

# EVAP Special Episode: Dr. Simon Adams

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## SPEAKERS

Simon Adams, Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall

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### Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 00:12

Welcome to Expert Voices on Atrocity Prevention by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. I'm Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall, Research Director at the Global Centre. This podcast features one-on-one conversations with practitioners from the fields of human rights, conflict prevention and atrocity prevention. These conversations will give us a glimpse of the personal and professional side of how practitioners approach human rights protection and atrocity prevention, allowing us to explore challenges, identify best practices, and share lessons learned on how we can protect populations more effectively. For this special edition of Expert Voices on Atrocity Prevention, I'll be interviewing Dr. Simon Adams. For the past 10 years, Simon has been the Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. He recently announced that he will be stepping down to take on the role of President and CEO of the Center for Victims of Torture. Prior to joining the Global Centre, Simon was a Pro Vice Chancellor at Monash University in Australia, and served as Vice President of its South African campus. He has authored five books with a focus on international conflict, including most recently mass atrocities, the responsibility to protect and the future of human rights. Outside of his academic life, he has worked extensively with governments and civil society organizations around the world. During this episode, Simon will reflect on his 10 years with us here at the Global Centre, and what he witnessed and R2P's evolution during that time. Welcome to the podcast, Simon.

### Simon Adams 01:43

Thank you, Jackie, it's very strange to be here on being interviewed on our podcast by you.

### Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 01:51

Before we dive into your time with the Global Centre, can you give the audience some background on your path to a career in human rights? Were there specific incidents or experiences that dramatically shaped your worldview?

### Simon Adams 02:06

Yeah, first thing to say about that, I guess is when I was coming up, there was no real such thing as a career in human rights. I don't think when, I mean, that's kind of a reflection of how old I am. But, you know, when I was going to university in the early 1990s, I don't think that was something that was really a defined career path for people. So

to university in the early 1990s, I don't think that was something that was really a defined career path for people. So it certainly wasn't something that kind of occurred to me that was possible. In terms of kind of what led me to this, you know, and me personally, I mean, my family come from Northern Ireland, and I think I grew up as being very conscious of the fact that I was a member of a diaspora community, and that the place where my family came from, was a place of, of violence and, and conflict. And I guess the kind of defining moments that then led me to a career in, in human rights and to the prevention of mass atrocities are two separate things. But you know, as I kind of reached adulthood, or something approximating adulthood, at least physically, if not intellectually, then you know, I got involved in the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa, and eventually moved to South Africa to participate in that struggle and to also do a PhD, going there to do my PhD was kind of the cover. And that was like a deeply meaningful experience for me, being able to see a country move from conflict to a post-conflict situation and get to see it with your own eyes every day. It really felt in South Africa at that time, like the world was literally changing every day, and you could see that the dismantling of apartheid happening all around you. And then after that, you know, I did spend some time back in Northern Ireland in Belfast where my family come from. And I was obviously trying to take the lessons of South Africa and see how I could apply them to the situation where my my family came from, and I got very involved with political organizations there. So those were the two kinds of experiences that kind of somehow started to make me something like an expert in something rather than just being a kid who went to university and was a troublemaker and was involved in politics. I started to become an expert in something called, you know, conflict and post-conflict situations. And I guess it was a few years after that, that a friend of mine made me acutely aware of the fact that while I was kind of celebrating the transition from Apartheid to democracy in South Africa and was working, you know, in a process that eventually led to the Good Friday Peace Agreement in Northern Ireland, that Rwanda had gone through the absolute worst experience in its history, and the absolute worst experience that you could possibly imagine. And I started to think a lot about that. And I started to get involved. I traveled to Rwanda, with taking people from around the African continent and around the world, who came from conflict situations and trying to get them to learn from the Rwandan experience, and Rwanda had a profound effect on me in many, many different ways. And I think that's the kind of point where I crossed over from just being a guy who kind of had this weird personal history and academic history in terms of peace and conflict and identity based conflicts to being a guy who was now much more kind of singularly focused on mass atrocities and the prevention of mass atrocities.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 06:11

And how did Rwanda sort of shape your way of looking at, I guess, looking at atrocity situations, but also looking at your career and where you wanted to go from there?

