



## **R2P Consultation**

Submitted by **Scientific Association of Young Political Scientists**

**Given the progress and/or challenges facing atrocity crime prevention in your region, what issues do you believe civil society needs to prioritize and coordinate efforts on? What global issues and/or cross-cutting topics need to be in focus for civil society organizations in the coming years? \***

We strongly believe that civil society should focus its efforts in building understanding of the scope of the R2P norm. In a highly globalized environment, the impacts of humanitarian crises around the globe are no longer constrained in the borders of the state, but they spill over on a regional and international level. The global agenda is full of great challenges and threats to our planet's very own survival and therefore we cannot afford responding when a crisis has reached its peak. The UN has underlined the importance of prevention in numerous occasions and the civil society must be a strong stakeholder in this process.

**Are there lessons learned from your experience in other movements that can be applied to the global NGO movement to advance RtoP and prevent atrocity crimes? \***

The use of mobile technology could turn out being a very effective tool both in preventing mass atrocities but also in advancing the R2P. Smartphone penetration in global markets is rising rapidly, a development that facilitates the dissemination of and the access to information on a global level

**In what ways do you believe your organization can recommit to advancing RtoP? This could be through further integrating RtoP into your mandate or programmatic initiatives, building partnerships with other NGOs or stakeholders to coordinate action on atrocities prevention, etc. \***

Our Association is a UN accredited NGO in special consultative status to the ECOSOC. This week we took part in a consultation process under the topic "Long-term position of the United Nations development system".

In our document we linked development with human security and education and underlined that " the question of achieving human security and promoting stronger education is one that cannot be met outside the protective umbrella of good governance. Grave Human Rights violations and the commitment of mass atrocities have clearly showed that a state's failure to protect its own citizens can trigger a widespread crisis that can jeopardize state's stability and therefore strike down its development rates, adding, in this way, more weight on the international community which is required to find immediate funds to address the humanitarian catastrophes generated, funds that could have been used- if prevention of such



violations was effective- in helping states address development issues. Therefore, by promoting peace through education and development we also achieve human security".

**What examples would you list as demonstrating the United Nations working to protect populations from atrocity crimes? What challenges do you believe confront the UN in atrocity prevention and response, and what recommendations do you have for addressing the challenges?**

Decision making is one of the challenges in the UN system that are susceptible to hinder effective and timely response against the threat or the reality of mass atrocities commitment. To this end, efforts within and outside the UN system should focus more on raising awareness of the essence, nature and importance of the responsibility to protect as a norm of global traits which seeks to and works towards protecting populations from mass atrocities.

**Please elaborate on your answer, sharing more on the impact you believe the reports and dialogues have had.**

The Reports and dialogues held on the responsibility to protect have a twofold impact.

On the one hand, they have helped states and the international community in general to give a more concrete and detailed understanding of the essence of the responsibility to protect norm, especially under the Pillars I and II. As a result, states now have in hand a wide range of tools that can help them identify and tackle the indicators or factors that could lead up to a mass atrocity.

On the other hand, it has become more apparent that States hold a different stance on the implementation of the third pillar of the norm, a development that can hinder response when prevention has failed.

On these grounds, and in order for the dialogue held to be more fruitful, we strongly believe that more focus should be given on preventive mechanisms and more specifically on the use of technology and data-driven decisions while preventing mass atrocities,

**. The Special Advisers for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect attempt to fulfill their mandates for early warning and protection through a variety of means. These have included the development of the annual reports of the Secretary-General on RtoP, briefings to the United Nations Security Council by the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, the development of a Framework of Analysis for atrocity crimes, and capacity building training at the national and regional levels. Were you aware of any of these activities? If applicable to your experience, how would you assess the work of the Joint Office? What additional actions would you recommend it undertake to advance its mandates for early warning and protection?**

Our Association was aware of the annual reports through the information that was provided by the ICRtP. We strongly believe that while moving forward we should focus more on building efficient and resilient preventive mechanisms, tailored to the risks that each country faces.



**The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has undertaken action to address atrocity crimes through the adoption of over 25 Resolutions including thematic and country-specific references to RtoP as well as welcoming the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide (SAPG) to brief the Council on country situations. That said, the ongoing case of Syria shows the challenges facing this body when it is constrained by political interests. What more should the UNSC do to strengthen its capacity to uphold RtoP?**

The case of Syria underlined the fact that in cases where the UNSC fails to respond to a crisis due to the use of veto, the catastrophes following up this inertia could be enormous. Maintaining security and international peace is one of the core responsibilities of the UNSC and upholding the R2P is at the heart of those responsibilities. To this end, the UNSC should strengthen its capacity to uphold the RtoP by linking political interests to human security, prioritizing human rights when inquiring and responding to a breach of international peace and security and refrain from the use of veto when populations are under the risk of the R2P related crimes.

