

Summary of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, June 2016, Seoul, Republic of Korea

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the tenth anniversary of the 2005 adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) at the UN World Summit, the discourse on R2P has focused on moving from principle to practice. With this practical need in mind, the Sixth Annual meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points aimed to identify concrete measures Focal Points can undertake individually and collectively to implement R2P at national, regional and global levels. Through roundtable discussions R2P Focal Points identified best practices and challenges in the prevention of mass atrocities and discussed ways in which they could better operationalize the Global Network.

From these discussions, the R2P Focal Points proposed a series of activities that they and their governments can undertake. Proposals ranged from small, budget-neutral projects for the R2P Focal Points to develop on their own, to broader inter-ministerial activities for governments. Activities included:

NATIONAL

- 1) Awareness-raising activities, including translation of the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes into a local language and engaging in public diplomacy on R2P and atrocity situations.
- 2) Identifying opportunities for engagement between ministries on mass atrocity prevention, including through demonstrating the connections between development programming and reducing the risk of mass atrocities.
- 3) Mapping existing preventive mechanisms within their governments, including assessing national implementation of international principles that

support the protection of human rights and prevention of mass atrocities.

- 4) Facilitating training of diplomatic staff, parliamentarians, and the security sector on risk factors for mass atrocities and mechanisms for prevention.
- 5) Ensuring troops and police participating in peacekeeping missions receive pre-deployment training for the protection of civilians in mass atrocity situations from their home government.

INTERNATIONAL

- 1) Engaging in country-specific advocacy to address mass atrocity situations with a group of R2P Focal Points who may consider a particular country a priority commitment.
- 2) Encouraging permanent missions in New York and Geneva to consistently engage on R2P and atrocity risk situations at the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council.
- 3) Demonstrating the linkages between R2P and other issue areas at the UN (including peacebuilding and development), and encouraging the UN Secretariat to do more to prevent mass atrocities and protect civilians via all UN agencies.
- 4) Strengthening information-sharing for early warning, and encouraging regional organizations with sophisticated early warning tools to help others in developing similar mechanisms.
- 5) Raising R2P implementation within meetings of various country sub-groupings, including regional organizations.

GLOBAL NETWORK

- 1) Generating and implementing a collective program of work, including issuing joint statements on R2P.

- 2) Publishing a Manual for R2P Focal Points and holding an annual training for new members.

The following outcome document provides a brief summary of the meeting and elaborates upon the recommendations put forth by the R2P Focal Points.

INTRODUCTION

The Global Network of R2P Focal Points held its sixth annual meeting from 20 to 22 June in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The governments of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste co-hosted the sixth annual meeting in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Senior government representatives from more than 50 countries from all regions of the globe participated.

The meeting was opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, H.E. Mr. Hernani Coehlo da Silva, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Choi Jong-moon, and the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, followed by a video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The UN Refugee Agency's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker Turk, also briefed participants via video message.

Nine experts briefed the participants on specific measures they or their governments could adopt in enhancing mass atrocity prevention and civilian protection across a range of thematic issues. Experts included: Charles Petrie, a former UN official and member of the UN Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture; Ambassador David Malcom Robinson, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations and Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization; Dr. Marie Louise Baricako of the Burundi Women and Girl's Movement for Peace and Security and a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations; Dr. Noel Morada of the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect; Sellah King-oro of the Kenyan National Cohesion and Integration Commission; Mario Buil-Merce of the UN Office of the Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect; Matthew Smith of Fortify Rights; H.E. Mr. Pou Sothirak of the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace; and Haidi Willmot, an international expert on peacekeeping and the Protection of Civilians.

Sessions of the sixth annual meeting focused on addressing challenges R2P Focal Points encounter in fulfilling their role within their governments and on building national, regional and international capacities to prevent and halt mass atrocities. In addition to expert presentations, several R2P Focal Points also briefed other participants on projects they have undertaken since the start of their appointment. The final day of the three-day meeting featured interactive discussions aimed at building upon recommendations for practical initiatives that participants put forward during earlier sessions.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

During the meeting, participants identified existing gaps in implementing R2P. Despite different regional perspectives, R2P Focal Points discussed common operational and political challenges in fulfilling their mandates. These challenges include building consensus on R2P's value-add within their ministries and bridging the gap between rhetorical commitment and meaningful action.

