



Protection Forum

SAN JOSÉ 2025

Tuesday 18 November 2025
Sheraton Hotel,
350 Metros Oeste Multiplaza,
27, San José.

PROGRAMME & EVENT GUIDE

11.00 - 12.00

Arrival, registration and coffee

12.00 - 12.15

OPENING OF THE PROTECTION FORUM

Master of Ceremony: **María Pía Devoto**,
Human Security Network of Latin America
and the Caribbean

Carlos Rivera Bianchini,
President of the Board of Directors
of Fundación para la paz y la democracia

Rasmus Sandvoll Weschke,
International Network on Explosive Weapons

12:15 - 13:15

SESSION 1 – CIVILIAN HARM
AND CURRENT CONTEXTS

Moderator: **Roos Boer**, PAX

Katherine Young, Explosive Weapons Monitor
Olha Lieshukova, Persons with disabilities
rights activist from Ukraine
Waad Al Kateab, Action For Sama
Anne Héry, Humanity and Inclusion

13:15 - 13:45 Coffee break

13:45 - 14:45

SESSION 2 - TURNING COMMITMENT INTO ACTION

Moderator: **Alma Taslidžan**, Humanity & Inclusion

Dr. Hamza Al-Kateab, Action for Sama
Narmina Strishenets, Save the Children UK
Clément Meynier, Mines Advisory Group

14:45 - 15:00 Coffee break

15:00 - 16:00

SESSION 3 - BUILDING NORMS IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Moderator: **Cesar Jaramillo**, SANE Policy Institute

Joseph Dube, Peace and Disarmament Advocate
Annie Shiel, Center for Civilians in Conflict
Laura Boillot, Article 36

The session includes the INEW call to action

16:00 - 16:30 - Break

16:30 - 18:10

SCREENING OF FOR SAMA

18:15 - 19:00

Panel discussion with filmmakers and
For Sama team, moderated by **Marwa Almbaed**

19:00 - 20:00 - Drinks reception and food





Maria Pia Devoto
SEHLAC

Maria Pia Devoto is Director of the Association for Public Policies (APP) is an expert in international security issues and non-proliferation, disarmament, arms control and gender. She is a founding member of the Argentine Network for Disarmament (RAD), of the Human Security Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (SEHLAC) of whom she is the coordinator and member of the governing bodies of ICBL/CMC, ICAN, INEW and StopKillerRobots, she is also a focal point for the Gender Equality Network on Small Arms (GENSAC).



Carlos Rivera Bianchini
FUNPADEM

Carlos Rivera Bianchini is the President of the Board of Directors of FUNPADEM, with a distinguished career in public service and the promotion of peace and democracy. He served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica (1982–1986) and later as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1986–1990). As part of his duties, he represented Costa Rica before the United Nations General Assembly, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). His commitment to institutional strengthening has been reflected through FUNPADEM's ongoing work and advocacy across various national and regional platforms.



Rasmus Sandvoll Weschke
INEW / Norwegian People's Aid

Rasmus Sandvoll Weschke is a senior policy advisor at Norwegian People's Aid and also represents NPA in the INEW Steering Committee. He has worked in conflict preparedness and protection (CPP) as well as explosive weapons in populated areas since joining NPA in 2017. Prior to NPA he worked on protection of civilians issues at the ICRC.



Katherine Young
Explosive Weapons Monitor

Katherine Young is the Research & Monitoring Manager of the Explosive Weapons Monitor, a civil society research initiative of the International Network on Explosive Weapons. She undertakes and oversees the development of research on harms from and practices of explosive weapon use in populated areas, and she provides overall programmatic management for the initiative. Katherine was previously Senior Researcher of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Monitor, a project of Control Arms. Prior to that she was the Program Manager of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School, where she managed the day-to-day operations of the International Human Rights Clinic. She is based in the state of New York in the United States.



Olha Lieshukova
Activist from Ukraine

Olha Lieshukova is an activist and expert on the rights of persons with disabilities from Mykolaiv, Ukraine. Before the outbreak of war in her home country, Olha – a multiple European and World Champion in armwrestling – coached the Ukrainian national Paralympic team, living with a disability herself since childhood. In May 2022, a missile strike destroyed her home in Mykolaiv, leaving her and her husband seriously injured and forcing them to evacuate to Germany. Despite these challenges, Olha continues to advocate for disability rights and supports Ukrainian refugees with disabilities in Germany. Internationally, she speaks on humanitarian aid, access to medical care in conflict zones, and the impact of war on civilians and the environment, using her strong voice and personal experiences to raise awareness and advocate for greater support for affected communities.



