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INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

Ceasefires are arrangements in which conflict parties commit to temporary or permanent cessation of violence.[1] They are a common feature in violent conflict. Between 1989 and 2020, more than 2000 ceasefires were declared globally.[2] Each year, about a third of all ongoing civil conflicts observe at least one ceasefire. Ceasefires are a crucial part of the peacemaking process – a form of confidence building, means of signalling peaceful intentions, and the mechanism that sets out the terms through which armed forces transition from war to peace.[3]

Peacekeeping and ceasefires are closely linked. For most of the UN's peacekeeping history, blue helmets have only been deployed when a ceasefire was in place, i.e. when there was a peace to keep. More recently, robust multidimensional peacekeeping missions play a more active role during violent conflict,[4] often seeking to support the efforts of mediators to produce ceasefires at the national and local level.[5]

Peacekeepers are also often crucial in helping to sustain ceasefires.[6] The 1956 UN peacekeeping mission in Egypt, deployed in the wake of the Suez crisis, was the first ceasefire monitoring mission of the modern era. Since then, ceasefire monitoring – that is, inter-positioning between the belligerents and reporting and managing ceasefire violations – has become a key

[1]Clayton et al., "Introducing the Civil Conflict Ceasefire Dataset."

[2]Ibid.

[3]Brickhill, *Mediating Security Arrangements in Peace Processes*; Clayton and Sticher, "The Logic of Ceasefires in Civil War."

[4]Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon, "Beyond Keeping Peace"; Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism"; United Nations, *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace*.

[5]Clayton and Dorussen, "Mediation, Peacekeeping and the Termination of Civil War"; Duursma, "Peacekeeping, Mediation, and the Conclusion of Ceasefires."

[6]Fortna, "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace?"

(and sometimes the only) task of peacekeepers.[7] Peacekeeping mandates have now been expanded to include a range of other tasks that often directly and indirectly support a ceasefire, including: protecting civilians, monitoring human rights, facilitating and delivering humanitarian aid, and reforming military and police forces, to name just a few.[8]

At the same time, ceasefires play an important role in many conflicts, not just those that receive a peacekeeping mission. Ceasefires can help to build trust and mitigate the commitment problem even when peacekeeping is not desirable or feasible. In fact, about 70% of ceasefires have no monitoring or verification provisions,[9] and of those cases that are monitored, UN peacekeeping operations are but one actor tasked with doing so. Regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are nowadays as likely as the UN to oversee an agreement.[10] The task to verify and monitor a ceasefire is often delegated to a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) made up of representatives of the conflict parties and third-party actors. The latter may come from the UN or other international and regional organizations, states, NGOs, and other civil society actors, and may or may not include representatives from a peacekeeping mission. The conflict parties may also agree to monitor a ceasefire jointly without external involvement.[11]

The fact that peace operations now do much more than just promote and sustain ceasefires, and that ceasefires are often initiated and endure in the absence of peacekeepers, suggests that peacekeeping and ceasefires each ought to be studied in their own right. But while peacekeeping research has been a dynamic subfield of peace and conflict studies ever since this journal was founded in 1994, there has been far less research focused specifically on ceasefires.[12] Until recently, ceasefires were largely overlooked, and only discussed generally in the context of research on peace processes more generally,[13] or in practitioner guidance.[14]

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[7]Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture."

[8]Druckman, Mueller, and Diehl, "Exploring the Compatibility of Multiple Missions in UN Peace Operations"; Franke and Warnecke, "Building Peace"; Howard, *Power in Peacekeeping*, 5.

[9]Data from the ETH/PRIO civil conflict ceasefire dataset, see Clayton et al., "Introducing the Civil Conflict Ceasefire Dataset."

[10]Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture"; Verjee, *Monitoring Ceasefires is Getting Harder*. For data on non-UN peacekeeping missions, see Bara and Hultman, "Just Different Hats?"

[11]Chounet-Cambas, "Negotiating Ceasefires," 23–34.