Some R2P Focal Points discussed concerns regarding competing dossiers and managing their multiple roles within their ministries, including trying to serve as a coordinator on atrocity prevention activities. Since R2P is a cross-cutting agenda, R2P Focal Points need to reach across departments to sensitize other ministries. Several observers at the meeting raised questions regarding how to educate their governments on the importance of appointing an R2P Focal Point.

R2P Focal Points were especially concerned with the scarcity of good examples of successful international preventive efforts, making it hard to convince their ministries to invest in mass atrocity prevention. Participants expressed operational concerns about existing gaps between early warning and timely action, particularly questioning the capacity of international peacekeepers with civilian protection mandates. Concerns were also raised with regard to decision-making challenges within the UN Security Council.

Discussions also addressed challenges in strengthening the Global Network. Several participants worried about the continuous personnel rollover within ministries and how to ensure that whoever is appointed as R2P Focal Point maintains the institutional knowledge and momentum developed by their predecessors. Participants discussed strengthening communication

within the Global Network, including through utilizing the Secretariat as a resource for clarifying what it means to be an R2P Focal Point in the context of a particular country situation.

Sessions of the sixth annual meeting of the Global Network were designed to assess these challenges and propose solutions that R2P Focal Points could individually and collectively implement. The following section addresses some of these suggestions.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO PREVENT MASS ATROCITY CRIMES

R2P Focal Points are meant to be a catalyst for advocating R2P within their respective systems. Although they are not personally responsible for implementation and management of all projects that could facilitate the prevention of mass atrocities, the role of an R2P Focal Point is to apply an R2P lens to the day-to-day work of their government. During the meeting participants discussed what capacities and resources are required to mainstream mass atrocity prevention within their respective ministries as well as within various international institutions. R2P Focal Points identified existing projects and proposed new initiatives ranging from significant institutional initiatives – such as security sector reform or the creation of National Action Plan for mass atrocity prevention – to smaller, budget-neutral activities – like producing internal policy papers on R2P implementation.

The following recommendations highlight some of the mechanisms proposed by R2P Focal Points for building capacity to prevent mass atrocities at the national, regional and international levels, as well as concrete suggestions for making the Global Network more operational.

NATIONAL

Awareness-raising

Regardless of what ministry the R2P Focal Point is located within, one consistent responsibility is the need to raise awareness of R2P and mass atrocity prevention tools, as well as of emerging risk situations. To convince others of R2P's value-add, R2P Focal Points need to engage in sensitization activities within their ministry and the wider government.

To fulfill this aim, R2P Focal Points proposed several activities with relatively small budgetary and time commitments. This includes translation of the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes into local languages, making it a more accessible tool for national actors, and creating short briefing tools for ministry staff and educators on R2P, mass atrocities and international human rights. Short of organizing formal trainings on these issues, R2P Focal Points can also hold “brown bag” presentations for ministry staff to start a conversation about how others can apply a mass atrocity lens to their work.

Engaging in public diplomacy is an additional means through which R2P Focal Points can raise greater awareness of civilian protection issues in mass atrocity situations. Activities undertaken by ministers, including writing op-eds and attending ministerial-level meetings on R2P, enhances political commitment at the highest level.

Identifying opportunities for engagement between ministries

One product of awareness-raising activities is the opportunity to strengthen linkages between ministries on mass atrocity prevention. R2P Focal Points can actively reach out to counterparts in other ministries to raise awareness on areas where adopting a mass atrocities lens can provide mutually beneficial outcomes. One such area is through identifying risk factors for atrocity crimes in development programming. One member of the Global Network shared best practices on how their R2P Focal Point has directly reached out to development staff in capital and stationed within certain countries to show how their programs can help reduce risks and ensure programming does not contribute to conflict dynamics through perceived favoritism of a particular group over another. The R2P Focal Point can facilitate the creation and distribution of internal guidelines on this important issue.

