

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AT 10:

Progress, Challenges
and Opportunities in the Asia Pacific

Phnom Penh, Cambodia 26-27 February 2015



Australian Government
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SUMMARY conference REPORT

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Sofitel Phnom Penh, 26-27 February 2015



Executive summary

In the 10 years since its adoption by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has become a central part of the way we think about, and respond to, genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. R2P has progressed farthest in its normative development, and it is now a well-established political norm: there is little doubt that R2P has been making states more aware of their protection responsibilities.

That R2P has largely won the battle of ideas about whether the community of states should protect populations from atrocity crimes, and the most appropriate framework for doing so is evident not just in the avalanche of resolutions and government statements, but in practice too. Yet the pace of its domestic implementation has been more halted.

A key conclusion of the R2P at 10 Conference held in Phnom Penh 26-27 February 2015 is that problems today lay not in the acceptance of the norm but in its implementation. The key role governments, regional institutions, civil society, R2P focal points and even individuals play in leading domestic implementation efforts was resonantly affirmed across the fifteen sessions of this two-day conference that gathered representatives and speakers from all these constituencies working across most countries in Asia and beyond.

Regional organizations have an important role to play in preventing genocide and mass atrocities. For this reason, a deeper partnership between the UN and the Asia Pacific region is needed. ASEAN is well placed to prevent atrocities because it already has the relevant mechanisms at its disposal, and R2P norms can be readily embedded in the existing institutional and administrative arrangements. A first step to progress such partnership would be for the ASEAN Regional Forum to host a regional dialogue on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Efforts to mainstream the R2P principle in ASEAN should be informed by the recommendations of the 2014 High Level Advisory Panel on R2P in Southeast Asia (HLAP), and could be led by Cambodia.

To support the role of regional organizations in implementing R2P, governments are urged to appoint National Focal Points, prioritize dialogue between ASEAN and the UN, and undertake training of ASEAN officials to support R2P.

Grounding the principle in local values and cultures is the best way of embedding it within communities. This is how we will continue the work of translating R2P from words into deeds.

The recent R2P at 10 Conference also reaffirmed there is widespread support for the UN Secretary-General's view that prevention should lie at the heart of R2P. Conference presenters stressed that more needs to be done to demystify R2P through training and education. Grounding the principle in local values and cultures is the best way of embedding it within communities so as to continue the work of translating R2P from words into deeds.

Calls for prevention efforts to lead the implementation agenda were led by many of the presenters gathered in Phnom Penh. In reinforcing the link between women's empowerment and preventing gendered violence in conflict, the conference heard conclusive arguments for violence against women (VAW) to be incorporated into the ambit of R2P, and for the need to have a clearer regional focus on the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. The concrete demand for a regional symposium on the protection of women and girls in armed conflict is one of the recommendations of the conference.



As R2P and other agendas such as human security, human rights and counter-terrorism continue to converge, we should do more to emphasize the moral imperative underlying the Responsibility to Protect.

Though universal in aspiration, efforts to implement R2P must be local in articulation. The call to ‘localize’ the principle was led by several speakers in the course of the two-day conference. Presenters warned that the success of practitioners and advocates in implementing the principle of R2P is predicated on their ability to relate it to past experiences and otherwise localizing the principle through initiatives to deal with past atrocity crimes such as public education programs, truth and reconciliation commissions, or museums.

Likewise, success in implementing R2P is tied to incorporating the lessons of earlier invocations of the R2P principle, including the controversies surrounding the NATO-led intervention in Libya.

The theme of developing the human skills needed to identify risks and prevent mass atrocities was a recurrent one in the conference. It was discussed in relation to prevention initiatives, as well as through the value of the global network of R2P focal points. By supporting political will and coordinating national approaches to implementing R2P, public servants and diplomats who serve as focal points play a crucial role in advancing domestic implementation.

In the years ahead energies should be focused on domestic implementation of the R2P principle by supporting the work of:

1. National R2P Focal Points, which support political will and coordinate national approaches to implementing R2P.
2. Civil society organizations that help build awareness of R2P and set up the institutions states need to implement the principle.
3. International institutions, with particular attention to furthering cooperation on peacekeeping and human rights, as well as track two initiatives that seek to develop networks of individuals and organizations dedicated to atrocity prevention.

As R2P enters its second decade, human security and R2P should be recognized as mutually reinforcing in many respects, and more should be done to build on the linkages between them. The last decade has seen a growing convergence between R2P and other agendas such as human security, human rights and counter-terrorism. There is now broad agreement that more ought to be done to re-emphasize the moral imperative underlying the Responsibility to Protect. The R2P at 10 Conference heard specific calls for greater attention to be paid to international assistance, and to satisfying demands for justice in the wake of genocide and mass atrocities.

In outlining the challenges ahead, speakers addressed concerns that the broadening of consensus on R2P had resulted in a more shallow principle characterized by its least objectionable elements. The success of R2P so far is part of this story. Indeed, states are now more prepared to support the UN Secretary General on R2P that they were a decade ago, when the R2P resolution was adopted by the United Nations World Summit. And yet states have delayed backing their stated support with a proportional investment of resources. In response to such specific challenges, many of the recommendations following from the Phnom Penh conference specifically target implementation.

