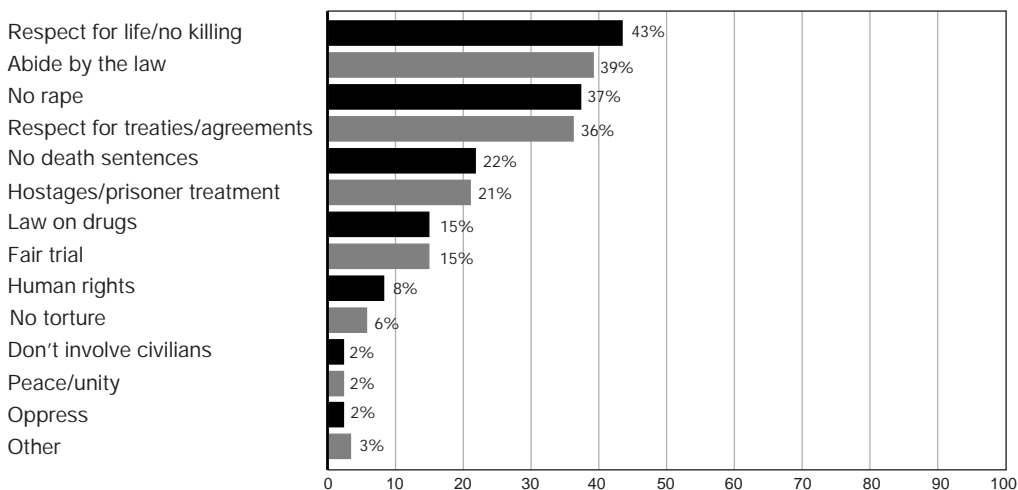
FIGURE 10
War crimes

(per cent of total population responding)



Question: Are there rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

(per cent of population responding "yes")



Question: What are these rules based on?

In addition, Filipinos believe that those who break laws should be held accountable. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) think they should be put on trial, while the others believe they should be either granted amnesty (18 per cent), forgiven (9 per cent) or forgotten (3 per cent) when the armed conflict ends.

People in Mindanao, many of whom live near conflict and feel its effects, are less supportive of holding law-breakers accountable and look more readily for closure than prolonging the conflict with trials. Only one-half (50 per cent) believe that those who break rules should be put on trial, while 43 per cent believe they should either be given amnesty, forgiven or forgotten when the armed conflict ends.

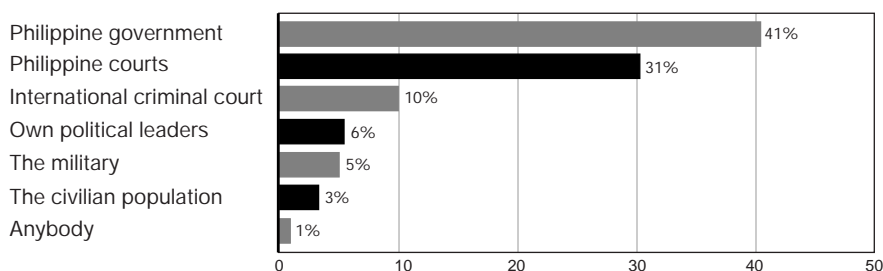
Filipinos view this debate from a national, not international, perspective. A near majority (41 per cent) say the rules governing armed conflict are based on local and national laws, which is more than three times the number who say they are based on international law (12 per cent). Few Filipinos view either international law or intervention by international actors as the appropriate medium for either rule-setting or enforcement in the conflict.

¹⁴ Even fewer respondents in the parallel survey, 39 per cent, believe there are rules so important that those who break them should be punished, and a near majority, 48 per cent, disagree.

Enforcement of the rules or laws governing armed conflict is clearly seen as the responsibility of the national political and judicial establishment rather than an international court. The majority, 72 per cent, believe the Philippine government or courts are responsible for punishing wrongdoers, compared with just 10 per cent who believe it should be put in the hands of an international court.

FIGURE 11
Who should punish wrongdoers?

(per cent of total population responding)

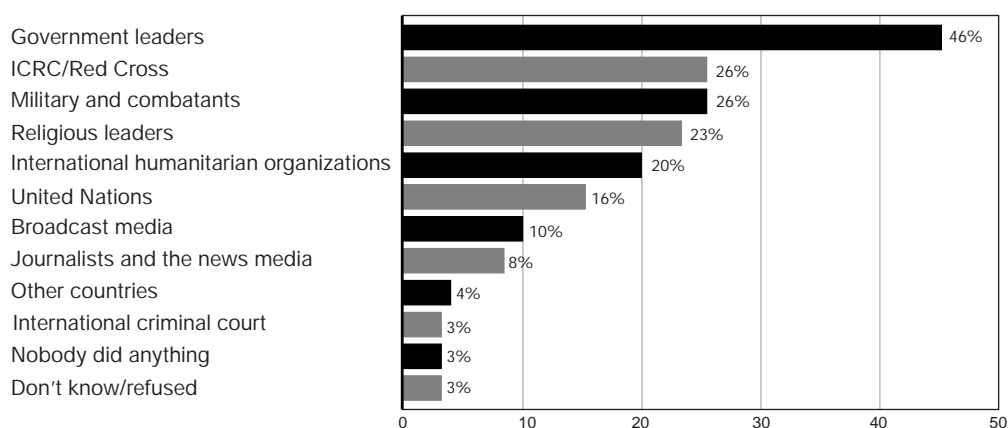


Question: If rules are broken in armed conflict, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers?

