

24 November 2008

Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society

Web: www.responsibilitytoprotect

E-mail: info@responsibilitytoprotect.org

In this issue:

I. Inter-Parliamentary Union hold hearing at UN; session on R2P

1. INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION HEARING ON EFFECTIVE PEACEKEEPING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

II. R2P and DRC

1. THE WASHINGTON POST/N AFRICAN CRISIS FOR OBAMA
2. THE BOSTON GLOBE/ONGOS CATASTROPHE
3. THE ECONOMIST--PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE: WHAT CONGO MEANS FOR OBAMA
4. GENOCIDE WARNING ON THE CONGO/ORDS FROM JAN EGELAND AND JEAN-MARIE GUEHENNO

III. Civil Society Initiatives on DRC and Darfur

1. A PLEA FROM 44 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN NORTH KIVU, DRC
2. AU CITIZENS/FRICAN AND EU MINISTERS MUST ACT IN DRC AND DARFUR

IV. R2P in the News

1. NYT MAGAZINE/ELCOME TO MY WORLD, BARACK (INTERVIEW WITH CONDOLEEZA RICE)
2. KISHORE MAHBUBANI/HE WEST MUST LEARN TO LISTEN
3. IMPORTANCE OF R2P OUTLINED AT DUBLIN CONFERENCE

V. R2P and Burma

1. CSW URGES UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO PRIORITIZE HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

I. Inter-Parliamentary Union hold hearing at UN; session on R2P

1. United Nations: Inter-Parliamentary Union Opens 2008 Hearings At Headquarters On Theme: Effective Peacekeeping and Conflict Prevention

M2 PressWIRE

21 November 2008

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) opened a two-day hearing at United Nations Headquarters this morning on maintaining peace and preventing conflicts, which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said was the primary mission assigned the Organization by its founders some 63 years ago.

The 2008 Parliamentary Hearing "Towards Effective Peacekeeping and the Prevention of Conflict: Delivering on our Commitments" was jointly organized by the IPU and the Office of the

President of the General Assembly. The two themes of the session's first day were on the concept of "**the responsibility to protect**", and sexual violence against women and children during times of conflict, as well as the United Nations' role in that regard. The hearing wraps up tomorrow with a consideration of ways to integrate the human security approach into the work of the United Nations, as well as an examination of the key challenges facing the world body's peacekeeping operations. ()

During the morning session on "**the responsibility to protect**", the representative of Rwanda contrasted the international community's passivity in the face of the 1994 genocide of Tutsis, with its move to action during recent troubles in Kenya. Kenya's crisis had been managed by the region and the United Nations. He noted: "There was one coordinated intervention to stabilize the situation. Mediation prevented the situation from perhaps degenerating into crimes against humanity and genocide."

Concerning prevention, he insisted on the role of education for populations, teaching them to respect the life of others. That must begin in primary school, and also involve the army; an army that must respect human rights, he recommended. History must not be an eternal beginning, and we must, through it, learn," he concluded, recalling that "never again" had been said following the Holocaust.

For her part, Nicola Reindorp, Director of Advocacy for the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, citing the examples of Iraq or Georgia, cautioned against the risk that States would unduly invoke the **responsibility to protect** a population to justify interventions that, in fact, only served their own interests.

Conversely, the representative of the French Parliament cautioned against an interpretation that was too restrictive or rigid. Such a view would risk that an intervention, however necessary, would take place too late -- after having verified that a State was not dealing with its obligations or was incapable of protecting its citizens -- when there remained, in fact, only one thing left to do: "count cadavers". ()

Source: Unavailable

UN Press release: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/pa4.doc.htm>

II. R2P and DRC

1. An African Crisis for Obama

The Washington Post

Jim Hoagland

16 November 2008

While world leaders gathered here to unleash soothing words on the financial tsunami swamping their economies, the daring "**responsibility to protect**" doctrine adopted by U.N. members three years ago was being buried in the killing fields of eastern Congo. ()

In three years, "never again" has become "sorry about that." Humanitarian intervention --

proudly proclaimed as a universal mission by Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and other Third Way leaders and eventually adopted at the 2005 U.N. summit -- has fallen into serious disrepair. The slaughter, looting and forced removal of defenseless Congolese civilians around the city of Goma this month -- even though they were theoretically under the protection of 17,000 U.N. peacekeepers -- are grim testimony to the consequences of making righteous-sounding promises without thinking enough about the means to carry them out. The money men and women of the Group of 20 should take note.