[12]Some of the earlier academic studies on intra-state ceasefires include Core, "Burma/ Myanmar"; Dukalskis, "Why Do Some Insurgent Groups Agree to Cease-Fires While Others Do Not?"; Fortna, *Peace Time*; Höglund and Wennerström, "When the Going Gets Tough … Monitoring Missions"; Kolås, "Naga Militancy and Violent Politics in the Shadow of Ceasefire"; Mahieu, "When Should Mediators Interrupt a Civil War?"; Oo and Min, *Assessing Burma's Ceasefire Accords*; Åkebo, *Ceasefire Agreements and Peace Processes*; Åkebo, "'Coexistence Ceasefire' in Mindanao."

[13]For instance Darby and MacGinty, *Contemporary Peace Making*; Darby, *The Effects of Violence on Peace Processes*; Höglund, "Violence and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka"; Höglund, *Peace Negotiations in the Shadow of Violence*; Jarman, "From War to Peace?"; Sisk, *International Mediation in Civil Wars*.

[14]For example Brickhill, *Mediating Security Arrangements in Peace Processes*; Chounet-Cambas, "Negotiating Ceasefires"; Haysom and Hottinger, "Do's and Don'ts of Sustainable Ceasefire Arrangements";

This is now changing. In the past few years, research projects devoted to the systematic study of ceasefire agreements in civil conflicts have been started at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich, the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.[15] The ongoing collaboration between these institutes led to the creation of the ETH/PRIO Civil Conflict Ceasefire Dataset, the first global comprehensive ceasefire dataset, as well as a wave of new quantitative studies on ceasefire causes, dynamics, and consequences.[16] In parallel, new case studies have begun to reveal the dynamics underlying ceasefires in a number of conflicts, including Syria,[17] Myanmar,[18] the Philippines, India, or Israel-Palestine.[19] An increasing number of MA and PhD projects dedicated to ceasefire research is another sign of a quickly emerging research field.[20]

To build on and catalyze this momentum, the project teams at PRIO and ETH Zürich invited researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to a workshop in Oslo in September 2019 to collectively explore how we can better understand and design ceasefires. The contributions in this special issue are a selection of work presented and discussed at this workshop.

Collectively, the contributions to this special issue reveal two key insights: firstly, ceasefires are a diverse collective of arrangements, arising in vastly different contexts to serve quite different purposes. Unless we understand the different forms that ceasefires can take, and the processes that lead them to come about, it is unlikely we will understand why some ceasefires work, while others do not. Secondly, violence rarely stops with the declaration of a ceasefire. Conflict parties, international actors and civil society thus need to manage violence that occurs during a ceasefire to sustain fragile agreements. In what follows we discuss each of these insights in more

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Potter, *Ceasefire Monitoring and Verification*; Verjee, *Monitoring Ceasefires is Getting Harder*; Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture"; Brickhill, *Mediating Security Arrangements in Peace Processes*; Chounet-Cambas, "Negotiating Ceasefires"; Haysom and Hottinger, "Do's and Don'ts of Sustainable Ceasefire Agreements"; Potter, *Ceasefire Monitoring and Verification*, Verjee, "Ceasefire Monitoring in South Sudan 2014–2019"; Verjee, *Monitoring Ceasefires is Getting Harder*.

[15]ETH Zurich, "ETH Ceasefire Project"; PRIO, "Ceasefires"; Uppsala University, "Ceasefires and the Dynamics of Violence in War Zones."

[16]Clayton et al., "Introducing the Civil Conflict Ceasefire Dataset."

[17]Karakus and Svensson, "Between the Bombs"; Lundgren, "Causal Mechanisms in Civil War Mediation"; Sosnowski, "Ceasefires as Statebuilding"; Sosnowski, "Violence and Order"; Sosnowski, "Ceasefires as Violent State-Building."

[18]Harrisson and Kyed, "Ceasefire State-Making and Justice Provision"; McCarthy and Farrelly, "Peri-Conflict Peace"; Jones, "Understanding Myanmar's Ceasefires Geopolitics, Political Economy and State-Building."

[19]Åkebo, "'Coexistence Ceasefire' in Mindanao'; Milton-Edwards, "The 'Warriors Break'."

