Overview of Presentation for Session I
Sarah Holewinski Presenting
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It is an honor to present to this audience today on protection of civilians. My sincere thanks to the Government of Norway for grappling with this issue across years and continents, and to the organizing team led by Hilde Salvesen.

My organization—Center for Civilians in Conflict—works with warring parties to increase their ability to prevent civilian harm and respond to it when it occurs. Thus, we are taking their civilian protection mindset and practice above and beyond the letter of international humanitarian law.

What does this mean in the real world? We provide best practices to militaries on how to tactically avoid civilians in modern warfare, advise on commanders' guidance and doctrine, advocate for programs of amends for civilians harmed, and create practical tools to reduce civilian harm like "civilian casualty tracking, analysis, and response cells."

It is this latter effort that I'm here to discuss, and specifically in the Somalia context. In 2010, our team began working with AMISOM on civilian protection. At that time, civilian casualties caused by the coalition force were getting a lot of media attention thanks to the research of human rights groups and local Somali civil society. The public relations problem was—at its heart—an operational problem, created by some gaps in policy that allowed for damaging civilian harm. Our team traveled to Mogadishu by invitation from the African Union along with Major General (ret) Roger Lane from the UK armed forces. Together, we developed with AMISOM an "indirect fire policy", which was essentially a policy of civilian protection.

We identified the main problem in AMISOM policy as permissive indirect fire, often used in response to al-Shabaab attacks on AMISOM positions. The "indirect fire policy" solution consisted of three categories, each with specific recommendations to curb civilian harm: avoid civilian harm, attribute responsibility for civilian harm, and make amends for any civilian harm caused through appropriate responses. The policy was adopted by the African Union, and over time, civilian casualty rates went down as a result both of the policy and of situational realities on the ground.

One of the key recommendations in the "indirect fire policy" was the creation of a Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis, and Response Cell, known as CCTARC for short. The CCTARC allows a warring party to understand the impact of its operations on

the civilian population, and to make adjustments that will both lower civilian casualty rates and enable appropriate responses to any civilian harm that does occur. Efforts by warring parties to track civilian harm have been seen in Iraq by US forces, and in Afghanistan under ISAF—the international coalition. AMISOM has been working these past two years to put in place their own CCTARC, and we expect the African Union to approve the framework for it this summer.

The cell itself consists of personnel, hardware, and software—all of which are designed to specifically suit the force characteristics, the conflict environment, and the goals of the mandate. For AMISOM, the CCTARC has three components. The first is data collection, in which reports from the field on any instances of civilian harm are identified, collated, and logged in a central database. The second is an analytical function, which allows the force commander to track civilian harm over time, where and when it occurs, and how it occurs. He can then adjust operational tactics to curtail the behavior or policies that are causing civilian casualties in a continuous feedback loop that ultimately minimizes civilian harm. Finally, the CCTARC maintains a response function, allowing the force to conduct investigations, to combat false allegations of civilian harm with factual evidence, and to make amends to civilians suffering losses.

I should note that the data collected and analyzed by the CCTARC belongs to AMISOM and its stakeholders. It is the force commander who decides whether to share the information with the public or media. At its heart, the CCTARC is an internal tool to help the force minimize and respond to civilian harm. Further, it is not a legal mechanism, nor one for holding violators of domestic or international law accountable. For a force like AMISOM, which already maintains processes for military justice, the CCTARC will work in close cooperation with those systems to provide more information on an incident or to identify civilian harm incidents that may violate laws.

Civilian harm tracking, analysis, and response is a major innovation in civilian protection. It is a proactive tool that enables commanders to understand what impact the force's operations are having on the civilian population, and thus to amend and respond to actions that cause needless risk to civilians. We hope that many more parties to conflicts will take on this practice as part of their operational function, including those with formal peacekeeping or protection of civilian mandates like that of the intervention brigade in DRC or the upcoming peace operation in Mali.

Thank you.