Filipinos are more likely to turn to their government or government leaders before an international institution when looking for civilian protection. Nearly half (46 per cent) believe their government leaders have done the most to aid civilians in times of armed conflict, while one in five people (20 per cent) believe international humanitarian organizations have played a big role, placing them well behind the government, the ICRC/Red Cross, the military and religious leaders. (See Figure 12.) Only 44 per cent seek greater involvement from the international community to deal with these issues in the future. One-third (35 per cent) want less involvement and 15 per cent would rather see no involvement at all.

FIGURE 12
Biggest role

(per cent of total population responding) (top two responses)



Question: I'm now going to describe different kinds of people and organizations. Please tell me which *two* of these have played the biggest role during the armed conflict to stop civilian areas from being attacked or cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity.

The role of the ICRC/Red Cross

The ICRC/Red Cross holds a special place for Filipinos as the single organization with the credibility and ability to make a difference during armed conflict. Almost every Filipino recognizes the ICRC/Red Cross – 85 per cent can identify the red cross emblem – and support for its efforts is nearly absolute.

The organization's credibility is based on its central guiding principle of helping people without regard to their political or ideological beliefs. As heard in the focus groups, people view the ICRC/Red Cross as someone to be trusted.

People like you who are from the ICRC, you will help us. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

Yes, the Red Cross helps us in our area. (FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

With the ICRC, when assistance arrived in Bagan, all the people got their share.
(FG, Muslim teachers, North Cotabato)

It's only the DSWD [Department of Social Welfare and Development] and the Philippine National Red Cross that we can ask for help for our protection during evacuation, like what happened to us.
(FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

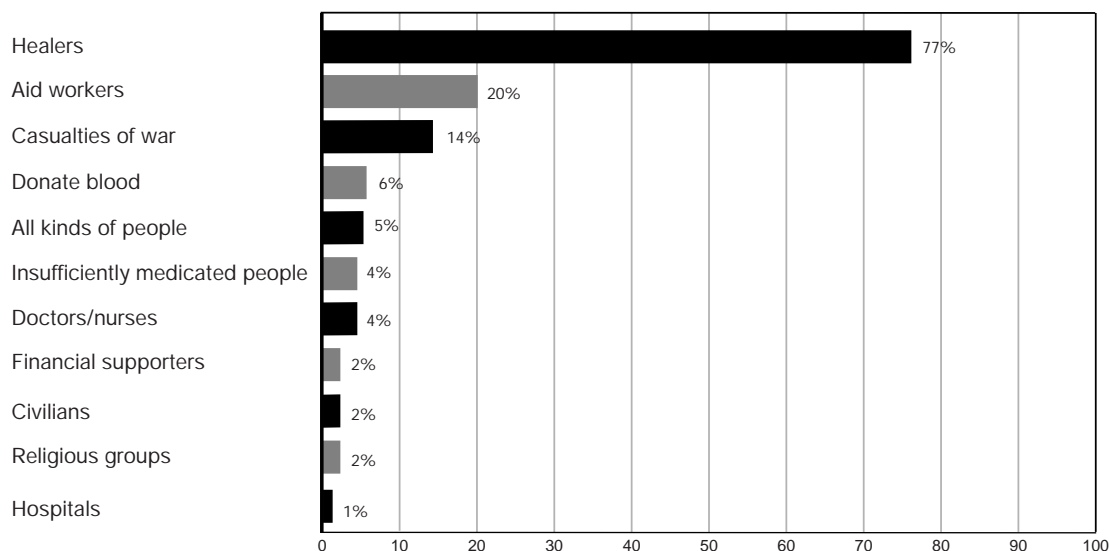
[Moderator: If civilians in a town have been attacked, what are we going to do? Where can we go? Whom can we approach to ask for protection?] The Red Cross. (FG, displaced women, Kidapawan City)

[Moderator: Aside from the military, who else could you ask for help?] Red Cross.
(FG, AFP soldiers, Davao City)

The data reinforce the image of the ICRC/Red Cross as motivated by a general desire to help people. A large majority associate the ICRC/Red Cross with helping people who are sick or wounded. Filipinos also associate the ICRC/Red Cross with specific events, including emergencies and armed conflict, as Figure 13 highlights.