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Simon Adams 06:23

Yeah, I mean, well, the first thing I'd say about career was I didn't really have a plan on career, it was all kind of improvised along the way and made up. I mean, again, when I was listening to you read my bio at the start, and I feel this every time I hear my bio read out loud in an event or a speech or something on another podcast, it has a logic to it which I know was not a lived experience for me. Like when you listen to it, it sounds like a logical progression. But it wasn't that way. In real life, it was more me kind of stumbling in the dark, trying to find a way of doing things that were meaningful to me, and that I felt could potentially make a little bit of a positive difference in the world. So yeah, having said that Rwanda did have a profound experience - impact on me, I should say - the experience of Rwanda, getting to go there in the years after the genocide, and returning there a number of times and seeing and meeting survivors, seeing people trying to reconstruct their country and kind of comparing that, in my own mind to the experience of, say, South Africa and Northern Ireland, and thinking, wow, you know, we thought we had tough in trying to rebuild something out of conflict, look at this situation. But it wasn't the only experience. I also spent at the end of, I guess, the first couple of years of the new millennium, I spent quite a bit of time in East Timor, which is, of course, a country very close to Australia, where I was when I was living at the time, and which had this

terrible history of atrocities, of conflict, of all the sorts of things that I've talked about. And going to East Timor, and seeing that country go through a process of truth and reconciliation and reckoning with its path, and to try and again, build out of absolutely nothing and build out of destruction and death, and getting to be there on the kind of the ground floor out in a very remote village in the hillside. Seeing people trying to cope with their past while also trying to figure out where they're going to get fresh water from and you know, where food's gonna come from the day after tomorrow. That also had a profound experience in it eventually, I guess, was part of the long and winding road, to quote The Beatles, that led me eventually to the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 08:55

It's so critical and important that you've been able to meet both people experiencing atrocities and survivors who can give you that perspective of this is not just an abstract concept. It's something that has real meaningful impact for people within countries. So turning to your time at the Global Centre, since you've led us right into that, what are some of your highlights from the last 10 years?

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Simon Adams 09:26

I mean, there's so many that it's really hard to pick out particular things, you know. And maybe just before I say that, Jackie, if I could just follow in on your little point there. I think it's right. I think that, you know, it wasn't until I became an adult that I realized how weird my family situation was, and all these little stories like the story of my aunt being burned out of her house because of her ethnic identity by a mob of people. The story of my aunt, another aunt, being murdered by undercover British soldiers, or the experience of some of my uncles going to prison and the things I heard from them about that process, about the tension and interrogation and surviving the hunger strike in Long Kesh prison in 1981, and the period of the dirty protests and all of that. All of that had a profound impact on me, but I didn't really realize it, because it was just part of my growing up. It was only when I really became an adult, and started to realize that this was not a normal experience, that I realized how kind of unique that was, all the experiences I had had living and working in South Africa as a white man working in Soweto, or in East Timor in, you know, in Letifoho which is a very remote village at the top of East Timor, on the mountains. But I do think that there were things from that, that I carried over into all aspects of my life, it made me acutely aware of my family background that "there but for the grace of God go I" that, you know, my family had a direct experience of identity based conflict. It made me very sensitive to the politics of marginalization, or the politics of the machete. And what I saw in these different kinds of contexts, it allowed me to not just be a voyeur, but to kind of, hopefully kind of, empathetically try to put myself in other people's shoes and try and understand what was going on. And I think that ultimately served me well when I came to the Global Centre, because I think there can sometimes be a tendency, and if you work in this field, they just view things always as abstractions. This is just a country where bad things are happening to people, and we need to stop it. Whereas, you know, I would always kind of run through those stories in my mind and connected up with people that I had met, or past experiences I had had. And it meant that it always felt no matter how big the issue was, it always kind of felt personal to me. And I think that's generally a good thing. As long as you don't let it overwhelm you, as long as you don't let it disorient you. I think that's generally a good thing. I mean, I've had many highlights, in my time at the Global Center, I've seen it go over the last decade from this kind of organization that was just trying to figure out its identity and figure out, you know, along with governments and civil society and the rest of the world, what in the hell is this concept, R2P? What does it mean? What are the parameters of it? Is it applicable in the real world? Will it make a difference to anybody's lives? Will it make a difference to people who are facing the mass grave, or the machete, or ethnic cleansing or whatever today, because that has to be the measure of its success. And so it's hard to pick out, you know, particular things. But, you know, when I think back on the last 10 years, it's the progress we've made and kind of growing support for the idea. And, you know, I think human rights work is generally a story of defeat, occasionally punctuated by a celebrated victory. You know, you're always pushing states and trying to push harder for people to uphold international law and norms and principles they say that they believe in. But when you do get those victories, they really stand out for you.

