

# **APPAP Working Group Draft Report on Awareness Raising for Atrocities Prevention**

Report 17 August 2018

## **Introduction**

The Asia Pacific Partnership for Atrocities Prevention (APPAP) was launched in November 2016 in Singapore as part of promoting the Responsibility to Protect in the region. It is composed of government institutions, a network of parliamentarians, academic/think tanks, and civil society organizations who have been engaged in policy-relevant research and advocacy on human rights protection and atrocities prevention.

A Working Group on Awareness Raising was created by APPAP in 2016 to explore ideas, identify strategies, and recommend priority areas for building awareness about R2P and atrocities prevention in the region. Two meetings of the Working Group were held in Singapore and Phnom Penh in 2018, which produced a report that will be presented in the APPAP meeting in Bangkok in August 2018. This report presents an overview of the state of knowledge and understanding of R2P in Southeast Asia and discusses some ideas on the strategies for promoting the principle and its implementation at the domestic and regional levels. It also provides some recommendations on priority areas for 2018-2019 that APPAP partner institutions should consider in advancing knowledge and deepening of understanding of the Responsibility to Protect.

The next section of this report provides an overview of the atrocities prevention in the region.

## **Overview of Atrocities Prevention in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia is composed of multi-ethnic societies with some states still in the process of nation-building after gaining their independence since the end of the Second World War. Internal conflicts remain as a number of states in the region face continuing challenges to its legitimacy from identity-based armed groups. Communal and ethnic tensions between majority and minority groups have also led to eruption of violent conflicts, such as incitement or attacks against minority and vulnerable groups by Islamist fundamentalist in Indonesia and the continuing communal tensions in Myanmar. Incitement against other minority Christians from other ethnic nationalities in Myanmar have also been waged. Accordingly, the level of social trust among different communities in Myanmar remains very low.<sup>1</sup> Human rights advocates in the region have also reported on targeted attacks on human rights defenders and discrimination against minorities in Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from unresolved armed rebellion and communal conflicts, some countries in the region also face a number of risk factors for atrocities in varying degrees. This include weak state institutions, poor governance due to issues related to corruption, rule of law, and accountability; persistent economic and

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<sup>1</sup> See for example “Public Opinions on Citizen’s Democratic Participation”, People’s Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE), January 2018, pp. 15-26, from <https://www.pacemyanmar.org/survey-eng/>, accessed on 20 April 2018.

<sup>2</sup> See for example country reports from World Report 2018, Human Rights Watch, from [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world\\_report\\_download/201801world\\_report\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf), accessed on 10 August 2018; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017, US State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, available from <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>, accessed on 10 August 2018.

social inequalities; violation of human rights and lack of adequate protection for freedom of expression, press freedom; and constraints imposed on civil society groups that limit their human protection advocacy efforts for minority rights, environmental protection, etc. As well, inadequate access to basic services and justice is also a problem especially for the poor and marginalised sectors, particularly vulnerable minority groups. This then creates resentment against the state, which also feeds into ongoing armed rebellions and serves as fertile ground for recruitment by extremist groups.

For some Southeast Asian states, unresolved issues with regard to dealing with past atrocities also increases the risk of future atrocity crimes being committed again. Cambodia and Indonesia are dealing with atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge and Suharto's New Order, respectively. While Cambodia, with the help of the international community, set up the Extraordinary Chambers of the Cambodian Courts (ECCC), the scope of accountability for past crimes have been limited to the most responsible leaders of the Khmer Rouge. Meanwhile, human rights advocates in Indonesia continue to press the government to address atrocities committed by the military against suspected communists in the 1960s.

Confronting past atrocities is a difficult and sensitive political issue. Nonetheless, it is the primary responsibility of states to pursue truth and reconciliation efforts as part of dealing with past atrocity crimes. This includes setting up appropriate accountability mechanisms (e.g., oversight bodies, investigation and monitoring offices within the security sector, witness protection programs, and anti-corruption courts) and implementing measures to address the grievances by victims of human rights violations and atrocities. Otherwise, the culture of impunity is reinforced and perpetrators of atrocity crimes are likely to repeat the same mistake all over again. Indeed, without a strong commitment on the part of states and non-state actors in recognising and memorialising past atrocities, the next generation of future leaders are likely to repeat the horrible mistakes of the past. It is therefore important that educational institutions, with the support of governments, should include the promotion of human rights protection to help foster a commitment among the youth and future generation of leaders to universal norms and human protection values.

