

RtoP WEEKLY

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

#R2P10: The Responsibility to Protect and Counter-Terrorism: A Response

(This post is a response to an earlier piece in the blog series, which can be found [here](#).)

In a recent post on this [website](#), [Kyle Matthews](#) argued RtoP faced a conceptual problem. There is, he suggests, a lack of consensus among those working on RtoP 'on whether countering violent extremism and implementing certain counter terrorism measures are in fact a state obligation under RtoP'. This is despite the fact that, as he puts it, 'acts of terrorism and mass atrocity crimes are easily comparable and sometimes overlap'. He urges the human rights community, national governments and the UN to fulfil 'a duty to come together and discuss the convergence of mass atrocity and terrorism prevention'. Such discussion would 'further develop RtoP conceptually'. Without it the RtoP community could be accused of 'burying our heads in the sand'. The meaning – and normative demands – of RtoP should constantly be open for discussion, and in raising the matter Matthews does the RtoP community a great service.

Yet I would argue there are dangers contained within this exercise and the RtoP community needs to be aware of them before embarking on the exercise Matthews calls for. (...)

Read the full post [here](#) .

Catch up on developments in...

[Burma/Myanmar](#)

[Burundi](#)

[Central African Republic](#)

[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

[Gaza](#)

[Iraq](#)

[Libya](#)

[Mali](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[South Sudan](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)

[Sudan/Darfur](#)

[Syria](#)

[Yemen](#)

[Other](#)

Burma/Myanmar:

Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), in collaboration with the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), the Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEG) and the Women's Organizations Network Myanmar (WON), [published](#) a report on the impact of conflict on women in Burma entitled, "Opening the box: Women's Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity."

In a new Statistical Analysis from the Early Warning Project launched by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum this week, Myanmar was [found](#) to be the country at the highest risk for the onset of State-led mass killings in 2015.

Burundi:

The head of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Burundi [reported](#) that the situation in the country was deteriorating. Local and international rights groups in Burundi have voiced concern about the killing of senior political and military figures, condemning the arrests of more than 600 people opposing the ruling party (CNDD-FDD).

Central African Republic:

Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the head of the UN stabilization force in the Central African Republic, [expressed](#) that there must be no impunity for peacekeepers who perpetrate sexual abuse offences, noting that there would be even more cases coming into public view in the future.

Human Rights Watch [echoed](#) the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, by describing the Central African Republic as a country "gripped with fear" and in dire need of more UN troops. However, HRW declared that deploying a peacekeeping mission was only the first step in response to this crisis and urged for more financial and technical support for the Special Criminal Court. ICRtoP Member International Crisis Group [published](#) a summary report on the crisis in CAR, emphasizing its long-term nature and characteristics of "sporadic surges of violence against a backdrop of state disintegration, a survival economy and deeper inter-ethnic cleavages."

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Two ministers of the DRC government [resigned](#) after refusing to sign a loyalty pledge to Kabila's majority coalition, placing pressure on President Joseph Kabila to select a new cabinet ahead of upcoming elections in which Kabila is not allowed to run.

50 peacekeepers serving in MONUSCO have been [recalled](#) home for security breaches and are under investigation.

Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea:

The UN Human Rights Council, as part of its 30th session, held a panel on the situation of human rights in DPRK. Many states and bodies echoed the Commission of Inquiry's [report](#) by pushing for a Security Council referral of the situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Republic of Korea noted that it may pursue an additional course of action to deal with the issue of abductees.

Gaza:

Last Friday, the Egyptian military [began](#) flooding tunnels used by Palestinian militants and smugglers under the border with Gaza. On Saturday, Israeli airstrikes [hit](#) the Gaza Strip, targeting two Hamas training camps, following the attacks by Palestinian militants whom had fired rockets into southern Israel.

UNSG Ban Ki-moon on Sunday [condemned](#) the recent rocket attacks by extremist Palestinian militants on Israel from Gaza. UNSG Ban Ki-moon additionally [urged](#) both Israeli and Palestinian sides to defuse recent tensions at the Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount compound and prevent an escalation of the current situation. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [warned](#) of the "risk of a new Intifada", after clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces in occupied

East Jerusalem continued.

UNRWA [announced](#) that it has obtained the funds to rebuild 1,1000 homes destroyed during Israel's incursion on the Gaza Strip in summer 2014.

Guinea:

The United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, [concluded](#) a visit during an investigation into the events that took place in 2009 at a stadium in Conakry, where more than 100 people were killed and at least 100 women were raped during an opposition demonstration. Thus far, 16 people have been indicted in connection with the case, including former Head of State- Moussa Dadis Camara and several high ranking military officers.

Several people were [wounded](#) when rival political factions fought in northern Guinea as a result of mounting tension before presidential elections on 11 October. Police arrested and detained a number of local opposition leaders.

Iraq:

A suspected ISIL car bomb [exploded](#) in Ameen, killing at least 12 people and injuring 42 others. The UNHCR [announced](#) that two new camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been opened in Baghdad province.

Two Yazidi groups have [urged](#) the International Criminal Court to investigate their persecution as a case of genocide. The report submitted to the ICC details executions of more than 700 Yazidi men, the murder of the sick and elderly, the rape and enslavement of thousands of women and abduction of children, many of whom are, if not killed, forced to convert to Islam and fight for ISIL.