So should the incoming Obama administration, which will have to fashion a new basis for the use of force abroad for a Democratic Party that has been divided by that issue since the Vietnam War. The responsibility of the world's nations to act together to protect citizens against massive human rights abuses by their own governments was shaped by Clinton, Blair and Kofi Annan out of the sickening failure to prevent genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the successful military campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo later in the decade.

Humanitarian intervention provided Democrats with a unifying, and comfortable, middle ground from which to support military action abroad. Even U.S. cities, including Barack Obama's own Chicago, have adopted resolutions demanding that the responsibility to protect -- known to its advocates as **R2P** -- be made a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. ()

Reams of pious words have been written or uttered, including by Obama, about the need to do something to halt the brutal ethnic conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan. But the failure of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and other regional organizations to intervene effectively there and now in eastern Congo may be the final nail in the coffin of **R2P**. The civilians around Goma have been effectively abandoned by Congo's dysfunctional national army, which more often victimizes them than protects them. They are caught between this feckless force and the far more efficient, better-armed and absolutely ruthless rebel movement led by Laurent Nkunda, who declared on BBC television last week that he intends to overthrow President Joseph Kabila. ()

"What is happening in Goma is very damaging for the **responsibility to protect**. It could be a turning point," says Bernard Kouchner, France's foreign minister and one of the doctrine's founders through his own humanitarian work. "We are witnessing the consequences of the arrival of nationalism on a continental level." () He does find one ray of hope -- the election of Obama, who has a direct family connection to Africa and promises a fresh start in U.S. foreign policy. "This could change everything," Kouchner said, "and not only for Africa. You Americans have just held a world election. President Obama should not wait to show what that means."

Source: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/14/AR2008111403059.html>

2. Congos Catastrophe
The Boston Globe
16 November 2008

Caught up in a spasmodic civil war, civilians in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of

Congo are suffering a humanitarian catastrophe. Some 250,000 have been driven from their homes. The displaced as well as those who stayed in their villages are preyed upon by rebel, foreign, and government soldiers alike. And the victims receive no protection from the undermanned United Nations peacekeepers - 17,000 in the entire country, just 5,400 in the east.

This is a many-sided conflict over ethnic resentments, control of rich mineral resources, and the pure pursuit of power. Its antecedents are in the Rwandan genocide of 1994, when a Hutu supremacist regime in Rwanda murdered an estimated 800,000 Tutsis. After the Tutsis' Patriotic Front overthrew the genocidal Hutu regime, many Hutu fighters fled into eastern Congo.

Their presence there ignited a war that lasted from 1998 to 2003, drawing in troops from several African countries, including Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Angola. And now the unextinguished members of that conflict have flared up into another conflagration. ()

An even sadder spectacle is the abject failure of the UN mission to Congo. Just this week, the Security Council postponed until Nov. 26 a request by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon for 3,000 more peacekeepers. This refusal to save lives and to act against the raping of women and girls in eastern Congo makes a mockery of the UN's avowed **responsibility to protect** civilians who are threatened by their own government.

Source: http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2008/11/16/congos_catastrophe/

3. Protecting the vulnerable: What Congo means for Obama
The Economist
13 November 2008

IN AMERICA this has been a week for the drawing up of lists of the virtues of Barack Obama, lists of big names for his administration, lists of big tasks for his bulging in-tray. But in Congo this week a million hungry and terrified refugees are in desperate need of food and protection. The two things are connected, in a way that may surprise, and dismay, Mr Obama's admirers. If he is to prove worthy of the near-universal exaltation with which his election has been greeted, he has to prepare America and the world for the possibility of further American military interventions overseas. ()

What should the world's strongest and (still) richest country do when famine or conflict strike places whose own governments will not or cannot help, where America has no direct interest, but where averting a humanitarian disaster may require military intervention?

