



**GLOBAL CENTRE
FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT**

A N N U A L
2020
R E P O R T

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR THE

WHO WE ARE

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

Since its inception in 2008 the [Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#) has played a unique “insider/outsider” role at the United Nations as the only organization carrying out monitoring, research and advocacy on all mass atrocity situations around the globe. The Global Centre works with various governments to translate this research into actionable policy.

This document provides insight into the work of the Global Centre during 2020. [Hyperlinks](#), indicated by underlined text and the symbols below, will take you to the Global Centre’s website, published pieces, interviews, social media posts and more.



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MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

Last year was unprecedented. Not since the UN was formed in 1945 have so many people around the world been displaced by persecution, conflict and atrocities. To make matters worse, in 2020 the devastating COVID-19 pandemic claimed 2 million lives, exacerbated threats to international peace and security and led to fresh assaults on human dignity.

Despite the impact of the pandemic on our work and operations, during 2020 the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect continued to fulfill its mandate to prevent mass atrocity crimes and facilitate the effective implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle. We have continued to provide early warning of emerging crises and to work closely with governments, the United Nations, international civil society, R2P Focal Points and the Group of Friends of R2P in both New York and Geneva.

The Global Centre celebrated a number of highlights during 2020, including our ongoing work in coordination with the government of The Gambia — and our colleagues at the Global Justice Center — to support a historic genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice. During January the Court issued a provisional measures order to protect the Rohingya population and the Global Centre helped lead the resulting media campaign, appearing on CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera and many other outlets. But not all of our work took place in public. During February we also participated in a confidential planning meeting with human rights defenders from Venezuela, supporting efforts to get evidence into the hands of the UN's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission.

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared during March, I wrote that, "now more than ever, it is essential that the entire global community respond to COVID-19 in ways that defend universal human rights, emphasize human solidarity, and uphold our responsibility to protect vulnerable populations from atrocities." Despite lockdowns and "social distancing," the Global Centre helped mobilize international diplomatic action regarding conflicts in Cameroon, The Sahel and elsewhere. Even China — which has used its veto power to shield Syria and Myanmar from collective action at the UN Security Council — faced unprecedented global scrutiny during 2020 for its mass detention of approximately one million ethnic Uyghurs. We were proud to play a role in exposing and highlighting these crimes.

As we adjusted to the pandemic, we initiated an online campaign of high-level events and op-eds to promote the 15th anniversary of R2P. During May we delivered testimony to the European Parliament's human rights committee about the connection between detention and potential crimes against humanity in China, Syria and elsewhere. In June we were honored to join five Nobel Peace Prize laureates in a joint statement calling for a ceasefire in Cameroon. During July we celebrated the adoption of the first thematic resolution on R2P at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. During September we co-hosted — alongside the Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Costa Rica and Qatar — the 12th annual ministerial meeting on R2P. UN Secretary-General António Guterres opened the online meeting and a record 17 ministers and deputy ministers spoke about the critical importance of the principle of R2P for ongoing efforts to protect human rights and prevent atrocities.

Throughout the year, the Global Centre hosted a number of successful high-level events and discussions online — if you missed them, there are links embedded in this annual report. In our new role as the Secretariat of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, we also utilized digital platforms to organize 25 briefings with ambassadors from the Council and top UN officials during 2020.

There is no doubt that 2020 was a difficult year for all of us. But we are proud of the fact that our organization survived. And as the world slowly emerges from the pandemic during 2021, the Global Centre will continue to assist governments, policymakers and human rights defenders. Just as the UN Charter represents a vision of a world where all human beings can live free and equal in dignity and rights, R2P is a promise to act on behalf of people for whom mass atrocities are not abstract words, but real acts that pose an existential threat to them, their loved ones and their communities. Together we can and will "Build Back Better."

Yours truly,


Dr. Simon Adams

WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT?

The Responsibility to Protect — **known as R2P** — is an international norm that seeks to ensure that the international community consistently mobilizes to halt **genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity**. R2P was adopted by more than 170 heads of state and government at the 2005 UN World Summit and stipulates that all states have a responsibility to protect their populations from these mass atrocity crimes and ensure their prevention.

R2P'S THREE PILLARS:

PILLAR I

Every state has the Responsibility to Protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

PILLAR II

The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist states in meeting that responsibility.

PILLAR III

If a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter.

OUR
GOALS
FOR 2020



MOBILIZE

Mobilize appropriate international responses to situations where populations are at risk of mass atrocity crimes, particularly through action at the UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council and Security Council.



MONITORING & EARLY WARNING

Conduct in-depth research and analysis of mass atrocity situations in order to provide early warning, as well as policy recommendations to UN member states and international civil society.



BUILD

Continue building dedicated institutions, networks and capacities at the national, regional and multilateral level to effectively prevent mass atrocity crimes.



IMPLEMENT & INNOVATE

Develop and explore new ways to expand support for R2P and mass atrocity prevention.



MOBILIZING ACTION

Mobilizing members of the UN Security Council, Human Rights Council and other key stakeholders on situations where populations are at risk of atrocity crimes, or where atrocities are already occurring, remained a key goal of the Global Centre's advocacy efforts throughout 2020. The Global Centre helped influence action for populations who were at risk of atrocities prior to COVID-19, as well as those in situations where risks became more acute because of the pandemic.



CAMEROON

© Giles Clarke/UNOCHA via Getty Images



OVER 765,000

PEOPLE DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN THE NORTH-WEST AND SOUTH-WEST REGIONS

A political crisis over cultural rights and identity has been ongoing in [Cameroon's](#) Anglophone north-west and south-west regions since 2016. Violence between government forces and armed separatists, as well as attacks on civilians, has resulted in at least 3,000 people being killed.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) has largely neglected the conflict, as Cameroon is not included on the Council's formal agenda. During May 2020 Global Centre Senior Research Analyst Ms. Juliette Paauwe [spoke](#) on a panel as part of a webinar series hosted by The Global Campaign for Peace & Justice in Cameroon.

The UN Secretary-General's call on 23 March for a global ceasefire during the COVID-19 pandemic has largely been ignored in Cameroon, with continued military operations by both government forces and armed separatists. On 22 June the Global Centre

[joined](#) five Nobel Peace Prize laureates, along with two former heads of state and other notable world leaders, to call on all parties to the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon to declare a humanitarian ceasefire during the pandemic. Global Centre Executive Director Dr. Simon Adams appeared on several international news programs to amplify the "ceasefire challenge." A recording of his [interview](#) on *Deutsche Welle Africa* on 22 June has been viewed more than 64,000 times. The Global Centre has also shared the ceasefire challenge with all ambassadors on the UNSC.

