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The ICRtoP Secretariat will be moving offices on Thursday, March 13 and Friday, March 14 and the office will be closed. Our new address is 708 Third Avenue, Suite 1715, New York, NY 10017.

Messages of Solidarity and Calls for Action as Third Anniversary of Syrian Crisis Approaches

This Saturday, March 15 2014, marks the third anniversary of the crisis in Syria. It is estimated that the conflict has resulted in over 140,000 [deaths](#)

, more than six million

[internally displaced persons](#),

and over three million

[refugees](#)

. As recently as 10 March 2014, Amnesty International [reported](#)

that war crimes and crimes against humanity are still taking place in Yarmouk, while the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has

[called](#)

the crisis the 'biggest humanitarian tragedy since the Rwandan genocide'.

In the lead up to the anniversary, civil society has kept focus on Syria, with many NGOs and media highlighting the plight of the children of Syria. On March 5th, Save the Children released a 'second a day' [video](#), showing how children are affected by war. Four days later, the organisation released a report on the devastating [impact](#) of war on children's health, including amputations in lieu of treatment, the death of incubated babies during power cuts, and the re-emergence of the measles and polio. On the heels of this, UNICEF released the report '

[Under Siege](#)

' on March 10th, highlighting the effect the war has had on over 5.5 million children and warning of a possibly 'lost generation'. Worryingly, the future of child refugees is also at risk, with Syrian children in Lebanon and Jordan facing

[bullying and discrimination](#)

. NBC News will be hosting a

[48-hour live documentary](#)

on Syria's children starting on 11 March.

Although humanitarian access has [eased](#) since the UNSC unanimously adopted a [resolution](#) on February 22nd, there are still approximately a [quarter of a million](#)

Syrians who have not received aid for over a year. On March 11 2014, the CEOs of more than

fifty NGOs signed onto a

[statement](#)

calling for immediate and unfettered access throughout Syria. To this end, the UN Relief and Works Agency is also hosting a

[campaign](#)

aiming to generate at least 23 million tweets with the hashtag #LetUsThrough; if this is achieved, the now famous image of refugees at Yarmouk will appear in New York's Times Square.

Much of the other civil society action is being coordinated as part of the [#WithSyria campaign](#). This movement – supported by many international NGOs, and the artist

[Banksy](#)

– calls for humanitarian access, as well as an end to the bloodshed and the need for continued inclusive peace talks. Individuals are asked to use the hashtag #WithSyria, and participate in global vigils around the world, in cities worldwide, including Kinshasa, Seoul,

[Washington DC](#)

,
[London](#)

,
[Melbourne](#)

, and Baqaa, Jordan. Find a vigil near you on the

[#WithSyria website](#)

Actors have reminded, and continue to remind the Syrian government, UN Security Council and others of their [Responsibility to Protect](#). So far, efforts to protect the Syrian people from atrocities have failed, and the crisis will inevitably enter its fourth year later this week. In the coming year, the Syrian government and international community need to do more to relieve the suffering of the Syrian people, and ensure a peaceful, negotiated political settlement for the conflict.

To learn more about the #WithSyria campaign, click [here](#).

To learn more about the NBC News 48-hour live documentary, click [here](#).

More on Syria:

[ICRtoP](#) : The Crisis in Syria.

[Amnesty International](#): . Syria: Squeezing the Life out of Yarmouk: War Crimes against Besieged Civilians

[Save the Children](#): A Devastating Toll: The Impact of Three Years of War on the Health of Syria's Children.

[UNICEF](#): Under Siege: The Devastating Impact on Children of Three Years of Conflict in Syria

[World Vision](#): Children's Report on Refugees

Human Rights Council Embraces Prevention of Mass Atrocities in

Opening of 25th Session *From 3-28 March 2014, the United Nations' [Human Rights Council](#)*

(HRC) is holding its twenty-fifth regular session. During the opening four days of the session, some 100 ministers and other senior dignitaries, including the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, participated in discussions ranging from the promotion of

[preventive approaches](#)

within the UN to an

[interactive dialogue](#)

on the

[Genocide Convention](#)

. Mr. Dieng's participation in the HRC's session was of particular significance, as it allowed the Special Advisor to present the importance of mainstreaming his mandate and the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing into the UN's human rights system. Find highlights from relevant meetings during the 25

th

session's first week below.

