



An explosion of cheap, powerful, smart new technologies is proliferating in war zones. Drones, social media, big data, cell phones and the Internet. They have changed the world. They have changed conflict. Revolutions are tweeted. Information is warfare. Citizens bear witness. Activists circumvent warlords to organize, connect and seek global action.

Like never before, new technologies promise to empower individuals caught in conflict. But how? To what end? What is the potential? What are the risks? Can the local and global “connection” help? Can smart new technologies empower citizens to make a difference in zones of conflict?

The **#HackingConflict** Diplohack challenges you to put these ideas into practice. We have selected three UN Security Council Resolutions to frame your efforts: UNSC 1325 - Women, peace and security; UNSC 2139 - End barrel bombs in Syria; and, UNSC 2202 - Cease-fire in Ukraine. Your mission: Find innovative ways to leverage technology, youth and citizen action to make a difference in living up to the goals of these international instruments!

Mission Objective

Develop a specific proposal that leverages technology to empower citizen action in support of one of the three UN Resolutions. You have less than 48 hours to design and build an innovative solution. This can be a policy intervention, communication campaign, a technology, or any and all of the above. Suggested entry points for each of the UN Resolutions are provided below.

Evaluation Criteria

To succeed, your idea must have **CREDD**:

Clarity -- The goal, objectives, intended beneficiaries and outcome must be clear and compelling.

Risk Assessment -- Your idea's innovation, and potential to disrupt conflict needs to be balanced against potential risks to your beneficiaries, and your end goal.

Evidence -- Demonstrate that your idea is sound by providing facts and supporting evidence. If hard data is lacking - enumerate the challenges and areas for further research.

Do-ability -- Show how your idea could be put into action and sustained; Will intended beneficiaries welcome the idea? How will you assess impact?

Disruption -- How innovative is the idea and proposed outcome?

Supporting Resources:

Throughout the Diplohack you will have access to background resources, social media data tools, and data sets.

Experts and mentors will circulate among the teams, providing insight and professional advice on a wide range of topics including: Big data, strategic communication, specifics of the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine. You will also have access to experts and activists in Syria and Ukraine who (connection willing) will be available by Skype, Twitter and Google hangout.

Challenge Areas

[UNSC Resolution 2139](#) -- Ending barrel bombs in Syria

To date, 86,000 members of the Syrian non-violent community have mobilized around a global campaign to [stop barrel bombing in Syria](#). Others are also [calling for an end](#). But, [Amnesty Reports](#) notwithstanding, the regime continues to deny that it is dropping barrel bombs on civilian areas. Actors on the ground are trying to capture and document evidence of barrel bomb attacks. But many frontline activists have not been trained on how to capture evidence that matters (to future prosecution cases, for example), nor do they know where to send it. Many activists have literally died in the process of collecting evidence that, in the end, will go nowhere. Some documentation organizations – like the [Violations Documentation Centre](#) (VDC), [Syrian Justice and Accountability Centre](#) and [Syria Tracker](#) among others – collect field reports and scan social media to verify barrel bomb reports, but there are many problems. For example, only 6% of citizen documented evidence is considered good enough to use (by Syria Tracker), and overall the effort is very fragmented. No documentation organization has yet to produce a centralized repository that can also be used for advocacy by the global movements seeking to end the bombs.

Potential Entry Points:

- **Verification:** Can open source forensics enhance reporting and documentation?
- **Collection and Crisis mapping:** Can crowd-sourced evidence be strengthened and communicated in an innovative and compelling way taking into account the technical and security challenges of collection and reporting from an active war zone?
- **Disruptive:** Can new smart technologies including drones, commercial satellite data, on-line collaboration and evidence collection tools, and clever advocacy campaigns create new ways for early warning or strategic advocacy?

UNSC Resolution 2202 -- Ukraine Ceasefire

On February 15, 2015 a cease-fire came into effect in the eastern regions of Ukraine. [Resolution 2202](#) spells out the conditions of the cease-fire as agreed upon in the [Minsk Accords](#). In addition to a cessation of hostilities, the agreement calls on all parties to withdraw heavy weapons from the cease-fire lines, and mandates an effective monitoring and verification regime including satellites, [drones](#), and other technical means. The accord also provides for the release of hostages and detained persons, delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance, withdrawal of foreign forces, and reinstatement of effective border controls by the government of Ukraine. Implementation of the agreement has been plagued by alleged violations by both sides. Shelling of civilian areas has been reported, as have clashes between armed groups. Foreign fighters remain engaged, and human rights violations have been claimed by both sides. Disinformation and a lack of credible information complicate matters further. Information is used as warfare by all parties. In the midst of the conflict, civilians suffer most. Groups like [stopfake.org](#) combat disinformation, and nongovernmental organizations use open source means to document violations and hold combatants to account.