From 30 October to 1 November, Ms. Paauwe also attended the International Conference on the Armed Conflict in the Southern Cameroons, which was attended by more than 1,000 participants and followed on social media by 72,000 people. Ms. Paauwe spoke on one of the main panels.



© Kevin Frayer/Getty Images



APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION UYGHURS AND OTHER TURKIC MUSLIM MINORITIES ARE CURRENTLY BEING DETAINED IN "RE-EDUCATION" OR "DE-EXTREMIFICATION" FACILITIES

The persecution of Uyghurs (or Uighurs) and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, [China](#), continues with impunity. During 2020 the Global Centre intensified its advocacy regarding the treatment of the Uyghurs, highlighting that China is committing potential crimes against humanity and genocide.

During March the Global Centre [amplified](#) new evidence that factories in China are using Uyghur forced labor and [joined](#) 250 organizations calling on leading brands and retailers to ensure their products do not exploit the forced labor of Uyghurs and other detainees. In July the Global Centre highlighted the practice of forced abortions and issued a [statement](#) asserting that the Chinese government is violating customary international law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.



GCR2P @GCR2P



Mass detention of over 1 million #Uighurs and other #Muslim minorities. Forced birth control, including involuntary abortions and sterilizations. Destruction of cultural heritage.

Read our statement on mounting evidence #China's #CrimesAgainstHumanity and #Genocide in #XUAR.



Approximately 1 million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities – including Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Hui – are currently being detained in so-called "re-education" or "de-extremification" facilities.

China's Crimes Against Humanity & Genocide Against the Uighurs
globalr2p.org

11:31 AM · Jul 21, 2020 · Twitter for Advertisers



Photo credit: JOHANNES EISELE/AFP via Getty Images

Mounting Evidence that China is Perpetrating Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide Against the Uighurs

21 July 2020 | STATEMENT



There is growing evidence that the government of the **People's Republic of China** is committing crimes against humanity and genocide in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Under the guise of combatting religious extremism and terrorism, in recent years China has intensified its persecution of the ethnic Uighur community. These crimes, which are now widely documented, are in violation of customary international law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, of which China is a signatory.

Approximately 1 million Uighurs and other Muslim minorities – including Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Hui – are currently being detained in so-called “re-education” or “de-extremification” facilities, without formal charges, due process, or an ability to communicate with the outside world. Detainees have reportedly been

The Global Centre campaigned to urge UN member states not to vote for UN Human Rights Council (HRC) candidates if their government is responsible for perpetrating atrocity crimes. China was one of the three countries that was highlighted during the campaign. While China succeeded in its election bid, the number of supporting votes was their lowest since the founding of the HRC in 2006. There was also considerable media focus on the concerns raised by human rights organizations.

In September the Global Centre drew attention to newly available evidence of [mass detention infrastructure](#) in Xinjiang and the systematic [destruction](#) of Uyghur cultural heritage by the Chinese authorities. The Global Centre has also called

on the international community to explore all avenues to hold perpetrators in Xinjiang [accountable](#), and advocated for bans on products made using forced labor in Xinjiang.

In November Global Centre China expert Ms. Nadira Kourt spoke on a [panel](#) entitled “Protecting the Uyghur: Responsibility to Protect in China.” Her remarks focused on the international community’s response to the situation in Xinjiang and how states and intergovernmental organizations can be mobilized to ensure accountability for alleged crimes against humanity and genocide.

The Global Centre is now working with a broader NGO coalition to expose and end China’s abuses in Xinjiang.

CENTRAL SAHEL:

BURKINA FASO, MALI & NIGER

© Olympia de Maismont/AFP via Getty Images



MORE THAN 6,600 PEOPLE KILLED
IN ATTACKS IN MALI, BURKINA FASO AND NIGER SINCE OCTOBER 2019

Populations in [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#), and [Niger](#) face potential atrocity crimes as a result of ongoing attacks by armed Islamist groups and state security forces, as well as growing conflict between ethnic militias and community “self-defense groups.” In an already fragile security environment, with 2 million people displaced across the Sahel, vulnerable communities are also facing the growing threat of COVID-19.

France and the G-5 Sahel countries launched the International Coalition for the Sahel, a security-oriented response to the conflict, on 30 June. In response, the Global Centre joined over 35 local, regional and international NGOs to launch the [People’s Coalition for the Sahel](#). More than 1,000 people tuned in for the [live launch](#), including representatives from the African Union, Canada, European Union, Japan, United Kingdom and the United States as well as Chad, Mali and other regional stakeholders. Journalists from international news organizations also attended.

As part of the People’s Coalition, the Global Centre contributed to the development of four “[People’s Pillars](#)” for states to use as a framework for responding to the protection and humanitarian crisis in the Central Sahel. In March 2021 members of the People’s Coalition will publish a “milestones monitoring report,” which will prioritize the protection of civilians, create political strategies to address the root causes of the conflict and address impunity.

During December the Global Centre amplified the findings of Niger’s National Human Rights Commission and the Pan-African Network for Peace, Democracy and Development — a People’s Coalition member — by featuring their investigation into the alleged extrajudicial execution of more than 70 civilians in an issue of [Atrocity Alert](#).



