



# AP R2P

## Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

P: +61 7 3346 6435 • E: r2pinfo@uq.edu.au

AUGUST 2014 • ISSUE 12



Acting British Ambassador to Indonesia, ASEAN and Timor Leste, Rebecca Razavi, presenting the keynote address at the ASEAN and Prevention of Violence Against Women in Conflict and Humanitarian Situations Workshop, Jakarta

## SPOTLIGHT ON R2P

### ASEAN and the Prevention of Violence Against Women

*THIS IS AN EDITED VERSION OF THE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP BY DR. SARA DAVIES, AP R2P PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE PREVENTION OF MASS ATROCITIES*

It is my pleasure to have this opportunity to welcome such a distinguished audience to this Workshop on Prevention of Violence Against Women in Conflict and Humanitarian Situations, hosted by the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Today, we are attempting to address two ambitions.

The Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, with the support of the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, hosted a workshop on ASEAN and Prevention of Violence Against Women in Conflict and Humanitarian Situations in Jakarta on 20 August 2014. The event was attended by 48 leaders from the government sector, non-government organizations and international organizations from Cambodia, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Viet Nam. It was our honour to host Acting British Ambassador to Indonesia, ASEAN and Timor Leste, Rebecca Razavi, who gave the keynote address on the 'Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative'.



Australian Government  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

First, to identify, document and highlight the important regional, national and local work that you - as governments and civil society organizations - have undertaken to protect populations from R2P crimes, which include widespread and systematic sexual and gender based violence.

Second, to explore ways of assisting Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and individual members to fulfill their responsibility to eliminate violence against women. In particular, we are interested in exploring how the principle of the responsibility to protect might assist, what further initiatives may enable a deepening of engagement in this issue, what sorts of capacities still need to be built, and how the international community might support these efforts across Southeast Asia. In this talk, I will briefly outline the work of the Centre, how we have come to focus on ASEAN and Prevention of Violence Against Women in Conflict and Humanitarian Settings, and explain why your work is important to the Centre, before turning over to our more important speakers.

The Asia Pacific Centre for

**We believe strongly that advocates of R2P should engage with and promote the prevention, protection, participation framework outlined by the Women Peace and Security Agenda**

Responsibility to Protect was created at the University of Queensland in 2008. Its mission is to deepen knowledge and advance policy on R2P and mass atrocity prevention and response in the Asia Pacific region.

As agreed by all states, including all ASEAN Member States in 2005, the Responsibility to Protect has three pillars:

1. All states have a responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, including prevention of these crimes and their incitement;
2. The international community, including neighboring states and regional organizations, has a responsibility to encourage and assist the state with meeting their protection obligations; and,
3. The international community has a responsibility to use diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful measures to protect populations and to take timely and decisive action in accordance with the UN Charter if a state is manifestly failing to protect its population from these four crimes

Each pillar is of equal importance, but the responsibility to prevent has been the enduring focus of the UN Secretary-General in his reports on R2P.

Our Centre is particularly focused on the prevention of mass atrocities. Prevention creates the best conditions for stability and prosperity, which enables populations to be protected effectively and inclusively.

We have long argued that the prevention of mass atrocity crimes requires engagement with the conditions that perpetuate gender inequality, women's human rights violations and the disproportionate risk of atrocity crimes, specifically those that constitute sexual and gender based violence, which sees women and girls disproportionately targeted. It also demands that we pay attention to the empowerment of women as peacemakers,

peacebuilders, and sources of protection.

We believe strongly that advocates of R2P should engage with and promote the prevention, protection, participation framework outlined by the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, which was first passed as resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, and successively in resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122.

As a result, the promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding between the R2P principle and WPS agenda has become a core focus of the Centre's work on the conditions for prevention of mass atrocities for four main reasons:

First, it is now well recognized that sexual and gender-based violence can constitute acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. At their most basic, R2P and WPS share important goals in common, not least, the elimination of these types of crimes.

Second, there is a strong explanatory relationship between endemic gender inequality and high rates of political violence and one-sided violence against civilians. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon observed in his 2013 R2P report on State Responsibility and Protection:

"Gender discrimination and inequality increase underlying risks associated with sexual and gender-based violence, which can constitute genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity...Specific gender discrimination practices include the denial or inadequate protection of basic rights relating to physical security and the status of women, compulsory birth control and unequal access to services and property".

Third, sexual and gendered violence are often the first types of mass atrocity crimes committed against populations to achieve political ends. These crimes can occur before conflict, after conflict and during conflict as Syria, Mali, Sri Lanka and

recent tragedy in Iraq with the Yazidi population demonstrate. There is a history of gendered crimes being used as tools of political violence to achieve political aims. This continues today, but its role in fostering other crimes and violence conflict is not yet adequately understood. This is the focus of my own research with Prof. Jacqui True, in the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Asia Pacific Project.

Fourth, R2P and WPS share a common focus on prevention and in the development of international, regional, national and societal level tools to empower women and prevent mass atrocities (R2P – through appointment of government level R2P Focal Point and WPS - through development of National Action Plans). This means that there is opportunity to align the R2P principle and the WPS agenda on the targets and tools needed to prevent mass atrocity crimes, which – as stated by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in his 2013 report - demands action to address structural gender inequality and gender discrimination.