Waad al-Kateab

Filmmaker, Activist, and Co-Founder of Action For Sama

Waad al-Kateab is a Syrian journalist, award-winning filmmaker and activist. She became a citizen journalist in 2011, after protests broke out across Syria, and in January 2016 she began documenting the horrors of Aleppo for Channel 4 News in a series that received an International Emmy for breaking news coverage. Her first feature documentary, *For Sama*, documented her life over five years in Aleppo, showcasing an intimate human insight into the everyday existence of her family against the backdrop of the conflict in Syria. The film received worldwide critical acclaim, winning numerous awards, including best documentary at Cannes Film Festival, Best Documentary at the BAFTAs and a nomination for Best Documentary Feature at the 2020 Academy Awards. She is the Co-Founder of Action For Sama alongside Hamza - an impact campaign created to turn the incredible worldwide reaction to For Sama into action for Syria.



Anne Héry

Director for Advocacy and Institutional Relations - Handicap International - Humanity & inclusion

Anne Héry is the Director for Advocacy and Institutional Relations for Handicap International - Humanity & Inclusion. With more than 20 years' experience in the humanitarian sector, most of which at senior management positions, she has travelled extensively in crises affected countries, in particular in Africa and in the Middle East. Under her leadership, HI has meaningfully contributed to major policy work related to humanitarian action, such as the IASC Guidelines on Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the International Declaration on the Impact of EWIPA, or the impact of counter terrorism measures and sanction regimes on humanitarian action. This, in addition to her advocacy and policy work on humanitarian access in specific crisis, and her engagement in major international NGO networks, has built her robust understanding of the structure and functioning of the humanitarian system.



Roos Boer

Project leader on EWIPA, PAX

Roos Boer is the project leader on Explosive Weapons in Populated project at PAX, and is based in the Netherlands. As one of the co-founding members of the International Network on Explosive Weapons, Boer co-published several reports on explosive weapons in populated areas, based on field missions as well as policy oriented publications. Boer holds a masters degree in International Relations from the University of Amsterdam, and has been working on a range of humanitarian disarmament issues since 2007, including negotiations on the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.



Alma Taslidžan

Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager at Humanity & Inclusion

Alma Taslidžan is the Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager at Humanity & Inclusion. She has devoted her career to humanitarian disarmament and the protection of civilians. Since 2014, she has led Disarmament and Protection of Civilians advocacy for Federation Handicap International in Brussels. Her efforts are dedicated to advancing the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Additionally, she played a pivotal role in shaping the Political Declaration aimed at addressing the humanitarian ramifications stemming from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Taslidžan was recently appointed to Chair the Governance Board of ICBL-CMC. She is also a member of the Steering Committee of INEW, a member of the Monitoring and Research Committee of the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor and Board member of the Explosive Weapons Monitor.



Hamza al-Kateab

Doctor, Human Rights Activist, Action For Sama Lead

Dr Hamza al-Kateab is a Syrian doctor, researcher, and human rights advocate working to protect healthcare in conflict. He is the Co-Founder of Action For Sama, an international campaign using storytelling, documentation, and advocacy to end attacks on hospitals and medical workers. His work builds on years of frontline experience as the manager of Al-Quds Hospital in besieged Eastern Aleppo, where he was among the last doctors to remain until the forced evacuation in 2016.

Now based in the UK, Hamza leads international efforts to strengthen the protection of healthcare and accountability for attacks, while pursuing a PhD at King's College London on medical evacuations of civilians during sieges in Syria. He was featured in the BAFTA-winning and Oscar-nominated documentary *For Sama*, filmed and directed by his wife, Waad al-Kateab.



Narmina Strishenets

Senior Conflict and Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Save the Children UK

Narmina Strishenets is a Senior Conflict and Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Save the Children UK, who joined the team in July 2022. She is an Advocacy Lead on Protecting Children from Explosive Weapons and a lead author of Save the Children's report *Children and Blast Injuries: The Devastating Impact of Explosive Weapons on Children, 2020–2025*. Narmina has led Save the Children's advocacy response on Ukraine and Myanmar. From 2017 to 2022, she led advocacy and communications at the UN Women Ukraine Country Office and supported the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in Türkiye, focusing on women's and girls' rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and gender-based violence. Earlier in her career, she contributed to international initiatives on public health and education with UNICEF in New York. Narmina holds a master's degree in International Affairs from King's College London.



