

SPOTLIGHT ON R2P



Thailand National Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect “Thailand and the Prevention of Atrocities: Progress, Reflections, and Emerging Challenges”

24 – 25 November 2022

The National Dialogue Organization

The 2022 National Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect was organized in a hybrid format between November 24 and 25, 2022, with an onsite event at the Monthathip 3 Room of the Anantara Siam Hotel, Bangkok, and online via Zoom. The event was organized following the 2021 national dialogue organized in February 2022 that was reconvened after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 national dialogue brought together participants from various sectors, including civil society organizations, academics, and government officials, to discuss progress in atrocity prevention in Thailand, reflect on what needs to be done in the future, and discuss emerging challenges. This year's event was designed to be interactive, creating a space for multisectoral conversation and exchanges. It also received additional support from the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (AIPG).

The 2022 Thailand national dialogue featured three panel discussions focusing on education and the progress of Thailand in atrocity prevention, the implementation of atrocity prevention in reality, and the debate about emerging issues in atrocity prevention. It also included two keynote addresses and parallel sessions. The latter allowed participants to engage with each other and collectively discuss atrocity prevention initiatives. There were more than 70 participants in the national dialogue, with 40 people joining on-site and more than 30 participating online.

Welcoming and Opening Remarks

The 2022 national dialogue started with the welcoming remarks of Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang, the Director of MAIDS-GRID, Faculty of Political Science, and the national coordinator for Thailand's country program of APR2P. Dr. Jittiang discussed the mass atrocities situation in the context of Southeast Asia. He highlighted how the pandemic and

other global challenges, such as climate change and political conflicts, have become the conditions leading to poverty and resource contestation—accumulatively becoming one of the determining factors of global insecurity and mass atrocities. As a result, he emphasized the importance of dialogue, collective efforts in combating insecurity and mass atrocities, and exchanges between involved parties.



Welcoming Remarks by Dr. Bhanubhatra Kaan Jittiang

Associate Professor Dr. Prakorn Siriprakob, a new Dean of the Faculty of Political Science, delivered an opening remark on behalf of the Thai country program. His speech emphasized sharing knowledge and expertise among relevant players—primarily through education—which would allow atrocity prevention to become a fundamental principle driving the world toward peace and shared prosperity.



Opening Remarks by Associate Professor Dr. Prakorn Siriprakob

Later, Dr. Noel M. Morada, Director of Regional Diplomacy and Capacity Building at the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P), delivered an opening remark on behalf of APR2P. He highlighted the role of local champions in promoting the Responsibility to Protect within the country, given that this norm does not automatically translate into regional and domestic commitment. Accordingly, drawing from the ongoing political crisis and mass atrocities in Myanmar, Dr. Morada also emphasized that Thailand could play a significant role in promoting awareness about atrocity prevention, given its proximity to the situation and the historical experiences Thailand had in managing humanitarian crises in the region.



Opening Remarks by Dr. Noel Morada



Opening Remarks by Opening Remarks by Dr. Tibi Galis

Dr. Tibi Galis, the Executive Director of AIPG, wrapped up the event's opening session. His remarks focused on vulnerable groups at risk of mass atrocities—especially refugees, migrants, and people on the move. Dr. Galis recognized the opportunity for various parties to come together to explore new approaches to address the immense challenges the world is facing—mainly to make projects a reality.

Keynote Speeches

The 2022 national dialogue consisted of two keynote addresses. The first one was delivered at the beginning of the event via a video recording by Professor Dr. Alex J. Bellamy, Director of the APR2P, University of Queensland. The second remark was made in person to close the national dialogue by Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor Emeritus of Law, Chulalongkorn University; former UN Independent Expert and member of UN Commissions of Inquiry on Human Rights; and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia.

Atrocity Prevention: A Challenge for Our Times

The recording remark of Professor Dr. Alex J. Bellamy was entitled “Atrocity Prevention: A Challenge for Our Times,” in which he addressed five questions on the meaning of atrocity in the current world context, the significance of atrocity prevention, approach to atrocity prevention, the role of R2P in atrocity prevention and reasons behind R2P's continuing relevance. Professor Bellamy started his discussion with crucial trends in atrocity crimes—especially the sharp differences in atrocity prevention dynamics around the globe.

However, he emphasized that conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continued shaping global responses. Professor Bellamy delved into different clusters of atrocities in the current global affairs and argued for crucial factors shaping the ongoing crises, namely the rise of violent extremism, the unresolved questions of statehood, economic crisis, and geopolitical competition.