Potential Entry Points:

- **Citizen-led verification:** Limited resources, and difficulty in accessing areas of hostilities have hampered OSCE's verification mechanisms. Are there clever ways in which crisis mapping and other citizen led mechanisms using new technologies such as drones, social media, and cell phones enhance verification of the ceasefire in a credible, compelling and sustainable manner?
- **Disruptive:** Botnets and Trolling create confusion and disinformation. Are there rapid, scalable, and automated ways in which to combat disinformation in real time? Are there ways to anticipate botnets and disinformation so as to pre-empt their impact and effect? Is it possible to identify and reveal the source of trolling and disinformation at scale, and communicate this in a way that results and meaningful action?

● [UNSC Resolution 1325](#) -- Women, Peace and Security

This year marks the 15th anniversary of [UNSC Resolution 1325](#), with its calls for preventing sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict, protection of women and girls in refugee settings and improved political participation of women in peace-building operations. [UNSC 1820 \(2008\)](#) further condemned sexual violence as a weapon of war and declared rape and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes. And yet, sexual and gender-based violence continues to be widespread with impunity for those who commit it, especially in conflict zones. In [Syria](#), for example, commissions of inquiry report institutionalized sexual violence in detention centers and prisons, as well as allegations against armed opposition groups, including reports of Islamic State sexual slavery practices. An ever increasing but silent number of women are survivors of war crimes. Not only do they suffer the physical and psychological trauma, but they are often rejected (or even killed) by their families. Some commit suicide. The scale of the problem is masked by deep shame and silence. [The UN Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#) and smaller organizations have been providing some assistance in the zones where they operate, but in many areas, no help is available. Doctors and aid workers in these areas have no training, nor access to resources that can help. And of course, other conflict zones — like [South Sudan](#), Congo, Somalia, Iraq, [Colombia](#), amongst other areas — have similar ongoing horror stories.

On a positive note, promising approaches are being pioneered by actors like [Physicians for Human Rights](#). And groups around the world are working on innovative ways to improve women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Potential Entry Points:

- **Protection and Access:** Can new technologies help support local capacity to address gender-based violence in the midst of war? In Syria, as in all conflict zones, we see new actors coming to the forefront, dealing with issues that they were never trained to deal with, and often in isolation. Can new technologies help?
- **Documentation and Advocacy:** Can technology help to improve documentation and reporting processes of sexual violence against women and children in conflict zones? Might better documentation and advocacy help others come forward? On the peacebuilding front, advocacy groups suggest that better documentation of women in peace-building processes is needed, and will help to empower the 1325 agenda.
- **Disruptive:** Are there new ways that technology, data, or some combination can create and sustain networks of advocacy and involve women, and women's voices in the prevention/documentation of sexual violence and/or conflict resolution in Syria, Ukraine, and elsewhere?

The Diplohack Process

Plan and reflect (Diplohack -1)

Prior to the Diplohack, think about the specific challenge area you have chosen and how you would like to tackle it. Think about the specific opportunities and develop some initial ideas you want to share with your teammates. Take a look at the resource page and perhaps do a little research on your own. Remember, **CREDD** is the basis on which your team's project will be evaluated, so reflect on the opportunities, as well as the risks that you will have to answer to develop your idea.

Ideation and prototype (Day 1 and morning of Day 2)

During the morning and early afternoon of the first day (27th), you will focus on brainstorming and developing your ideas with your teammates. During this phase, you should focus on defining your goal, identifying your beneficiaries, and thinking through the outcome you want to achieve. Your thinking should be informed by **CREDD** -- assess the risks, muster your evidence, map out how you will go about implementing your idea. During the first two hours of Day 1, you will be helped along by a facilitator as you get to know your team members, and begin to define your idea. Thereafter, each group will have access to roving mentors and subject matter experts who can help you along on specific aspects of your project. You will also have access to tools and data sets including a social media dashboard, access to the Internet, and other materials to help you along. Each team will have embedded experts that can show you how to use these tools, and that you can use in building out your idea.

By the end of the first day, teams should have a prototype of an idea, and the tasks that you need to undertake to refine your idea on the second day. During the morning of the 28th, teams will refine their idea further, and begin preparing for the presentation to judges. The Diplohack team will provide a basic template to build the presentation in PowerPoint.

Presentation and Assessment (Afternoon of Day 2)

During the late morning and early afternoon of Day 2, teams will refine their idea into a five-minute "pitch" presentation. It will need to answer all the questions of **CREDD** in a clear and compelling way. At 3:30pm, teams will take turns presenting their idea to a panel of judges. Two winners will be chosen in situ: one by the judges, and one by Participant vote.

Awards will be presented at the final closing ceremonies.

Following the Diplohack, your presentations will be made available on the Diplohack website. On 29 May, we will encourage public online voting, to determine the People's Choice winner.

A Final Thought

The objective of the Diplohack is engagement, creative thinking and learning. We expect some great ideas to come out of this event, but the greatest benefit is to you. If you walk away with a fresh perspective, new ideas and motivated to make a difference, we will have succeeded!