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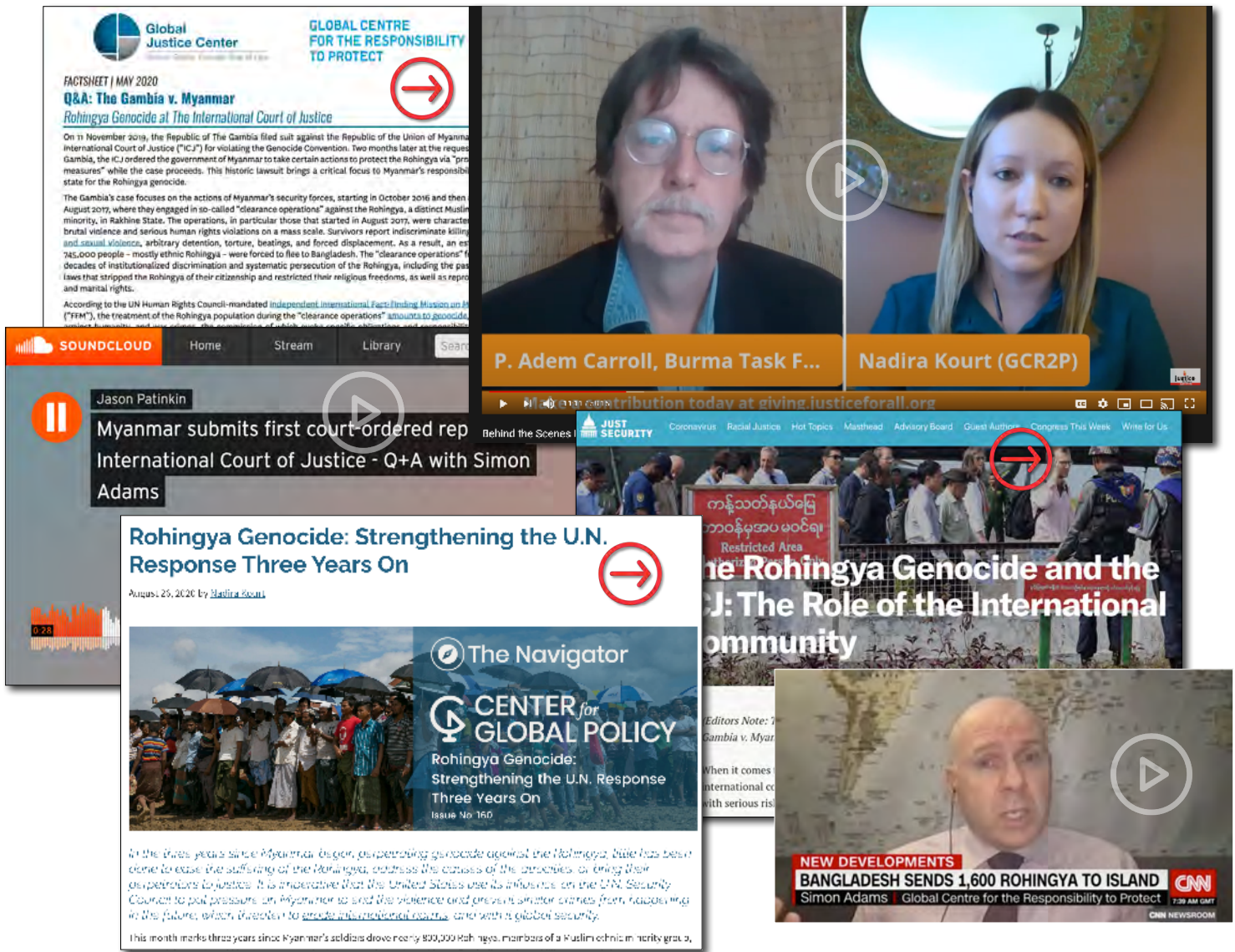
OVER 900,000 ROHINGYA HAVE FLED ATROCITIES AND ARE CURRENTLY REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH

Since 2018 the Global Centre has partnered with the Global Justice Center (GJC) to ensure accountability for atrocities perpetrated by the government of [Myanmar \(Burma\)](#) against the minority Rohingya population. This included working closely with The Gambia and their Minister of Justice regarding a potential case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for violations of the Genocide Convention. The Gambia formally filed a case at the ICJ on 11 November 2019. On 23 January 2020 the ICJ issued [four provisional measures](#) with which Myanmar must comply.

Throughout 2020, the Global Centre advocated for Myanmar's full compliance with the Court's order and called for an increased response to ongoing atrocity risks in the country. In February the Global Centre, together with GJC, sent [a letter](#) to UNSC members regarding Myanmar's Independent Commission of

Enquiry and the Provisional Measures ordered by the ICJ. In May the Global Centre and GJC published an updated [Q&A](#) policy brief on the ICJ case against Myanmar, describing the essential aspects of the case and its progress through the Court's processes. The Global Centre, together with GJC and Human Rights Watch, also co-hosted an online event exploring ways the authorities could comply with the ICJ provisional measures. There were 700 registered participants from around the world. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

In July the Global Centre and GJC submitted a formal shadow report to the HRC ahead of its third cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Myanmar. This analysis provided specific recommendations to Myanmar's government on meeting its international obligations to provide justice for mass atrocities, including sexual and gender-based violence, and



to eliminate discriminatory laws and policies. The Global Centre has also contributed to joint advocacy regarding the plight of Rohingya refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

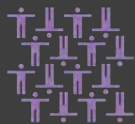
In February Global Centre Myanmar expert Ms. Nadira Kourt [spoke](#) at an event entitled “Implications of the International Court of Justice’s Ruling on Rohingya in Myanmar,” hosted by the Center for Global Policy in Washington, DC. Ms. Kourt also conducted advocacy with United States’ government officials, urging greater response to the Rohingya genocide bilaterally and through multilateral institutions. Throughout the year, the Global Centre participated in a [campaign](#) urging the United States to formally declare the crimes

committed against the Rohingya as a genocide. In December the Global Centre sent a letter to UNSC members calling for increased communication between the ICJ and the Security Council around the ongoing case of The Gambia v. Myanmar and urging Council members to request the ICJ share Myanmar’s compliance reports with the UNSC.

Dr. Adams and Ms. Kourt have spoken at numerous events and in the media throughout the year, including an [interview](#) with Dr. Adams by VOA News on 25 May to discuss the significance of Myanmar’s first report to the ICJ.



© -AFP/Getty Images



OVER 8,200 PEOPLE KILLED IN "SECURITY OPERATIONS" SINCE JANUARY 2018

In 2019 the Global Centre initiated an advocacy campaign focusing on the need for an HRC-mandated investigative mechanism for Venezuela. This included briefings for more than 40 member states, joint publications with Venezuelan civil society, confidential bilateral engagement with Geneva-based ambassadors and public events. These efforts contributed to the adoption of a [resolution](#) on 27 September 2019 establishing an independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) for Venezuela, mandated to investigate ongoing serious violations and abuses of human rights. In September 2020 the FFM warned that these violations and abuses may amount to crimes against humanity.

Throughout 2020 the Global Centre continued its advocacy on Venezuela in Geneva and beyond. This included close cooperation with Venezuelan civil society organizations to mobilize international

support at the HRC, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and UN General Assembly (UNGA). In February Global Centre Venezuela expert Ms. Elisabeth Pramendorfer participated in a two-day strategic planning meeting with Venezuelan human rights defenders in Colombia, which included confidential consultations with members of the FFM.