FIGURE 13
Red Cross and protection

(per cent of total population responding)



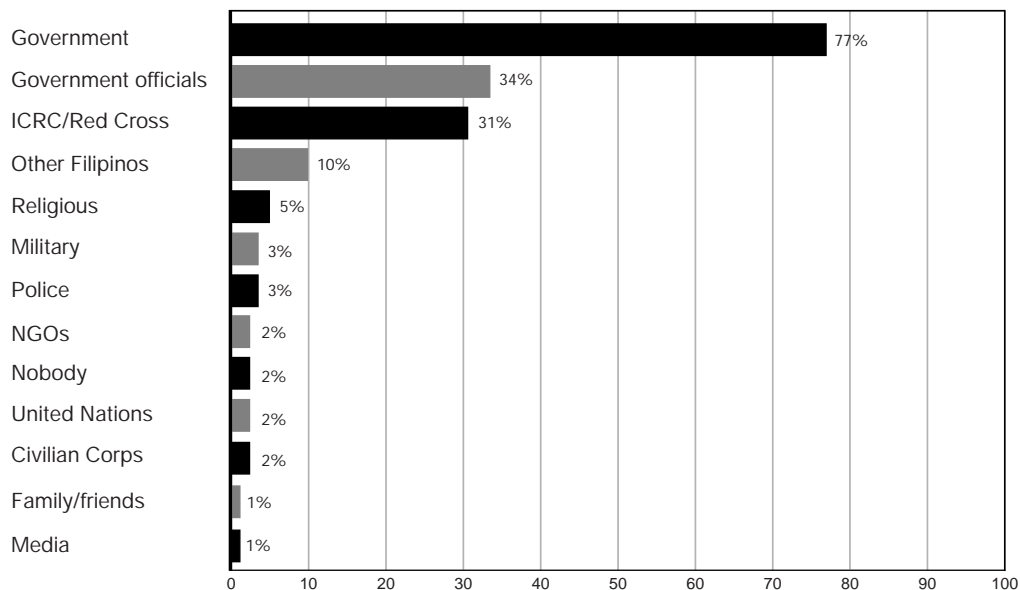
Question: What kind of people or things does this symbol (red cross emblem) protect?

The strong standing of the ICRC/Red Cross puts it in a strong position to influence behaviour during armed conflict, and it is the only organization or institution other than the government with the credibility to do so. The ICRC/Red Cross is second only to the government as the institution people would turn to for protection during conflict.

On the critical question of to whom to turn to get help when villages are cut off from food, water, electricity and medical supplies, the ICRC/Red Cross (31 per cent) dwarfs all other international and non-governmental organizations. Its credibility, coupled with an ability to deliver tangible goods, puts it in a unique position to have an impact that goes beyond that of other humanitarian organizations (2 per cent) and religious organizations (5 per cent).

FIGURE 14
Turn to for help

(per cent of total population responding)



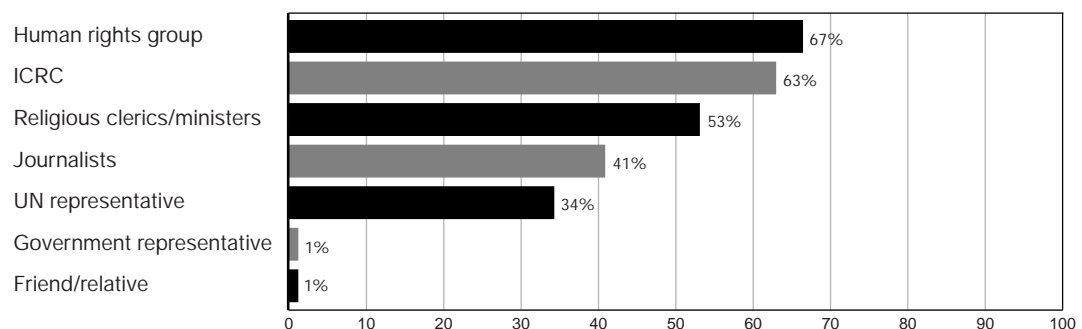
Question: Let me ask what can be done if during the armed conflict civilian areas are attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity? To whom would you turn to get help or to be protected?

The humanitarian image of the ICRC also puts it in a position to influence the treatment of captured combatants. Both the ICRC and human rights organizations have comparable standing in this area, 63 and 67 per cent, respectively. More people believe the ICRC should be allowed to visit captured combatants than should the clergy and other religious leaders (53 per cent), possibly as a result of its ability to bring about tangible improvements in protection.

The positive impact of the ICRC/Red Cross is most evident in areas of conflict. Its standing is even greater in areas of conflict and the same is true among people who have heard of the Geneva Conventions.¹⁵

FIGURE 15
Visit by representative

(per cent of those saying visit should be allowed)



Question: Which of the following people should be allowed to visit captured enemy combatants?

¹⁵ It is important to note, however, that significant differences regarding the impact of the ICRC/Red Cross emerge in the parallel survey, which suggest a much smaller role for the ICRC/Red Cross in the eyes of Filipinos. One-third of those surveyed in the parallel survey think ICRC representatives should be allowed to visit captured combatants, nearly 30 percentage points below the ICRC survey, and less than 10 per cent say they would look to the ICRC/Red Cross for protection when attacked. In addition, only 12 per cent believe the ICRC/Red Cross played the biggest role in aiding civilians, half the level of response in the ICRC survey.