So for me, you know, probably one that's very important to me personally, and that I'll always cherish is, despite the enormous and historic failure of the UN Security Council to act in relation to the genocide against the Rohingya in Myanmar, we worked behind the scenes with the Global Justice Center, and then with the government of the Gambia to make sure that a case was taken to the International Court of Justice to hold Myanmar accountable for genocide. The day that that case was lodged, and even more so the day when the judges handed down provisional measures, was - certainly felt like - a good day at work.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 14:20

And since you mentioned that so much of our work is a lot of struggle punctuated by some successful moments that you really cherish, what do you think are the really challenging moments that we faced over the past 10 years?

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Simon Adams 14:37

I mean, I think human rights work again is not for the faint hearted. You know, I think it's it's tough. You're constantly pushing and I think that contrary to kind of popular perceptions, it's not like there's ever been a golden age of human rights where it was just onwards and upwards and everything was easy. You're always pushing states to do better, to aim higher, governments to be more accountable and responsible in terms of their people. But yeah, there are also - in the same way that I could say that all the positives and the advances we've made and the very real sense I have that we've been able to grow support from the norm, and we can measure that in a number of different ways - there are also those moments of harrowing defeat, you know, and I think probably, no conflict in the world today has robbed me of more sleep and has made me more upset over the last decade than the situation in Syria. And I can kind of view it from a level of 10,000 feet, looking down on it and seeing everything that went wrong and how it went wrong and analyzing it. And of course, I've done that in print, and done that in interviews, and done that in all kinds of different ways, looking at it from the bigger level, looking at it from the macro level. But for me, it also feels like a couple of really personal moments as well. So, you know, you build up connections with people on the ground, and, you know, I was lucky enough to get to know from the earliest days of the organization of the White Helmets, a couple of the White Helmets. And when some of those people were subsequently killed in Russian or Syrian government army airstrikes, that hit me really hard. And, you know, I think I've told this story in print at least, once before, but, you know, I was being interviewed on Al Jazeera on the day that Aleppo fell, and I had been, you know, waiting to be interviewed. And I think we're a couple of minutes away from going live. And so I did what I always did on days like that, which was I started, I picked up my phone and started looking for people who I could text who were on the ground in Aleppo, and could give me a little bit of intel about what they were seeing or what the situation was like. And I suddenly realized that literally all these people who I knew who were in Aleppo, and who I had been in sporadic contact with over the years were either dead or missing, or I had no way of getting in contact with them. And that was like a, that was a devastating personal moment and a devastating political moment - to know that the international community had failed so abjectly, so fundamentally, to uphold its responsibility to protect the people of Aleppo, the people of Syria. Yeah, that was a tough one.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 17:47

I agree. I think Syria has been a huge struggle for, obviously, for us as individuals, but also at the Centre over the past 10 plus years. I can remember, you know, in the earlier years of the conflict, having these meetings with other NGOs where they're debating the validity of death tolls. And at the time, the death toll was I think 50,000. And there was a debate over "well, how do we know if it's 50 versus 40". And now, you know, a decade later, we're at over 500,000. And I believe it was about a year ago, Alex Bellamy wrote a piece for us on R2P and kind of mentioned different things that had happened in the course of the Syrian conflict. And both you and I were reading it being like, "I can remember when this happened, but so many more horrific things have happened since then, that I've almost erased

that moment from my memory, because it just kept getting worse". Which is really tragic, because somehow, even though it was just getting worse, the Security Council couldn't muster the motivation to do anything about what was worse.