Today we are interested in exploring the progress made by ASEAN member states in the promotion

With the passage of Resolution 1325 in 2000 it was recognized that the maintenance of international peace and security depended upon women's equal and full participation in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.



Workshop participants engaged in a group interactive session

of the Violence Against Women Agenda and in how this may be extended through greater reference to WPS agenda in the Political-Security Community – the area with greatest focus (and responsibility) on populations at risk in situations of civil strife, conflict and humanitarian disasters. We want to explore how the WPS agenda might be advanced through the region's Political-Security Community to ensure that the resilience built in 'peaceful' situations extends to situations characterized by conflict and humanitarian disasters – where there is disproportionate risk to women and girls.

In thinking about these issues, we have identified three important themes that currently have the attention of ASEAN and individual member states:

- Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Against Children progressed by ASEAN Commission on Women and Children (ACWC) and ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).
- The UN WPS agenda – referred to in the ACWC Declaration on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children, and affirmed by ASEAN member states at the annual WPS Open Debates (Viet Nam

representative, April 2013).

- The UK FCO Prevention of Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), which has received both regional commitment through most ASEAN states signing the UNGA Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Indonesia, Philippines and East Timor joint ministerial statement as PSVI champions.

In this workshop we will hear about the vital work that you are doing in the region, and making these agendas a lived reality. We want to know more about how your work can be supported by these broader agendas and how these considerations might be mainstreamed into the three ASEAN communities, particularly the Political-Security Community, which is based on a commitment to give attention to prevention of violence against women in conflict and humanitarian situations.

I will make some final notes regarding areas where we see alignment across these three areas – WPS, PSVI and VAW – in the ASEAN region.

First, with passage of Resolution 1325 in 2000 it was recognized that the maintenance of international peace and security depended upon women's equal and full participation in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The ASEAN



Presenters and participants at the ASEAN and Prevention of Violence Against Women in Conflict and Humanitarian Situations Workshop, Jakarta, Indonesia, 20 August 2014

Political-Security Community has developed parallel to WPS and have made statements suggesting supportive of its goals but, thus far, ASEAN Member States have made few specific engagements relevant to 1325 in terms of taking both a whole-of-government and regional organization approach to incorporate WPS into political and security sectors. Of interest to us, the one area where we have seen significant ASEAN foreign ministry-led engagement in WPS has been the UK's PSVI.

The PSVI, which we will hear more about next from UK FCO Acting Ambassador Rebecca Razavi, has been one of most important normative developments in foreign policy in recent years. There has been much focus on the UNGA Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the recently, the International Protocol on Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Within this region, 8 ASEAN member states have committed to this Declaration. The Declaration calls upon states to legislate against and prosecute individuals for these crimes, have police and justice mechanisms in place to punish anyone for these crimes, and requests states and regional organizations to recognise and implement the WPS National Action Plans; as well as promote women's full participation in all political, governance, and security structures.

The commitment of Indonesia, Philippines and East Timor Foreign Ministers, at the June 2014 Global Summit on PSVI, to serve as Champions of PSVI and promote the UNGA Declaration against Sexual Violence amongst the ASEAN membership is a further significant development. This public support provides an opportunity to sharpen attention on the participation, protection and prevention elements of the WPS agenda that is not present within the ASEAN Political-Security Community. The PSVI falls directly under the purview of the ASEAN Political-Security Community and may provide an opportunity to formalise inclusion of WPS agenda.

To date, we have identified a considerable gap in reporting on the work being done every day to protect people from these grave crimes. We focus a lot on the failure but give too little focus and attention on what works. This gap in knowledge exists not just in the area of WPS but across a number of areas of concern to R2P – in relation to asylum seekers and refugees, ethnic and religious minorities, children and other vulnerable populations. This workshop is the beginning, we hope, of a process of documenting the work you are doing which contributes to the goal of preventing atrocities and provides opportunities for participation and engagement that may inform future policy and programs.

As such, we are very keen to hear

from you about what the priorities should be as we move forward to achieve the goals of WPS and R2P in our region.

A report detailing the event and recommendations from the participants will be available at the Asia Pacific Centre for Responsibility to Protect in late September.

1

*The research in this paper was conducted as part of the activities of the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (AP R2P) [DFAT Agreement 63684]. The AP R2P wish to acknowledge the funding support provided by the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.*



**Sara E. Davies**

ARC Future Fellow at the Health Law Research Centre, QUT; and Program Leader of the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities Program, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

**ASIA PACIFIC CENTRE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

Building 91, 54 Walcott Street

School of Political Science  
& International Studies

The University of Queensland,  
St Lucia Brisbane QLD 4072

**P +61 7 3346 6449**

**E: [r2pinfo@uq.edu.au](mailto:r2pinfo@uq.edu.au)**

**W: [www.r2pasiapacific.org](http://www.r2pasiapacific.org)**



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND**  
AUSTRALIA