Mapping existing national mechanisms for mass atrocity prevention

Another mechanism through which strategic awareness-raising activities can be used to influence policy is through mapping existing national mechanisms for mass atrocity prevention. This mapping can be a part of the development of a National Action Plan for mass atrocity prevention, as well as a step towards including an R2P lens in submissions to the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council. The mapping exercise should include observing whether their government has ratified relevant international legal

instruments that support the protection of human rights and prevention of mass atrocities, such as the Geneva Conventions, Rome Statute, Arms Trade Treaty and Kigali Principles for the Protection of Civilians. Further assessment can review implementation of these principles by the government and the adoption of complementary legislation criminalizing activities that violate these principles.

Mass atrocity prevention training programs

Participants from several different countries and regions requested assistance in facilitating training on R2P for members of their government. Many R2P Focal Points are developing programs for training on early warning and response mechanisms for diplomatic staff, parliamentarians, various ministries and offices (including the justice ministry and offices for gender and human rights protection) and the security sector (including military and police). These training programs should be institutionalized with guidance protocols for all members of the government serving in these roles. The R2P Focal Points can support each other in implementing these projects through sharing best practices on training modules, providing information on existing early warning mechanisms, and/or funding the development of these programs.

Pre-deployment training for police and troops entering peacekeeping missions

Participants noted that if member states are truly committed to improving civilian protection within UN and regional peacekeeping missions, countries must do more to ensure the troops and police they contribute are prepared to uphold a protection of civilians mandate. This includes investing in better pre-deployment training on warning signs of mass atrocities, and on identifying vulnerable communities and threats to civilians, as well as on the proper channels for reporting on risk factors. Troops and police must also be physically prepared, with adequate resources and willingness to respond to situations where civilians are at risk. One mechanism for ensuring governments uphold such a commitment is through adopting and implementing the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians.

INTERNATIONAL

Joint advocacy on situations with mass atrocity risks

R2P Focal Points discussed ways in which they could collectively advocate for an international response to emerging mass atrocity risks. There was an interest

expressed in engaging in country-specific advocacy, but some felt that advocating on behalf of the entire network, which currently has 54 members, could be too cumbersome since not every R2P Focal Point is seized of every situation with potential for mass atrocity crimes. Instead, it was suggested that a sub-group of R2P Focal Points from concerned countries join together to share early warning information, propose joint-assistance projects and/or issue joint letters advocating for a response by the UN and relevant regional organizations and states.

UN Security Council and Human Rights Council Engagement

During the past six years, members of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points and of the Group of Friends of R2P at the UN have played an important role in ensuring that R2P remains a key tool in addressing mass atrocity situations. Permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council have successfully negotiated language on R2P into more than 50 resolutions, including those to protect populations in Syria, Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Libya and others, as well as on thematic issues.

During 2015 the governments of Spain and Chile, who were both non-permanent members of the Council, introduced the outcome document from the fifth annual meeting of the Global Network as a UN Security Council document and then later hosted an Arria Formula meeting on R2P and non-state armed groups. Members of the Global Network can continue this trend by hosting similar meetings during their Presidencies on the Security Council and through supporting the ACT Code of Conduct for the Security Council in mass atrocity situations.

R2P Focal Points can also encourage their UN Security Council teams to request briefings by the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect regarding early warning on situations where populations are at risk of mass atrocities. Similarly, R2P Focal Points can encourage their governments to constructively engage with R2P at the Human Rights Council through the Group of Friends of R2P in Geneva and support initiatives aimed at advancing mass atrocity prevention through the Universal Periodic Review, mandates of the Special Procedures and other processes for monitoring national mechanisms for human rights protection.

UN Secretariat Engagement

Participants acknowledged that a critical part of reforming the UN Secretariat's practices around R2P

and civilian protection agendas is through member state advocacy regarding their priorities. By encouraging and funding actions that help mainstream mass atrocity prevention, Human Rights up Front and civilian protection across all UN agendas, member states have the capacity to influence how different agencies prioritize these issues. Working with their counterparts at their missions in New York and Geneva, R2P Focal Points have the capacity to demonstrate the linkages between R2P and other UN agendas, encouraging the UN Secretariat to enable staff from the UN Development Programme and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for example, to play a role in implementing R2P.