The answers of previous presidents have depended on temperament and circumstance. George Bush senior sent marines to feed Somalia. Bill Clinton used force to stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo but not in Rwanda, where Hutus killed close to 800,000 Tutsis. The junior Bush decided against intervention in Darfur, even though his own administration called the ethnic cleansing there a genocide and the killing goes on. ()

For several years The Economist has repeated like a stuck gramophone needle a call for intervention in Darfur, but we acknowledge the law of unintended consequences. In all such cases, the use of force should be the very last resort. And yet a strong moral case remains for forceful outside intervention in desperate cases. Would the world still do nothing if it had a second chance to avert genocide in Rwanda? And the practical case is stronger than the failures suggest. From the Balkans to Liberia to Sierra Leone to Kosovo, armed intervention has, on balance, helped to end or forestall catastrophes. ()

Two jobs for a new president

As for Mr Obama, he has a chance to restore Americas moral leadership. That is not something he should do by scouring the world in search of new monsters to slay. Nor, though, can a war-weary America turn its back on people threatened by ethnic cleansing or genocide. Since 2005 the UN has accepted a **responsibility to protect** people in such cases, so this is not a burden for America alone. But since the UN has no army, and no other countries have the military resources America boasts, there may be times when only the superpower can move soldiers swiftly where they are needed.

Should that call come, Mr. Obama will need the courage to respond, notwithstanding Americans fatigue. In extremis, if the danger is great and veto-wielding members of the Security Council block the way, he and others might have to act without the Security Councils blessing, as NATO did in Kosovo. Far better would be an early effort by Mr. Obama to reach agreement on the rules to apply and forces to earmark so that the UN can actually exercise its collective **responsibility to protect**

. That will be hard, but Mr Bush was actively hostile to such work. How fitting if the next president made possible a genuinely global response to the next Rwanda, Congo or Darfur.

Source: http://www.economist.com/opinion/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12601948

4. Genocide Warning on Congo

The World Today

Emma Alberici

24 November 2008

Below is a transcript of a report by journalists Emma Alberici and Eleanor Hall on the situation in the Congo, along with questions asked to Jan Egelend, secretary of Humanitarian Affairs, and Jean-Marie Guehenno, the UN's former Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations.

ELEANOR HALL: The leader of Congo's Tutsi rebels staged his first public rally over the weekend in newly conquered territory. Laurent Nkunda told the crowd not to be afraid. But two former high ranking United Nations officials are warning that the conditions look frighteningly similar to those before the Rwanda genocide in 1994. They're calling on the British Government to support a deployment of elite European forces to protect the Congolese population. As Europe correspondent Emma Alberici reports.

EMMA ALBERICI: The United Nations peacekeeping effort in Congo is already its biggest force in the world. They've approved the deployment of 3,000 more troops to the troubled central

African state. But now two former United Nations chiefs are questioning whether they will be given the strength and resources to protect the civilian population. Jan Egeland, the former UN emergency relief co-ordinator, has called the Congo's continuing violence the world's worst humanitarian disaster. He has called on the European Union to take the lead role in ensuring a swift end to the bloodshed.

JAN EGELAND: And everybody speaks about the biggest UN force in the world in the Congo. There are 17,000 people there - one fourth of the Western force in Afghanistan with a tenth of the equipment in a much bigger place. The response is inadequate and Europe has to show that it was no joke when Europe solemnly swore in the UN General Assembly that there was a **responsibility to protect** and there should be no more Rwandas.

EMMA ALBERICI: Many observers say the current conflict owes its origins to the Rwandan genocide. The mass murder of General Nkunda's fellow Tutsis by Hutu militias allows him to claim he is defending a minority. The peace-keeping force now in east Congo had its demands for reinforcements met but the complaints from commanders are the same as those voiced in 1994 about not being able to open fire early enough to stop killings. () Jean-Marie Guehenno is the UN's ex-peacekeeping chief. He believes that the extra UN troops being sent to the Congo need to be elite soldiers from Europe.

JEAN-MARIE GUEHENNO: That would have a big deterrent effect. Because the troops, they really play two roles: they have their operational role but they also are a political signal. And if the Europeans showed that they are ready to go, that would be a very powerful signal. When you think of what happened during the election where there was a very small, very, very small European deployment in Congo, but it had a huge psychological impact because there was that sense that the rest of the world was watching. That deterrent effect was enormous. ()

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/cgi-bin/common/printfriendly.pl?http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2008/s2428031.htm>

III. Civil Society Initiatives on DRC and Darfur

1. A Plea from Local Organizations and Civil Society in North Kivu
19 November 2008
Goma, DRC

The following letter was signed by 44 NGOs in North Kivu, DRC, to the UN Security Council.