Since July 2020 the Global Centre has consulted with countries on how to strengthen the mandate of the FFM. The Global Centre was also actively involved in joint NGO activities, including public events, joint [letters](#) and confidential bilateral meetings with a cross-regional group of member states. In October the HRC adopted a [resolution](#) renewing the mandate of the FFM for two years and broadened the scope of violations and abuses covered. This is the first time an HRC-investigative mechanism was mandated for a period longer than one year.



@GCR2P **GCR2P**
@GCR2P

!! The systematic commission of #EnforcedDisappearances is a crime against humanity.

Enforced disappearances include arrest, detention or abduction of individuals w/o acknowledgment of their fate or whereabouts. More states must ratify the Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

UN Treaty Bodies @UNTreatyBodies · Dec 23, 2020
The Convention on #EnforcedDisappearances has a rapid response capacity through urgent actions, reprisal procedure and individual complaints.

We need more States to ratify it to prevent disappearances, discover the truth, and make sure victims receive justice.

#CED10

1:52 | 3K views

10:48 AM · Dec 23, 2020 · Twitter Web App



Elisabeth Pramendorfer interviewed on "The Responsibility to Protect Venezuelans" for 35 West podcast

5 November 2020 | INTERVIEW

On 5 November Global Centre Senior Human Rights Officer Elisabeth Pramendorfer was interviewed by Maura Rendón, Director, The Justice of Venezuela Initiative and Fellow, Americas Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. They discussed how the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) applies in the case of Venezuela, particularly considering the report of the United Nations Human Rights Council Independent Fact-Finding Mission. Ms. Pramendorfer outlines common misconceptions about the use and scope of R2P and discusses next steps for the international community to protect human rights in Venezuela.

Since the public release of the FFM report Ms. Pramendorfer has participated in numerous online events, covering the gender dimension of atrocity crimes, the role of the ICC and clarifying the implementation of R2P in the Venezuelan context.

ENGAGEMENT DURING HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SESSIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic restricted regular HRC sessions, limiting civil society participation. Despite these changes, the Global Centre was actively involved in thematic and country-specific initiatives throughout the year. During the 43rd session of the HRC, the Global Centre co-hosted a side event on “[South Sudan](#): ensuring continued HRC scrutiny and engagement” and advocated successfully for the renewal of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. The Global Centre also advocated for the renewal of Special Procedures mandate holders for the [Democratic People’s Republic of Korea](#) and Myanmar and the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on [Syria](#).

During the 44th HRC session, the Global Centre led civil society efforts for the adoption of the first HRC resolution on R2P, and also advocated for strong resolutions on [Eritrea](#) and the [Philippines](#).

Ahead of the 45th session of the HRC, the Global Centre conducted targeted campaigns with various member states and civil society partners on the extension of the mandate of the FFM on Venezuela and the Group of Eminent Experts on [Yemen](#), as well as the mandate renewal of the Col on [Burundi](#). This included bilateral engagement with HRC members.

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

During 2020 the Global Centre provided targeted UPR recommendations for states under review that are experiencing, at risk of, or complicit in the commission of atrocity crimes.

Ahead of the January 2021 review for Myanmar, the Global Centre provided context-specific recommendations in a detailed joint NGO submission with the GJC, focusing on the need for accountability for genocide, crimes against humanity and ongoing violations and abuses of human rights.



News from #Geneva: UPR36 will take place from 2-13 November 2020. Session includes review of #Libya, where civilians remain at risk of atrocity crimes. Through targeted recommendations and questions, UPR can highlight and address these risks.

UN Human Rights Council @UN_HRC - Mar 23, 2020
 New tentative timetable for the 36th #UPR Working Group session is out now, which has been postponed to 2-13 November 2020.
 #Belarus #Liberia #Malawi #Mongolia #Panama #Maldives #Andorra #Bulgaria #Honduras #USA #MarshallIslands #Croatia #Jamaica #Libya #Covid19 #humanrights

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR THE 36th SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP (2 - 13 NOVEMBER 2020)

	Monday 2 November	Tuesday 3 November	Wednesday 4 November	Thursday 5 November	Friday 6 November
1 st week	09:00-12:00 Review of Belarus	09:00-12:00 Review of Malawi	09:00-12:00 Review of Panama (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of Andorra (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of Honduras
	13:00-18:00 Review of Liberia	13:00-18:00 Review of Mongolia	13:00-18:00 Review of Maldives (Introduction of the report on children)	13:00-18:00 Review of Bulgaria (Introduction of the report on children)	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Panama and Maldives
2 nd week	09:00-12:00 Review of the United States of America (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of Eritrea (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of Jamaica (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of the Marshall Islands (Introduction of the report on children)	09:00-12:00 Review of Libya (Introduction of the report on children)
	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Belarus	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Malawi	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Panama	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Andorra	13:00-18:00 Introduction of the report on Honduras

8:33 AM - Mar 23, 2020 - Twitter Web App

ADOPTION OF THE FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT



On 17 July the HRC adopted a resolution on the "Fifteenth anniversary of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as enshrined in the World Summit Outcome of 2005." While the HRC has, to date, adopted more than [50 resolutions](#) that include a reference to R2P, this constitutes the first stand-alone thematic resolution on the principle. The resolution is available [here](#).

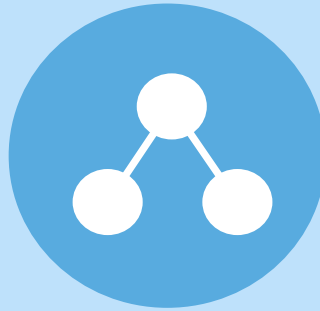
The COVID-19 pandemic had direct implications for the planning and negotiations on the resolution, but the Global Centre worked with a committed core group of countries who successfully led the resolution from drafting to adoption.

NGO WORKING GROUP ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL



The Global Centre became the Secretariat of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council (NGOWG/SC) in January 2020. The NGOWG/SC brings together 38 NGOs for a series of briefings with UNSC ambassadors and high-level UN officials. As the Secretariat, the Global Centre provides the Coordinator, Ms. Christine Caldera, who liaises and organizes briefings for the Working Group. The Global Centre organized 25 briefings during 2020, including 21 virtual meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





BUILDING CAPACITIES

During 2020 the Global Centre continued to build capacity for atrocity prevention by supporting dedicated institutions and networks at a national, regional and multilateral level. This included serving as Secretariat of the UN Group of Friends of R2P in New York and Geneva and of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, as well as ongoing engagement with the office of the UN Secretary-General.

