

#R2P Weekly: 28 September-2 October 2015

ICRtoP Statement on the Occasion of the Ministerial Meetings on “Framing the Veto in the Event of Mass Atrocities” and “Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.” Over the past few years, the United Nations Security Council, due to the veto power wielded irresponsibly by some of its members, has been unable to respond adequately to the greatest humanitarian disaster of our generation—the crisis in Syria. Despite the international community’s repeated vows to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes, the UN organ primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security has failed to take consistent action to help staunch the ongoing crimes against humanity and war crimes. The 210,000 dead, 3.9 million refugee count, and 6.5 million internally displaced show the high price that Syrians—and the region at large—have paid for such inaction.

Four vetoes used over the span of three years on *one* crisis cannot be dismissed as an unfortunate but ultimately unsolvable difference of political opinion between Council members. Furthermore, the *threat* of the use of the veto has been equally as obstructive in responding to atrocity crimes, as it curtails even discussing taking action to protect populations. (...)

Read the full statement

[here](#)

.

Event Announcement: Latin America and the Responsibility to Protect: Diverging Views from the South?

The ICRtoP, together with Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales, is holding this event on Monday, 6 October 2015. The event is open to the public. For details and to RSVP, click [here](#) .

Catch up on developments in...

[Burma/Myanmar](#)

[Burundi](#)

[Central African Republic](#)

[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

[Gaza](#)

[Guinea](#)

[Iraq](#)

[Libya](#)

[Mali](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[South Sudan](#)

[Sri Lanka](#)

[Sudan/Darfur](#)

[Syria](#)

[Yemen](#)

[Other](#)

Burma/Myanmar:

The Burmese government's chief peace negotiator [stressed](#) that the Mon minority will be limited to observer status during political discussions if it does not agree to a nationwide ceasefire agreement. Union Minister Aung Min met with influential monks and urged them to sign the peace deal before the November elections.

However, the ceasefire talks between the Myanmar government and ethnic rebel groups [collapsed](#) after only seven out of eighteen armed groups agreed to sign the peace accord and the government refused to extend a ceasefire to three rebel groups located in Kokang province. The rebel groups who did not sign the agreement did not rule out their participation in the future, but maintained their position to only accede to a ceasefire when every armed group is included in the deal.

With just over a month until Burma's national election, Human Rights Watch [reported](#) on the ongoing electoral intimidation in the ethnic-minority borderlands by the The Pyithu Sit (People's Militias) and Neh San Tat (Border Guard Forces). The UNSG Ban Ki-Moon also [raised](#) concerns over Myanmar's polls procedures thus far for the upcoming election and expressed his disappointment in the "effective disenfranchisement of the Rohingya and other minority communities."

Burundi:

The EU [announced](#) that it will impose sanctions, in the form of travel bans and asset freezes, on four Burundi officials close to President Nkurunziza.

Impunity Watch [released](#) a report detailing possible methods for addressing impunity and preventing future grievances in Burundi. Impunity Watch recommends to the UN Human Rights Council the following: a new resolution on the crisis; disarmament processes for all youth paramilitary and militia; security for independent media to be re-opened; an open-ended citizen dialogue process; and for the Burundian government to conduct independent and impartial investigations into human rights abuses and international crimes committed by all parties to the conflict.

Central African Republic:

Violence erupted in CAR after a Muslim man was murdered on Saturday, which ignited retaliations by Muslims on a Christian neighborhood and attacks by armed groups on civilians. Over 30 people have been killed and more than 100 injured in the inter-communal violence. Additionally, hundreds of prisoners escaped from the primary jail in Bangui, resulting in U.N. peacekeepers firing warning shots to disperse thousands of protesters in favor of rearming the military. Bangui has since been [pl](#)
[aced](#)
under a strict night-time curfew.

Central African Republic Foreign Minister Samuel Rangba [called](#) on the United Nations to step up its support for the country by strengthening MINUSCA and lifting sanctions impacting the training of military forces.

ICRtoP member Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [released](#) a new report entitled, “Too little, too late: Failing to prevent atrocities in the Central African Republic,” which noted the ‘woefully inadequate’ international response on all levels concerning the crisis in CAR.