Other challenges identified for the norm in the years medium term is the need for sustaining high-level commitment to R2P in the coming leadership transitions in the UN and US, with a new UN Secretary-General and a new US President scheduled to commence their terms in January 2017.

Another priority is for the R2P principle to deal with non-state armed groups, especially those that advance sectarian agendas, and how to relate R2P with the counter-terrorism agenda.

There should be a clearer regional focus on the protection of women and girls in situations of armed conflict.

The role of civil society organizations in building capacity for R2P deserves special mention, given the widely acknowledged role these organizations play in driving domestic implementation. Speakers from across Southeast Asia highlighted the role of civil society in raising awareness of R2P, encouraging and assisting governments and parliamentarians to implement the norm, and facilitating cooperation within and between countries.

A concrete recommendation in this respect is for the ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation to develop a regional early warning mechanism and strengthen preventive diplomacy and mediation.

More than 50 representatives from government, international organizations and NGOs articulated a series of opportunities and challenges for the future of R2P, which included:

- Translating the global commitment to preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity into practical policies and strategies.
- Matching the commitments made to protect populations with the resources necessary to achieve that goal, including in relation to the resourcing of peacekeeping operations tasked with protecting civilians.

- Protecting against the misuse of R2P and preserving the global consensus.
- Strengthening the International Criminal Court to challenge impunity.
- Enhancing South-South dialogue and cooperation on issues related to R2P.
- Demystifying R2P by making early warning and assessment a normal part of global politics and persuading states to ask for assistance.



Prof. Alex Bellamy, Executive Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
H.E. Ambassador Youssoufou J. Bamba, R2P Focal Point for Cote d'Ivoire
Dr Edward C. Luck, former Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect

The R2P at 10 conference was hosted by the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (AP R2P) in partnership with the Cambodian Institute for Co-operation and Peace (CICP), The Stanley Foundation, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GRtoP), and the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP). The Conference was held on 26-27 February 2015 at the Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra, to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the unanimous adoption of the R2P principle at the World Summit in 2005.

The conference combined dialogue about how far R2P has come with detailed consideration of how the principle's three pillars can continue to be embedded into state practice and into the work of regional and sub-regional organizations, working in partnership with each other and the UN.

The conference consisted of a series of plenary keynote speeches by leaders from the UN and the region, and 10 roundtable sessions focused on specific policy questions. Participants included a total of 51 invited speakers and more than 200 delegates including UN and governmental leaders, R2P Focal Points, diplomats and officials from the Asia Pacific region, eminent experts on R2P, and prominent civil society representatives.

Recommendations

General

- The second decade of R2P should focus on translating the political commitment to R2P into a lived reality for populations in need.
- There is a need for global strategy to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.
- Human security and R2P are mutually reinforcing in many respects, and more should be done to build on the linkages between them.
- More work is needed to identify and operationalize the *individual* responsibility to protect.
- Training and education aimed at demystifying R2P should be a key priority.
- The Global Network of R2P Focal Points should deepen and intensify dialogue between focal points.
- It should be recognized that improving human rights and tackling gender discrimination are important elements of implementing R2P.
- Peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction are important components of the responsibility to prevent mass atrocities and should be given greater emphasis, as should guaranteeing non-recurrence.
- Parliamentarians ought to be better engaged in R2P as they are important conduits between national populations, governments and international actors.

For the Asia Pacific region

- States should sign and ratify relevant international legal instruments relating to the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Where appropriate, complementary domestic legislation should be adopted.
- Governments should consider appointing a senior official as National R2P Focal Point.
- The values and goals of R2P should be embedded within local cultures and value systems.
- A deeper partnership between the UN and the Asia Pacific region is needed for atrocities prevention

- It is important to build national constituencies of groups and individuals working nationally and locally to implement R2P.
- The ASEAN Regional Forum should consider hosting a regional dialogue on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.
- There should be a regional symposium on the protection of women and girls in armed conflict.
- Governments and other organizations should mainstream R2P in their training curricula, especially in the security sector.

For ASEAN

- ASEAN Member States should initiate a dialogue on the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities and protection of vulnerable populations, which could be led by Cambodia.
- ASEAN should establish a partnership with the UN to promote R2P in Southeast Asia.
- The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) should consider undertaking a thematic study on the human rights implication of genocide and mass atrocity prevention.
- AICHR should consider the need to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity when it revises its Terms of Reference.
- The ASEAN Institute of Peace and Reconciliation should develop a regional early warning mechanism and strengthen preventive diplomacy and mediation.