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Simon Adams 19:00

Yeah, no, totally. And I agree with you 100%, Jackie. And you mentioned at the intro that I published this book earlier this year, which is about R2P, and about mass atrocities and human rights in the world and how things have developed. And when I was researching that book, I actually went back and looked at a number of things that I had written and there's probably no situation over the last decade that I've written more about, you know, in newspapers, commentaries, whatever different kinds of fora or been interviewed about than Syria, it's probably the biggest thing I've been interviewed about. And I was looking at things I had written to kind of see how my own thinking had developed. And I found this article that I had written, I think, for Huffington Post, and it was written in the second half of 2011. And it basically said, the death toll at the moment is I think it was 2500 - if urgent international action doesn't happen, the death toll here could easily reach 5000 or 10,000 people, you know, before this thing ends. And it just shows that even, you know, those of us who were in some ways connected to the situation, were doing advocacy around it, you know, none of us realized how catastrophically bad, how murderous the Assad government would be, how it would be willing to violate every single precept of international law, including the use of chemical weapons repeatedly upon its own people. And how big that death toll and how devastating that conflict would be on all of us.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 20:44

Indeed, and I think on the topic of Syria, you know, I've had the privilege of working with you for the past decade on R2P Monitor and its younger sister, Atrocity Alert. And in that time, we've seen many crises around the world from Kenya to Cote d'Ivoire, Nagorno Karabakh last year, sort of rise and then dissipate over time. And often that's as a result of a mix of preventive and responsive measures by the state and the international community. But situations like Syria, Congo, Myanmar, have been featured in every single issue of the Monitor. So what do you think is necessary to address atrocities in these seemingly intractable situations?

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Simon Adams 21:31

Yeah, I mean, I should have said at the end of my last comment, that that's the way you and I feel about Syria. But of course, our experiences have been nothing compared to the experiences of the Syrian people themselves, including the millions who have become refugees around the world and have had their lives turned upside down. But I certainly take your point about intractable conflicts or seemingly intractable conflicts. But I mean, maybe it's just about me and my own background that I just never feel that, I never feel that any conflict is intractable. Because, of course, when your family comes from Northern Ireland, I grew up with people telling me that that conflict would never ever, ever be resolved, that Catholics and Protestants hated - not that people from there wouldn't say this, but outsiders would say Catholics and Protestants just hate each other, they've been killing each other forever, they will continue to kill each other, it's never going to end. And I guess also, you know, when I became kind of politically conscious as a teenager, the common sense view of South Africa was that it was probably going to end up in a race war and a bloodbath. And of course, it went in the opposite direction. And so it did kind of teach me a fundamental lesson of political life, which is that nothing is intractable and everything can change. But something needs to fundamentally shift in the kind of historical calculus in order for that to happen. And so you know, one of those intractable situations, I'm sure you would agree, in the 10 years - I can't believe it's 10 years - of meetings that you and I have had, long discussions about these different countries, how they fit into the Monitor, how they fit into, as you very adequately described it, it's little sister Atrocity Alert. Sudan would have been one of those countries. And,

you know, I remember having, you know, of all the meetings I've had with diplomats who served on the UN Security Council, the Sudanese discussions, actually more than the DRC discussions, were always the most depressing, because you could just see in people's eyes that they didn't actually believe there was anything they could do and that anything was going to change. So they were just kind of fob you off with "Yeah yeah it's very bad, atrocities. Yep, no, we got it. It's awful. Next", because they just didn't think anything was gonna happen. But, you know, Sudan is not fixed by any longshot. But you know, it was actually the Sudanese people themselves who overthrew the dictator, Omar al Bashir, who in some ways, then created the political space for ending the devastating conflict, which was also leading to atrocities in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. And even though things are very politically volatile, and you know, it's still not a good place to be a civilian, if you live in West Darfur or somewhere, the situation in Sudan is immeasurably better than it used to be. And we now see that at least, Bashir is behind bars and hopefully, ultimately will be held accountable for the atrocities he committed in Darfur and elsewhere as President. But I think, you just have to wait for that moment of political alignment or that moment of historical opportunity and as advocates, and as human rights workers, you have to just keep plugging away and then waiting for that moment when, you know, a bit of space does open and then you just have to try and widen it and push harder for a kind of accountability and the kinds of changes that will actually protect people's lives.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 25:22

I think one of the great advantages, although it creates struggles for us as well, of the nature of the Global Centre's work, being an organization that both advocates for populations and also advocates for a norm designed to protect those populations, is that we can see situations like Sudan evolve, but you've also had, you know, firsthand experience both watching R2P evolve, and to some degree shaping how that evolution occurred. So during your 10 years of the Global Centre, what do you perceive as being the most impactful developments for R2P over this time?