[20]For example Åkebo, *The Politics of Ceasefires*; Martínez Lorenzo, *Negotiating in Peace*; Millán Hernández, *Connecting Practice and Research*; Sagård, *Causes of Ceasefire Failure*; Sticher, *Ceasefires as Bargaining Instruments in Intrastate Conflicts*; Woods, *The War to Rule*.

depth, and set out the unique contributions of each article in the special issue.

Ceasefire Diversity

There is no universally accepted definition of a ceasefire, and the use of the term varies widely.[21] Broadly speaking, a ceasefire is any arrangement in which a conflict party commits to a temporary or permanent cessation of violence. This covers an extensive family of arrangements that can be known by a variety of related labels, including: truce, humanitarian pause, windows of silence, cessations of hostilities, preliminary ceasefire, or definitive ceasefire. In this sense, ceasefire can be considered an umbrella term covering a wide variety of related arrangements that can range from short-term humanitarian arrangements to detailed formal documents setting out a permanent end to hostilities. While this diversity is recognized by scholars and practitioners alike, we lack a clear articulation of the different forms of ceasefires, and an understanding of the processes that lead to different types of agreements.[22] Several of the articles in this special issue addresses this diversity.

In the first contribution to the special issue, Clayton, Nathan and Wiehler provide a framework to better account for this variation across ceasefires.[23] They develop a distinction between the immediate objective and the underlying purpose of a ceasefire. All ceasefires share the same immediate objective, namely to stop violence. The underlying purpose, however, varies and can include *inter alia:* signalling peaceful intent, building trust, establishing control of forces, reducing human suffering, creating a more favourable environment for negotiations, and preparing security arrangements for the immediate post-peace agreement period. The authors argue that determining the success or failure of any ceasefire often requires considering both the immediate objective and underlying purpose. Quantitative methods are well suited to assess the immediate objective, i.e. whether violence ceased, while qualitative analysis is better equipped to identify and evaluate the underlying purpose, pointing to the need for more mixed methods research. The authors assert that rather than assume a homogenous collection of agreements, researchers evaluating ceasefires need to consider the context from which an agreement emerges and why it was adopted by the parties.

In the second contribution, Åkebo develops this line of thinking, arguing that the analysis of ceasefires requires a sensitivity to the conflict issues and

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[21]For this reason the draft UN Guidance on ceasefire mediation does not offer a definition of ceasefires (United Nations, "United Nations Draft Guidance of Ceasefires").
[22]Though see Clayton et al., "Ceasefires in Intra-State Peace Processes"; Clayton and Sticher, "The Logic of Ceasefires in Civil War."
[23]Clayton, Nathan, and Wiehler, "Ceasefire Success: A Conceptual Framework."

approaches to violence, as both shape the underlying purpose of ceasefires, how agreements are used as political tools, and in what way ceasefires ultimately influence conflict.[24] Through a comparative case analysis of ceasefires in the Moro conflict in Mindanao – a self-determination conflict – and the communist insurgencies in the Philippines, Åkebo shows that within one and the same country, the government adopted very different ceasefire strategies across contexts. Put simply, the type of ceasefires that conflict parties are willing to enter into is fundamentally shaped by what their conflict aims are to begin with. In the Moro conflict there was a rationale for both sides for a bilateral ceasefire arrangement that regulated territorial coexistence. In contrast, the contest for central state control with the communist group led both sides to favour predominantly unilateral, temporary and short-lived ceasefires.

Åkebo's analysis reveals that in the Philippines there was a difference between ceasefires that occur in self-determination conflicts as compared to conflicts that aim at overthrowing the central government. Hanson, in the third contribution to the special issue, systematically assesses a related argument using an original global dataset of long-term truces in civil conflicts between 1989 and 2015.[25] Focusing on this specific and previously overlooked form of ceasefire, he argues that as separatist conflicts involve more geographically contained fighting and non-maximalist stakes, the belligerents can more easily transition into limited cooperation without necessarily resolving their incompatibility. This is a similar process to what might occur in interstate conflicts when the opposing sides retreat to their side and 'agree to disagree'. Analysing the new global dataset, Hanson finds that long-term truces (limited cooperation without concession) are rare in centre-seeking conflicts, but happened in more than one-third of separatist conflicts since 1989.