As the representatives of Congolese non-governmental organizations in North Kivu, we come before your authority to request an immediate reinforcement of peacekeeping forces for the Democratic Republic of Congo, reinforcements that would be capable of protecting us. This would help to prevent the atrocities that continue to be committed against civilians on an ever greater scale here in North Kivu, on the border of Rwanda and Uganda.

This letter presents a sad, cynical, tragic and very frustrating situation, which reveals the misery in which the population of North Kivu are immersed. We are anxious, afraid and utterly traumatised by the constant insecurity in which we live. We don't know which saint to pray to; we are condemned to death by all this violence and displacement. We have been abandoned. Who will protect us? Who will help us? The United Nations says that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, but our dignity and our rights are violated every day with hardly a cry of protest. Do we not deserve protection? Are we not equal to others?

Since August 28, fighting has intensified in many areas, causing deaths, rapes, lootings, forced recruitment and further displacements of civilian populations. The population has thus been immersed in unspeakable suffering. In the last few days, fighting has drawn closer to large populated areas, such as the town of Goma. Fighting has also invaded and torn apart the region of Rutshuru, particularly in the town of Kiwanja, where hundreds of civilian deaths have now been recorded.

The suffering has gone on too long for the population of North Kivu. It is time for the government and the international community to protect the civilians who have fallen victim to the atrocities of the conflict.

We are aware that during several high-level visits to eastern Congo this year, you and your representatives heard many firsthand testimonies which could not have left you indifferent to the tragedy facing the population of our region of the DRC. ()

As the conquering army of Laurent Nkunda gradually takes new areas, the Congolese army takes flight. As they flee, they end up killing, pillaging, raping and stealing, leaving chaos and total disorder in their wake. This is the case in Goma, where more than 20 civilians were killed, several women were raped, and valuable goods were stolen on October 29. Since last week, the towns of Kanyabayonga, Kirumba and Kayna have been invaded in almost the same way as Goma by FARDC soldiers fleeing the fighting.

Forced recruitment has also intensified. In several areas of Rutshuru and Masisi, armed groups, the CNDP in particular, go from door to door to force young boys and adults - aged between 14 and 40 - to go to the front, without any prior military training. Last week, reports documented the recruitment by force of hundreds of civilians by the CNDP, especially in Kitchanga, Kiwanja, Rutshuru and Rubare.

In all of these cases, we, the civilian population, have been held hostage and caught between many lines of fire. Women are among the first victims. Sexual violence has become dramatically worse since the end of August, as military forces and armed groups have reduced women to a battlefield.

MONUC has fallen short of fulfilling its mandate to protect civilians, openly and publicly, but no concrete action has been taken. Powerless, MONUC witnesses all the atrocities committed by the armed forces and groups. At times, its interventions are delayed, if not ineffective. We can therefore no longer continue to rely on MONUC to protect us. The case of Kiwanja, where civilians are massacred daily near the MONUC base, is a striking example.

We ask you urgently to assist us at this most difficult time. It is absolutely clear to everyone that we need reinforcements of troops capable of protecting civilians effectively and efficiently, with

the means to deal with any kind of attacks. This must be done quickly.

We therefore urge you to:

- o Immediately send EU troops which can deploy quickly to provide protection and security for civilians as you did for our brothers and sisters in Bunia, Ituri, in June 2003.
- o Increase the number of troops for MONUC and provide them with a mandate that allows them to sufficiently protect civilians and to do so as their top priority.

Your Excellencies, you must save our lives now; otherwise it will be too late.

Source: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/11/19/plea-local-organizations-and-civil-society-north-kivu>

2. African and EU Ministers Must Act in DRC and Darfur

AU Citizens

20 November 2008

Ethiopia-Africa-EU Troika

As the 11th Africa EU Ministerial Troika is gathering in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital on Thursday, leading African civil society organisations have urged the ministers and their governments to act urgently in investing more resources and using all leverages in order to tackle the ongoing killing of civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and to alleviate the suffering of Darfurians.

