

## Recent seminar: the link between mediation and the Responsibility to Protect is evident Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland March 2013

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The Responsibility to Protect is a topical theme in international politics. It refers to the responsibility and role of individual States and the international community in civilian protection, crisis prevention and settlement efforts. The role of mediation in implementing the Responsibility to Protect and in crisis prevention was discussed at a seminar organised by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Mediation has been one of the priorities of Finland's foreign policy for some years. The Responsibility to Protect, in turn, is an emergent concept in international politics that applies to the collective responsibility of states and the international community to protect civilians from the worst international crimes, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

"The link between mediation and the Responsibility to Protect is a natural one, as one of the immediate objectives of mediation is to prevent potential conflict situations from escalating into violence and further into crimes under the Responsibility to Protect," Foreign Minister **Erkki Tuomioja** stated in his opening remarks at the seminar "Preventive, Responsive, and Effective? The Role of Mediation in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect", organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

The keynote speaker, Professor

### **Ed Luck**

, the UN Secretary-General's former Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, stated that the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect is not only a question of using military force; instead he stressed the central importance both of the diplomatic means referred to in Chapter VI of the UN Charter and of mediation. In his view, especially the link between mediation and the Responsibility to Protect is an interesting idea that has not yet been raised adequately in the international debate.

### **Tuija Talvitie**

, Executive Director of Crisis Management Initiative, reminded those present of the "invisible achievements" of mediation in situations that are particularly sensitive to deteriorate into serious international crimes. For example, the elections held in unstable conditions in Sierra Leone in 2012, took place without violence.

Professor

### **Peter Wallensteen**

of Uppsala University examined the change in nature of conflicts during recent decades from conflicts between states to internal conflicts within states. He also presented statistics on the effects of mediation with regard to the recurrence violence in conflict resolution situations. The

recurrence of conflicts that have ended in a negotiated settlement has declined significantly since the 1980s whereas the percentage of recurrence for conflicts that have ended with the victory of one party has increased correspondingly.

Member of Parliament **Pekka Haavisto**, who has handled UN and EU tasks in various crisis regions such as Sudan and the Horn of Africa, emphasised the importance of recognising early signals so that conflicts can be checked in time. (...)

**Read more about the**

[event](#)

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[speech by Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja](#)

, entitled, “The Role of Mediation in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect”. □