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Simon Adams 26:05

Yeah, I mean, I think in the early years, it was all about what is R2P? You know, how do you.. what are the parameters of it? How do you define it? And I'm sure I know that you know, this as well, so it's a bit of a Dorothy Dixon question, because I know you. We've discussed the fact that in those early years, so much of it was kind of theoretical, and about, would R2P theoretically apply in this situation or that situation? And theoretically, what would happen? How would it work? And then, from about 2011 onwards, it ceased to be a question of theory, and then all became about the practice. And the practice has obviously been very mixed. We can point to successes, we can point to abject failures. But I think, for the most part, success is always attenuated anyway, and there's been a number of situations where something in between success and failure has helped, or has happened, I should say. The bigger question is, has it helped? So you know, you look at somewhere like northern Iraq, where - an extreme example - but international military intervention helped protect the Yazidi from ISIS, trying to completely wipe them off the face of the map. Okay, that's good. But, you know, literally 1000s of Yazidis died, Yazidi the villages were completely depopulated. And there are still a couple of 1000 Yazidi girls and women who are still missing and is still in the hands of ISIS. And so, success or failure? You know, action came, but it came too late. You know, and I think that if you get to the point where you're talking about military force or military intervention, you've already failed in some sense, because you failed to prevent something from happening. So I know that something that that we always talk about is, how do we improve preventive capacities. Because I think that there's probably no word in the language of UN diplomacy that is more used and misused and worn out and redundant than the word "prevention". Everybody loves to talk about prevention. And you'll hear that all the time from member states, who will remain nameless, dear listener, who say, "No, no, no, no, no, we're opposed to intervention. We're very committed to the politics of prevention." To which, you know, I almost always have the question of, what are you doing right now to help prevent atrocities in this country, or how are you using your political capital, or your direct experience of your own country, or capacity building or other kinds of ways in which you can contribute, regardless of what country you are, to prevention of atrocities in this country that is struggling and is heading in a very bad direction? So I think in all of

that, you know, the lesson that I've learned over the last 10 years, it's a very simple lesson, and it's a lesson, which I think we've always known is that political will is crucial in all of this, you know. It requires intestinal fortitude on the behalf of individuals in government, governments as a whole, to actually take the steps to either address the problems in their own country, or alternatively, to have the courage to try and help another state and if needs be, to call out another state and to help take collective action to stop atrocities from happening. So, yeah, I think we have examples of that, certainly over the last decade. And you know, whether it be the one I mentioned before of the Gambia taking Myanmar to the International Court of Justice - that was very much a personal decision of the, of the Minister of Justice Ba Tambadou, but it's just one example. I think there are many other examples and all kinds of different ways of people taking action, people in offices taking individual action to help uphold their responsibility to protect and therefore influencing the bigger collective whole.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 30:35

Absolutely. And I mean, to take that example further, the Gambia itself was very close to atrocities, you know, very few years before they took Myanmar to the International Court of Justice. So, you know, it took a lot of steps and diplomacy on the part of neighboring states, as well as other partners to ensure that that situation was prevented from escalating, so...

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Simon Adams 31:07

It's such a great example. And you, you know, you've written about the Gambia, and I encourage everybody to go out and read that piece that you wrote, because it is such a great example. This is a country that was a dictatorship, that had grotesque human rights abuses happening at home, where particularly LGBT+ people were being targeted, and also, particular ethnic groups were being threatened with extermination, and whether the dictator tried to hold on to power but regional action actually stopped that from happening. And in the aftermath of that, it's this little country, the smallest country on the African continent, that not only sees the fastest increase in an improvement in its human rights situation for that year, at a time when authoritarianism is growing in the world and human rights situations are obviously going into the negative, it was a very positive advancement in the Gambia. And then it's the same country which then takes it upon itself to be an agent of international justice and accountability with regard to Myanmar. So it's such a fantastic example of, you know, in the same way that impunity is contagious and perpetrators learn from each other and get encouragement when others get away with atrocities - while international justice, accountability and human rights can be, can spread as well. And, you know, a few positive case studies and examples can really affect situations elsewhere. I think we need to make more of a deal about the Gambia case. And I'm to blame for this, because I think we've talked so much about the end result, which is, you know, the Gambia, this minister taking this case, and then all these other states who had literally said to my face, or said to me on the phone, "Yeah, no, great idea. We love the idea -not doing it", you know, suddenly saying "Yeah, no, we'll either make an intervention or we support this, or we're going to initiate another case around the Syrian torture, you know, situation" or whatever. So I think that that's so true. But I think the part that we've neglected is the first part - we need to talk more about how that came from a state that was struggling, and that, through regional action, flipped the other way and then went to become a human rights leader. Like imagine if we had... I mean, if that's what happened with one Gambia, imagine what we could do with four or five Gambias?

