

Tenth Anniversary Year in Review: Civil Society Perspectives

Now that the ten-year anniversary of the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) norm in 2005 has drawn to a close, it is time to reflect on the main outcomes of the stocktaking undertaken on the norm's progress and remaining challenges. The ICRtoP, together with input from its eighty-nine members, identified and made strides on addressing the three following needs: 1) increased partnerships; 2) local buy-in; and 3) collaboration with other protection agendas. For more details on ICRtoP and civil society priorities in these areas, click [here](#).

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Burma/Myanmar:

With the summer “sailing season” about to [begin](#) in Southeast Asia, tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in Burma will make the difficult decision to risk their lives in small, unsafe boats in pursuit of jobs in Malaysia or Thailand. When they arrive, many are at risk of being pulled into human-trafficking rings or buried in unmarked graves in the jungle if unable to pay the smugglers’ ransoms. Estimates state that around 100,000 Rohingya have already fled their homeland in recent years, with 1,000 fleeing since September 2014 alone.

Myanmar’s new [parliament](#), now dominated by the National League for Democracy, will convene for the first time on 1 February.

Burundi:

A [series](#) of grenade attacks killed one and injured at least a dozen early on New Year’s Day. President Nkurunziza [rejected](#) the African Union’s groundbreaking proposal to send 5,000 peacekeeping troops to Burundi to protect civilians from the violence gripping the country. It is the first time that the AU has utilized the power to intervene in the affairs of one of its member states without receiving the state’s prior consent. Nkurunziza stated that any troops sent into Burundi would be seen as an attack on the country, warning that Burundians would respond in kind to defend their nation. Nkurunziza’s government [refused](#) to participate in peace talks scheduled to take place in Tanzania on Wednesday, objecting to the inclusion of opposition figures, who they blame for the escalation of violence. It is unclear when and if peace talks will resume. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council is [awaiting](#) approval from the Burundian government to travel to the country in late January 2016.□

Central African Republic:

Vote counting is nearly complete after CAR’s 30 December presidential and legislative elections, with two former prime ministers, Faustin Archange Touadera and Anicet Georges Dologuele, [ahead](#) of the other 28 candidates. Though at least 20 of the presidential candidates had earlier called for the counting to be stopped, citing accusations of fraud, many have since reversed their position. Furthermore, after a [meeting](#) with MINUSCA (the

UN peace operation in CAR), almost all candidates agreed to “channel election-related complaints through the Constitutional Court, as provided for in the Electoral Code as well as the Code of Good Conduct.” Should the

[count](#)

show no clear majority, Touadera and Dologuele will head to a run-off election on 31 January.

Fresh allegations of sexual abuse and other misconduct involving children by UN peacekeepers and other international forces in CAR have [emerged](#) . MINUSCA says it will continue to investigate all allegations of misconduct.□

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

The military and local authorities [accused](#) the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) of orchestrating a massacre of 14 people in Goma on Wednesday. Meanwhile, the DRC [registered](#) 7,000 refugees arriving from South Sudan this week.

Gaza/West Bank:

On 2 January, Israeli air forces [struck](#) four empty facilities in Gaza in response to rocket attacks on southern Israel. Neither the air strikes nor the rocket attacks caused any casualties. In the West Bank, Israeli security forces [shot](#) and killed a Palestinian who had reportedly stabbed an Israeli soldier.

Hamas set conditions on joining a new Palestinian unity [government](#) , stating that it would only do so if the Palestinian Authority ended security cooperation with Israel.

Iraq:

U.S.-led coalition airstrikes [killed](#) approximately 2,500 ISIL fighters in Syria and Iraq in December. Furthermore, Iraqi armed forces have retaken several urban areas from ISIL in Iraq. US estimates of the total number of ISIL fighters killed last year range from 20,000-30,000. Nevertheless, though ISIL has suffered defeats, it has been able to replenish its troops relatively quickly, with its estimated number of available fighters this year relatively the same as in 2015. A similar trend has manifested itself in regards to territory, for though large sections of territory have been [recovered](#) from ISIL, the group has made gains in Libya and formerly government-held areas of Syria.

Libya:

A truck bomb in Libya [killed](#) at least 47 at a police training centre in Zliten on Thursday, with many speculating ISIL to be behind the attack. Attacks on Libya's oil ports by ISIL have [intensified](#)

, with from 5 to 7 oil tanks set ablaze by insurgents. It is thought that ISIL may be attempting in Libya to employ a strategy similar to one that it used in Syria to attain control over the country's large and productive oil assets, by destroying assets until they are no longer financially viable, thus allowing ISIL to more easily assume control. Fears have emerged that ISIL could also be attempting to destroy Libya's biggest source of income in order to thwart the successful unity of the country's two rival controlling powers which, in accordance with a UN-mediated power-sharing deal between the two, should form a national unity government by the middle of January.

