

International Conference on Preventing Mass Atrocities: Asian Perspectives on R2P

Civil Society Consultation
Final Report

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I. Introduction by William R. Pace, Executive Director of Institute for Global Policy

Mr. Pace provided a history of the WFM-IGP's **R2PCS** project, latest developments at the UN since the world summit, and background on the initiative to build a global civil society network/coalition for R2P.

II. Introduction by all participants (see full participant list below)

Each organization provided a summary of how it has or has not incorporated R2P into their activities and advocacy. General comments on how to further Asia activity on R2P were also made.

III. Asian Civil Society Perspectives on R2P

Main themes

R2P and prevention

The Responsibility to Protect encompasses prevention, reaction and rebuilding. But how does R2P relate to conflict prevention more broadly as opposed to prevention of genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing? We must make sure that we are not just talking about human rights generally and we are limiting it to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Do existing programs and mandates on conflict prevention generally complement R2P work and how? It is not required for organizations to work on genocide or crimes against humanity prevention to be supporters of R2P. We should look at R2P as an additional tool in the work of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and other common issues.

There is a lot of flexibility in prevention—but when do you trigger the prevention mode and what types of responses does it take to prevent these crimes? There are many possible preventative responses that can be taken when there is evidence of possible genocide or crimes against humanity (that do not involve military intervention). It would be useful to develop a set of indicators for prevention that suggest when a mass atrocity is imminent (can draw from human rights and humanitarian options).

R2P and “Asian cultural values”

Try and extract what Asian cultural values (indigenous values) exist and how to apply these ideas to R2P. Use the “responsibilities of Kings” to protect their populations in this discussion.

Invoking the responsibility to protect

- When is R2P triggered? When we talk about genocide and mass atrocities, we are talking about numbers—but how does this help minority groups and women?
- What happens when you invoke R2P? What is the impact on governments when you invoke R2P? At the very least, there is naming and shaming but what else do we expect?
- How do you invoke R2P, especially as it relates to prevention? What would civil society consider to be the prevention toolkit?
- Who has authority to invoke R2P? Problem in that there is no institution that declares when R2P applies. There are some international mechanisms such as Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide, Special Adviser on R2P, the Security Council and any other regional organizations.

IV. R2P Advocacy by Asian Civil Society: Main themes

Regional mechanisms and R2P advocacy in Asia:

There is a question of whether there are any effective regional mechanisms in Asia where R2P can/could be invoked. Some possibilities include:

1. ASEAN Regional Forum and governments from outside the region to also do advocacy on R2P within the Asian Regional Forum.
 - a. Can work with Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia has close relationship with ASF.
2. ASEAN Charter
 - a. See SAPA's submission Article 2.2.: Responsibility to Protect clause but this was not accepted. Could we include additional language?
3. ASEAN Political Security Community Blueprint
4. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

But how do we popularize “institution building” in other sub-regional groups (like Northeast Asia and South Asia)? We have agenda setting stage, standard-setting stage and institutional building (where South East Asia is), but this does not exist in other regions.

Multi-track approach: working with governments, parliaments, and military on R2P

- One way to influence governments is to remind them of their 2005 World Summit commitment and to send their support in capitals to the UN.
- Can talk about indigenous values and Asian values to remind governments of their responsibilities to the people.
- Think about what it means when governments fail to protect. How does this impact on regional neighbors? Remind governments of the cost to the region when mass atrocities are occurring.
- How to encourage the participation of governments in the region to engage other governments who are failing to protect their populations.
- Importance of mainstreaming and integrating R2P into parliaments, local and provincial governments (statutes), foreign ministries.

Caution—It has proved difficult for civil society to engage governments and military but it is needed.

Need for R2P Advocacy tools

- Basic education tools for effective advocacy of R2P in Asia
How do we make R2P more understandable? There is a need to create basic education tools on R2P, for example through power point presentation, in people-to-people trainings, talking points, brochures and other documentation.

How do we communicate basic information to civil society so that they can incorporate in their activities? There is a need to articulate how R2P relates to each NGO and their mandate. NGOs could also use information on how R2P relates to the region (possible role for the Asia Pacific Centre for R2P).

- Sign-on letters from neighboring countries that can address breaches in the responsibility to protect within a particular conflict situation. This could be supported by follow up initiatives by international NGOs in solidarity.
- Op-eds: Regional leaders could draft op-eds that can be shopped around strategically to support R2P advocacy.
- Establish an eminent persons group for R2P in the region for both advocacy and information raising (Asia Pacific Centre has a prominent Board of Advisers).

Using existing networks to promote R2P

Many networks in the region are not consciously applying R2P. We need to discuss R2P in networks, mainstream and appropriate it advocacy. Some relevant networks include:

- Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
- Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy
- Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition
- Women Peacebuilding
- Asian Circle 1325
- Asean People's Assembly
- Burma Partnership
- World Forum for Democratization in Asia
- Network of NGOs in Indonesia

V. Inputs on an R2P Network/Coalition: Co-Chaired by Anselmo Lee (FORUM-ASIA) and William Pace (WFM-IGP)

Suggestions to concept paper on Principles, Purposes and Activities highlighted in red.¹

I. Possible Preambular language

It is assumed that each organization has a different mandate: some may focus exclusively on conflict prevention or peacebuilding, others on country-specific situations. Recognition must be given to those organizations and networks that are already doing the solidarity and mobilization on these issues. Moreover, some organizations' mandates may not allow them to endorse certain part of the full spectrum, such as the possibility of military intervention, which even as a last resort may be problematic. The proposed network must take in consideration the diversity of all these mandates and should have an inclusive policy of membership.