Libya

Six people were killed and ten wounded over the weekend when fighting [erupted](#) between the Libyan National Army and fighters allied to ISIL.

UN Special Envoy to Libya, Bernardino Leon, [announced](#) last Friday that lawmakers from Libya's internationally recognized House of Representatives (HoR) had agreed to return to the talks with the General National Congress (GNC) after resolving an internal dispute. However, the 20 September peace agreement deadline

[passed](#)

unanswered. The HoR and the GNC

[began](#)

talks again on Tuesday to debate whether to accept a final version of the UN-brokered peace

agreement, which Leon declared would accept no further revisions. Subsequently, on Wednesday the HoR [called](#) for a freeze in the UN-mediated peace talks until the GNC halts their offensive in the east.

Mali:

Two police officers and two civilians were killed on Saturday when armed men, thought to be Islamic extremists, [attacked](#) a police station in a town bordered with Burkina Faso. Mali's government [postponed](#) regional elections due to insecurity in the north. Investigators [determined](#) that the Macina Liberation Front (FLM), a new group that emerged earlier this year, is behind the recent spread of violence into central and southern Mali.

Nigeria:

More than 100 people were [killed](#) Sunday in northern Nigeria in a coordinated set of bombings by Boko Haram in the north-eastern city of Maidugur. An additional bomb attack in the nearby town of Monguno [killed](#) an estimated 20 people

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UNICEF [reported](#) that half a million children had fled attacks by Boko Haram in the past five months, bringing the total number of displaced children by Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighboring countries to 1.4 million (1.2m in Nigeria, 265,000 in Cameroon, Chad and Niger).

Nigerian forces [rescued](#) 241 women and children during a raid on two camps controlled by Boko Haram and arrested 43 militants belonging to the group.

South Sudan:

South Sudan's rival parties [concluded](#) a week long ceasefire workshop without consensus on how to implement a security arrangement and form a joint command as part of the deal. Questions of how best to demilitarize Juba remain, as both sides cited differences in the size of the protection force required. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), [noted](#), in its first report since the ceasefire took effect on 30 August, that both government and rebel forces had violated the deal. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) [agreed](#) to discuss further the proposed sanctions on top military commanders and others in South Sudan after the opening of the General Assembly. The US State Department announced more than \$80 million in additional humanitarian assistance for South Sudanese refugees and persons affected by the conflict.

Sri Lanka:

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany [offered](#) assistance to Sri Lanka with its investigation of alleged atrocities during its civil war. In response, however, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera declared that his country wanted to conduct its own investigation but would accept some outside technical support. Mahinda Rajapaksa, the former President of Sri Lanka, [presse](#)
[d](#) the current Sri Lankan government to reject a UNHRC report that called for a special hybrid court to probe the alleged war crimes committed during the civil war.

Sudan/Darfur

President al-Bashir [pardoned](#) rebel leaders who will take part in the national dialogue conference on 20 October and declared a two-month ceasefire in war ravaged areas.

UNOCHA reported that around 50,000 of the 223,000 people displaced from the conflict have [returned](#) to Darfur this year, with 104,000 of them receiving some form of humanitarian assistance.

Human Rights Watch [released](#) a detailed report on how Sudanese government forces have carried out systematic attacks on towns and villages in the western part of Darfur in the past 18 months, including the raping, torturing, and killing of their civilians.

The European Union [called](#) on the Sudanese government to conduct an independent investigation into the violent protests of September 2013, when at least 200 people were killed, though the government stated the death toll as 85.

Syria

US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu [held](#) their first talks in more than a year via telephone to discuss solutions to the Syrian conflict. As the talks occurred, four Russian fighter jets arrived at an airfield near the Syrian city of Latakia. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [met](#) in Moscow on Monday and agreed to coordinate military actions over Syria to avoid accidentally trading fire.

Warring sides in Syria [reached](#) a UN-supervised agreement on actions concerning the fate of two villages. The ceasefire deal includes the withdrawal of rebel militants and evacuation of civilians from those areas and is to be implemented within six months, with the evacuation of wounded from all sides beginning immediately.

The UN Human Rights Council during its 30th session [held](#) an interactive dialogue on the

Commission of Inquiry ([COI](#)) on Syria. Several nations echoed the call of the COI for a UNSC referral of the situation to the ICC to ensure full accountability, in addition to the COI's proposal for an ad hoc tribunal. Transitional justice was also noted as playing a critical role in the fate of Syria, with civil society and women playing a central role in the political solution.

Yemen

Saudi-led coalition airstrikes [killed](#) at least 50 people when they hit a Houthi security compound in north Yemen and a residence in Sana'a. President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi [returned](#) to Yemen, landing in Aden after spending six months in exile in Saudi Arabia.

UNSG Ban Ki-moon [voiced](#) extreme concern at the recent escalation of ground fighting and airstrikes in Yemen which have devastated more cities and increased civilian casualties.

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, [urged](#) the Security Council and the international community to promote political dialogue aimed at ending violations against children in Yemen. She reported that more than 400 children have been killed, and more than 600 injured, in Yemen between 26 March and August.

What else is new?

The US [warned](#) Russia that its continued blanket use of its UN Security Council (UNSC) veto will jeopardize the Security Council's long-term legitimacy and could lead the US and other countries to bypass the UNSC as a decision-making body.