Hope and the future

For most Filipinos, this is an episodic and distant conflict in which international treaties are not applicable. It is a national conflict; abuses are best handled according to the country's laws; and the government is the best protector against abuses.

These conflicts have been ongoing for more than 20 years now, so in many ways it is part of the fabric of people's lives. Still, Filipinos express a strong desire to end the conflicts and have peace. While one MILF fighter described the armed conflict as "natural" because of its duration, most people see peace as a possibility in the future.

In the focus groups, there were few expressions of hatred and deep animosity among combatants or civilians towards others, and just 14 per cent of respondents in the survey cite hatred as something they felt during the conflict. As a result, there is a great deal of hope that the future will bring peace in spite of the long-running conflict. A large majority, 62 per cent, are hopeful that peace will come in the near future. And perhaps most encouraging of all is that this hope is also evident among people living in areas of conflict, who could easily have given up but have not, and where a majority (57 per cent) still hold out a hope for peace.

FIGURE 16

What people have learned from the armed conflict

(per cent of total population responding) (open-ended question)

| | Total population |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| More union/don't take sides | 53% |
| Conflict bad/peace good | 48% |
| Importance of negotiating | 28% |
| Principles/determination | 20% |
| Help people/others | 20% |
| Economic effects/poverty | 10% |
| Self-protection/prepare for war | 8% |
| Don't involve civilians | 6% |
| Equality/tolerance | 4% |
| Respect/value human life | 2% |
| Do right things generally | 1% |
| Pray more | 1% |
| Follow rules/law | 1% |
| Don't involve children | 1% |
| Fear | 1% |

Question: What have you learned from armed conflict that you think others should know?

There is optimism on the part of Filipinos that there will be an end to the conflict that has gone on for so long. Today, they seem more tired than angry. The absence of genuine hatred and animosity augurs well for reconciliation and true peace.

Annex 1: General methodology

The ICRC's worldwide consultation on the rules of war, which is the cornerstone of the People on War project, was carried out in 12 countries that have been ravaged by war over the past decades. In each case, the ICRC conducted a public opinion survey with a representative sample of the country's population and organized in-depth interviews and focus groups with those involved in or directly affected by the conflict.

For comparative purposes, the views of people were also sought in France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States on the basis of the opinion survey only.

The consultation was based on three principal research methods:

- A survey of 1,000 (in some cases 1,500) respondents representative of the country's general population;
- Focus groups (between 8 and 12 depending on the country) allowing a professionally moderated and intensive discussion in small groups;
- In-depth, face-to-face interviews (about 20 in each country) with individuals with specific war experiences.

In almost every case, the ICRC and local Red Cross or Red Crescent staff conducted the interviews, organized the focus groups, including recruitment of participants, and helped with translation/interpreting. Greenberg Research, with a local partner company, developed the sample design for the survey, processed data in electronic form, provided moderators and prepared transcripts.

Opinion survey

Questionnaire. The opinion survey questioned people on their war experiences and views on international humanitarian law. The survey was mainly standardized for all countries, though the wording was modified to reflect each context and to achieve consistent meaning. About 10 per cent of the questions were contextual and in many cases unique to the country. In an additional five countries, the questionnaire was designed to elicit people's perceptions on war and international humanitarian law.

The questionnaires were developed by Greenberg Research, in consultation with the ICRC, on the basis of interviews with humanitarian law experts in the United States and Europe. The survey and questions were pre-tested in Mozambique and Colombia.

Sample design. In each country, interviews were held with 1,000 to 1,500 respondents, selected by a stratified, multistage cluster sampling method. The sample was stratified to ensure representation (500 interviews) from each of the principal conflict-affected geographic areas or ethnic/religious groups. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, this meant some 1,500 interviews (500 from Republika Srpska and 500 each from the Bosniac and Croat areas of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina); in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, this meant 1,000 interviews (500 in Israel and 500 in the occupied territories and the autonomous territories). These areas were divided into urban and rural geographic units (strata), to ensure representation of urban and rural populations.

The local partner randomly selected small geographic units within these strata. These units – 100 to 200 in each country – constituted the sampling points for the survey. In each geographic unit, 10 households (though fewer in some countries) were selected using a random route method appropriate to the country. In some cases, interviewers were provided with a map and a route; in others, interviewers were simply given a route and selection instructions.

Within households, respondents were selected using a Kish grid (a respondent selection key that employs a combination of random numbers, alphabet codes and the number of available members in a household to identify the appropriate respondent) or the birthday criterion (a respondent selection process that employs dates of birth to determine the appropriate respondent). Interviewers were to make three attempts to achieve a completed interview, including locating the respondent elsewhere. In nearly every country, non-response was below 10 per cent.