As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, the international community must bring pressure on all the parties to the conflict to bring a definitive end to hostilities, to provide immediate protection to civilians and to ensure immediate access for impartial humanitarian organizations to deliver life-saving assistance, said a joint statement by leading African CSOs.

The AU-EU ministers will convene a joint ministerial meeting Thursday afternoon on current affairs of the continent and Africa-EU relationship.

It is time for a change in pace in the world's political engagement with the crisis in eastern DRC. It is not acceptable for human suffering to continue on this scale with a complete breakdown in the existing political processes, said: Elijah Munyuki, Chief Executive Officer of the SADC Lawyers Association.

They are lobbying at the ongoing sixth African Development Forum (ADF) being held here in Addis Ababa since on Wednesday.

A zero-tolerance position must be applied on all ceasefire violations as well as human rights abuses by any of the parties, said Mr. Allioune Tine, Executive Director of Rencontre Africaine des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO) a leading continental human rights network based in Dakar, Senegal.

The suffering has gone on too long for the population of North Kivu. The international community

must honour its **responsibility to protect** civilians before DRC falls back into another general war, said Roselyn Musa, Senior Advocacy Officer of the African Womens Development and Communication Network (FEMNET).

With regard to the Darfur crisis, the CSOs said that there are 2.7 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 4.7 million conflict-affected people in need of humanitarian assistance which, humanitarian agencies are finding it harder than ever to provide. Only 65% of the affected population are now accessible by humanitarian agencies, according to the CSOs.

While we welcome the government of Sudan's recently announced ceasefire, there are already reports that they broke it less than 48 hours later by conducting new bombing and attacks. The international community must ensure that it is adhered to and monitored. Previous ceasefire announcements have quickly fallen apart, said Dismas Nkunda, Chair of Darfur Consortium and Co-Director of the International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI). unilateral ceasefire cannot resolve the Darfur crisis more pressure must also be put on the many different rebel factions to return to the negotiating table, he added.

Source: Unavailable

IV. R2P in the News

1. Welcome to My World, Barack
The New York Times Magazine
Helene Cooper and Scott Malcomson
13 November 2008

The following excerpts are from an exit interview with the U.S. Secretary of State for the Bush administration, Condoleezza Rice. She gives very candid remarks on the policies of the Bush administration, including that of the adoption of **R2P** and its implications for the EU and Darfur.

() TWILIGHT OF THE INSTITUTIONS?

DISCOVERING WHETHER THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT MEANS ANYTHING.

I think we thought the **Responsibility to Protect** meant something.* I remember when the **responsibility-to-protect**

language came up at the 2006 United Nations General Assembly, and I remember thinking at the time: If this turns out to be nothing but words, the Security Council is going to have a real black eye, and in the Darfur case it has turned out to be nothing but words. I think it has been an enormous embarrassment for the Security Council and for multilateral diplomacy.

*NYT Footnote: In 2006, the United Nations adopted the principle of the **responsibility to protect**. It stipulates that the international community must protect the rights of people inside a sovereign country if the government of that country is failing to protect them.

WHY THE SECURITY COUNCIL NEGLECTED DARFUR.

We worked day in and day out. Almost not a day passes in this office that were not trying to find some way to get more forces into Darfur. To make the Sudanese government live up to the multiple agreements that it has made and then walked away from. We go to the Security Council, and nobody wants there to be consequences, well, not nobody, sorry, some dont wish there to be consequences. And so we end up sanctioning again, unilaterally. The Europeans do some things but other interests seem to then trump the **responsibility to protect**. ()

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/16/magazine/16rice-t.html?ref=todayspaper>

2. The West Must Learn to Listen

Cultural Diplomacy News

Shamsiah Ali

12 November 2008

Former Indonesian Foreign Minister and President of the United Nations Security Council, Professor Kishore Mahbubani talks about R2P, Darfur, and UN Security Council Reform.

You have identified a lack of political will amongst the P5, but how do you address this?

The permanent members need to be held accountable for their actions. Following the genocide in Rwanda, for example, the UN General Assembly should have convened to discuss the performance of the P5.

