

Going in Depth On: RtoP included once again on the UN General Assembly Agenda

On Friday, 21 September 2018, UN Member States voted to adopt the agenda for 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. This included a supplementary item entitled “the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” with a vote of 93 States in favor, 16 against, and 17 abstentions.

With this move forward, the UN General Assembly will once again hold a formal debate on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP), ensuring States have the opportunity to further consider the norm and the work of the UN Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and RtoP, as compared to the informal, interactive dialogue format of previous years. As the 2018 formal debate on RtoP on 25 June and 2 July clearly showed, formal debates allow more time for interventions, increasing the opportunities for increased discussion and a more involved dialogue on the topic, and also provide an opportunity for formal, on-the-record statements and an exchange of ideas and knowledge on preventing atrocities.

The ICRtoP and the [Global Centre on the Responsibility to Protect \(GCR2P\)](#) have worked in close coordination in the last weeks to advocate for the inclusion of RtoP on the formal agenda of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly. We welcome this great step forward in the continuation of discussion on RtoP at the United Nations.

What We've Been Watching:

Asia Pacific: [Youth Summit on Atrocity Prevention](#) (Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect)

ICRtoP Steering Group and Coalition member, the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) recently held a conference to train the next generation of leaders in atrocity prevention and RtoP principles. As a result participants "committed to establishing a 'regional network of youth leaders for atrocity prevention,' and called for the appointment of a youth focal point in each country within the region to advocate for atrocity prevention and R2P at the local level." The Youth Summit combines two top priorities of UNSG Guterres: conflict and atrocity

prevention and youth involvement.

Gender and Crimes Against Humanity: [Will the new crimes against humanity treaty protect women and LGBTI persons?](#) (Open Democracy)

An Op-Ed from Open Democracy argues that the use of an outdated definition of “gender” may not protect all individuals in the new UN draft treaty on Crimes Against Humanity. The treaty language currently matches that in the Rome Statute, which refers to gender in a binary aspect, that individuals are either “male or female.” While scholars, lawyers, and human rights officials at the UN and ICC prosecutors office understand “gender” to be inclusive, there are concerns that some may take advantage of the outdated language, creating a gap in the protection of sexual and gender identity minorities.

Yemen: [Human Rights Council Should Stand Firm on Yemen](#) (Human Rights Watch)

Coalition member, Human Rights Watch (HRW) urges the UN Human Rights Council to renew the Group of Experts’ mandate to investigate war crimes in the country. HRW [documented](#) numerous abuses committed by Houthi rebel forces including arbitrary detention, taking hostages, enforced disappearances, and torture. HRW also found evidence of detainees being refused medical service. The findings, severity, and extent of the crimes no doubt inform the organization’s platform in continuing to advocate for accountability of all parties in Yemen.

But Also Don’t Miss:

Burma: [UK and France Host High-Level Event on the Rohingya Crisis](#)

On Monday, the UK and France conducted a meeting on the Rohingya crisis in Burma, calling for urgent action of the international community, access of the UNDP and the UNHCR in the most severely affected regions, and the implementation of the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations.

Burma: [UN Human Rights Council Backs Atrocity Victims](#)

The UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution for the creation of a mechanism to prepare cases for prosecution in Burma.

Cameroon: [Can Elections Be Held in the Restive Anglophone Regions?](#)

Thousands continue to flee their homes in the Anglophone regions causing concern over the legitimacy of the upcoming Presidential election, with Presidential Candidate Joshua Osih acknowledging, "the problem is the marginalization and injustices that lead to that secession. The secession will not necessarily solve that problem."

DRC: [Human rights situation and the activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

The UN Human Rights Council was briefed on the situation in the DRC, with the importance of OHCHR and MONUSCO working together on early warning and early response with UN Peacekeeping.

The Gambia: [A Conversation on Truth and Reconciliation in The Gambia](#)

Decades after atrocity crimes were committed, seeking accountability is still important to Gambians looking to build an inclusive and resilient society.

Libya: [Libya ceasefire halts month-long battle in Tripoli](#)

The government announced another ceasefire agreement with armed groups, halting the latest bout of violence that displaced an estimated 25,000 from their homes over the past month.

South Sudan: [A new report estimates that more than 380,000 people have died in South Sudan's civil war](#)

A US Department of State and US Institute for Peace jointly-commissioned study estimates the death toll in South Sudan's conflict to be upwards of 382,000, placing the scale of the conflict on par with that of Syria.

Venezuela: [An Alternative for Venezuela: the International Criminal Court](#)

Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, and Canada have asked the ICC to open an investigation into Crimes Against Humanity in Venezuela. This is the first time that States are collectively referring a situation in another country for an ICC investigation.

Yemen: [Civilian deaths in Yemen up by 164% as United States recertifies support for the war](#)

The International Rescue Committee reported that civilians continue to suffer in the Yemeni conflict, with death rates increasing 164% over the summer months.

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