Managing Violence During Ceasefires

Ceasefires do not necessarily end violence. Because unlike peace agreements, they do not resolve the underlying incompatibilities around which a conflict is fought, and thus a return (or continuation) of violence is often a likely outcome. It can also take time to fully initiate the ceasefire architecture, the details of prohibited behaviour may be unclear, splinter groups might seek to undermine the agreement, or parties might strategically violate the ceasefire to gain an advantage over an opponent either on the battle-field or at the negotiating table. Yet the reverse is also true: Violence does not

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[24]Åkebo, "Ceasefire Rationales."
[25]Hanson, "Live and Let Live."

necessarily end ceasefires. Indeed, as Clayton, Nathan and Wiehler discuss, it is possible for a ceasefire to serve its purpose even when it fails to totally stop the violence.[26] Key here is how the conflict parties manage violence that arises.

Wiehler's article, the fourth contribution to the special issue, sets out a novel theoretical framework that outlines parties' decision-making problem in the face of ceasefire violations.[27] She argues that parties who have an interest in sustaining the ceasefire should try to identify a proportionate reaction that punishes the violation (and so prevents exploitation of prior cooperative behaviour) while avoiding excessive punishment that might further destabilize the favourable agreement. Wiehler illustrates the empirical implications of the framework with evidence from two ceasefires in the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines. The article shows that mistaken or disproportionate retaliation can lead to violence escalation, offering a new perspective on why some ceasefires break down after violations while others do not.

Wiehler's article emphasizes the importance of credible information exchange between conflict parties following alleged violations, and how crucial this is in managing violence during ceasefires. Prior research has shown ceasefire monitors to be well suited to facilitate this exchange. In ceasefire monitoring, actors observe and report on the implementation of a ceasefire. This can help to sustain a ceasefire, managing any violence that does occur, while helping to build trust and working relations between conflict parties.[28] Ceasefires that are monitored tend to be more durable in both inter- and intra-state conflict.[29] Traditionally, ceasefire monitoring has been undertaken by peacekeepers, or other international actors, yet the exact arrangements for monitoring and verification vary widely across conflicts and ceasefires, and we still know very little about the inner workings of these missions.

In the fifth contribution to the special issue, Palik focuses on the UN Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) in Yemen, and the challenges it faced in monitoring a 2018 ceasefire agreement between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis in the city of Hodeidah.[30] The mission has had some success, but has largely failed to stop violence. Palik identifies four key factors that have undermined the effectiveness of the monitoring mission: the poor quality of the agreement, the challenging conflict environment, the close relationship between the mediator and the monitoring mission,[31] and the conflict parties' commitment to the process.

[26]Clayton, Nathan, and Wiehler, "Ceasefire Success: A Conceptual Framework."
[27]Wiehler, "Deciding on the Tit for the Tat."
[28]Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture."
[29]Fortna, *Peace Time*; Clayton and Sticher, "The Logic of Ceasefires in Civil War."
[30]Palik, "Watchdogs of Pause."
[31]See also Höglund, "Obstacles to Monitoring."

The problems that Palik identifies in Yemen seem relevant to other contemporary ceasefire monitoring missions.[32] These challenges, coupled with the growing reluctance of Western states to deploy third-party monitors, and a growing recognition of the importance of incorporating local actors,[33] has led to a greater involvement of civilian actors within ceasefire monitoring. Pinaud, in the sixth contribution to the special issue, focuses specifically on civil society monitoring, an area largely neglected in existing academic research.[34] Based on fieldwork conducted in Nepal, she explores the effectiveness of civil society monitoring of the May 2006 ceasefire. Besides facilitating communication between and within conflict parties, she identifies additional distinct advantages of civil society actors in ceasefire monitoring, namely exposing noncompliance to ceasefire commitments, promoting peace process issues among conflict parties, and socializing outside spoilers and raising public awareness about ceasefires.[35] For external actors with a stake in the peace, this article offers an important lesson, with the risk of stating the obvious: for civil society to perform these functions, there has to be a viable civil society within the country. In Nepal, the international community began to channel support to peace-oriented actors years before the ceasefire was signed, pointing to a long-term strategy for third parties to support an eventual peace process further down the road.