It is against this backdrop that the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm needs to be mainstreamed and implemented in the region primarily to enable states to build national resilience in preventing and responding to atrocities. Based on the consensus reached by UN Member States in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, it is the primary responsibility of states to prevent genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing including their incitement. Preventing atrocity crimes entails a commitment on the part of states and non-state actors, as part of their duty and obligation, to build public awareness about the R2P norm and the importance of atrocities prevention, including the recognition that no society is immune from the risk of atrocity crimes. Specifically, critical stakeholders in the region must work together to create a "community of commitment" in implementing R2P through building a domestic network of champions who will advocate for the internalisation of the norm, which may be anchored on complementary local values and home-grown knowledge and experience.

The next section of this report elaborates further on the importance of building public awareness about atrocities prevention and the strategies that may be adopted in pursuit of this goal.

### **Importance of building public awareness about atrocities prevention**

Most states in Southeast Asia still adhere to the traditional norms of sovereignty and non-interference particularly when it comes to human protection issues such as dealing with domestic human rights violations and internal conflicts that lead to atrocities and humanitarian crises. The principle of R2P

remains a sensitive issue for many ASEAN member states inasmuch as it is often misconstrued as a “Western concept” that undermines the non-interference principle even. For some strong adherents of traditional norms, R2P may be used by powerful countries as a “pretext” or justification for regime change in the name of humanitarian intervention.

In many of its declarations and formal documents, ASEAN as a regional organisation clearly recognised the importance of upholding universal human rights norms and adherence to international humanitarian law. However, majority of its members have not ratified a number of international treaties and conventions related to genocide prevention and other protocols of the Geneva conventions, as well as the Rome Treaty that created the International Criminal Court (ICC). Unfortunately, the Philippines, which became a state party to the treaty in 2011, recently withdrew from the ICC following severe criticisms from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in regard to extra-judicial killings related to the government’s anti-drug war. This leaves Cambodia as the only ASEAN member state to remain a party to the Rome Treaty.

### State of Knowledge and Understanding of R2P and Atrocities Prevention

To date, the principle of R2P and the importance of atrocities prevention have not been mainstreamed in the agenda of ASEAN. First, the Responsibility to Protect is quite new and less clearly understood by many states and the general public in the region. Often, it is considered by some states as alien to ASEAN norms and values. Second, the discomfort about R2P springs from the controversial Pillar 3 of the principle (timely and decisive response), which was invoked by the UN Security Council in 2011 and NATO to intervene in Libya and resulted in the ouster of Muammar Qaddafi. Accordingly, ASEAN states do not have a problem with the other two pillars of R2P (i.e., the state’s responsibility to prevent mass atrocities and international assistance to enable states to build the capacity to prevent atrocity crimes), which have been articulated in the statements by some of its members who have participated in the UN Interactive Dialogue on R2P since 2009.<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, a number of ASEAN states also supported the principle of R2P in number of UNGA resolutions on Syria and other cases of atrocities.

Despite the still limited understanding of the principle, there is nonetheless a growing interest among critical stakeholders in the region in deepening knowledge about R2P and atrocities prevention. As a political norm adopted by consensus member states of the UN in 2005, R2P underscores the primary responsibility of states **to prevent mass atrocity crimes**. Indeed, it is important that states recognise this principle but must also be equally committed **to do something to prevent or respond to atrocity crimes**. Specifically, states must recognise the risk factors for atrocities that are relevant to their societies, raise public awareness about them, and build national resilience as part of their strategies in atrocities prevention. Fore sure, understanding and awareness about the norm must be anchored not just on universal norms and principles related to human rights protection but also on relevant local norms and values. Indeed, international norms and principles, such as R2P, do not automatically cascade at the regional and domestic spheres. It must also resonate and find traction in local contexts and embraced by domestic champions in order to take root and become integral to existing values such as good governance, democracy, and rule of law, among others. Beyond knowledge and understanding, governments and non-government actors must work together towards developing atrocities prevention strategies in order to manage the risk factors that are relevant to their domestic contexts.

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<sup>3</sup> See for example statements by Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand in the UNGA Dialogue on R2P.

