

Violence and Restraint in Civil War

Media coverage of civil wars often focuses on the most gruesome atrocities and the most extreme conflicts, which might lead one to think that all civil wars involve massive violence against civilians. In truth, many governments and rebel groups exercise restraint in their fighting, largely avoiding violence against civilians in compliance with international law. Governments and rebel groups make strategic calculations about whether to target civilians by evaluating how domestic and international audiences are likely to respond to violence. Restraint is also a deliberate strategic choice: governments and rebel groups often avoid targeting civilians and abide by international legal standards to appeal to domestic and international audiences for diplomatic support. This book presents a wide range of evidence of the strategic use of violence and restraint, using original data on violence against civilians in civil wars from 1989 to 2010 as well as in-depth analyses of conflicts in Azerbaijan, El Salvador, Indonesia, Sudan, Turkey, and Uganda.

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Civilian Targeting in the Shadow of International Law

JESSICA A. STANTON
University of Pennsylvania



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For Emery and Teodor

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Acknowledgments

This book began as two seminar papers, written in 2002 during my first year of graduate school at Columbia University. In those papers, I set out to explore whether and how international law influences the behavior of belligerents during wartime – in particular, during civil wars. Most research on international law had focused on its role in international economic relations, but I was interested in whether international law could have any impact on the behavior of actors whose security was threatened during wartime, and, if so, why some actors might be more susceptible to the influence of international law than others. The project changed considerably over the years – becoming a broader exploration of the dynamics of civil war violence – as it morphed from seminar papers into dissertation research, and ultimately into this book. But driving the project has always been a curiosity about the impact of international legal standards on wartime behavior and the conditions under which actors are willing and able to limit their use of violence.

More than a decade has passed since I wrote those first seminar papers, and in that time, many people and institutions have provided valuable guidance and support. My advisors at Columbia, Jack Snyder and Page Fortna, were incredibly generous with their time and advice. Jack's enthusiasm for the project from its first incarnation as a seminar paper through to its conclusion was an important source of encouragement, especially at moments when I was most unsure about how to proceed with the project. His probing questions and seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of cases of civil war challenged me to develop a more compelling argument, backed by more extensive evidence. Page offered detailed feedback at every stage of the process. I am particularly grateful for her patient willingness to help me work through problems as they arose in the course of research and writing – offering suggestions for how to refine the logic of an argument, reorganize a chapter, and conduct field interviews. Her mentorship while I was in graduate school and in the years since not only has

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Abbreviations

AGAM	Forces of the Free Aceh Movement (Angkatan Gerakan Aceh Merdeka)
CNRM	National Council of Maubere Resistance (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere)
COHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
DEP	Democratic Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional)
Fretilin	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Frente Revolucionária do Timor Leste Independente)
GAM	Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka)
HEP	People’s Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi)
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LRA	Lord’s Resistance Army
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
NTC	National Transitional Council
PKK	Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan)
SIRA	Aceh Referendum Information Centre (Sentral Informasi Referendum Aceh)
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SPLA	Sudan People’s Liberation Army

UDT	Timorese Democratic Union (União Democrática Timorense)
UNAMET	UN Mission in East Timor
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
UPDA	Ugandan People’s Democratic Army