The governments of the UK, France, Russia, China and the U.S. have to make their citizens aware that they have taken on an international responsibility and must act or face censure. At present there is no such responsibility, the P5 can simply sit back and watch as events unfold. It is clear that the concept of intervention has gained ground, as illustrated by the Responsibility to Protect summit in 2005.

The responsibility to protect, however, has not been successful in the case of Darfur. Will major powers only act when their national interests are at stake?

This is why the permanent members need to be held responsible.

When I was with the Security Council we went on a mission to Burundi. Whilst in the air our pilot told us that we ought to land as sunset was approaching and this was when the rebels began to shell the city. We did, and on this occasion were fortunate to avoid injury.

When we were back in New York, Gareth Evans, Head of the International Crisis Group, came to have lunch with the Security Council ambassadors. You now know how fragile and serious the situation is, he said, what will you do if a crisis breaks out? Will you intervene or stand by as you did in Rwanda?. To his disappointment the ambassadors responded that they had no national interest in Burundi, and would not therefore intervene. Mr. Evans was genuinely shocked.

But what specifically could tie the P5 to action?

A legal obligation. Once you create a legal obligation, its more difficult for them to stand back.

Source: <http://www.culturaldiplomacynews.org/index.php?aid=1188>

3. Importance of responsibility to protect outlined at Conference

The Irish Times

Ruadhan Mac Cormaic

22 November 2008

THE "RESPONSIBILITY to protect" doctrine is one of the most significant conceptual shifts in international affairs since the United Nations charter in 1945, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Peter Power said yesterday.

Mr Power, who has responsibility for overseas aid, told a conference in Dublin that the recently popularised concept could help to prevent - and ensure an effective international response to - crimes such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. () The failure in recent years to protect vulnerable populations from mass atrocities had provoked horror and shame across the globe, he continued.

"The development of the doctrine of responsibility to protect cannot atone for past failures.

"But it can ensure that every stakeholder . . . is aware of their roles, obligations and responsibilities when faced with the threat of the four specific crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." ()

Those in attendance also heard from one of the Canadian commission's founders - the former Australian foreign minister and current president of the International Crisis Group, Gareth Evans. He explained that the concept aimed to make it a "reflex response" for the community of states to shed its indifference to atrocity crimes. It involved a linguistic shift from an emphasis on the right to intervene to the responsibility of the collective. ()

Some states, particularly in the developing world, are concerned that the concept could be abused to serve the interests of powerful countries. Ireland is a strong supporter of the doctrine, however. Addressing critics who believe it fatally undermines sovereignty, Mr Power said that if humanitarian law was to have any meaning, "its values must be supported and defended where they are most threatened".

But he emphasised the concept was not a "carte blanche" for military action, and warned that some "loose talk" invoking the principle - for example, in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in Burma last spring - had not helped to build wider acceptance of the idea.

"But equally it is worrying that some members of the [UN] Security Council . . . have continued to address issues such as Burma and Zimbabwe in ways which seem to suggest that sovereignty remains absolute, and to indicate a possible hostility on their part to acting on the

basis of 'responsibility to protect' even in the most extreme circumstances."

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2008/1122/1227293432093.html>

V. R2P and Burma

1. CSW Urges UN Secretary General to Prioritize Human Rights in Burma

Christian Today

18 November 2008

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is calling on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to press ahead with his planned visit to Burma next month, in light of the recent prison sentences passed on to pro-democracy activists and the continued military offensive by the Burma Army against civilians in Karen State. ()

CSW's Chief Executive, Mervyn Thomas, said: "In light of the desperate deterioration in human rights in Burma, it is essential that the Secretary-General does not take the lack of progress as a reason to cancel his visit. On the contrary, the visits of UN envoys over many years have been shown to have failed and now it is time for the Secretary-General himself, with the full weight of his office, to visit Burma and seek to facilitate change."

CSW is calling on the UN Security Council to set out some "specific benchmarks for progress" which the regime must meet according to set deadlines. These include the immediate release of political prisoners, followed by an end to the military offensives against civilians in eastern Burma.

"The regime's crimes against humanity have gone unchallenged for too long," said Thomas. "We believe the international community should seriously consider invoking the principle of the Responsibility to Protect with regard to Burma."

Source: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/csw.urges.un.secretary.general.to.prioritise.human.rights.in.burma/21918.htm>

Thanks to Emily Cody for compiling this listserv