At the regional level, mainstreaming the Responsibility to Protect as part of ASEAN's efforts in building a community of caring societies means that critical stakeholders should give priority to raise public awareness about the relevance of the principle in the region. In particular, advocates of R2P and atrocities prevention must clearly and consistently champion the idea that the principle is not alien to ASEAN's people-oriented and people-centred values and norms. As the High Level Advisory Panel's Report argued, R2P is consistent with ASEAN's norms.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the HLAP Report is a useful tool for building awareness and engaging with states and non-government actors especially in addressing the relevant issues confronting ASEAN, such as human rights protection, protection of vulnerable populations, and humanitarian crises situations in the region.<sup>5</sup>

### Importance of Understanding Risk Factors

No society is immune from risks of atrocities including those in Southeast Asia. Cambodia's tragic history under the Khmer Rouge is a prime example in the region where the R2P principle resonates well especially in preventing future atrocities from happening again. As well, past atrocities in Indonesia under the New Order of President Suharto remains a politically sensitive issue as a number of human rights advocates continue to demand accountability for perpetrators of atrocity crimes during the 1965-1966 campaign against suspected communists and their sympathisers. Following his downfall in 1998, there were attacks against ethnic Chinese in the country. Elsewhere in the region, atrocity crimes have happened more recently (e.g., Maguindanao massacre in 2009 in the Philippines) and/or are still happening (e.g., in Rakhine, Shan, and Kachin states in Myanmar; alleged EJKs in relation to the government's anti-drug war and attacks against indigenous peoples in conflict areas in Mindanao in the Philippines). The rise of extremism and intolerance is also a growing concern in the region as incitement through the use of hate speech and fake news has led to violent attacks against minority or vulnerable groups (e.g., in Myanmar and Indonesia).

Understanding the relevant risk factors facing countries in the region is an important component of building awareness about R2P and atrocities prevention. Specifically, it would enable states and non-state actors to pay attention to the first pillar of R2P (prevention) and consider strategies for managing these risk factors, such as developing an early warning system, monitoring the risks and possible triggers, and creating early response mechanisms to avert escalation of violence and preventing atrocities. Deepening knowledge about risk factors for atrocities is therefore a necessary for developing national and regional resilience against atrocity crimes.

The next section presents some strategies for building awareness on atrocities prevention, which can be undertaken by national and regional stakeholders.

### **Strategies for Building Awareness on Atrocities Prevention**

Stakeholders in the region could adopt certain strategies to promote the Responsibility to Protect and atrocities prevention primarily through national and regional dialogues and engaging with the youth

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<sup>4</sup> See HLAP Report on Mainstreaming the Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Rakhine crisis, internal displacements in conflict areas such as Mindanao following the extremist attacks in Marawi, as well as ongoing conflict in Southern Thailand, in which over 6,000 people have been killed since the re-eruption of violence 2004.

sector, policy-makers, parliamentarians, and advocates of human rights and human protection from various civil society groups.

### National Dialogues

Engaging with various stakeholders at the domestic level is an essential component of building awareness about the importance of atrocities prevention. This can be done through regular national dialogues that foster serious conversations about what R2P is, addressing concerns and misconceptions about its application, as well as the importance of anchoring this principle with compatible local norms and values. Having a conversation about atrocities prevention among critical stakeholders from different sectors could also help build a consensus about its relevance in the national context, particularly with regard to addressing unresolved issues related to past atrocities or human rights violations, identifying relevant risk factors, reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of existing institutions to manage these risk factors, and assessing the state capacities in preventing atrocities.

A national conversation on atrocities prevention should also include identifying a set of priorities in disseminating information and deepening knowledge about R2P. Academic institutions and think tanks, for example, can play a critical role in promoting public awareness about the principle and relevant issues through public seminars, workshops, and sustained engagement through traditional and social media platforms. Engaging with the youth sector and other local influencers are also essential in sustaining public interest and awareness of national, regional, and global issues related to mass atrocities prevention. Even if the risk of atrocities may be low in one's own country or society, it is still important to engage in a national conversation about relevant issues if only to learn more about atrocity crimes happening elsewhere in other parts of the world not only to foster solidarity with the victims but also have deep appreciation of the context and root causes of such crises. It is also an opportunity to reflect and debate on how to anchor the policy position of the state on burning issues related to atrocities being committed in other countries and where one's country should stand on these issues during deliberations in regional and international bodies like the UN. Indeed, understanding how and why atrocities happen in other countries may be useful for government and non-government actors to develop an action plan for strengthening national resilience, creating mechanisms such as early warning and early response systems, as well as engaging community level actors in potential conflict areas.