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 33:44

I know we've touched a little on the Security Council already, but based on your experience, what are some of the challenges for the future of atrocity prevention and R2P?

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Simon Adams 33:56

Hmm. Well, I mean, you mentioned the one. I mean, I think the UN Security Council has just become so deeply divided and dysfunctional that it's very hard to see it playing a positive role in any kind of major emerging conflict or crisis. You know, the fact that it took the Security Council, what was it, 100 and something days at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic just to pass a statement saying that they agreed with the UN Secretary-General that peace is a good thing and that if armed groups could call a ceasefire, that was probably something that was a positive thing. It took them 100 days just to agree to something as simple as "give peace a chance". So I think it speaks to the level of dysfunctionality and division that exists. And you see more and more of course, that states and others are just going around the Security Council and are looking for action in other multilateral fora, or getting creative in ways in which to get action to happen. I think that is a massive challenge. I think we've also been living through a period of you know, what I think I've characterized in speeches and in other places as, you know, "lowest common denominator diplomacy" - that we just keep lowering the bar and lowering the bar to say, because, around human rights and humanitarian issues. I guess that kind of put the two things together, you see an example of that recently where some members of the Security Council congratulated themselves for passing a resolution to allow, you know, one border crossing into northern Syria so that emergency humanitarian aid could get to literally hundreds of 1000s of people who are facing extreme hunger, and possible starvation. You know, we shouldn't be congratulating ourselves for doing not even the bare minimum under international law and under humanitarian law, much less than that. But the forces who support impunity, and support sovereignty as a kind of "license to kill" have kind of got us to that situation. So I think that's a massive problem, the dysfunction of the Security Council, the pervasiveness of "lowest common denominator" diplomacy. I think it is also really, you know, a number of other kind of really big things. One of the most fundamental is, you know, I'm one of these people who really believes that climate change poses an existential threat to every single man, woman and child on this planet. And, you know, as I know, that we're starting to see this be a real factor in our world, that there are conflicts which on the surface seem to be about religion or ethnicity, but you dig a little bit into the conflict, and you find out that what's actually behind it is about resource scarcity, and resource scarcity caused by climate change, whether it be desertification in the Lake Chad Basin, or whether it be the erosion of grazing lands in the north of Nigeria, it's affecting these conflicts, creating new conflicts, and kind of magnifying existing ones. And I think that's something we've only really begun to grapple with. And I think, I fear, is something that's going to get a lot worse in the next couple of years. So that's kind of a couple of, you know, an organizational thing, and then a big kind of existential threat facing all of us. But, you know, I absolutely never lose hope. And it's, you know, a question that I often get from people when I speak in different places in the world is, how do you remain hopeful in the midst of all of this? And, you know, I know you and I are on the same page with this, because when the military coup happened in Myanmar on the first of February, and you saw people coming out into the streets, one of the first things that people did was to start carrying banners and placards, saying that the international community had a responsibility to protect them from atrocities and protecting from this murderous military junta. And you made the point, and I agreed with you, because these people know. And despite what some of these governments, repressive regimes in different parts of the world, may say, the ideas of human rights are pervasive. People know what their rights are. So there's no problem with the idea of the responsibility to protect, there's a problem with the kind of broken politics of a failing international system at the moment. And I think, ultimately, we need to do what the great Irish poet Seamus Heaney once said, you know, we need to make hope and history rhyme a little bit better than they do at the moment. And we need to make sure that we tip the balance of history and of power away from the politics of inaction and impunity, and towards the politics of action and international justice.

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Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall 39:25

Thank you for joining us for this episode of Expert Voices on Atrocity Prevention. If you'd like more information about the Global Centre's work on R2P, mass atrocity prevention, or populations at risk of mass atrocities, visit our website at [globalr2p.org](http://globalr2p.org) and connect with us on Twitter and Facebook @GCR2P

