

Human Rights Council Hosts Side-event on the Responsibility to Protect 19 June 2012

On 19 June 2012, the Permanent Missions of Australia, Hungary, Nigeria, Thailand, and Uruguay to the United Nations in Geneva organized a side-event in the Human Rights Council to discuss the Council's role in implementing the human rights dimension of the responsibility to protect. The event focused specifically on the Council's capacity to operationalize of the first two pillars of RtoP, namely, the protection responsibilities of the state; and the commitment of the international community to provide assistance to states in fulfilling their protection obligations through capacity building and assistance. Participants also touched on best practices and current initiatives in the prevention of mass atrocities. The event included an expert panel, featuring General Martin Luther Agwai, Deputy Military Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Peacekeeping Operations; H.E. Mr. José Luis Cancela, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations in New York; Edward Luck, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect; H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and past-President of the Human Rights Council, and Dr Csaba Törő, Senior research fellow, Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. Gareth Evans, former Australian Foreign Secretary, moderated the panel and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, participated via a video message. Following the panel, representatives from permanent missions and civil society were invited to give informal remarks. The side-event was the first occasion during which members of the Human Rights Council were invited to discuss the Responsibility to Protect in Geneva, and represented an important step in promoting RtoP advocacy as well as implementation in the Council. William Pace, Executive-Director of the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy, a Steering Committee Member of the ICRtoP, attended and participated in the event on behalf of the Coalition. Mr. Pace responded to the experts' presentations and, highlighting the importance of the side-event in a statement distributed to participants, strongly supported "the initiative of the Human Rights Council to devote increased attention to the Responsibility to Protect and to assess its capacity to assist states in protecting their populations from egregious threats to humanity." Mr. Pace's statement also reminded that, "The Human Rights Council is a key institution for the implementation of this new norm, serving both as a forum for rapid consideration of potential threats, and can authorize a variety of preventive tools to assist Member States in protecting populations."

See the

[summary](#)

of the event from the United Nations Association in the United Kingdom, whose Peace and Security Programmes Coordinator, James Kearney, attended the meeting.

ICRtoP will collect the statements given by expert panelists during the event. Thus far, we encourage you to view the remarks by:

[Navi Pillay](#)

, UN High Commissioner on Human Rights

[Gareth Evans](#)

, former Foreign Minister of Australia and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group, Moderator

Please also view the following statements distributed from the floor by civil society:

[William Pace](#)

, International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect

[Naomi Kikoler](#)

, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect