



**New roles of CSOs for Inclusive Development**

**Impact of non-state actors on civic space in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and Palestine**

Human rights civil society organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in promoting human rights and holding states to account. Yet, these groups are increasingly facing direct attacks and restrictions on their work from both state and non-state actors (NSAs), which impede their advocacy activities, ability to access information and ability to speak out freely against abuse. This research project explores if and how the actions of NSAs impact on the civic space of CSOs in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and Palestine. It aims to describe how various groups and powerful actors in society (other than states) impact, positively or negatively, on the space for civil society to conduct advocacy on human rights issues. In doing so, it hopes to unpack how these restrictions differ from state restrictions, if at all. It will do this by adopting a comparative case study approach and process tracing to assess how the actions of NSAs impact on CSO resources and their capacity to resist while protecting rights. By tracing this phenomenon over a period of 10 years in each of the three selected case studies, this research hopes to build a typology of NSAs and their motivations, methods and tactics, while understanding how they interact with government restrictions on civil society.

<b>Main question</b>	How do the activities of non-state actors influence the political or civic space of CSOs?
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<b>Consortium</b>	Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum
<b>Country focus</b>	Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and Palestine
<b>Planned activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a literature review to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework to account for the role of NSAs and their impact on CSO advocacy.</li> <li>• Drawing from the literature on resource mobilization, identify causal pathways by which the actions of NSAs influence the CSO resources of people, networks and finances.</li> <li>• Deploy a framework through comparative case study research in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and Palestine. Test hypothesized causal pathways using surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth expert interviews.</li> <li>• Conduct an assessment of how CSO resource capital influences CSO advocacy when faced with actions by NSAs.</li> <li>• Identify how if at all, restrictions imposed by NSAs differ from those imposed by states, with a particular focus on whether it is possible to evidence collusion between states and NSAs.</li> <li>• Compile and disseminate a report of the findings, recommendations and lessons learnt.</li> </ul>

