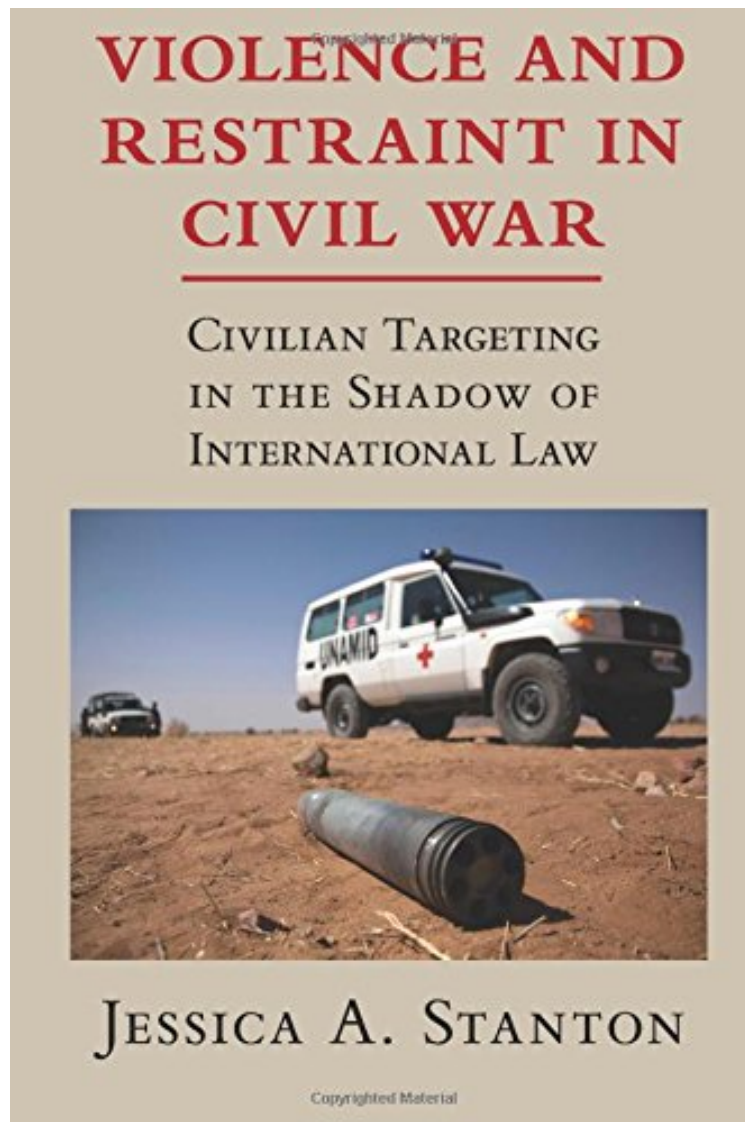


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## Violence and Restraint in Civil War: Civilian Targeting in the Shadow of International Law

Jessica A. Stanton

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**Jessica A. Stanton : Violence and Restraint in Civil War: Civilian Targeting in the Shadow of International Law** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Violence and Restraint in Civil War: Civilian Targeting in the Shadow of International Law:

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Media coverage of civil wars often focuses on the most gruesome atrocities and the most extreme conflicts, which might lead one to think that all civil wars involve massive violence against civilians. In truth, many governments and rebel groups exercise restraint in their fighting, largely avoiding violence against civilians in compliance with international law. Governments and rebel groups make strategic calculations about whether to target civilians by evaluating how domestic and international audiences are likely to respond to violence. Restraint is also a deliberate strategic choice: governments and rebel groups often avoid targeting civilians and abide by international legal standards to appeal to domestic and international audiences for diplomatic support. This book presents a wide range of evidence of the strategic use of violence and restraint, using original data on violence against civilians in civil wars from 1989 to 2010 as well as in-depth analyses of conflicts in Azerbaijan, El Salvador, Indonesia, Sudan, Turkey, and Uganda.

'The international community often thinks there's little it can do to stop governments and rebel groups from killing civilians in civil wars. The powerful message of this well-researched book is that they can do something. Stanton expertly argues and then shows that one of the best ways to stop massacres and civilian abuses is to invest in international human rights and laws. This is an extremely important and timely study that should be required reading for anyone interested in civil wars.' Barbara F. Walter, University of California, San Diego'Although extreme violence against civilians is common in civil war, it is far from universal. In many civil wars, belligerents display considerable (and surprising) restraint. Jessica A. Stanton explains why: in the context of the post-Cold War world with its emphasis on humanitarian standards and concomitant (if imperfect) rewards and sanctions, belligerents face significant incentives to limit their violence against civilians. When support from domestic, but also international, constituencies matters, restraining violence may make strategic sense.' Stathis Kalyvas, Director of the Program on Order, Conflict and Violence, Yale University'Stanton's study is the most compelling look at the full spectrum of violence used by rebel groups in civil war available today. Modes of violence - and restraint from violence - are strategies of struggle. Among many other crucial points, she shows that international legal norms and rules are among the factors combatants consider when weighing the costs and benefits of using or eschewing various forms of violence. A superb study - a major contribution to our understanding of civil war violence.' Beth Simmons, Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs, Harvard University'Using an impressive combination of quantitative analysis and case studies, Stanton persuasively argues that violence against civilians is more costly for belligerents that depend on domestic or international constituencies for support. These actors are more likely to observe restraint. When belligerents do target civilians, however, the type of violence they use - geared towards control, cleansing, or terrorism of the population - is a function of the nature of their adversary's relationship with its domestic constituency. This compelling work is an excellent contribution to the literature on civil war violence and is a must-read for anyone hoping to understand the dynamics of contemporary civil wars.' Alexander B. Downes, The George Washington University, Washington, DC

About the Author Jessica Stanton is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously, she held Fellowships at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, California, the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, Massachusetts, and the Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research has been published in *The Journal of Politics* and *the Journal of Conflict Resolution*.