High-level dialogue on the promotion of preventive approaches within the United Nations system

On 5 March, Flavia Pansieri, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights; Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Michael Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva; Mr. Dieng, and others participated as panelists in a high-level dialogue aimed at promoting preventive approaches within the UN system. Ms. Pansieri and Ms. Kang [urged](#) all parties to treat patterns of human rights violations as indicators of potential mass atrocities. Michael Møller, Acting

Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva agreed, asserting that human rights violations were at the root of many of today's conflicts and that there was room for improvement in the UN's engagement in prevention. Reminding states that it was their primary responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities, Mr. Dieng noted that these crimes are processes that often start with human rights violations such as hate speech and marginalization. Member States

[stressed](#) that there

was a need to help build state capacity by strengthening monitoring bodies and developing clear preventive measures, and urged the UN to implement its new "[Rights up Front](#)" Initiative across the system. Another key proposal was using the threat of accountability as a tool for de-escalation and deterrence.

High-level Panel on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

The Human Rights Council held a high-level panel and dialogue on 7 March to commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Genocide Convention, which counted Navi Pillay, Adama Dieng, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Armenia, Mr. Edward Nalbandian, Mr. Jonathon Sisson from the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, and Esther Mujawayo, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide among its participants.

Mr. Dieng and High Commissioner Pillay again [stressed](#) the importance of tackling the precursors to mass atrocities, such as discrimination and human rights violations. Dieng spoke of the need to remember the commitment made at the 2005

[World Summit](#)

to uphold the Responsibility to Protect, suggesting that the Human Rights Council increase engagement with his office and adapt the Framework for Analysis of Genocide. He further encouraged States to consider creating a mechanism to monitor compliance with the Genocide Convention, noting that the current lack of such a body may have led some States to ignore their responsibilities under the Convention. High Commissioner Pillay emphasized the particular significance of accountability and deterrence in preventing mass atrocities, urging states to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of such violence. She stressed that “the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities concern all UN entities,” including the Human Rights Council. Edward Nalbandian, Esther Mujawayo and Jonathon Sisson also

[reiterated](#)

the need to ensure accountability through national and international courts and further [called](#)

for states to demonstrate the political will to act on early warnings voiced by civil society and international bodies. During the subsequent interactive dialogue between Mr. Dieng and Member States, states reflected on the panels’ advice and praised the work of Mr. Dieng’s Office, while renewing their commitment to upholding their obligations to protect populations from genocide.

To listen to a press conference after Mr. Dieng's dialogue with the Human Rights Council on "Achievements and Challenges of the Mandate of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide" on 10 March, click [here](#) .

RtoP-Related Events and Opportunities Call for Applications for the Carl Wilkens Fellowship

The Carl Wilkens Fellowship is a selective year-long, part-time program that aims to give a diverse set of individuals at every level of experience the tools and resources to build sustained political will to end genocide. This program is designed to accommodate the schedules of working professionals as well as community members who have families, are active in other organizations, and have other commitments (...).

Please note that the scholarship is for U.S. residents only.

Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

International Conference on Genocide Prevention

Brussels, 31 March-1 April 2014

Despite the Holocaust, and other crimes committed by the Nazi regime in World War II, the world has ever since then been exposed to repeated cases of mass atrocities. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda (1994-2014) and the upcoming commemoration of the July 1995 Srebrenica genocide, the International Conference to be held in Brussels, on March 31 and April 1, 2014 will address this central issue. The Conference will

focus on 4 aspects: (1) the status of academic research on genocide; (2) an integrated international human rights law - international criminal law perspective; (3) role of civil society and (4) parliaments and institutional responses.

For more information on the conference, click [here](#).

Crisis in Syria: The Human Face
Benjamin Cardozo School of Law
24 March 2014

The Syrian conflict has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises in decades: over 2.5 million refugees, more than 4.2 million internally displaced persons, and 33,335 asylum seekers. Please join the Holocaust, Genocide & Human Rights Program for a panel discussion about the human impact of the conflict and the particular challenges faced by women, children, refugees, humanitarian agencies, as well as opposition parties seeking to establish a democratic Syria.

Read more about the event [here](#).

Professional Training on the Prevention of Mass Atrocities
Montreal Institute for the Prevention of Genocide Studies
18-20 June 2014

MIGS will be organizing a two-and-a-half-day professional training program on the prevention mass atrocities. The event will be held at Concordia University in Montreal from 18 to 20 June 2014. This program is tailored to mid- to senior-level professionals interested in the prevention and interdiction of mass atrocity crimes. To get a better understanding of what to expect, please have a look at this short [video](#) of the 2013 professional training program. ICRtoP Director Sapna Chhatpar Considine will participate as a speaker covering the role of civil society in mass atrocity prevention. The training program will be divided into several thematic sessions presented by internationally-recognized experts in the field of human rights and international affairs.

For more information, click [here](#).