Based on the previous assessment of the ongoing situation, Professor Bellamy identified significant gaps in atrocities prevention, including the difficulty of prevention, the complication of international politics, major power competition, effects of socio-political changes, imperfect information, domestic contestation, and the congruence of multiple crises at once. Despite such difficulties, he later argued that atrocities prevention continued to be possible, but the attempt may have to be varied depending on context. The crucial factor for successful prevention is unity for purpose—with all parties working together. Professor Bellamy proposed five approaches to atrocity prevention: establishing the national action plan, implementing conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy, providing international assistance, developing comprehensive prevention, and finally, a direct intervention.

Upon reflecting on these approaches, Professor Bellamy demonstrated the significance of R2P as a norm guiding and shaping behaviors of state actors by changing conversation and expectation. However, he recognized that many challenges continued to lie ahead regarding the application of R2P, especially how to make it a reality and approach to strengthening atrocity prevention.



Keynote Speech by Professor Dr. Alex J. Bellamy

Thailand and the Atrocity Prevention in the Country and Southeast Asia: Role, Challenges, and Opportunities

To close the 2022 national dialogue, Professor Muntarbhorn delivered a remark focusing on Thailand's role, challenge, and opportunities in preventing atrocity in the country and wider South-east Asia. He emphasized the three pillars of R2P and the responsibility of the government to protect and care for civilians from genocide, war crime, crime against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. If the government fails to do so, it is the international community's responsibility to assist and eventually intervene with authorization from the United Nations Security Council.

This norm, Professor Muntarbhorn explained, was endorsed by the Thai government in principle. However, it has not yet been localized domestically—partially because of the lack of understanding and the misunderstanding about the mass atrocities it aims to prevent. Professor Muntarbhorn provided some examples, such as the term “genocide” was mistranslated into Thai only in terms of killing—but its other components (such as torture or other harms, with specific intent against a group, without killing) were excluded. Following the prior discussion, he offered 15 keys for the successful implementation of R2P and mass atrocities prevention at large.

1. Definition: to correct translation of key terms in the Thai language so that the definition is comprehensive and well-covered.
2. Documentation: to write, document, and teach histories of past atrocities.
3. Memorialization: to recall and make mass atrocities known.
4. Ratification: to ratify treaties relevant to mass atrocities—especially the Genocide Convention.
5. Legislation: to enact laws that aim at protecting people from mass atrocities, including criminalizing genocide and crimes against humanity explicitly.
6. Accountabilization: to hold the State and state officials accountable for mass atrocities committed by the State.



Keynote Speech by Emeritus Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn

7. Universalization: to consider universal jurisdiction for cases of serious human rights violations in other countries.
8. Sensibilization: to protect the most vulnerable people, e.g., children and women.
9. Education: to educate more people—primarily through history, so people can help prevent future atrocities.
10. Focalization: to have a focal point/contact on humanitarian topics.
11. Identification: to identify and ensure protection for those needing protection.
12. Diversion: to employ alternative methods of management, not detention, especially for youth where they have done wrong.
13. Functionalization: to ensure a functional system on the international stage, particularly when the UNSC fails to take action.
14. Civilianization: to recognize that democratic states are less prone to mass atrocities.
15. Socialization: to increase the cross-cultural exchange between and within the community.

Professor Muntarbhorn ended his speech by suggesting that these 15 keys would be successful if they were started “young,” some of which also refer to involving and educating children about mass atrocities prevention at their younger ages. However, he emphasized that having a good role model is highly significant. He eventually thanked all stakeholders in the prevention initiatives and called for constructive engagement toward “transformative change.”

Panel and Roundtable Discussions

The national dialogue also included two panels and one roundtable discussion. The first panel focused on progress in atrocities prevention in Thailand, specifically in education, and the second attempted to identify emerging issues in atrocities prevention. The roundtable discussion highlighted the experiences of academics who have played a significant role in atrocities prevention, discussing challenges and experiences in turning atrocities prevention theories into practice.

Education and the Progress of Thailand in Atrocity Prevention

The first panel took place on the first day of the national dialogue with the participation of five individuals, including program implementors and beneficiaries, namely Assistant Professor Dr. Kasira Cheeppensook of the Faculty of Political Science Chulalongkorn University; Mr. Ratawit Ouaprachanon representing a Thailand Program of AIPG; Dr. Chalermchai Phanthalert, Director of Social Studies Institute, Ministry of Education; Ms. Pasinee Meetam, an officer at UNHCR-Thailand Office and a former student in the atrocity prevention class at Chulalongkorn University; and Mr. Zcongklod Khawjang, an international affairs official at the Ministry of Interior, a former student in the AIPG atrocity prevention course. Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang, a Thai country program coordinator, moderated the session.