The demographic distribution of the surveyed respondents was compared with the best available census data on education, age, household type and occupation. Where the sample survey was sharply askew (e.g., too many college-educated or too many young respondents), statistical weights were applied to eliminate the bias.

Interviews carried out by phone reached 755 adults in France, 1,000 in Switzerland, 750 in the United Kingdom and 1,000 in the United States, and 1,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out in the Russian Federation.

Survey administration

In nearly all the countries, the survey was administered by the ICRC, with the assistance of Greenberg Research and a local research partner. Interviews were conducted by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff. Greenberg Research provided training, which typically took two days.

Parallel research. In three of the countries – Colombia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Philippines – Greenberg Research commissioned a parallel quantitative survey, administered by a local research company using professional interviewers, in order to identify patterns of bias. The results of the parallel studies were then compared with the results of the ICRC-administered surveys. The exercise found only a few areas of systematic bias. Those interviewed by the ICRC and Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, for example, were consistently more supportive of the ICRC's role and more aware of the Geneva Conventions and the rules of war. However, the parallel research found few systematic differences in opinions on international humanitarian law. The ICRC results closely resemble the parallel survey results on most other questions. (A technical report assessing the parallel research and Red Cross bias is available separately.)

In-depth research

Focus groups. The focus groups provided a relatively unstructured environment for people to discuss their war experiences freely, express their views on the appropriate limits to war and consider possible actions against those who exceed them. To be effective, the groups had to be as homogeneous as possible, that is, the participants all had to have similar characteristics. Thus, in general, the participants in a group came from the same area, were all male or all female and shared an important experience (e.g., families of missing persons, ex-soldiers, ex-fighters, prisoners, teachers or journalists). The discussions were frequently intense and emotional and provide a rich commentary on how the public approaches these issues.

In each country, 8 to 12 focus groups were organized – four in each of the principal conflict areas. The participants were recruited by Red Cross or Red Crescent staff, based on guidelines provided by Greenberg Research. The local research company provided a professional moderator, who facilitated the discussions using guidelines prepared by Greenberg Research.

The discussions were held in focus-group facilities, school classrooms, hotel rooms and even in the open air, if, for example, they involved guerrilla fighters. ICRC, Red Cross/Red Crescent and Greenberg Research staff observed and listened to the discussions from an adjoining location, with simultaneous translation in English. The focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed in English.

In-depth interviews. To help interpret the full meaning of the survey responses, about 20 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had had specific war experiences. The in-depth interview guidelines repeated questions from the public opinion survey, although they allowed for open-ended, rather than categorized responses. Interviewers were encouraged to probe and follow up on responses.

The in-depth interviews involved a broad range of people – officers, medical personnel, students (secondary school and university), journalists, former combatants, refugees, displaced persons, family members of missing persons, war invalids and others. The interviews were recorded on tape, transcribed and translated into English by the local partner.

Annex 2: Questionnaire*

Introduction

We are doing a series of interviews on **[NAME OF COUNTRY]** and would like your help with that. Would it be possible to ask a few questions to the person who is 18 years or older and whose birthday is **[FIRST AFTER TODAY]**? **[IF NECESSARY:** The interview will take about 30 minutes.] The questions are about your experiences and opinions on the [war/armed conflict] in **[NAME OF COUNTRY OR REGION]**. Your identity will remain absolutely confidential.

1. Let me begin by asking you some questions about yourself to make sure we are talking to all kinds of people. If you don't want to answer, feel free to tell me so and we will move on to the next question.

What is your age? _____

- [Don't know/refused]

2. How many years of school have you had? _____ years

- [Don't know/refused]

3. What is your current family situation?

- Married (have a husband or wife)
- Single
- Live together with someone (in a permanent relationship)
- Divorced (or separated)
- Spouse of missing person
- Widow(er)
- [Don't know/refused]

4. Do you have children? **[FOLLOW UP IF "YES"]** How many?

- No children
- Yes _____ children

5. What is your job now or are you not working?

- Farmer
- Manual worker
- Skilled worker
- Self-employed
- Housewife/home care
- Soldier (combatant)
- Government employee
- Private sector employee
- Teacher/professor/intellectual
- Pensioner/retired
- Unemployed (but looking for work)
- Unemployed (not looking for work)
- Student
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

* This questionnaire is the standard one used in the 12 countries affected by conflict in the last decades. Some contextual questions were added for specific countries. These do not figure here, but are reflected in the findings presented in each Country Report.

6. Let me ask about the war in **[COUNTRY NAME]**. Did the war take place in the area where you were living or did the war take place mainly somewhere else?

- Area where you were living → **GO TO Q7**
 Somewhere else → **GO TO Q8**
 Both [Volunteered response] → **GO TO Q8**
 [Don't know/refused] → **GO TO Q8**

7. **[IF "AREA WHERE YOU WERE LIVING" IN PREVIOUS QUESTION]** Did you live in that area before the [war/armed conflict], move voluntarily, or were you forced to move? **[PROBE IF RESPONDENT SAYS "THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN ARMED CONFLICT"]**

- Live in same area
 Moved voluntarily
 Forced to move
 [Don't know/refused]

8. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** During the [war/armed conflict], did you ever find yourself in a situation of being a combatant and carrying a weapon?

