

SPOTLIGHT ON R2P



Spotlight on Youth Forum

Executive Summary and Outcomes

On 27 August 2019, the second forum for Youth and Atrocity Prevention was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. The theme of the forum was “Empowering Youth to Participate in Atrocity Prevention: Young People’s Unique Voices on Atrocity Prevention.” The forum built on strong foundation developed at the inaugural youth forum in 2018 which had issued a Statement of Commitment from youth representatives supporting the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in the Asia Pacific region.

The second forum resulted in the concrete outcome of the establishment of a Youth Core Group on Atrocity Prevention (YCGAP) which

will drive the agenda forward. The YCGAP comprises seven young leaders from Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Fiji whose strategic vision is to strengthen grassroots advocacy at the regional level on atrocity prevention:

- Wike Devi Erianti, Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia
- Md. Mofaq Kharul Islam, Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University, Bangladesh
- Toh Nyon Nyin, Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism & Human Rights, Malaysia
- Karishma Kaajal Kumar, Aspire Network, Fiji
- Md. Adnan Mashruzzaman, Research Initiatives Bangladesh, Bangladesh

- Vierna Tasya Wensatama, The Habibie Center, Indonesia
- Lway Hlar Reang, Ta’ang Women’s Organisation, Myanmar

The group identified capacity building, information sharing, and awareness-raising of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as priorities and will progress these during 2020 with support from the APR2P Centre. As a first step, the group agreed to establish an internal communications mechanism on social media for information sharing about local initiatives and opportunities for young people’s participation and training, which is open to all attendees of the forum. To support capacity building, the idea of a webinar series for youth representatives on key issues around R2P and atrocity prevention was raised.

Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)

The forum was opened by Prof Alex Bellamy, APR2P, and youth representatives from the Indonesian co-hosts for the APPAP meetings in Jakarta: Vierna Tasya Wensatama from The Habibie Centre and Muhammad Waffaa Kharisma from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Ms Wensatama said that young people holding the keys to penetrate grassroots communities and encouraged the network to amplify youth voices on R2P and atrocity prevention, and Mr Kharisma urged representatives to have an open and candid discussion.

Dr Catherine Hesse-Swain, Senior Policy Officer with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade provided an overview of YPS including relevant UN resolutions such as UNSC Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), and highlighted the vast potential of young people in peacebuilding processes, noting the support of the department for youth participation.

The role of young people as agents of change was reiterated by Dr Karen Smith, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on the Responsibility to Protect, who said that young people have always played a crucial part in holding governments to account and reminding them of their obligations. She noted that while young people have had to shout louder to have their voices heard, the critical need for young people's participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has begun to be recognised by the UN.

To provide further information about



Yina Yun, Erika Isabel Bulan Yague and Mridul Upadhyay

UN mechanisms for young people and how forum representatives may collaborate with existing networks, a panel discussion was held with the Co-Chairs of the Youth, Peace and Security Thematic Working Group of the UN Asia Pacific Interagency Network on Youth:

- Yina Yun, Youth Peace and Security Specialist (UNFPA)
- Mridul Upadhyay, Asia Pacific Representative of United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)
- Erika Isabel Bulan Yague, SDG16 Global Focal Point, UN Major Group for Children & Youth (UNMGCY)

The panel described three ways to engage young people in peacebuilding processes: investing, including, and partnering. In addition to describing the work of the Thematic Working Group, the speakers raised important aspects of youth participation such as consultation, regional exchange, training, and collective voice. Challenges affecting the youth space were noted, such as the lack



Alex Bellamy, Vierna Tasya Wensatama and Muhammad Waffaa Kharisma co hosts from The Habibie Centre and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

of core funding, the 'youth workforce turnover' and importance of knowledge transfer, and the length of time required for advocacy to yield results. There was also a discussion of the landscape of YPS networks and opportunities for collaboration.

Presentations and workshops

Nikki Marczak, Atrocity Prevention Coordinator with the APR2P Centre, gave a presentation on the nexus between young people and atrocity prevention, including an overview of R2P and the four atrocity crimes, and of the impact of atrocity

crime on the lives of young people. The presentation emphasised that young people have the potential to be at the forefront of atrocity prevention, including the prevention of incitement and hate speech. APR2P intern Taylor Toovey presented on social advocacy campaigns and effective use of social media in human rights advocacy.

Delegates participated in a small group workshop on the unique aspects of youth perspectives and approaches, the importance of youth voices on R2P, and major priority areas for young people. Participants highlighted how young people's contribution could be amplified, such as through engagement with political leaders, religious institutions and the media, action through technology and social media to combat hate speech, the use of personal narratives and storytelling, youth leaders promoting the value of diversity and the cost of atrocity crime, and the importance of early warning mechanisms.



Dr Karen Smith, Professor Alex Bellamy, Ms Nikki Marczak and Dr Catherine Hesse-Swain

APPAP meeting presentation

The YCGAP presented to the full APPAP business meeting on 28 August 2019 on the outcomes of the forum. Representatives outlined their priorities, including grassroots advocacy, capacity building, information and knowledge sharing, and exploring opportunities to collaborate. They stressed that young people want to be heard, more than to be taught, to be nurtured and mentored but also empowered. The APR2P Centre committed to supporting the YCGAP with an in-person strategic planning workshop during 2020 and other secretariat support. The group has since followed up the forum with online discussions and video calls to progress their priorities and develop strategies for the future.



Youth Core Group on Atrocity Prevention (YCGAP) presenting to main APPAP meeting



Members of the Youth Core Group on Atrocity Prevention (YCGAP)

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