**Call for input**: Comprehensive report on “Importance of casualty recording for the promotion and protection of human rights.”

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The impact of wide-scale violence and armed conflict is devastating on a country’s public institutions, national economy, infrastructure, and social cohesion (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2008, p. 31). Assessing the human and economic costs of conflict is key to accountability. Casualty recording represents the basic requirement for communities to obtain recognition of their losses and access any subsequent form of redress and compensation.

Violent deaths, in both conflict and non-conflict settings, being the most extreme consequence of armed violence are the object of more accurate recording than other violent events (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 43). As a consequence, the number of persons who die violently is frequently used as a proxy measure for insecurity in both conflict and non-conflict settings (see SDG indicators 16.1.2 and 16.1.1 respectively).

Accountability for lives lost includes full recognition of demographics, cause of death and surrounding scenarios. Considering that the location of many conflicts corresponds to areas in which a basic human right as birth registration is still lagging behind (see Sachs et al., 2022, Table A.5), casualty recording represents a crucial element to acknowledge the high price paid by communities. Casualty recording, by promoting a registry approach, is likely to produce a large amount of information, which may result in important evidence for policy use in different areas.

The role of civil society in casualty recording remains key. For example, as of 2017 seven different organizations were tracking fatalities in the Syrian conflict (Pavesi, 2017, p. 5). Different communities may need to collect their own data to seek recognition of full coverage without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or other characteristics. Nevertheless, there is a need for objective and impartial coordination of data collected, to ensure that definitions applied are coherent and the scope of coverage well identified.

References

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