- Yes – combatant, carried weapon
 No – not a combatant
 [Don't know/refused]

9. **[ASK OF ALL RESPONDENTS]** Is there anything that combatants should not be allowed to do in fighting their enemy? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

[IF NO RESPONSE, → GO TO Q11]

10. **[IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANY RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS QUESTION]** Could you tell me the main reason why they should not do that? Is that because...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- It's wrong → **GO TO Q10a**
 It just causes too many problems → **GO TO Q10b**
 [Don't know/refused] → **GO TO Q11**

[FOLLOW UP IF MORE THAN ONE REASON SELECTED] Which would be the main reason?

10a. **[IF "IT'S WRONG"]** When you say, it's wrong, is it primarily wrong because it is...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

- Against your religion
 Against your personal code
 Against the law
 Against what most people here believe
 Against your culture
 Against human rights
 Other **[SPECIFY]**
 [Don't know/refused]

10b. **[IF "IT JUST CAUSES TOO MANY PROBLEMS"]** When you say, it just causes too many problems, are you thinking it...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [TWO RESPONSES ALLOWED]**

- Produces too much hate and division
- Causes too much psychological damage
- Produces too much destruction
- Causes too much physical suffering
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

11. Which two of these words best describe the war for you personally? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- Horrible
- Disruptive
- Humiliating
- Exciting
- Hateful
- Challenging
- Hopeful
- Confusing
- Uncertainty
- Powerless
- Remote
- [Don't know/refused]

Note: Version used in countries where there are no clear sides for most of the population; for countries where there are sides, half the surveys will be asked Version A (without sided wording) and half Version B (with sided wording).

12. Now I would like to ask you some *general* questions about how, in your view, combatants should behave in times of war.

Version A: When combatants attack to weaken the enemy, should they...? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

Version B: When combatants from your side attack to weaken the enemy, should they... ? **[READ AND ROTATE]**

- Attack enemy combatants and civilians
 - Attack enemy combatants and avoid civilians as much as possible
- OR**
- Attack only enemy combatants and leave the civilians alone
 - [Don't know/refused]

[FOLLOW UP IF CONFUSION ABOUT YOUR/OTHER SIDE] Just imagine that there is a side in the conflict that you support more than any other side.

Note: in the next set of questions we will be randomly splitting the sample in two. Version 1 will be asked of one half and Version 2 will be asked of the other half. If there are clear sides to the war Version 1 coincides with Version A and Version 2 coincides with Version B. (This means there will always be two and exactly two versions of the questionnaire.)

Let me ask you about some things that combatants may do to weaken the enemy they are fighting against. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it, to weaken the enemy.

13. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily gave food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

Version 2: Attacking civilians who were forced to give food and shelter to enemy combatants. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them in order to weaken the enemy?

- Okay
 Not okay
 [Don't know/refused]

14. **Version 1:** Attacking civilians who voluntarily transported ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

Version 2: Attacking civilians who were forced to transport ammunition for enemy combatants defending their town. Would it be okay or not okay to attack them to weaken the enemy?

- Okay
 Not okay
 [Don't know/refused]

15. I will now describe some situations that may happen during a [war/armed conflict]. For each situation, I would like you to imagine that you are part of that situation. Tell me how you think you would behave if the decisions were completely up to you. Here comes the first imaginary situation.

Version 1: Would you save the life of a surrendering enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

- Would save
 Would not save
 [Don't know/refused]

Version 2: Would you help a wounded enemy combatant who killed a person close to you?

- Would help
 Would not help
 [Don't know/refused]

Now I'm going to ask your opinion on some of the things combatants might do in times of [war/armed conflict].

- 16a. **Version A:** What about depriving the civilian population of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

Version B: What about depriving the civilian population on the other side of food, medicine or water in order to weaken the enemy?

Is that wrong or just part of war?

-
- Wrong
 - Part of war
 - Both [volunteered response]
 - [Don't know/refused]

16b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

Version B: Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- Laws – can't do that
- No laws
- [Don't know/refused]

17a. **Version 1:** What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many civilians would be killed?

Version 2: What about attacking enemy combatants in populated villages or towns in order to weaken the enemy, knowing that many women and children would be killed?

Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong
- Part of war
- Both [volunteered response]
- [Don't know/refused]

17b. **Version A:** Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

Version B: Are there any laws or rules that say you can't do that, even if it would help your side weaken the enemy, or are there no laws or rules to stop that?

- Laws — can't do that
- No laws
- [Don't know/refused]

18. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about attacking religious and historical monuments, in order to weaken the enemy. Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong
 - Part of war
 - Both [volunteered response]
 - [Don't know/refused]
-

19. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** What about taking civilian hostages in order to get something in exchange? Is that wrong or just part of war?

