

## ICRtoP Summary of Thematic Panel Discussion on RtoP within UN General Assembly

On Friday, 25 February 2016, the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) convened a high-level thematic panel discussion entitled From commitment to implementation: Ten years of the Responsibility to Protect to mark the 10th anniversary of adoption of the norm.

Find the ICRtoP's summary of the dialogue [here](#) . To read any of the statements made, click [here](#)

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### Catch up on developments in...

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## Burma/Myanmar:

A Burmese human right organization, Network For Human Rights Documentation- Burma (ND-Burma), released a report identifying [84](#) human rights violations between January and December 2015. The violations occurred both in areas of active armed conflict and those covered by ceasefires.

John Ging, director of operations at the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), called for an end to [discrimination](#) against displaced Muslims, particularly the Rohingya.

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## Burundi:

The African Union plans to deploy 100 human rights observers and 100 military observers to [Burundi](#)

. Members of the opposition have complained that 200 observers is insufficient to cover Burundi's territory.

The East African Community [named](#) former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa as the new mediator for talks on ending Burundi's crisis, a move welcomed by the opposition group National Council for the Restoration of the Arusha Accord (CNARED).

A UN team of experts began [investigating](#) human rights violations in Burundi. The experts will remain for one week and present their findings in late March. Meanwhile, authorities in Bujumbura unveiled a mass grave, which they claim contains the remains of government supporters.

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## Central African Republic:

According to LRA Crisis Tracker, the Lord's Resistance Army [kidnapped](#) over 200 people in eastern CAR this year, already nearly twice the amount that had been abducted last year.

In a press release, the ICRC noted that [hundreds](#) of thousands of displaced people in CAR are waiting to return home from displaced camps. Armed men number among the camp's residents, while accidental fires have wreaked havoc in three separate sites.

CAR's constitutional court [confirmed](#) Faustin-Archange Touadera's election as president.

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### **Democratic People's Republic of Korea:**

The DPRK's foreign minister [denied](#) any claims of human rights violations by his State, warning that his country would no longer work with the Human Rights Council. He also pointed towards gun violence in the United States of America and the handling of the refugee crisis by European States as "proof of partiality and double standards." During this session of the Council, Japan and the EU will likely present a resolution condemning the violations in North Korea.

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### **Democratic Republic of the Congo:**

On 29 February, attacks [killed](#) at least 12 in Mamabio, in eastern DRC. The Center of Study for the Promotion of Peace, Democracy and Human Rights, which monitors violence in the region, stated that attacks have been carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces, an Islamist group from Uganda.

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### **Gaza/West Bank:**

Israeli forces [arrested](#) 38 Palestinians on Monday for various reasons, including violent acts,

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ties to Hamas, border infiltration, and alleged arms smuggling through the Gaza sea.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is seeking the Attorney General's approval to [deport](#) relatives of West Bank terrorists to Gaza. In his letter to AG Avichai Mandelblit, Netanyahu stated, "I am convinced that such a measure will lead to a significant decrease in the number of terror attacks against the State of Israel, its citizens and its residents." A few days prior, Mandelblit rejected a similar query from the political party Likud, arguing that such an explosion is a violation of both Israeli and international law.

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## **Iraq:**

At least 27 people were [killed](#) on Monday at the funeral of a Shi'ite military commander's relative in Diyala, when a suicide bomber detonated his vest. 55 more people were wounded. This follows twin-set of market place [bombings](#) which took place in Baghdad on Sunday, killing 53 and injuring 117. These events are the deadliest of the year thus far in Iraq.

The U.S. military is [planning](#) for the next phase of the battle against ISIL, which is re-taking Mosul. The U.S. claims to have isolated the city and says that the capture of Shaddadi, Syria last week had cut the last significant lines of communication between Mosul and ISIL's Syrian capital of Raqqa.

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## **Libya:**

In a briefing to the UN Security Council, the head of UNSMIL, [noted](#) that Libya risks division and collapse if it does not move ahead now. After a minority of parliamentarians opposed a vote on a new list of candidates for a cabinet on 22 February, Kobler vowed to reconvene the Libyan Political Dialogue. He further noted that the "overwhelming majority" of the Libyan people are in favor of the Libyan Political Agreement.

A new UNSMIL report [stated](#) that shelling, gun shots, explosive remnants of war, and aerial bombardments had killed 28 and injured 38 others since January.

The U.S. announced that it was [prepared](#) to expand military operations against ISIL in Libya, but only after Libyans agree on a national unity government.

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### **Mali:**

Ahmad al-Faqi al-Mahdi, a former member of Ansar-Dine, stands [accused](#) of causing irreparable damage to Africa's cultural heritage by destroying ancient shrines in Timbuktu during the conflict in 2012 in Mali. According to prosecutors at the International Criminal Court (ICC), the former trainee teacher and Islamic militant had "led and personally taken part in the attacks on nine mausoleums and mosques in the city with pick-axes and crowbars." Although trying cultural destruction as a crime is established in past jurisprudence in international law, this case is the first to be [trie](#)  
[d](#) addressing it as a heinous crime, but the prosecutor, Ms. Bensouda, does not think this will be the last.