Dr. Cheeppensook, Mr. Ouaprachanon, and Dr. Phanthalert presented details of the program in which they were the leading implementors. Dr. Phanthalert began the session by discussing



Panel Discussion on Education and the Progress of Thailand in Atrocity Prevention (From Right - Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang; Mr. Ratawit Ouaprachanon; Assistant Professor Dr. Kasira Cheeppensook; Ms. Pasinee Meetam; Dr. Chalermchai Phanthaler; and Mr. Zcongklod Khawjang)

implementing atrocities prevention education at primary and secondary education levels. He emphasized the placement of knowledge in the context of civic education and the creation of a network of civic education to bring together various stakeholders from different sectors of Thai society and to create a platform for teachers who work on the same topic to share knowledge and experiences. Through the subject and network, there is a rethinking of approaches to teaching history—including the history of past atrocities in Thailand. However, there are challenges, such as how atrocities and violence should be introduced into the classroom and how to manage expectations from students, parents, and society.

Dr. Cheeppensook was the second speaker of the session with a presentation on atrocities prevention education at the tertiary level, which Dr. Surachanee Sriyai, Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang, and had developed in partnership with the University of Queensland (Australia), and the University of Gadjah Mada (Indonesia) with support from the United Nations. She presented the process of course development and its contents. The new course in which she led the design was divided into four modules, starting from a fundamental understanding of mass atrocities and atrocities crimes, prevention mechanisms, ways towards strengthening atrocities prevention, and atrocity prevention case studies from within the re-

gion. The course primarily targeted undergraduate students in international relations. Despite the development of the course, Dr. Cheeppensook demonstrated that some challenges continue to present in atrocities prevention, for example, the lack of materials in the Thai language, the lack of opportunity to study from the field, and the need to develop a regional curriculum which may be useful regionally.

Former course student Ms. Meetam reflected on the course and key takeaways. She mentioned the connection between the atrocities prevention course and knowledge of international relations in general. Ms. Meetam highlighted how the course showed what international relations as a field of study means in reality. She particularly stressed the benefits of learning outside the classroom, from which she and her classmates realized that international relations are not simply about the state but more about people—especially those whose lives have been lost due to violence and conflicts.

Mr. Ouaprachanon then discussed the implementation of the online teaching module developed by AIPG, in which he has been working with Dr. Sriprapha Petcharamesree and Dr. Bhanubhatra Jittiang. The course targeted public officials and CSO staffers interested in atrocities prevention. AIPG originally designed the module to be all online, with six weeks focused on mass atrocities and another four weeks learning

about atrocities in the context of migration. However, given the learning environment in Thailand, Mr. Ouaprachanon highlighted how his Thai team rearranged the course to be more apt with the Thai learning context by adding an online bi-monthly discussion from which participants met with instructors. The latter approach clarified and addressed several confusions and misunderstandings from online materials. This approach, he argued, allowed students to contextualize and situate what they learned in the online classroom to make sense of the realities around them and their histories.

Mr. Zcongklod Khawjang, a participant in the online atrocities prevention course from the first batch, discussed its takeaways. He highlighted how the course helped introduce him to a new lens he can use to make sense of his daily work, which is also related to atrocity prevention. More importantly, he demonstrated that the course also provides him with a platform to connect with colleagues from other sectors and learn from other perspectives, which can be different and may go beyond the common understanding within his working environment.

Emerging Issues in Atrocity Prevention

The second panel was organized at the beginning of the second day of the national dialogue. It was joined by Dr. Yana Gorokhovskaia, a senior researcher at Freedom House; Associate Professor Dr. Cecilia Jacob from Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, Australian National University; and Ms. Nikki Marczak, an atrocity prevention coordinator at APR2P. Assistant Professor Dr. Phongpisoot Busbarat from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn Uni-



Panel Discussion on Emerging Issues in Atrocity Prevention

versity, moderated the panel.

Dr. Gorokhovskaia started the presentation by focusing on the emergence of transnational repression—which has increasingly become the cause of atrocities. According to her, transnational repression encompasses various tactics used, especially by repressive regimes or actors, to violate the rights of individuals across borders. Digital communication has become one of the factors making transnational repression more severe because it allows those actors to track their targets more precisely. Dr. Gorokhovskaia demonstrated that transnational repression by repressive states had taken multiple forms in recent years ranging from direct physical attacks on targets in exile to mobility limitation, such as passport cancellation—forcing the displaced targets to remain where they are—some of which are hostile countries with no refugee protection or unsafe areas. However, transnational repression as a concept has been recognized more broadly in recent years, and it has become part of an evolving conversation in several international organizations. Dr. Gorokhovskaia suggested that raising public awareness at the domestic and international levels remains crucial and must involve multiple stakeholders.

