

Report of the Task Force: The EU and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities: An Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses 4 March 2013

The [Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities](#) established the [Task Force on the EU Prevention of Mass Atrocities](#) in late 2011 to review the capabilities of the European Union to respond to threats of mass atrocities and publish a report on the findings. The aim of the review was to “support ongoing activities of the European Union and its Member States regarding the implementation of the responsibility to protect, explore the potentials for more coherence and better cooperation, and develop practical policy recommendations.” The Task Force is chaired by Professor Christoph O. Meyer (King’s College London) and Professor Karen E. Smith (London School of Economics) and made up of European academics, experts and practitioners. The Report of the Task Force, entitled

“[The EU and the Prevention of Mass Atrocities: An Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses](#)”, was launched on 4 March 2013, and the Budapest Centre has planned several events in European cities, in partnership with other NGOs and academic institutions, to present the findings of the report in the coming weeks. See below to access the report and read more about upcoming events.□

(...) The EU has considerable strengths in each of the three broad areas of warning, prevention and response. At the same time, the Task Force has identified four core problems impeding the ability of the EU and its member states to prevent mass atrocities:

- Mass atrocity prevention is rarely mentioned in core EU documents and by EU actors, despite EU commitments to protect and promote human rights and despite its support for R2P.
- Integrating a preventative mindset into EU foreign policy-making is a challenge, given the dominant focus on crisis management, especially within the Council.
- Efforts to strengthen conflict prevention and human rights policies need to include a distinct mass atrocity lens in intelligence, policy-making and planning capacities.
- There are problems of coordination within the EU, as well as an underused potential for collaboration with local and international partners.

To address these four core problems and subsidiary shortcomings identified in the chapters below, the Task Force puts forward the following recommendations:

1. The EU should make explicit its commitment to preventing mass atrocities and thus match the strong normative commitment it has made to promoting human rights and preventing conflict.
2. The EU should cultivate expertise in the area of mass atrocity prevention and warning to enable it to prioritise effectively and focus on the countries and regions where these are most needed.
3. The EU's warning-response system should be strengthened to improve early action against long and short-term mass atrocity risks.
4. The EU should build on its strengths in structural and direct prevention by employing a mass atrocity lens across the spectrum of relevant activities, including its trade and development policies.
5. The EU's capabilities to react quickly to mass atrocities should be improved by better contingency planning for situations of imminent and/or ongoing mass atrocities which have not been identified earlier or where structural prevention has failed.
6. The EU should cooperate more closely with other actors to prevent mass atrocities. (...)

Upcoming events: Presentation of Task Force Report at the European Parliament in Brussels, at United Nations Headquarters in Geneva, and at the London School of Economics

On 7 March 2013, the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities will present the findings of the Report of the Task Force to the European Parliament during an event in Brussels, Belgium, entitled “

[Remembering in the Future: Policies and practices of remembrance to prevent mass atrocities](#)”. In addition to the EU Task Force for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities, participants will include Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, as well as representatives of the European Parliament, European Commission, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the United Nations.

The following day, the Permanent Missions of Ethiopia, Hungary, and the United States and the Delegation of the European Union, in cooperation with the Budapest Centre, will host a second launch, entitled “

[Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Regional Perspectives](#)”, at the Palais des Nations at UN Headquarters in Geneva.

The event will feature a panel discussion with representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Canada (as Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Task Force), Nigeria, and the United States focusing on political challenges for

capacity-building and promoting international cooperation in mass atrocities prevention.

On 26 March, the Report will be presented during a public lecture of the London School of Economics (LSE) Department of International Relations entitled, “

[Prevention of Mass Atrocities: Can the EU do Better?](#)

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The event will be chaired by Professor Karen E. Smith (LSE), one of the co-Chairs of the Task Force, and feature a panel discussion with James Kearney (UN Association of the UK) and Dr. James Smith (The Aegis Trust).

See the full report

[here](#)

See details on the respective events

[here](#)

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