

INTRODUCTION: RACISM, RIGHTS, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT REFUGEES

James C. Simeon and Stephanie P. Stobbe

This special issue of the Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies covers the topic of “Racism, Rights and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Refugees,” the theme of the 2023 Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) conference, co-hosted by Stephanie P. Stobbe (CARFMS President) and James C. Simeon (CARFMS Vice President) at York University. Thank you to the authors who contributed to this issue: James C. Simeon, Maureen Silcoff, Gamze Ovacık, and Sorpong Peou.

The challenge of achieving a “sustainable peace”¹ has been a constant for most of humanity throughout recorded history.² While organized political violence has waxed and waned throughout human history, there is no denying its devastating effect on human society, not only in terms of the numbers of those who have died as a consequence of organized political violence—that is, armed conflicts and/or wars—but also in the destruction of property and its negative effects on our environment.³ By definition, armed conflicts and/or wars are intended, deliberately, to perpetrate death and destruction in order to achieve military victory. And in this lies the supreme motivation for people to flee, in order merely to survive and provide for their families.

THE EVER-ESCALATING NUMBER OF ARMED CONFLICTS

The global situation today is especially grim. The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights’ Rule of Law in Armed Conflict Online Portal (RULAC), which “identifies and classifies all situations of armed violence that amount to an armed conflict under international humanitarian law,”⁴ reports that there are more than 110 armed conflicts in the world today and that many of these are protracted armed

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