GROUP OF FRIENDS OF THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

The Global Centre serves as the Secretariat for the [Group of Friends of R2P](#) at the UN. The Group of Friends helps to facilitate effective discussion on R2P-related issues, including conflict prevention, human rights and international justice through regular meetings at the ambassador or expert level in both New York and Geneva. The Global Centre arranged five virtual meetings during 2020. More than 150 ambassadors and other diplomats from 46 countries participated in the meetings.



GLOBAL NETWORK OF R2P FOCAL POINTS

The Global Network of R2P Focal Points was established in 2010 to improve national and international efforts to prevent and halt atrocities.

During 2020 the Global Centre continued to engage with the Steering Group of the Global Network — Australia, Denmark, Ghana, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovenia — to share updates on R2P and develop activities for the Global Network for 2021.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, on 8 May the Global Centre distributed a [statement](#) on behalf of 32 members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points. Signatories urged the international community to address the COVID-19 pandemic in practical ways that defend universal human rights, emphasize human solidarity, and uphold our responsibility to protect vulnerable populations from atrocities.

The 10th annual meeting of the Global Network of

R2P Focal Points will be [hosted](#) by the Organization of American States (OAS), the world's oldest regional organization, at their headquarters in Washington, DC in 2021. The Global Centre will work with the OAS and the other 62 members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points in preparation for the annual meeting.





Photo Credit: OHCHR

The UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities

24 February 2020 | STATEMENT

Today, 24 February, UN Secretary-General António Guterres released a "Call to Action for Human Rights." The Secretary-General's Call to Action is a long-overdue public commitment to lead in promoting and protecting human rights globally and in coordinating UN responses to situations where grave violations and abuses of human rights continue. But in order to effectively address protracted human rights crises around the world, the Call to Action must move beyond words and be expeditiously implemented.



Facing an unprecedented refugee and displacement and persecution – the Call to Action must generate the Secretary-General himself. We are hopeful as usual" approach to these issues, replacing it with perpetrators of atrocity crimes, and to defend the dignity and protect human rights.

As highlighted in the Call to Action, complex crises often provide early warning signs of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. But around the world today the laws, institutions and individuals

Call to Action for Human Rights, the Secretary-General should now pressurize amatory governments and the improvement of the UN's ability to react to emerging crises, in accordance with the recommendations of the Brundage Report.

Following the announcement of the Call to Action, Global Centre Executive Director Dr. Simon Adams said, "We welcome the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights. Historically, nothing has tarnished the UN's reputation more than the failure to protect civilians facing mass atrocity crimes. Today's Call to Action is a reminder that the UN and the international community simply must do more to defend human rights and consistently uphold our collective responsibility to protect."

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 24 February UN Secretary-General António Guterres released a "Call to Action for Human Rights," signaling his commitment to promoting and protecting human rights. The Global Centre coordinated a joint NGO letter to the Secretary-General on the urgency of implementing the Call to Action in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2 April letter helped establish a regular NGO roundtable

meeting with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) to discuss ongoing areas for collaboration, which Global Centre Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Savita Pawnday, has regularly attended. These meetings provide an opportunity for NGOs to update the EOSG about their activities and to raise human rights issues that the Secretary-General should be aware of.

R2P @15

PREVENT | PROTECT

BUILDING A WORLD WITHOUT MASS ATROCITIES

END IMPUNITY

In 2005 the Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity was unanimously adopted at the UN World Summit. The occasion of the [15th anniversary of the](#)

[adoption of R2P](#) presented the international community with an opportunity to deepen global commitment to R2P and set an ambitious and practical vision to ensure its consistent implementation.

R2P MINISTERIAL



Since the Global Centre's inception it has co-hosted an annual Ministerial Meeting on R2P during the opening of the UNGA session. On 24 September the Global Centre and the governments of Costa Rica, Denmark and Qatar co-hosted the 12th Annual Ministerial Meeting on R2P, entitled "Building Back Better: Strengthen the UN, Prevent Atrocities and Uphold Human Rights." The purpose of this year's meeting was to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of R2P, to offer member states the opportunity to take stock of best practices with regard to the prevention of atrocities and to devise effective strategies for "Building Back Better" after the COVID-19 pandemic.



A record 35 states and 2 regional organizations participated in the 12th Ministerial Meeting. Among the speakers were 17 ministers and deputy ministers. A full recording of the event can be found [here](#).

R2P AT 15 FEATURED EVENT

A conversation with the **UN Special Advisers on the Responsibility to Protect**
Monday, 1 June, 9:00 New York | 16:00 Nairobi | 21:00 Beijing



Virtual public event: “A conversation with the UN Special Advisers on the Responsibility to Protect”

To mark the 15th Anniversary of R2P and to reflect upon the norm’s past, present and future, the Global Centre held an interactive conversation on 1 June with all former and current UN Special Advisers on R2P. This was the first time all four UN Special Advisers on R2P had spoken on a panel together.



During the 90-minute Q&A discussion, the Special Advisers shared thoughts on how implementation of R2P had evolved during their tenure. There were 426 registered participants from 71 countries. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

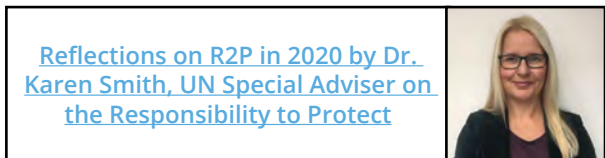
REFLECTIONS ON R2P AT 15

In lieu of hosting in-person events during the COVID-19 pandemic the Global Centre initiated a series of commentaries to commemorate “R2P at 15.” The reflections in this series were written by the former Chair of the International Commission on

Intervention and State Sovereignty – which defined R2P – and two UN Special Advisers on R2P, as well as the Global Centre’s Executive Director and the Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.



[R2P and the World in 2020 by Dr. Simon Adams](#)



[Reflections on R2P in 2020 by Dr. Karen Smith, UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect](#)



[Atrocity Crimes and Preventive Diplomacy by Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, former UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect](#)



[R2P: The Dream and the Reality by Hon. Gareth Evans, Chair, International Advisory Board, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#)



[The Responsibility to Protect at 15: A Promise Unfulfilled by Dr. Alex Bellamy, Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](#)



MONITORING & EARLY WARNING

The Global Centre provides research and analysis on how to prevent or halt mass atrocity crimes. Publications like *R2P Monitor* and *Atrocity Alert* provide early warning and policy recommendations to governments, UN officials and civil society activists.

PUBLICATIONS

The Global Centre published over 115 statements, open letters, policy briefs and commentaries during 2020.