**Please provide more information on the specific policies and/or mechanisms that have been established by your regional organization(s) to prevent and respond to atrocities, as well as hold perpetrators accountable, and your assessment of how effective such measures have been.**

In 2003 the EU adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS) which outlines the threats against the EU and its role and place on the global stage. In 2008, the European Council adopted a Report on the implementation of the ESS (S407/08) which integrated the R2P norm and explicitly stated that "sovereign governments must take responsibility for the consequences of their actions and hold a shared responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity".

The European Consensus on Development( 2006/C, 46/01) also highlights EU's intention to play a significant role in strengthening the role for the regional and subregional organisations in the process of enhancing international peace and security.

The EU also brings unparalleled experience and effectiveness in the implementation of sanctions against States that fail to live up to their responsibility to protect.

**4.List three target areas/actions that you want your government to prioritize going forward that would enable it to strengthen its capacity to protect populations from atrocities. \***

Though the risk of commitment of atrocity crimes is not imminent in Greece, we strongly believe that one of the areas where concrete steps and measures could be taken is that of education in order to tackle hate speech and xenophobia in certain and small parts of cities.

**How has your state assisted other countries to strengthen their ability to protect populations, or acted where a state was unable to prevent atrocities? Are there strategies that were undertaken by your country to prevent or respond to the occurrence of atrocity crimes that**



**did not work or proved counter-productive? What recommendations do you have for preventing such action in the future? How would you recommend that your government approaches international assistance in the future? \***

By looking back to the history of Greece it is hard not to realize that under the Ottoman and the Nazi occupation, atrocities are not a stranger to our conscience and memories. Greece, a member of the European Union, is a strong supporter of the Responsibility to Protect norm and it projects in its foreign policy the respect of law and a lawful and legitimate response to the R2P related crises under the rules and provisions of the UN Charter.

**What measures has your government adopted to protect its own populations from and enhance domestic capacity to prevent and respond to the commission of atrocity crimes? How effective have these actions been? \***

The rise of the Golden Dawn, an extremist and pro-Nazi party, poses a risk to certain portions of the population with different political, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds but not on a massive scale. The Greek government was quick to condemn the Golden Dawn and prosecute it as a criminal organization which promotes hate speech and violence. Most of its members today are imprisoned.

**How well is the international community anticipating and responding to the risk of atrocity crimes? Are there gaps? If so, are these gaps the result of knowledge deficits, gaps in policy, or challenges in operational guidance?**

At its inception, the R2P norm, as it was outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, set forth the responsibility assumed by states to protect their population from four specific crimes. The text of the Outcome Document however did not provide concrete guidelines to states on how they should live up to that responsibility. This gap was filled during the ensuing years through the Reports of the UNSG, the work of the UN Offices of the Special Advisers on the prevention of Genocide and on the R2P and the valuable contribution and support of the world wide network of NGOs.

This outcome has facilitated states and the UN system in their effort to anticipate the risk of atrocity crimes but the response has not been always adequate and timely. The UN Security Council in some occasions, such as the Syria crisis, was not able to reach to a resolution that could set the prevention or the response mechanism active under the relevant provisions of the UN Charter, a conduct that bears enormous costs in human lives in such cases. A close examination of the P5 stance on the Syrian Crisis leads up to the conclusion that the operational response in the crisis in Libya, which was considered as excessive by some States, created the fear that a response to the Syrian crisis would be similar to that in Libya. However this is not the only reason why the international community has failed in responding to Syria, but it underlines a hypothesis that enforcement of the R2P in one case could have negative repercussions or even hinder the response to another.

Different political agendas and conflicting national interests can also impede our response to atrocity crimes. The R2P norm was regarded - and probably still is - by states and individuals



as a pretext for Western Powers to intervene in the domestic affairs of third states, a belief which is deeply rooted in memories from the past and which should be taken under consideration while responding to atrocity crimes.

By this token, the gaps in the prevention and response mechanism are more linked to those revolving around the policy and decision making and the enforcement of the R2P on the ground

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