Myriam Rabbath

Senior Community Liaison Adviser, MAG

Myriam is MAG's Senior Community Liaison Advisor. She has worked in the humanitarian sector for ten years, including in education, livelihoods, shelter, WASH, and mine action, for the largest part in delivering direct support to families, communities and institutions affected by emergent and protracted armed conflict and explosive ordnance (EO) contamination. In her current role, Myriam provides technical support and advice to colleagues across MAG's programmes in 30+ countries, on strategies and activities enhancing community resilience and risk reduction from EO, and regularly travels to areas impacted by conflict. Throughout her childhood and time in Lebanon, she has also experienced first-hand the impacts of explosive weapons used in populated areas, bombing raids and street battles on civilians.



Cesar Jaramillo

SEHLAC's representative to the INEW Steering Committee

Cesar Jaramillo is the Executive Director of the SANE Policy Institute, Chair of the Canadian Pugwash Group, and a member of the SEHLAC Network – as well as SEHLAC's representative to the INEW Steering Committee. For more than fifteen years, his work has focused on arms control, global governance, and international security, with emphasis on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, nuclear disarmament, emerging military technologies, and the trade in conventional weapons. He previously served as Executive Director of Project Ploughshares and held a fellowship at the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). He has participated in proceedings of the UN General Assembly First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and meetings of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. He holds a Master's degree in Global Governance from the University of Waterloo, and bachelor's degrees in Political Science and Journalism.



Annie Shiel

US Advocacy Director at Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)

Annie Shiel is US Advocacy Director at Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), where she leads the organization's advocacy with US policymakers, lawmakers, and civil society partners to prevent and respond to civilian harm in conflict. Prior to joining CIVIC, Annie worked as a Research Program Manager at Stanford University, where she led research on civilian harm and humanitarian response. Annie also spent three years at the US State Department, where she worked on human rights, civilian protection, and security sector reform as a founding member of the Office of Security and Human Rights. Annie holds a Master's Degree in International Policy from Stanford University and a BA in International Development from McGill University.



Joseph Dube

Peace and Disarmament Advocate

Joseph is a leading voice for Humanitarian disarmament and common security. With decades of grassroots and regional policy-level experience, working with the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. Joseph has helped influence several African States' approach to disarmament, contributing to ratification of most major humanitarian disarmament treaties. He champions inclusive peacebuilding rooted in lived experience and youth leadership, working towards a world free from war and violence.



Laura Boillot
Director of Article 36

Laura Boillot is a Director of UK-based Article 36 which focuses on reducing harm from weapons. Laura previously served as Coordinator for the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) and led the coalition through the negotiations of the international political declaration to strengthen the protection of civilians. She has previously worked as Campaign Manager and subsequently as Director of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC). Prior to that Laura worked as Program Officer on the Control Arms campaign and for the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA). She has 20-years experience of leading global civil society coalitions on humanitarian disarmament and protection of civilians issues.



Marwa Almbaed
Syrian Survivor and Self-Advocate

The war in her home country Syria drastically changed Marwa Almbaed's life at the age of 24. She was involved in a car accident caused by explosive weapons fired on a highway, which left her paralyzed from the waist down. Even after arriving in Germany, the fear of not being able to evacuate quickly during times of conflict remained with her. A turning point came when she received exceptional care from an occupational therapist in Germany — an experience that inspired her to pursue the same profession, with the goal of supporting others in similar situations. She is currently undergoing professional training to become an occupational therapist. Continuing her previous volunteer work in peacebuilding in Syria, Marwa now uses her voice and first-hand experience as a war survivor to support the implementation of the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA).

Movie Screening:

For Sama

Join us for an evening that moves beyond policy: one that re-centres humanity, compassion, and courage at the heart of the effort to protect civilians in conflict.

As part of the Protection Forum, INEW/Article 36, and Humanity & Inclusion are proud to host an exclusive screening of the award-winning documentary *For Sama*, followed by an in-depth conversation with filmmaker Waad al-Kateab and Dr Hamza al-Kateab.

For Sama is both an epic and intimate story - a love letter from a mother to her daughter, filmed amid the Syrian conflict in Aleppo. It captures the extraordinary courage of civilians and medics who continue their work under relentless bombardment, documenting with honesty the impact of explosive weapons on families, hospitals, and entire communities.

Screened for world leaders and policymakers around the globe, *For Sama* has become a landmark in public understanding of the civilian cost of war. The film embodies the core principles of the Political Declaration on EWIPA - the urgent need to protect civilians, preserve humanitarian space, and uphold international law.



STOP BOMBING CIVILIANS