- Wrong
 Part of war
 Both [volunteered response]
 [Don't know/refused]

20. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Now a question about the "protected areas". Do you think that these "protected areas" are a good or a bad idea?

- Good idea
 Bad idea
 [Don't know/refused]

21. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE]** Did the "protected areas" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or did they make no difference?

- Better
 Worse
 No difference
 [Don't know/refused]

22. **[ASK ONLY IN WAR ZONES WHERE APPROPRIATE] Version 1:** Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for civilians during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

Version 2: Did the "Peace support operation" make it better or worse for you personally during the war, or didn't it make any difference?

- Better
 Worse
 No difference
 [Don't know/refused]

Version A: Let me ask you about some other things that might happen during war to weaken the enemy. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

Version B: Let me ask you about some other things that your side might do to weaken the enemy during war. Please tell me for each of these things whether it is okay or not okay to do it in order to weaken the enemy.

23. First, are there types of weapons that should just never be used during war? **[FOLLOW UP IF YES]** What types of weapons would you think of? **[CHECK RESPONSE BELOW] [DO NOT READ CHOICES] [MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED]**

- Landmines
 Laser weapons
 Napalm
 Nuclear weapons
 Chemical weapons
 Cluster bombs

-
- Other [SPECIFY]
 - No types of weapons allowed
 - [Don't know/refused]

24. **Version A:** Combatants planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

Version B: Combatants on your side planting landmines to stop the movement of enemy combatants, even though civilians may step on them accidentally. Is it okay or not okay to do that if it would weaken the enemy?

- Okay, if necessary
- Not okay
- [Don't know/refused]

25. In war, combatants sometimes attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay and maybe against the law. So please tell me why you think combatants attack civilians anyway. [**PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE**]

26. Which two of the following reasons best explain why combatants attack or hurt civilians, even though many people say it is not okay or maybe against the law. Is it because they...? [**READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES**] [**FOLLOW UP IF MORE THAN TWO REASONS SELECTED**] Which would be the two main reasons?

- Don't care about the laws
- Hate the other side so much
- Are determined to win at any cost
- Lose all sense during war
- Are too young to make judgements
- Don't know the laws
- Are often under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Are scared
- Are told to do so
- Know the other side is doing the same thing
- [Don't know/refused]

27a. Now let me ask you how *captured combatants* should be treated.

Version A: Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed to contact relatives, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

Version B: Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to contact relatives, or don't you have to allow that?

- Must allow
 - Don't have to allow
 - [Don't know/refused]
-

27b. **Version A:** Is it true that a captured enemy combatant cannot be subjected to torture to obtain important military information, or can captured combatants be subjected to torture?

Version B: Is it true that your side cannot subject a captured enemy combatant to torture to obtain important military information, or can you subject captured combatants to torture?

- Cannot subject
- Can subject
- [Don't know/refused]

27c. **Version A:** Must a captured enemy combatant be allowed a visit by a representative from an independent organization outside the prison or camp, or doesn't that have to be allowed?

Version B: Must your side allow a captured enemy combatant to be visited by a representative from an independent organization from outside the prison or camp, or don't you have to allow that?

- Must allow → GO TO Q27d
- Don't have to allow → GO TO Q28
- [Don't know/refused] → GO TO Q28

27d. **[IF "MUST ALLOW"]** Which of the following people should be allowed to visit captured enemy combatants...? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

- International Committee of the Red Cross representatives
- UN representatives
- Human rights group representatives
- Journalists
- Religious clerics/ministers
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

Once again, I want you to *imagine* yourself in the following situations and tell me what you think you would do if the decisions were completely up to you.

28. **Version A:** If one side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by the other side or would you not approve it?

Version B: If the other side in the war is killing prisoners, would you approve the killing of prisoners by your side or would you not approve it?

- Would approve
- Would not approve
- [Don't know/refused]

[FOLLOW UP IF RESPONDENT PROTESTS] Just imagine you happen to find yourself in this situation.

29. In general, do you ever think that captured enemy combatants deserve to die?

- Think deserve to die
- No
- [Don't know/refused]

30. Now I'm going to ask you about your actual experiences during the war. Please tell me whether any of the following things happened to you personally or did not happen as a consequence of the war/armed conflict in [COUNTRY NAME]. [READ AND ROTATE ORDER]

| | Happened | Did not happen | Don't know/ refused |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Forced to leave your home and live elsewhere | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Imprisoned | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Kidnapped or taken hostage | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tortured | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Felt humiliated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lost contact with a close relative | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A member of your immediate family killed during the armed conflict (son, daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious damage to your property | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wounded by the fighting | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Combatants took food away | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Had your house looted | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Somebody you knew well was sexually assaulted by combatants | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| [READ LAST] Somebody you knew well was raped by combatants | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

31. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Were you imprisoned by enemy combatants or were you living in an area that came under enemy control?

