

Possible Activities for Parliamentarians to Support the Responsibility to Protect

(This handout was prepared for a December 2006 roundtable discussion on R2P and the role of parliamentarians held in Tokyo, Japan)

Activities to Promote and strengthen R2P Norms

Propose resolution endorsing the world summit outcome on R2P. A resolution would contain the following elements:

- Recognition of that primary responsibility rests with the state and responsibility of the international community is when the state manifestly fails to protect its populations
- Recognition that responsibility must include prevention, and measures short of military force
- Identify what crimes must trigger the responsibility to protect: crimes of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.
- Adopting principles guiding how force would be used in these circumstances

That force is a last resort; force be conducted only to halt or avert an actual crisis – not used preventively; the purpose of use of force be for protecting a civilian population from mass atrocity, rather than for purpose of settling political disputes or other non-protective motives; any force be proportional – the minimum necessary to achieve the goals; and in the balance of consequences, there is a likelihood of success so that action would is not likely to be worse than inaction; finally, force should not be undertaken by one country but collectively

Strengthen government's infrastructure to prevent and respond to mass atrocities

- Conduct hearings on what capacities are lacking or need strengthening within the government to build capacity to prevent mass atrocities – within own country and internationally. This would include:
 - reviewing intelligence capacity (for example early warning); economic capacity (assessment of resources available for structural and direct prevention, reaction and rebuilding); legal measures that must be put in place so that the government is able to prosecute or support prosecutions (including by joining ICC) and to adopt sanctions targeting individuals or corporations; and military doctrine and capacities.
- Call for national security strategies to incorporate protection of populations from atrocity crimes, wherever they occur, as a national security priority.
 - This strategy could outline steps that the government is prepared to take diplomatically, financially, legally and militarily within own government and through regional organizations (where applicable)
 - Should also outline efforts to ensure support from other governments through the UN, through regional partnerships, and also to mitigate opposition from those governments that are principally opposed to international action directed at internal conduct of states
- Ensure coordination among governmental departments on this agenda, in particular, ministries and agencies for foreign affairs, defense and development. For example, call for inter-departmental report to parliament to address strategies adopted and steps to implement R2P.
- Create emergency fund to respond to mass atrocities, aid victims.

Mobilize to prevent or react to specific crises where populations are suffering from mass atrocities

- At early stages of conflict, hold hearings to assess governments response including its bilateral engagement and through the UN;
- Send mission to country;
- Appropriate funds for protection of victims;
- If crisis continues to escalate, the use of force issue should be put to a vote of parliament.

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