Associate Professor Dr. Cecilia Jacob was the second speaker of the session. Her discussion focused on preventing hate speech, incitement, and discrimination. Dr. Jacob began her talk by pointing out the prevalence of hate speech, especially in a political campaign targeting specific populations or ethnic groups. Digital space has also become another key platform where speech, incitement, and discrimination occur more commonly. She pointed out that although there is no guarantee that hate speech, incitement, and discrimination will automatically lead to atrocities, the rise of hate speech increases the chance of atrocities. For this reason, she recommends five takeaways to mitigate the increase in hate speech, incitement, and discrimination, including legal prevention mechanisms, institutions protecting minority groups, advocacy of civil society organizations, transnational justice, and a more significant role of international community and diplomacy to protect

targeted groups.

Ms. Nikki Marczak was the last presenter for the session. Her presentation focused on sexual and gender-based atrocity prevention. Ms. Marczak highlighted the growth of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in recent years and the importance of using the gender lens in atrocities prevention. She argued that atrocity crimes are gendered and that SGBV could constitute atrocities. Accordingly, gender inequality is also linked to the risk of atrocities, so adopting a gender lens is essential for strengthening atrocities prevention. Ms. Marczak ended her presentation with findings from Thailand. She called for action to be taken—through legislation and preventive policies with the involvement of various stakeholders so that there is a development of a mechanism for the protection and prevention of gendered atrocities.

Roundtable Discussion on Atrocity Prevention: From Theory to Practice

Apart from the panel discussion, the national dialogue for this year also highlighted the discussion of experience in turning atrocities prevention from theory into practice. The session featured two prominent atrocities prevention champions in Southeast Asia, Dr. Sriprapha Petcharamesree, a former Representative of Thailand in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission (AICHR), and Dr. Noel M. Morada, Director of Regional Diplomacy and Capacity Building, Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P). Dr. Pranee Thiparat

from the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, moderated the session.

Dr. Petcharamesree opened the roundtable drawing from her experiences working in various sectors, including in the refugee camp, as a government official, and as a university professor, before becoming a representative of Thailand in AICHR. Her discussion captured various challenges she faced through all her journeys with wearing different hats. Dr. Petcharamesree demonstrated difficulties reaching out to critical mass for a better public understanding of mass atrocities. This was partially due to an unequal knowledge of the subject matter. Given that many students have various backgrounds, it is challenging for a professor to best deliver materials to them and get them all to understand the topic at hand. More importantly, since mass atrocities are a complicated matter, public education is hard to be implemented. Dr. Petcharamesree was also concerned about the scale of mass atrocities—especially how large it is to be called mass atrocities. The lack of a precise scale sometimes complicates the topic's discussion.

Dr. Morada was the second speaker for the panel. His discussion also focused on the challenge of implementing atrocities prevention—especially with the conception of R2P. He first discussed the origin of the concept and its progress. One of the issues he highlighted was how R2P changed our understanding of sovereignty. However, he recognized the limits of R2P implementation and emphasized the role of regional and local champions in making



Roundtable Discussion on Atrocity Prevention: From Theory to Practice (From Right - Dr. Noel M. Morada; Dr. Pranee Thiparat; and (on-screen) Dr. Sriprapha Petcharamesree)

R2P a reality. One example he gave was Cambodia, where the Friend of R2P network was established, which draws young people's engagement. Dr. Morada also discussed how new technology, such as mobile phone applications, is needed to monitor violence and the risks of atrocities. Accordingly, there is also the need to engage with the public through traditional and social media to increase awareness of the relevance of R2P and atrocities prevention. Dr. Morada highlighted two other means for translating R2P concepts into practice: the creation of a network of domestic stakeholders and investment in future generations of leaders through training and capacity building as part of building awareness about mass atrocities prevention.

Parallel Sessions

This year's national dialogue also provided a platform for participants to engage and share experiences. At the end of the first day, participants were divided into two groups by their professional sectors. The first one focused on the role of academics in preventing atrocities. Assistant Professor Dr. Surachanee Sriyai led the discussion, emphasizing the development of an atrocities prevention course and its integration into the existing curriculum. Another parallel discussion focused on delivering atrocity prevention in practice with participants from various sectors. Dr. Sriprapha Petcharamesree and Mr. Ratawit Ouaprachanon led the session. The session discussed the future engagement of participants and the plan forward—especially with a focus on potential support from AIPG. Some suggestions include the development of a regional program for atrocities prevention, engagement with journalists, and a capacity-building workshop.

Conclusion

The organization of the national dialogue for this year was designed based on the previous year's discussions and recommendations, especially in awareness- and network building. Moving forward into 2023, the Thailand country program will emphasize the research activities, including publishing articles, policy briefs, and reports on atrocity prevention in Thailand, both in Thai and English. Another key priority is media engagement, especially for knowledge dissemination and awareness among the public.



Parallel Sessions (From top – open discussion among participants who attended the AIPG course; and Assistant Professor Dr. Surachanee Sriyai ran a session on teaching atrocities in the university)

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