II. How should the Coalition understand/define R2P?

If we use Paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document, as well as the original language of the international Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), we can find the following main points:

¹ Concept paper was drafted by WFM-IGP to guide all civil society consultations.

- A. The term Responsibility to Protect expresses the principle that states have the primary obligation to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes, specifically genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.
- B. The Responsibility to Protect supports the idea that “sovereignty brings responsibility” in that sovereignty is not just about protecting ones’ borders, but also about protecting ones’ population.
- C. If a state is unable to avert serious harm to its population, the international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility.
- D. Only if the state is unwilling or unable to accept assistance from the international community or “manifestly fails” in its protection responsibilities, does the Responsibility to Protect populations require additional measures. Sovereignty does not mean that government should be neutral to atrocities occurring in another state. Sovereignty brings responsibility on the international community to act when another state has failed to protect.
- E. The Responsibility to Protect emphasizes peaceful measures (including economic, political, diplomatic, legal) with collective use of force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter only as a last resort.
- F. The Responsibility to Protect encompasses three specific responsibilities:
 - a. The Responsibility to **Prevent** the root and direct causes of conflict and other crises that put populations at risk
 - b. The Responsibility to **React** to humanitarian crises with appropriate measures.
 - c. The Responsibility to **Rebuild** by providing full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation.

Of these three, emphasis must be placed on prevention as the most effective life-saving and least costly way to address atrocity crimes. (see discussion in main report regarding prevention and R2P)

- G. Responsibility to Protect requires the international community to recognize that conflict affects men and women **and children** differently. This is an essential first step in developing gendered responses to conflict, empowering women in the prevention and ending of conflicts, and the rebuilding of communities after conflict.

III. What could the founding purposes of the civil society network/coalition be?

1. To promote the universal acceptance and understanding of the Responsibility to Protect, **among governments, policy makers, civil society and the public.**
2. **To protect the integrity of the norm so that it is not misused by governments, regional organizations or civil society.**
3. To ensure support from civil society, coming from every region and involved in a broad range of sectors.
4. To help monitor governments **compliance** with their commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.
5. To facilitate strategic cooperation **for advocacy** within the NGO community on operationalizing R2P, and also between NGOs and parliamentarians, governments, regional organizations, the United Nations.
6. To ensure that the UN, regional and other international organizations advance the R2P

IV. What could the activities of the civil society network/coalition be? Some ideas include the following:

1. Develop common messages and advocacy strategies to ensure that R2P is properly advanced.
2. Engage officials (**including parliamentarians and ministers**) at policy-making events, agenda-setting discussions, summits, forums on global issues and conflict specific discussions on R2P.
3. Coordinate other civil society groups in lobbying key governments to seek endorsements of R2P at national, regional and international levels.
 - This entails establishing a network between Coalition members and other actors on R2P (including governments, UN, regional organizations, academia and research institutes and organizations, including the Global Centre for R2P and the Asia-Pacific Centre).
4. Lobby governments, regional organizations, and the UN to build practical capability, both preventive and reactive, across the full range of civilian and military responses that are appropriate in confronting different R2P situations.
5. Coordinate civil society in conducting broad-based public education outreach on the norm.
6. Organize discussions, collate recommendations on policy frameworks, and provide strategic inputs into policy discussions. Examples could include discussion of R2P toolbox, criteria for determining when an R2P situation exists, principles on use of force.
7. Monitor the effectiveness of the policy frameworks that are adopted by governments and the UN.
8. **Support advocacy on conflict-specific cases or campaigns (national, country, sub-regional), including through facilitation of exchange of information for member organizations that seek to develop common messages and strategies.**
9. Facilitate thematic/topic working groups (such among groups who specialize in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, conflict/crisis specific or those focused on specific actors, such as regional institutions) as appropriate.
10. **Promote people-to-people power to improve solidarity with those affected by genocide, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.**

VI. Final Outcomes: Building a Civil Society network/Coalition for R2P

1. There was general support for the concept of R2P and for promoting R2P within the region and exploring how to further incorporate R2P into existing NGO mandates.
2. Many organizations supported, in principle, joining a *global* coalition for R2P rather than establishing a completely new *Asia-Pacific regional* coalition for R2P. Participants expressed

support for mainstreaming R2P into existing civil society networks and also organizing around specific campaigns where R2P may apply.

3. There was interest in establishing two focal points:
 - a. FORUM-ASIA: Anselmo Lee anselmo@forum-asia.org (rep for SAPA)
 - b. Initiatives for International Dialogue: Gus Miclat (GPPAC rep for South East Asia): gus@iidnet.org
4. Both Anselmo and Gus agreed to explore how to better translate and mainstream R2P into these existing networks (GPPAC and SAPA) by going back to their Steering Committees.
5. The focal points will also facilitate communication with other interested NGOs from the region on R2P.
6. In June 2008, after discussions within GPAAC and SAPA, Anselmo and Gus will reconvene with Asia-Pacific NGO inputs on the structure for a global coalition for R2P (also at conclusion of WFM-IGP global consultative roundtables).

VII. Upcoming events in Asia-Pacific (where R2P may be discussed/featured)

May 2008: GPPAC Article 9 conference

June 2008: Asia-Pacific Roundtable (contact Institute for Strategic and International Studies-Malaysia)

October 2008: ASEAN People's Assembly (contact Noel Morada)

November 2009: Global Conference with NGOs in Sydney (contact Vesselin Popovski)

VIII. List of Participants

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