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

A German court [imprisoned](#) Ignace Murwanashyaka, the former political leader of the FDLR, for 13 years for abetting war crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

ICRtoP member Human Rights Watch [issued](#) a new report entitled “Justice on Trial: Lessons from the Minova Rape Case in the Democratic Republic of Congo”, which states the DRC government should urgently reform the country’s justice system in order to better prosecute atrocities.

Gaza:

On Wednesday, as the Palestinian flag was raised for the first time outside the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas [accused](#) Israel of not following through with the Oslo Accords peace agreement and announced that Palestinians “cannot continue to be bound by these agreements.” Mustafa Barghouti, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization Central Council, stated that all security coordination between Israel and Palestine has now been canceled and that Palestinians will begin using nonviolent resistance while calling for sanctions against Israel.

Guinea:

September 28th [marked](#) the 6th anniversary of the massacre of protesters in a Conakry stadium. A group of civil society organizations called for the massacre trial to be a priority following the 11 October presidential elections.

Iraq:

A suicide bomber in the town of Tarmiyah [killed](#) 7 people and wounded 16 others.

Libya:

Ageila Saleh, the leader of Libya's Parliament, [declared](#) that, if needed, the House of Representatives will continue peace talks past the end of the Parliament's current mandate on 20 October. Delegates from the House of Representatives and the General National Congress reportedly [began](#) meetings on the UN-brokered peace plan in New York yesterday.

In his speech to the UN General Assembly Libya's Acting Head of State, Agila Saleh Essa Gwaider [warned](#) of the "overwhelming threat" posed by ISIL which is hindering Libya's transition to becoming a transparent democracy. Mr. Gwaider also stated that external powers, including the UN Security Council, have hampered Libya's attempts at fighting terrorists, due to their delay in approving requests by the Libyan government to exempt it from an arms embargo.

Mali:

Alleged Islamist militant Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi [has become](#) the first person to appear at the International Criminal Court on charges of damaging humanity's cultural heritage. Mr. al-Mahdi is accused of belonging to Ansar Dine, an ally of al-Qaida in the Maghreb, and jointly ordering or carrying out the destruction of nine mausoleums and the Sidi Yahia mosque in the Malian city Timbuktu. A hearing to confirm the charges will take place on 18 January.

Nigeria:

The Nigerian Army [claimed](#) that around 200 members of Boko Haram have surrendered. Boko Haram [raided](#) a village in neighboring Niger and massacred at least 15 civilians.

At a UN General Assembly side event, the UN, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon [appealed](#) for help for millions of people displaced in the Lake Chad Basin region after fleeing violence incited by Boko Haram coupled with repeated droughts and floods leading to malnutrition and disease. Several UN diplomats warned that the aid emergency in the region risks being forgotten among

other humanitarian crises in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, and others.

South Sudan:

More than 100 advocacy groups [petitioned](#) the African Union to establish a hybrid court for South Sudan and to release a report commissioned by the continental body to investigate atrocity crimes committed during the 21-month long ongoing conflict. The African Union later [announced](#) that it would [release](#) the report, and that a special court would be set up to try atrocity crime suspects in South Sudan after an inquiry has found that both government and rebel forces have committed war crimes.

UNHCR [started](#) relocating 2,143 vulnerable Sudanese refugees from South Sudan's Central Equatoria state town of Yei River to a nearby Lasu settlement site.

The United Nations [called](#) on President Kiir's government and the armed opposition to allow UN agencies to reach all areas of the country affected by the 21 month long conflict. Additionally, the UN's Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, urged that the perpetrated serious human rights violations occurring in South Sudan must be monitored.

Agence France- Presse [reported](#) on the suspected thousands of women and girls used as sex slaves throughout South Sudan's. Dozens of interviews with victims revealed a systematic pattern of abduction and rape perpetrated by government soldiers and their allied militias during recent offensives.

Sri Lanka:

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [urged](#) Sri Lanka to investigate the reports of secret jails, where allegedly former Tamil rebels are being tortured.

