



# AP R2P

Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

P: +61 7 3346 645 • E: r2pinfo@uq.edu.au

AUGUST 2017 • ISSUE 38

## SPOTLIGHT ON R2P



Dr. Noel Morada, Ms Debbie Stothard and Executive Dean, Professor Tim Dunne at Myanmar Public seminar

### APR2P hosts Public seminar -Myanmar Human Rights and Democracy: Progress and Deadlocks

The Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) hosted human rights advocate Debbie Stothard at a public seminar on Monday, 03 July 2017. Addressing attendees, Ms Stothard spoke of the deadlocks and progress of human rights and in Myanmar's democratic transition.

As founder and coordinator of the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (AltSEAN-Burma) and the Secretary-General of the International Federation for Human Rights (IHFR), Ms Stothard has been involved in

promoting human rights in Myanmar including organising advocacy meetings and capacity building trainings with key stakeholders in the country. As well, she developed the first on-going women's specific training program for ethnic minority groups in 1997, an initiative which has produced many local and national young women leaders from Myanmar.

In her presentation, Ms Stothard discussed the domestic context of Myanmar as a society that is prone to mass atrocities including a 60

year conflict in Karen state, the persecution of the Rohingya community, with a large population in Rakhine state, and a 2011 war in Kachin state. Adding to the challenge of promoting human rights and democracy in Myanmar is the continuing domination of the military that has granted itself immunity from prosecution, control of the economy, and attacks civilian populations.

She also argued that despite the landslide victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in the Novem-

ber 2015 elections, the process of democratic transition has so far not led to improvement in the protection of human rights for all groups, particularly for minority ethnic groups. As well, Muslim politicians were prevented and disqualified from running as candidates in the last elections.

Notwithstanding these challenges, Ms Stothard also pointed to some progress in Myanmar. Specifically, despite the threat of prosecution, people have become more willing to speak out against the human rights violations. She highlighted the important role of young people, particularly young women, who are leading the charge, taking a stand against intolerance and creating spaces for better understanding amongst different communities in Myanmar. She argued that the younger generation have a broader mindset and are willing to reach out to minority communities and work together to promote democracy and human rights protection.

Ms Stothard underscored the importance of collaborative efforts that should underpin the promotion of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in Myanmar through partnerships with various stakeholders in the domestic and regional levels. This includes increasing public awareness about atrocities prevention through education and training.

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

Building 39A

School of Political Science & International Studies

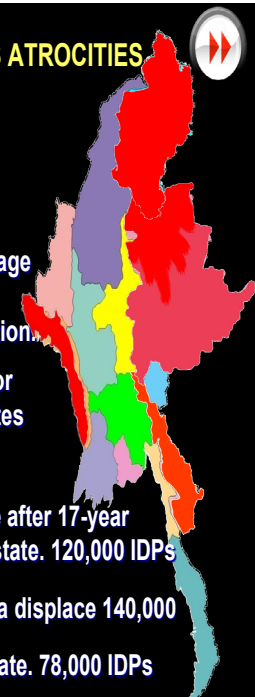
The University of Queensland, St Lucia Brisbane QLD 4072

P +61 7 3346 6435

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

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

### BURMA/MYANMAR: PRONE TO MASS ATROCITIES



- Karen State: 60 year conflict
- Rohingya in Arakan / Rakhine state "most persecuted": at risk since 1982 Citizenship Law. Restrictions on marriage & internal travel (Reg. Order 1/2009), reproduction, religion, health & education.
- Children of "unpermitted" marriages, or over 2-child limit denied birth certificates (Regional Order 1/2005)
- Jun 2011: war resumed in Kachin state after 17-year ceasefire, spilling into northern Shan state. 120,000 IDPs
- Jun 2012: atrocities targeting Rohingya displace 140,000
- Feb 2015: New war in Kokang, Shan state. 78,000 IDPs

### THE 2ND 21ST CENTURY PANGLONG CONFERENCE 24-29 May 2017 (follow up to Jan & Sep 2017)

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 700 reps agreed on 37 out of 41 basic principles, signed part 1 of the Union Accord.</li> <li>• The Panghsang bloc* aka FPNC - UWSP/UWSA, KIO/KIA, PSC/NDAA, SSPP/SSA-N, PSLF/TNLA, ULA/AA &amp; MNTJP/MNDAA - admitted as "special guests"/ observers, had meetings with Peace Commission &amp; Aung San Suu Kyi. (*Wa, Kachin, Mongla, Shan, Ta'ang, Arakan &amp; Kokang).+</li> <li>• 259 prisoners released to "celebrate" conference.</li> <li>• More women were included.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attacks escalated in Kachin &amp; Shan ahead of Conference, incl airstrikes &amp; daily shelling. More civilian deaths &amp; displacement.</li> <li>• Deadlock persisted over principle of "non-secession" and 'sole' army → key factors in armed conflict.</li> <li>• The UNFC - formally comprising NMSP/MNLA, KNPP/KA, WNO/WNA, LDU, ANC, KIO/KIA, SSPP/SSA-N - boycotted on principle that all EAOs should have equal rights in the peace dialogue. (*Mon, Karenni, Wa, Lahu Arakan, Kachin &amp; Shan).+</li> <li>• Only 80 were political prisoners.</li> <li>• Women representation at 20%, lower than 30% target.</li> </ul>