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### **Nigeria:**

On 2 March, 76 emaciated-looking people associated with the Boko Haram group, including women and children, [surrendered](#) in Gwoza, a town near Maiduguri in northeastern Nigeria. The food shortages are likely a result of the successful choking of Boko Haram supply chains by the Nigerian military in their fight to suppress the insurgency under President Muhammadu Buhari.

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### **South Sudan:**

A UN source anonymously [claimed](#) that approximately 50,000 may have been killed since the

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start of the civil war. The source further estimated that around 2.2 million had been displaced.

South Sudan [missed](#) another deadline in implementing the August peace deal, as rebel troops under former vice-president Machar signaled that they would not arrive in Juba on Tuesday as planned. The rebels announced that the government had not designated cantonment areas or food and medical care facilities for their troops. The government, meanwhile, claims that the delay is due to the rebels' failure to submit their names to the troika, who are responsible for their transportation to Juba.

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### **Sudan/Darfur:**

Over 10,000 people living in the [Kalma](#) camp for the displaced protested on Tuesday, demanding an end to the six-month-long pause in food aid delivery to the camp. The displaced persons arriving at Kalma from 2013 to 2014 were not registered by the camp and therefore never added to the permanent food subsidy lists of the humanitarian organizations operating in the area. The Secretary General of the camp appealed to relief organizations, asking them "to act immediately to save people."

In the meantime, the Sudanese [Ministry](#) of Foreign Affairs has dismissed reports by the UN concerning the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have fled their homes since 15 January, when the conflict in Jebel Marra escalated. UN OCHA has stated that 90,000 have been displaced since 21 February due to the continued [conflict](#) between the Sudanese army and the rebel opposition, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLA). The Ministry described that figure as inaccurate and claimed that government authorities have provided aid to the displaced, who have since returned to their villages.

The Sudanese military has meanwhile claimed control over all areas north of [Jebel](#) Marra.

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### **Syria:**

Hours [prior](#) to the start of the ceasefire in Syria last Saturday, reports surfaced claiming that over 100 airstrikes had been conducted in Northern Aleppo. Amnesty International, for its part, [accused](#)

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the Russian and Syrian government of deliberately and systematically targeting health facilities in Aleppo over the past 12 weeks. The human rights organization claimed to have evidence that these attacks were an attempt by government forces to gain ground before the cessation of hostilities took effect.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that there has been 31 violations of the ceasefire in 3 days. Zakharova [said](#) the exact number was provided by the U.S. and did not specify which parties have contributed to the offences. U.S. Secretary of State John [Kerry](#) announced that all alleged violations of the ceasefire would be investigated and added that both the U.S. and Russia are working on a mechanism to ensure airstrikes only target UN-designated terrorist organizations.

Syrian President Bashar al- [Assad](#) declared on Tuesday that his government would “do its part” to ensure the success of the ceasefire. He has also offered amnesty to the opposition if they agree to disarm. Meanwhile, the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), a group representing the opposition, cautioned that ceasefire violations would further threaten the possibility of finding a peaceful, political solution to the five-year war.

UN [Envoy](#) for Syria Staffan de Mistura stated that the U.S.-Russia cessation of hostilities plan is reportedly holding up despite the many setbacks. Mistura noted that the ceasefire has greatly reduced violence in Syria and created hope for the resumption of the peace talks in Geneva next week. The truce is further expected to assist in making progress with the delivery of aid to remote and besieged areas.

In the meantime, [Israel](#) accused the Syrian government on Tuesday of using chemical weapons against civilians during the ceasefire.

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## Yemen:

An airstrike on 27 February on Khaleq market [killed](#) 32 civilians and injured at least 41, making the death toll the highest from a single bombing since September 2015.

President Hadi [declared](#) that Yemen’s army and popular resistance forces have liberated more than 85% of Yemeni territories from control of the Houthis. The president was confident that his forces would soon regain control of Sanaa as well.

[Amnesty International](#) urged all states to impose an arms embargo on all warring parties in Yemen.

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## What else is new?

The ICRtoP [co-signed](#) a statement along with around 60 other domestic and international groups asking US lawmakers to pass the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act in support of mass atrocity prevention. The passing of the legislation would authorize "critical tools that are needed to prevent violent conflict and save lives" such as the Atrocity Prevention Board and the Complex Crises Fund, require training for Foreign Service Officers in prevention, and more. Read the full statement with signatories [here](#) .

ICRtoP Member Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation is launching the 2015 Annual Report of the Technical Secretariat of the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention on 8 March. RSVP to [diana.mantilla@auschwitzinstitute.org](mailto:diana.mantilla@auschwitzinstitute.org) by March 4.

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Above photo: General Assembly Holds Panel Discussion on Responsibility to Protect. (UN Photo/Manuel Elias.)