Amnesty International [stated](#) that the adoption of a resolution on human rights violations by all sides in Sri Lanka's conflict by the UN Human Rights Council marked a crucial turning point for providing justice for victims and that the international component of the hybrid court is crucial for its credibility.

Sudan/Darfur:

The opposition Reform Now Movement (RNM) and Union of the Nation's Forces (UNF) party have [called](#) for a joint ceasefire monitoring force from the government and rebel groups to be formed.

UNSG Ban Ki-moon strongly [condemned](#) an attack on Sunday against UNAMID mission in Mellit, North Darfur in which one South African peacekeeper died and four others were wounded.

A Sudanese delegation [arrived](#) in Chad on Wednesday to discuss with Chadian President Idris Deby the participation of the armed opposition in the Sudanese National Dialogue. The dialogue is scheduled to start on 10 October.

Syria:

In their speeches at the UN General Assembly on Monday Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin [agreed](#) on the need to counter the threat to peace posed by ISIL; however, they were at odds on how to end the Syrian conflict. President Obama

[insisted](#)

that Syria's President Assad must be removed from power and President Putin stated that it would be an "enormous mistake" not to work with Assad in the fight against ISIL.

A study by the [Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters](#) at [Université Catholique de Louvain](#) in

Belgium

[found](#)

that while men make up the overall majority of civilians killed in the Syrian war, nearly 25 percent of all civilians killed by explosive weapons were women and children.

On Wednesday, Russia [began](#) carrying out airstrikes in Syria against the opponents of President Assad. Syrian opposition activist network 'Local Coordination Committees' reported that Russian warplanes hit five towns, not controlled by ISIL, resulting in the deaths of 36 people, five of them children. Russian jets [continued](#) airstrikes in Syria into Thursday, with reports again claiming that targets being hit are not a part of ISIL but are areas held by groups that are opposed to ISIL and the Syrian government.

French authorities [launched](#) a criminal probe of Syrian President Assad's regime for war crimes committed between 2011 and 2013 focusing on evidence provided by a former Syrian army photographer known by codename "Caesar," who holds 55,000 graphic photographs of scenes of brutality from the conflict.

On 5 October, Concordia University in Montreal [will host](#) an event on The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Seeking Protection in Dangerous Times.

Yemen:

Amnesty International [called](#) for an establishment of a UN HRC Commission of Inquiry to investigate violations of international humanitarian law committed by all sides in the ongoing civil war in Yemen.

Accounts from residents and medics [reported](#) that air strikes from helicopters from the

Saudi-led coalition against the Houthi rebels in Yemen killed at least 25 civilians in the Hajja province, but Saudi authorities dismissed the reports. A Saudi-led coalition airstrike hit a Houthi wedding party in Wahijah on Monday [killing](#) 131 people, making it the deadliest single incident in the country's civil war. Yemeni officials reported that the Saudi-led coalition had hit the wedding by mistake.

A Dutch draft resolution at the Human Rights Council, previously supported by other Western countries, for an international inquiry into human rights violations by all parties to the Yemeni conflict was [dropped](#) on Wednesday. The HRC accepted a revised resolution which omits an international inquiry and supports a decree, issued by the exiled Yemeni government of President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, for a national commission of inquiry. Philippe Dam of Human Rights Watch in Geneva stated that this is "a lost opportunity for the council and a huge victory for Saudi Arabia, protecting it from scrutiny over laws of war violations which will probably continue to be committed in Yemen."

What else is new?

ICRtoP's Communication and Advocacy Officer, Angela Patnode, [wrote](#) a guest blog post for the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, about the need for UN Security Council reform, a proposed Security Council Code of Conduct, and the necessity of putting justice before international politics.

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [released](#) an report entitled "Preventing Mass Atrocities in West Africa," detailing the case studies of preventative efforts undertaken by Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. The Centre, together with the Elders, also [released](#) a Press Release on the high-level panel event on "Preventing Mass Atrocities: How Can the UN Security Council Do Better?"

At a Ministerial-level meeting on Wednesday of the Security Council on the settlement of conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa and countering the terrorist threat in the region, UNSG Ban Ki-moon [underscored](#) the shared responsibility to resolve the Mid-east conflicts and urged Member States to use all tools available.