The Responsibility to Protect at 10: In their own words

Resources and Conference Materials

Speeches

[Keynote Address](#) by **Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**, to the Conference on the Responsibility to Protect at 10: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities in the Asia Pacific, under the theme "Cambodia Takes the Leading Role in Prevention of Genocide in ASEAN"

[Keynote Dinner Address](#) by **Professor the Hon Gareth Evans AC QC**, Former Foreign Minister of Australia and Co-Chair of the International Commission on Intervention and States Sovereignty, to the Conference on the Responsibility to Protect at 10: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities in the Asia Pacific

[Concluding Session Remarks](#) by **Dr. Simon Adams**, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

[Remarks](#) by **Professor Pou Sovachana**, CICP Deputy Director in Charge of Research and Publication, 'Promoting and Advancing the Responsibility to Protect in Cambodia: What Role for Academia?'

[Remarks](#) by **Ma. Loretta Ann P. Rosales**, Chairperson Commission on Human Rights, Philippines, 'National Human Rights Institutions and the Responsibility to Protect: Reflections from the Philippine Experience'



Question during a session on The Roles of Civil Society in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect.

Power Point Presentations

Presentation by **Mr. Yang Yi**, Secretary-General, China Institute of International Studies

Presentation by **Dr. Sachiko Ishikawa**, Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding and South-South Cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 'Can Human Security Contribute to Pillar II of R2P? in the context of Japan's Assistance to the Southeast Asia'

Presentation by **Ms. Yuyun Wahyuningrum**, Senior Advisor on ASEAN and Human Rights at the Human Rights Working Group- Indonesia, 'The Role of Civil Society in Advancing the Responsibility to Protect'

Presentation by **Professor Pou Sovachana**, CICP Deputy Director in Charge of Research and Publication, 'Promoting and Advancing the Responsibility to Protect in Cambodia: What Role for Academia?'

Presentation by **Ms. Devanna de la Puente**, Regional GBV Humanitarian Advisor, United Nations (Bangkok), 'Addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Humanitarian Situations in the Asia and the Pacific Region'

Presentation by **Ms. Mudjiati**, Deputy Minister for Women's Protection, Republic of Indonesia

Presentation by **Dr. Ma. Lourdes Veneracion-Rallonza**, Ateneo de Manila University and Consultation on WPS National Action Plan, The Philippines, 'Mapping Collaborative initiatives on Women, Peace and Security in the Philippines and Exploring Institutional Entry Points for Women's Protection in Armed Conflict in the ASEAN'



Photos

[R2P at 10 Conference Photo Album](#), 26-27 February 2015

Videos

Video Message, "[The Responsibility to Protect: Born out of Necessity](#)", by **Mrs. Fatou Bensouda**, Chief Prosecutor, the International Criminal Court, to the Responsibility to Protect at 10 Conference, 26 February 2015

[Video Message](#) by **Ms. Zainab Bangura**, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, to the Responsibility to Protect at 10 Conference, 27 February 2015

Prof Jennifer Welsh, *Special Adviser to the UN Secretary- General on the Responsibility to Protect*: "[Assisting States to Fulfill Their Responsibility to Protect](#)"

Ms Yuyun Wahyuningrum, *Senior Advisor on ASEAN and Human Rights at the Human Rights Working Group – Indonesia*: '[The Role of Civil Society in Advancing the Responsibility to Protect](#)'

Prof. Sovachana Pou, *CICP Deputy Director in Charge of Research and Publication* '[Promoting and Advancing the Responsibility to Protect in Cambodia: What Role for Academia?](#)'

Dr. Sophal Ear, *Associate Professor (Tenured), Stuart Chevalier Department of Diplomacy & World Affairs, Occidental College, Los Angeles, US*
"[Cambodia's R2P Experience in Comparative Perspective: Past, Present, and Future](#)"

Dr. Sachiko Ishikawa, *Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding and South-South Cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)*, [Presentation](#) on the 'Assisting States to Fulfill Their Responsibility to Protect' panel

Ambassador Nguyen Duy Hung, *former Ambassador of Viet Nam to Cambodia and Thailand* "[Mainstreaming the Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia: National Commitments, Regional Aspirations](#)" (Presentation of the Report of the High Level Advisory Panel on RtoP in Southeast Asia)

Professor Alex Bellamy, *Executive Director, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*, [Closing Remarks](#)



Panel on The Way Forward: R2P in the Next Decade

Right to left: Ms. Shazalina Zainul Abidin (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia), Mr. Keith Porter (CEO and President, The Stanley Foundation), Mr. Pou Sothirak (Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace), Dr. Simon Adams (Executive Director, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect), Mr. William Pace (International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect) and Professor Alex Bellamy (Executive Director, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect).

In the News

The Phnom Penh Post, 3 March 2015, [Cambodia can lead on R2P](#)

The Cambodia Daily, 27 February 2015, [Hun Sen Warns Of Civil War If ECCC Goes Beyond 'Limit'](#)

Khmer Times, 27 February 2015, [PM Blasts Former Australian Foreign Minister](#)

The Phnom Penh Post, 27 February 2015, [With friends like these](#)

Social Media

[R2P at 10: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities in the Asia-Pacific](#), Storify page by ICRtoP, 3 March 2015

British High Commission in Canberra Essay Competition Winner

[Essay](#) by **Aneto Peretko**, *How best can supporters promote the principle of Responsibility to Protect in Asia over the next 10 years, particularly in the campaign to prevent sexual violence in conflict?*



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