Experts in attendance particularly highlighted the role that states can play in ensuring an atrocity prevention lens is added to peacebuilding programming. Enhanced support to the Peacebuilding Commission was seen as essential. This advocacy by member states will be particularly important as the next Secretary-General takes office to ensure that mass atrocity prevention remains a UN priority.

Networking for better early warning and early response

Participants proposed several measures for strengthening information-sharing from early warning mechanisms. Acknowledging that some sub-regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have especially sophisticated early warning mechanisms, R2P Focal Points agreed that in order to contribute to the development of regional and continental early warning systems they needed to actively support inter-organizational learning on how to adapt these capacities to all regions. Greater networking could be done among embassies within high-risk countries, particularly by states who have trained their diplomatic staff on recognizing the risk factors for atrocity crimes.

Raising R2P and mass atrocity prevention in various international forums

With the exception of the European Union - which appointed its own R2P Focal Point in 2015 - and ECOWAS, discussions around R2P within regional and sub-regional organizations has been relatively weak. The R2P Focal Points have the capacity to improve this by raising R2P implementation within groupings of countries that their government participates in, including regional organizations as well as language-based communities, such as the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. In this context, the R2P Focal Point from Qatar mentioned plans to hold a

meeting on R2P for GCC member states. Raising these issues within regional and language-based groupings helps facilitate discussion of mass atrocity prevention among countries with other common interests and also grants the R2P Focal Points an opportunity to encourage other member states to institutionalize the norm.

GLOBAL NETWORK

Implementing a program of work

R2P Focal Points have advocated for greater intercessional communication between annual meetings of the Global Network. In order to meet this demand, several participants recommended the development of a Program of Work for the network, including a series of benchmarks for the R2P Focal Points to achieve collectively, and the creation of stronger channels for communication amongst the members. This includes holding “Global Calls” with membership of the Network, during which members discuss collective means to address emerging situations with mass atrocity risks as well as relevant thematic topics, such as the Kigali Principles and Code of Conduct.

Members also recommended holding small regional meetings and other pairings of R2P Focal Points during the year, as well as sharing information on the work of the Global Network with states that have not yet joined. R2P Focal Points can also enhance their cooperation with countries within the Global Network that they already have bilateral relationships with and implement various projects aimed at mass atrocity prevention.

As part of the program of work, members can also utilize the Global Networks’ mailing list as a forum to generate a calendar highlighting various R2P-related events at the UN, Human Rights Council, regional organizations and national public forums. Finally, during the meeting, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect reminded members of the Global Network that they can approach the Secretariat with recommendations and inquiries regarding potential projects for R2P Focal Points to undertake.

Developing training for R2P Focal Points

In the six years since the launching of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, the Secretariat and long-time members of the network have developed a wealth of institutional and practical knowledge on how governments approach the appointment of an R2P Focal Point and how individual members have fulfilled their

roles within a variety of different ministries and positions.

Participants recommended the creation of a Manual for R2P Focal Points as well as once-annual trainings for individuals newly-appointed to the role to act as informal guidelines on how to fulfill their role and how to articulate what mass atrocity prevention is to colleagues within their governments. The Manual for R2P Focal Points would include a compendium of different tools of analysis – including the UN’s Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes and the European Union’s early warning tools – and guidance from thematic experts, as well as best practices shared by existing members of the network to encourage peer-to-peer learning and government-driven information sharing.

The Manual could serve as a tool outlining the types of activities R2P Focal Points can undertake individually and collectively as a Global Network and aid in clarifying their mandates.

CONCLUSION

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points was an opportunity for members of the network to discuss how to better develop programs to advance the implementation of R2P. In the coming year the Global Network will try to implement a program of work with benchmarks for achieving some of the recommendations and goals outlined above.

During the meeting R2P Focal Points consistently indicated a desire for greater assistance and engagement from the Secretariat of the Global Network in launching projects and facilitating joint cooperation among members. The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect is prepared to help members develop partnerships to advance these proposals and to facilitate the creation of the Manual for R2P Focal Points.

Following these productive discussions, the Global Network of R2P Focal Points looks forward to the seventh annual meeting to be convened in Doha, Qatar, during 2017.