

Round Table Discussion on

“UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION & CONDITIONS OF NONVIOLENCE IN THAI SOCIETY”

At Chulalongkorn Peace and Conflict Studies Center



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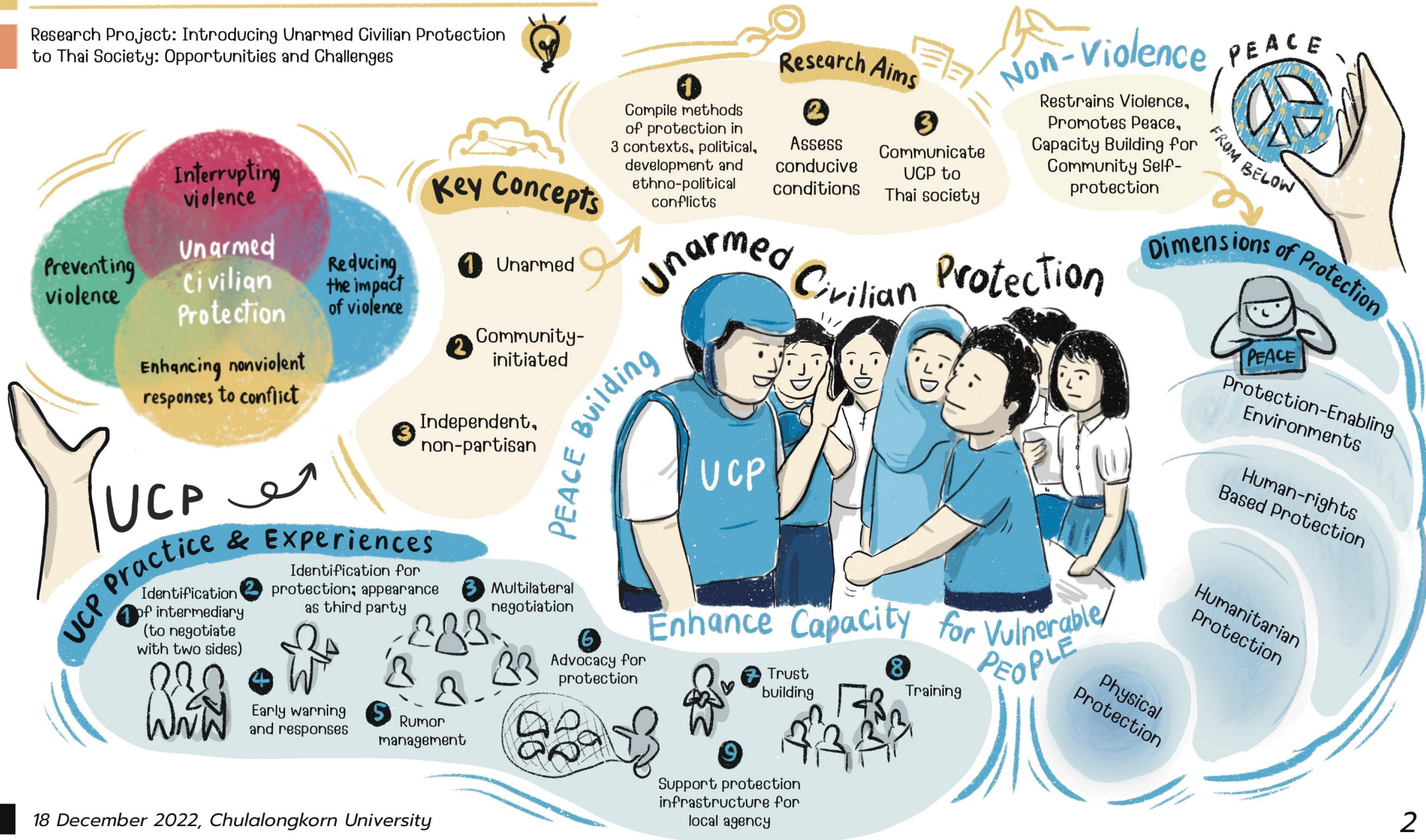


Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



Unarmed Civilian Protections & Non-violence in Thai Society

Research Project: Introducing Unarmed Civilian Protection to Thai Society: Opportunities and Challenges



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CHALLENGES

On State Officers

1.