Mali:

Mali [extended](#) its state of emergency for an additional three months, a measure initially imposed after the attack on a Bamako hotel in November. Germany announced its intention to [contribute](#) an additional 500 troops to MINUSMA (the UN peace operation in Mali), though the decision must still be approved by Parliament.□

Nigeria:

The U.S. [donated](#) 24 mine-resistant, ambush protected vehicles to the Nigerian military this week to aid the country in its fight against Boko Haram. The group, allegedly disguised in military uniforms, [launched](#) attacks between Monday and Wednesday in Borno State, killing 30. To many, the attack [demonstrated](#) the group's resilience, despite significant territorial losses and President Buhari's declaration at the end of 2015 that the group was "technically defeated."□

South Sudan:

Sudan and South Sudan are in [discussions](#) to re-open their borders, closed after Sudan accused the South of supporting rebel movements in South Kordofan in July 2011. The SPLM, the ruling party of South Sudan, [extended](#) invitations to the upcoming party convention to so-called "rival leaders"-- both the head of the SPLM-In Opposition, Riek Machar, and SPLM Secretary-General, Pagan Amum.□

Sri Lanka:□ □

The International Truth and Justice Project [released](#) a report announcing that Sri Lankan civilians, years after the close of the civil war, are still being abducted, tortured and sexually abused by security forces.[]

Sudan/Darfur: []

Minni Minawi, leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement, said that talks would [commence](#) in Paris between government representatives from Qatar and representatives of Sudan's armed movements. The objective of the meeting will not only be to discuss and exchange ideas on how to solve the problems in Darfur, but also to find an understanding and agreement on the roles for the countries and clarify what the requirements for peace will be. The African Union has also invited the Sudanese government to meet informally with two Darfur rebel groups in Ethiopia, though no date has yet been set. The latest efforts to revive these talks have been [delayed](#) due to disagreements over humanitarian, political, and security issues.[]

Syria:

The Syrian government has [decided](#) to allow aid to be delivered to the people in the besieged city of Madaya after reports surfaced that people were dying from starvation. The UN reported that it has credible accounts of such starvation and of people being killed while attempting to leave Madaya. The UN also [announced](#) that it has been granted access by rebel forces to the cities of Foah and Kefraya, which had been besieged by those forces for an even longer period. Currently, it is estimated that up to 4.5 million people live in not easily-accessible areas in Syria, with nearly 400,000 of those individuals in besieged areas without any access to aid.

Human Rights Watch [released](#) reports last month claiming that either Russian forces had dropped cluster bombs in Syria, provided Syrian forces with those bombs, or both. Although Russia has denied the allegations, the Conflict Intelligence Team, a Russian group of investigative bloggers, has published photos and videos which the group claims shows the cluster munitions at a base in Syria used by the Russian air force. The evidence also shows cluster bombs on Russian aircraft.

Schools are [closed](#) without any sign of re-opening in Douma in Syria after cluster bombs struck the city and a school on 13 December. The strikes were reportedly carried out by Russian planes. Save the Children estimates that it could cost up to 2 billion GBP to rebuild the damaged schools in Syria.

Around 12,000 Syrian refugees are [stranded](#) in a remote desert at the Jordanian border. Jordan, who is letting in between 50-100 refugees per day, stated that mass entry was unfeasible due to security concerns.

Fears have arisen that the tense diplomatic crisis between Saudi Arabia and Iran will [derail](#) the nascent Syrian peace process, due to resume in Geneva on 25 January. The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, is visiting both Saudi Arabia and Iran this week in an effort to allay tensions.

Yemen

Human Rights Watch reported that Saudi-led coalition airstrikes [dropped](#) cluster bombs in residential neighborhoods in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, on 6 January 2016. Although civilian casualties related to these attacks have yet to be determined, Human Rights Watch arms director Steve Goose notes that, 'The coalition's repeated use of cluster bombs in the middle of a crowded city suggests an intent to harm civilians, which is a war crime.'

The Saudi Arabian military [claimed](#) that it had intercepted a missile launched from a platform in Yemen, which the Saudis later destroyed. The Houthis currently possess some of Yemen's Soviet-era Scud missiles, and have already fired several into Saudi Arabia since the beginning

of the conflict.

Pro-government Yemeni forces have [seized](#) the Red Sea port of Maydi from the Al Houthi rebel group. The troops also “liberated” other previously Houthi controlled sections of the city of Taiz. In retaliation the Houthis bombed residential areas of the city indiscriminately. Since the escalation of the war in March with the beginning of the involvement of the Saudi-led coalition at least 5,884 people have been killed in Yemen according to the UN.

What else is new?

The ICRtoP [published](#) a summary of the Arria-formula meeting held by the UN Security Council on 14 December 2015.

ICRtoP Member Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies announced its annual [Professional Training Program](#) on the Prevention of Mass Atrocities from 1-3 June 2016. For more details, [click here](#).