- Imprisoned by enemy combatants → GO TO Q32
- Living in area under enemy control → GO TO Q32
- Both [Volunteered response] → GO TO Q32
- [Don't know/refused] → GO TO Q34
- No response → GO TO Q34

32. **[ASK IF "IMPRISONED", "LIVED UNDER ENEMY CONTROL", OR BOTH]** Please tell me whether any of the following happened while you were under enemy control. **[READ AND ROTATE]** Did that happen or not?

| | Happened | Did not happen | Don't know/ refused |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| You were personally mistreated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| You were physically injured | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| You were treated correctly | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| [READ LAST] You had a contact with a representative from an independent organization to check on your well-being | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

33. **[ASK ONLY IF CONTACT HAPPENED, OTHERWISE GO TO Q33]** Which of the following people did you have contact with to check on your well-being? **[READ AND ROTATE RESPONSES] [ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES]**

- ICRC representatives
- UN representatives
- Human rights group representatives
- Journalists
- Religious clerics/ministers
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

34. Now let me ask you for your opinion about something else, about young people being combatants. At what age is a young person mature enough to be a combatant? **[READ LIST UNTIL RESPONDENT CHOOSES AN ANSWER]**

- 14 or under
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- Above 21
- [Don't know/refused]

35. During the war, did you support [have you supported] one of the sides or did you not support any side?

- Supported a side
- Did not support a side
- [Don't know/refused]

36. Let me ask you something very different. Have you ever heard of the Geneva Conventions?

- Yes – heard
- No – not heard **→ GO TO Q38**
- [Don't know/refused] **→ GO TO Q38**

37. **[IF HEARD OF GENEVA CONVENTIONS]** Could you tell me what the Geneva Conventions are about? **[WRITE DOWN ANSWER AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE] [MARK APPROPRIATE RESPONSE]**

- Accurate **[ANY REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**
 - Not accurate **[NO REFERENCE TO LIMITS IN WAR]**
-

36 38. Let me read you a statement about the Geneva Conventions:

The Geneva Conventions is a series of international treaties that impose limits in war by describing some rules of war. Most countries in the world have signed these treaties.

Do you think the existence of the Geneva Conventions prevents wars from getting worse or does it make no real difference?

- Prevents wars from getting worse
- No real difference
- [Don't know/refused]

39. Are you familiar with this? **[SHOW RED CROSS OR RED CRESCENT]** What does it stand for?
[DO NOT READ RESPONSES]

- Red Cross
- Red Crescent
- Red Cross and Red Crescent
- Medical/Hospital
- United Nations
- Army
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Don't know/refused]

40. What kind of people or things does this symbol protect? **[WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

41. Are there rules or laws that are so important that, if broken during war, the person who broke them should be punished?

- Yes
- No **→ GO TO Q46**
- [Don't know/Refused] **→ GO TO Q46**

42. **[IF YES]** So what kind of rules or laws are you thinking about? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

43. **[IF RESPONDS TO PRIOR QUESTION, OTHERWISE GO TO Q46]** What are these rules based on?
[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]

- [Country name]'s laws
 - International law
 - Religious principles
 - The values people hold
 - Other **[SPECIFY]**
 - [Don't know/refused]
-

44. If these rules are broken in war, who should be responsible for punishing the wrongdoers? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

- The government of [country name]
- The [country name]'s courts
- International criminal court
- The military itself
- The civilian population
- Your own political leaders
- Other **[SPECIFY]**
- [Does not apply, rules are not broken]
- [Don't know/refused]

45. When the war is over, should people who have broken these rules...? **[READ AND ROTATE] [ONE RESPONSE ONLY]**

- Be put on trial
- Be exposed to the public but not be put on trial
- Be forgotten when the war is over
- Be forgiven after the war
- Granted amnesty
- [Don't know/refused]

46. **[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]** Let me ask what can be done if during the war civilian areas are attacked, towns or villages are cut off from food, water, medical supplies and electricity. To whom would you turn to get help or to be protected? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

- [Can't turn to anybody]
- [Don't know/refused]

47. I'm now going to describe different kinds of people and organizations. Please tell me which *two* of these have played the biggest role *during* the war to stop this. Here are the people and organizations: **[READ AND ROTATE] [RECORD THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSES] [FOLLOW UP WITH: Which two have played the biggest role?]**

- The military and combatants on your side **[Version B]**
- The military and combatants of the other side **[Version B]**
- The military and combatants **[Version A]**
- Religious leaders
- International humanitarian organizations
- Journalists and the news media
- The United Nations
- The ICRC or Red Cross (or Red Crescent)
- Government leaders
- International criminal court
- Other countries
- [Nobody did anything]
- [Don't know/refused]

48. In the future, would you like to see more or less intervention from the international community to deal with these kinds of issues?

- More intervention
- Less intervention
- [No intervention]
- [Don't know/refused]

49. Do you think the peace will last or do you think there will be more war in the future?

- Peace will last
- More war in future
- [Both]
- [Don't know/refused]

50. One last question, what did you learn from the war that you think others should know? **[PROBE AND WRITE ANSWERS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE]**

The ICRC's mission

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