The Global Centre produced statements on a wide range of topics related to R2P, including [International Day of UN Peacekeepers](#), [World Day for International Justice](#), [Atrocity Prevention during a Global Pandemic](#), and [Syria: Nine Years of Atrocities, Impunity and Inaction](#), as well as [profiles](#) of newly-elected UNSC and HRC members and summaries of R2P-relevant actions taken during the latest session of the HRC.

The Global Centre also produced and/or signed on to 35 open letters advocating for action in mass atrocity situations, including populations at risk in Myanmar, Venezuela, Eritrea, the Philippines and Yemen.

Additionally, the Global Centre published a number of publications by experts working on mass atrocity prevention. This included a [speech](#) by Chair of the Global Centre's International Advisory Board, Gareth Evans, and a [commentary](#) on R2P and the Americas by the OAS Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Jared Genser.

35 OPEN LETTERS
IN 2020
INCLUDING
ON

BURUNDI | CHINA
ERITREA | MALI
MYANMAR
PHILIPPINES
SOUTH SUDAN | SUDAN
VENEZUELA | YEMEN

NEW IN 2020: STAFF COMMENTARIES

Global Centre staff published commentaries on a variety of issues during 2020, including [atrocity risks following Burundi's election](#), [the UN Board of Inquiry Report on Syria](#), and the [formation of South Sudan's new government](#).



ATROCITY ALERT — — & — R2P MONITOR

ATROCITY ALERT is a weekly publication. Since it was first introduced in 2016, *Atrocity Alert* has established itself as a respected and timely source of information, often providing early warning regarding situations where populations are at risk of mass atrocity crimes. The Global Centre has also utilized *Atrocity Alert* to highlight crises that may be neglected by the international community. During 2020 the Global Centre released 48 issues of *Atrocity Alert*.

While COVID-19 has brought many things to a halt, **respect for International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law should not be among them.** All parties to armed conflicts around the world should silence their guns, mitigate the risks posed by the pandemic and stop targeting vulnerable populations.



Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall
Research Director



@GCR2P GCR2P @GCR2P

In this week's issue of [#AtrocityAlert](#) we discuss how the [#COVID19](#) pandemic may affect vulnerable populations in existing atrocity situation and how it may exacerbate divisions and abuses of human rights in fragile societies.

[#R2P](#)



Read Now -> [Atrocity Alert Special Issue on COVID-19](#)
globalr2p.org

5:07 PM · Apr 1, 2020 · [Twitter for Advertisers](#)



Photo Source: © Eduardo Soteras/AFP via Getty Images

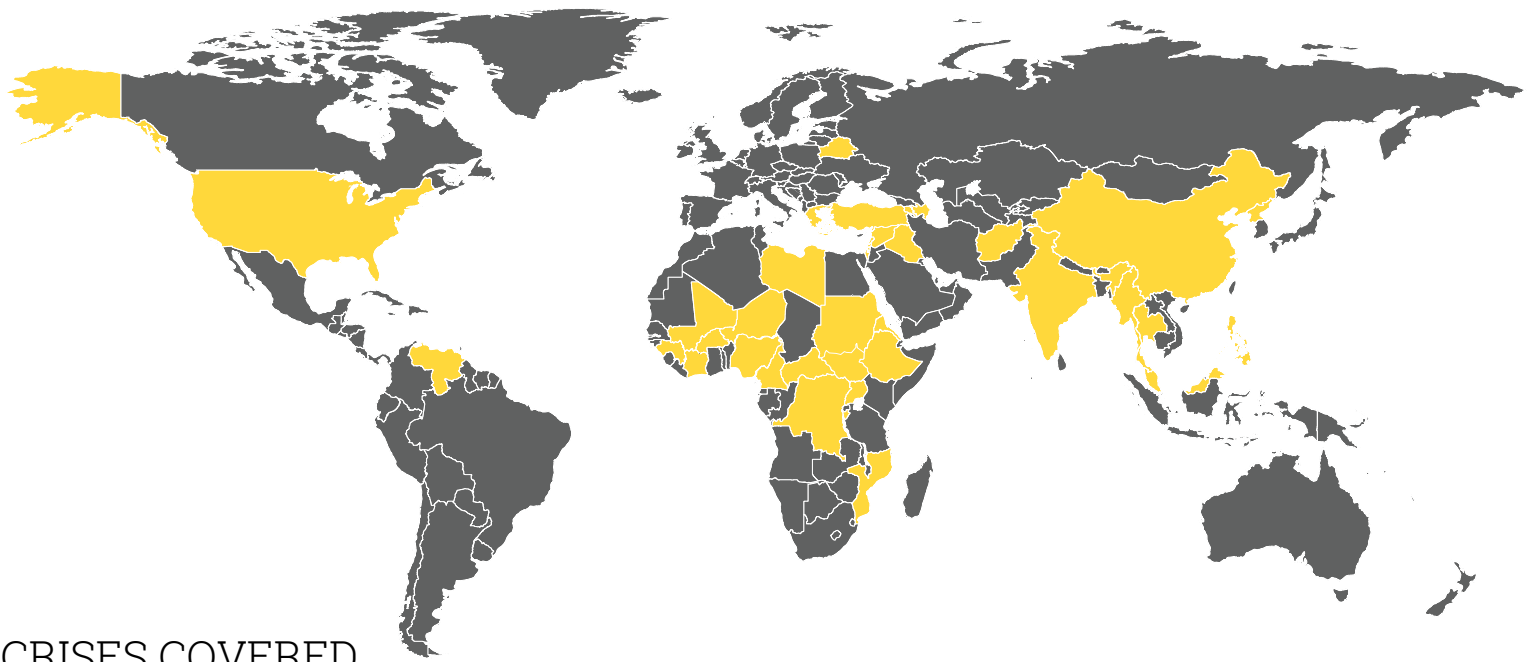
Atrocity Alert No. 233: Ethiopia, Yemen and Nigeria



16 December 2020 | **ATROCITY ALERT**

NEW EYEWITNESS REPORTS OF ETHNIC KILLINGS IN ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY REGION

Despite Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declaring an official end to the fighting in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region on 28 November, there has been continued violence around Mekelle, Sherero, Axum and Abiy Addi, as well as along the regional border between Amhara and Tigray. Since 4 November the conflict has displaced more than one million people, at least 50,000 of whom have fled to neighboring Sudan.



CRISES COVERED DURING 2020

The Global Centre monitored atrocity risks in **33 countries** during 2020.