Should state officers inflict violence on civilian, protection is limited, particularly among citizens blacklisted or tagged by the state.

2. On Thai Contexts

UCP in the context of low intensity conflict can be challenging. These include structural violence and unforeseen harms on civilian. As such, the usual methods of protection might not necessarily be applicable. Effective protection needs to be contextualized and innovative.

On Polarization

3.

Unarmed protection is tied to nonviolence practice. Political polarization in Thailand stymies nonviolence, making third-party protection limited or impossible.

FUTURE & OPPORTUNITIES

UCP Community & Future



- There exist people in need of protection in Thailand, yet human rights defenders seeking to do so are intimidated.

- UCP Community of Practice contributes to and multiplies learning and knowledge.

- Best practice on peace and protection helps build trust and promotes learning.

- Individual and community protection skills should be part of citizen education.

NONVIOLENCE

- Nonviolence is questioned regarding its stance, efficacy and safety guarantee.

- Nonviolence actions have been more creative, yet sporadic, unconnected as a movement.

- Nonviolence learning is disrupted by military coup and polarization.

- Effective protection enhances trust in nonviolence.



Political Scientist

PEACE NEED



Peace Academic

CREATIVITY



PROTECTION

- State monopolizes provision of civilian protection.

- Self-defense understanding is still attached to the idea of armament.

- Third party's role is limited, lacking solid foothold.

- If nonviolence can be expanded, protection strategy and skill can be developed within nonviolence framework, and civilian protection can emerge a norm.

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Participants' Inputs



THE SITUATIONS

What to do when demonstrators are peaceful and violence erupts?

How to convince demonstrators that they can do their action peacefully?

Why does it have to lead to violent suppression?



Excessive use of force by the State
notably in national security-related cases

• Incentives for suppression officers, absence of accountability for violence perpetrators



Lawyer

• State has the duty to foster peace through international rules and norms – reducing rather than scaling up violence



Transparent & Justice

• Vigilante due to lack of confidence in judicial system and low level of mutual trust in the Thai society



Political Scientist



Identification of a third party is extremely challenging due to the dichotomy duress or perception of being biased

• The legitimacy of nonviolent protests in “Political Jiu-jitsu”, can be undermined



by being tempted to slip into using violent means.



Peace Facilitator



• Demonstration by taking into account safety for all including third party, soldiers and crowd control police; fear of being harmed resorting to pre-emptive armed self-protection. This is reducing violence by a notch and ramping up nonviolence by a notch.

• Radicalization / Extremism in the state sector are yet to be addressed



• Peacebuilders operating in authoritarianism context are more at risk than ordinary citizens



Peace Scholar

• Legacy of hate mongering attitude behind the protracted conflict. How can UCP be made effective?



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Participants' Inputs



LAW & JUSTICE

The justice system needs UCP



Officer must not discriminate in a polarized society

Public Assembly Act must deliver protection

MEDIA

Media must be on the same page on nonviolence, thus refraining from spreading disinformation and instead promoting knowledge in its public communication.



ONLINE PLATFORM



Online platform is one of the key options to promote nonviolence, as listening avenue to abate and prevent violence. A case in point is the listening platform on the ongoing civil strife for Myanmar citizens.



NON-VIOLENT CREATIVITY



UCP is visible in innovative public assembly movement such as the Ratchaprasong Fund, Independent Public Defenders Movement, various flash mobs network.

POLITICS

UCP application is relative to democratization



Explore new ways for UCP to thrive inside an authoritarian state

UCP WAY

Advocate for UCP and develop mechanism to protect practitioners



For example, practitioners know when to save life in the face of violence