Ceasefire monitoring can be a useful tool to manage violence that occurs during a ceasefire, yet this can only be effective when the parties are committed to stopping violence. In many cases, conflict parties enter into ceasefire for other purposes, such as renegotiating authority and influencing governance at the local level. Seen in this way, ceasefires are not just shaped by the dynamics of conflict (as shown by Åkebo and Hanson in this issue) but in turn shape the dynamics of conflict and violence down the road.

This is the argument developed by Waterman in the final contribution to the special issue, which focuses on the distinct order-making purpose of ceasefires. He studies the 1997 Indo-Naga ceasefire (one of the long-term truces examined by Hanson), with a particular focus on the statés role in order-making. Because of the character of the Indo-Naga ceasefire, which was light on details, the ceasefire regime remained ambiguous and open to interpretation. As a result, different actors within the state interpreted and tried to shape it differently, leading to a continuation of violence.[36] Waterman traces and illustrates this spectrum of bargaining, signalling and negotiation over the formal and informal rules of the state-rebel relationship in

[32]Verjee, *Monitoring Ceasefires is Getting Harder*; Verjee, "Ceasefire Monitoring in South Sudan."
[33]Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture."
[34]Though see, for example, Puttick, *Eyes on the Ground*.
[35]Pinaud, "Home-Grown Peace."
[36]Waterman, "Ceasefires and State Order-Making in Naga Northeast India."

this case, and challenges the idea that ceasefires simply lock in the state-conflict party relationship. This underscores the importance of considering the formal and informal ordering processes that take place following a ceasefire, and how this shapes violence during a ceasefire. As the author emphasizes, this case presents a clear lesson for policymakers engaged in designing ceasefires with a view to ensuring human security, namely to set and communicate red lines and so reduce the space for continued violence. This is in line with prior practitioner research that stresses the importance of clarity and precision in ceasefire agreements.[37]

Conclusion

This is an auspicious period in the study of ceasefires. For the first time, there is a critical mass of scholars concerned with better understanding the characteristics, causes, and consequences of ceasefires. This growing research community is benefiting from significant knowledge exchange between scholars and practitioners. This special issue is the result of exactly this exchange, as all of the contributions build on policy and practitioner literature, rely on some collaboration with practitioners or decision-makers, and benefited from the collective wisdom of both communities at the joint analysis workshop in Oslo, from where the issue originates.

Looking forward, there are a number of areas in which the findings of this special issue could be developed. One of our key insights relates to the diversity of ceasefire agreements. The different articles within this issue offer first attempts to conceptualize different forms of ceasefire, explore the different pathways that produce different types of agreements, and understand the different effects the different classes of agreement are likely to produce.[38] Much work remains to be done to identify and explore other forms of ceasefire. Similarly, ceasefire monitoring, despite its importance, remains a relatively understudied phenomenon.[39] All signs suggest that civilian monitoring will become an increasingly common phenomenon, and more research is required to explore the relative strengths and weaknesses of this approach.[40] Finally, the interaction between ceasefires and the political negotiations remains poorly understood. We still lack sufficient knowledge of how negotiations to address the conflict incompatibility are influenced by factors such as the onset, sequencing, violation, and success of a

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[37]Buchanan, Clayton, and Ramsbotham, "Ceasefire Monitoring and Support Architecture"; Haysom and Hottinger, "Do's and Don'ts of Sustainable Ceasefire Arrangements."
[38]Similarly, Clayton et al., "Ceasefires in Intra-State Peace Processes"; Clayton and Sticher, "The Logic of Ceasefires in Civil War."
[39]Grist, "More than Eunuchs at the Orgy."
[40]See also Julian and Gasser, "Soldiers, Civilians and Peacekeeping". For a discussion on peacekeeping by unarmed civilians, including civilian ceasefire monitoring.

ceasefire. This special issue has hopefully provided the foundations for this research agenda to develop.

Disclosure Statement

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Corinne Bara is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in Uppsala. Her research focuses on the dynamics of violence and strategies of armed actors during and after civil wars.

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