@GCR2P GCR2P @GCR2P

#R2P Monitor Issue 52 is out! Click below for our latest analysis on: ● #Afghanistan ● #Cameroon ● #China ● #DRC ● #Mali/#BurkinaFaso ● #Myanmar ● #Syria ● #Yemen ● #Burundi ● #CARcrisis ● #Israel & #OPT ● #Libya ● #Nigeria ● #SouthSudan ● #Venezuela

R2P Monitor, Issue 52, 15 July 2020 - Global Centre for the Responsibility to P...
R2P Monitor is a bimonthly bulletin applying the atrocity prevention lens to

R2P MONITOR is a bimonthly publication providing analysis on situations where populations are threatened by mass atrocities, as well as an assessment of international efforts to respond to them. **During 2020 the Global Centre reported on 24 country situations in R2P Monitor.**

Notably, the Global Centre published its 50th issue of R2P Monitor on 15 March.

R2P Monitor, Issue 52, 15 July 2020

15 July 2020 | R2P MONITOR

R2P Monitor is a bimonthly bulletin applying the atrocity prevention lens to populations at risk of mass atrocities around the world. Issue 52 looks at developments in **Afghanistan, Cameroon, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Burkina Faso, Myanmar (Burma), Syria, Yemen, Burundi, Central African Republic, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Nigeria, South Sudan and Venezuela.**



IMPLEMENT & INNOVATE

This year challenged everyone to come together while remaining apart due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Global Centre hosted numerous virtual events to ensure discussions on important issues — like the ICJ case against Myanmar and the linkages between R2P and the Women, Peace and Security agenda — continued to take place. The Global Centre also explored new ways to expand support for atrocity prevention during these unusual times.

WEBINARS

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, the Global Centre adapted to restrictions by hosting and delivering remarks at virtual events.

13

WEBINARS HOSTED BY THE GLOBAL CENTRE IN 2020



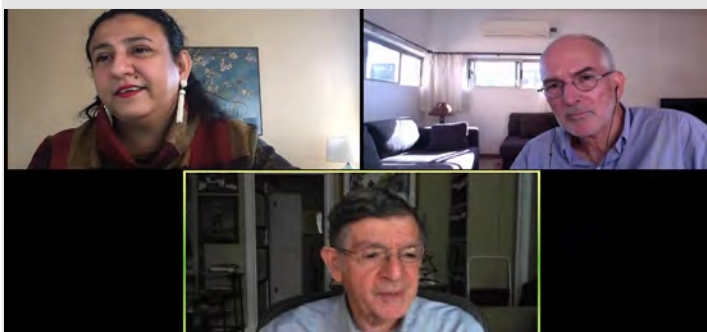
Virtual public event: “Mass atrocities and international justice – an effective deterrent?”

In honor of the 15th anniversary of R2P and the World Day for International Justice, on 17 July the Global Centre brought together world-renowned international experts and practitioners to reflect upon the role of the international justice system in atrocity prevention. Nearly 200 people from 58 countries watched the event live. A recording is available [here](#).



Virtual public event: “On the brink: the relationship between human rights violations and the threat of atrocity crimes”

On 21 July the Global Centre hosted an interactive conversation with four senior UN officials to examine how and why some human rights situations reach a critical tipping point and what lessons can be learned about how to prevent atrocities. There were 289 registered participants from 58 countries. A recording of the event is available [here](#).



Virtual public event: “UN response to atrocities: A conversation with Ambassador Gert Rosenthal and Mr. Charles Petrie”

On 19 November the Global Centre brought together two renowned UN experts to discuss lessons learned from their seminal reports on Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Nearly 220 people from 43 countries watched the event live. A recording is available [here](#).



Virtual public event: “Applying the Atrocity Lens through Human Rights Council-mandated Investigative Mechanisms”

On 8 December the Global Centre convened a group of members of HRC-mandated investigative mechanisms to discuss how CoIs, FFMs and other mechanisms can include an atrocity lens in their work. There were over 260 registered participants from 33 countries. A recording of the event is available [here](#).

Global Centre staff have also continued to participate in virtual events, which has enabled our analysis to reach a wider global audience.

GLOBAL CENTRE STAFF SPOKE AT **25+** EVENTS



Juliette Paauwe discussing R2P and the international response to the situation in Cameroon, 2 May 2020.

So, what is necessary for an effective response to the conflict in Cameroon? **Pressure.**

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for the international community to say enough is enough and exert pressure on parties to the conflict to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Juliette Paauwe



Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall discussing lessons learned on R2P and Women, Peace and Security during an event on 17 December 2020.



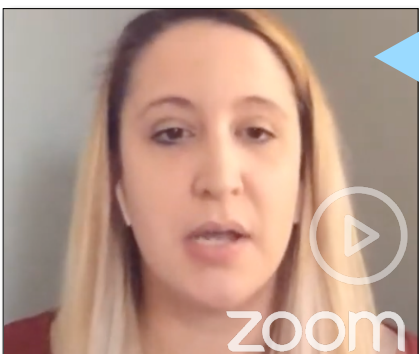
Nadira Kourt speaking on a panel regarding the plight of the Uyghur population in China, 11 November 2020.

Atrocity prevention is a **continuous process** that requires constant engagement and dialogue with all groups in society.

Savita Pawnday



Savita Pawnday delivering remarks on hate speech and mass atrocity prevention for an OSCE conference, 26 May 2020.



Sarah Hunter discussing the risks of mass atrocities in Ethiopia during a panel on 3 December 2020.

Despite the communications blackout we can still see the hallmarks of violations that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes being committed in Tigray. **50,000 people don't flee with nothing without good reason.** Their stories are harrowing.

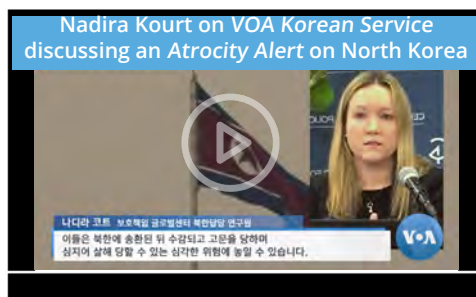
Sarah Hunter



Dr. Simon Adams giving testimony for a meeting of the Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament, 11 May 2020

GLOBAL CENTRE IN THE MEDIA

During the last year the Global Centre has also engaged with the global media with over 80 interviews and appearances. Global Centre staff and publications were featured on TV, in print news and on radio shows with journalists from over 35 international news outlets, including Al Jazeera (English and Arabic), Associated Press, BBC, CNN, Deutsche Welle, New York Times, Reuters and Voice of America (English and Korean).



Interview with Dr. Simon Adams on the US sanctions against the International Criminal Court for Voice of America

3 September 2020 | INTERVIEW

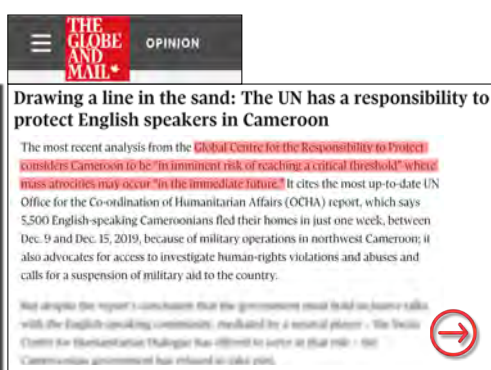
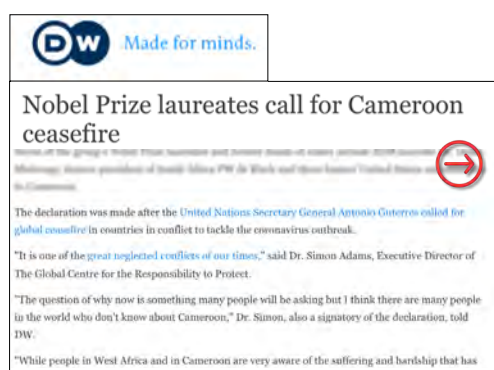
Interview with Jahaan Pittalwala on the situation in Yemen by Voice of Islam

7 July 2020 | INTERVIEW

On 7 July Global Centre Research Analyst, Ms. Jahaan Pittalwala, was interviewed by Voice of Islam on the situation in Yemen, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the already dire situation in the country and what steps need to be taken to bring about an end to the protracted conflict.

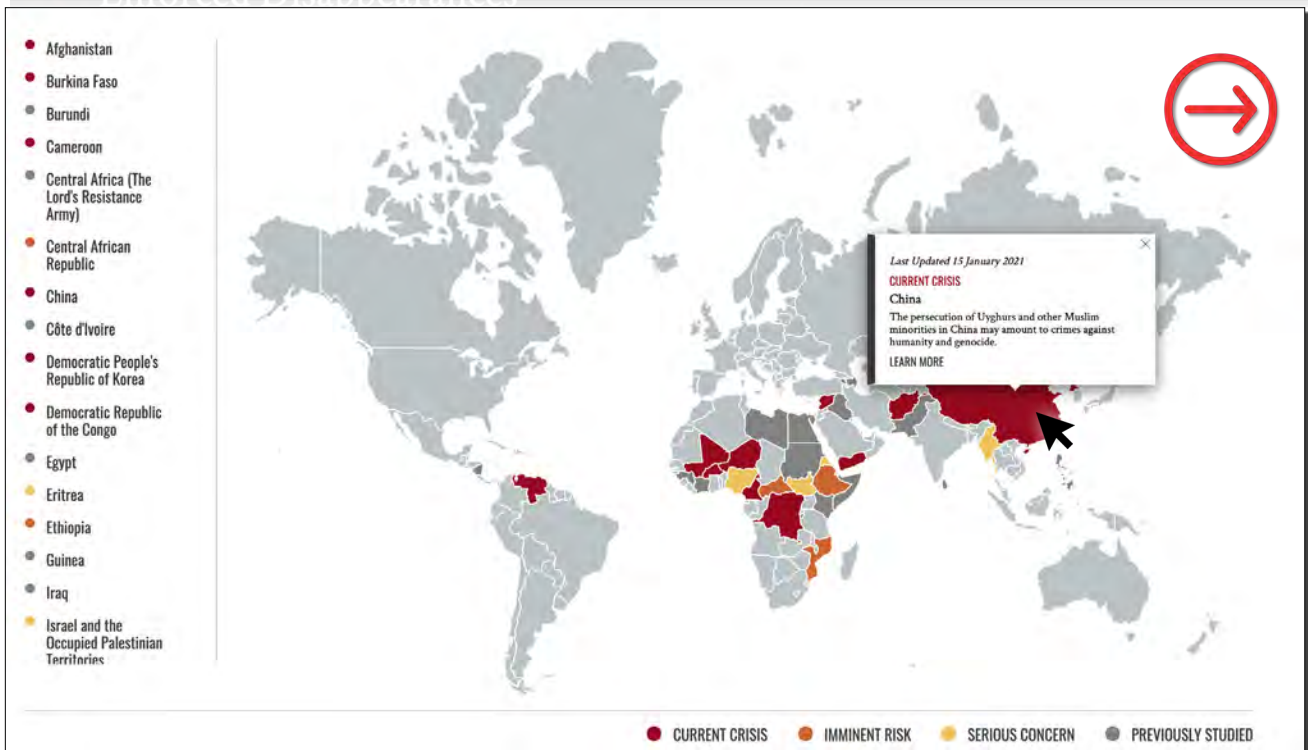
A lack of accountability for violations and potential war crimes committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen have facilitated the continued risk of atrocities against civilians. **The Global Centre and its international and regional partners are fighting very hard to establish accountability for victims who have suffered from indiscriminate bombings and potential war crimes.**

Jahaan Pittalwala
Research Analyst



THE NEW GLOBALR2P.ORG

During January 2020 the Global Centre launched a new website that is more vibrant, interactive and user friendly. It includes a new map that visualizes where populations are at risk of atrocities, embedded videos of Global Centre events and interviews, and new search features that enable our audience to easily access the Global Centre's archive of publications and R2P-relevant resources.



2021: BUILDING BACK BETTER



The Global Centre has adjusted its work during the COVID-19 pandemic through virtual advocacy and engagement, while continuing to engage closely with governments, the UN, international civil society, R2P Focal Points and the Group of Friends of R2P. Despite ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, virtual events continue to be planned to further the conversation on atrocity prevention and human rights. The Global Centre will also continue to respond to the threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as a potential trigger for identity-based violence. With a record 80.3 million people displaced by conflict, persecution and atrocities around the world, the need to uphold our collective responsibility to protect has never been greater.

MEET THE TEAM



DR. SIMON ADAMS
Executive Director



MS. SAVITA PAWNDAY
Deputy Executive Director



MS. JACLYN STREITFELD-HALL
Research Director



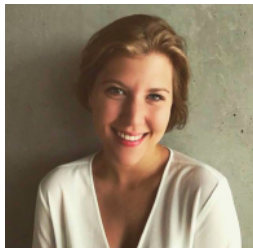
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