Through national dialogues, stakeholders can also share information, knowledge, and insights on how affected communities, minority groups, and vulnerable populations view certain state policies and to what extent they may increase disaffection towards the government, exacerbate existing conflicts, and increase or mitigate certain risks for atrocities. As well, it serves as an important platform for raising awareness about unresolved issues affecting protected groups that needs priority attention by concerned government agencies, such as continuing human rights violations, impunity by state agents or officials, threats of violence, communal tensions, and ongoing conflicts over resources, among others. Thus, national dialogues can generate consensus among critical stakeholders on how best to prevent and respond to risks of atrocities through adjustments in policies, adoption of better strategies, and allocation of needed resources. It is also an opportunity for both government and non-government actors to explore partnerships in building public awareness about managing certain risks factors for atrocities facing the country.

### **Friends of R2P--Cambodia**

Friends of R2P – Cambodia, officially launched on 2nd December 2016 in Phnom Penh with the support from the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P), is a network of dedicated individuals and institutions that aspires for a society without genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Its mission is to promote the norms of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) by raising awareness and helping put in place effective mechanisms to protect civilians from mass atrocities. The network has the following objectives:

1. To enhance public knowledge and awareness of the R2P principle across different sectors in Cambodia;
2. To strengthen the capacity of involved stakeholders through national dialogue, outreach, education, and training, as well as to monitor and share information on early warning signs;
3. To actively engage international stakeholders in order to build capacity at the national level; and
4. To provide support to state institutions and the Cambodia national focal point in their efforts to develop a national action plan for the prevention of mass atrocities.

Members of Friends of R2P – Cambodia include individuals from civil society organizations, youth organizations, government agencies, parliamentarians, educators/scholars, religious groups, and private sector.

The network helped in co-organising two national dialogues on R2P and Atrocities Prevention on 18-19 August 2016 and 22-23 August 2017 to promote awareness of the principle in Cambodia and in the region. It also assisted in co-organising the Regional Workshop on “The Role of Development Cooperation in the Prevention of Mass Atrocities and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)” on 23-25 August 2017 in Phnom Penh to visualize how development cooperation in atrocities prevention can strengthen its works in Southeast Asia region and to explore how the micro-level or economic-based stresses can stimulate tensions especially among the vulnerable groups.

The Friends of R2P – Cambodia organised a field trip to Anlong Veng in the northwestern part of Cambodia, which is the last stronghold of the Khmer Rouge, to speak to the community about peace building and mass atrocities prevention, as well as to listen to the voices of the Khmer Rouge cadres and the local residents about past history. The main objective of this field trip is try to build awareness and promote R2P norms and to highlight the need for mass atrocities prevention at the grassroots level.

The network, with the support from APR2P, ICRC, and CICP, organized a Workshop on International Humanitarian Law and Atrocity Prevention on 2 July 2018. It was also in this meeting that the members deliberated on the process of institutionalizing the network and adopting its by-laws. The process of drafting the country risk assessment suitable to the Cambodian context, using the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention, was also discussed.

### Regional dialogues

A sustained regional conversation is also necessary for raising awareness about the relevance of R2P and atrocities prevention. As the HLAP Report on Mainstreaming the Responsibility to protect has pointed out, the principle must be included in the agenda of ASEAN as part of its community building project. In particular, the ASEAN Political and Security Community, which underscores the importance of promoting good governance, democracy, and human rights protection, could be the main anchor for implementing a number of the recommendations of the HLAP Report.

Engaging with ASEAN mechanisms such as the ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion of Protection of Women and Children (ACWC), and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) is an important first step in mainstreaming R2P and atrocities prevention in the region. It is also important the engage the security sector in ASEAN on international human rights law and international humanitarian law through the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meetings (ADMM). While some member states may still be reluctant to embrace the

principle, focusing on certain elements of atrocities prevention may be useful in priority agenda of these mechanisms, such as building public awareness about human rights protection, developing action plans for the protection of women and children in the region, and conducting research on early warning systems for conflict prevention. Other regional networks affiliated with ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Association (AIPA), could also be engaged in a dialogue on atrocities prevention as part of building awareness about R2P and its implementation amongst parliamentarians.

Engagement with these ASEAN mechanisms and the three pillars of the ASEAN Community through dialogue on atrocities prevention can be anchored on promoting and developing a ***culture of prevention*** in the region, which was adopted in the ASEAN Leaders' Summit in Manila in November 2017. Specifically, the ***Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society*** states that ASEAN will promote the culture of prevention by focusing on:

- i. understanding the root causes and consequences of violent extremism and other forms of violence and deviant behaviours at individual, organisational and institutional levels through risk assessment, research, forecast, early warning and other evidence-based methods;
- ii. adopting a mindset change from a reactive to a preventive approach;
- iii. inculcating shared values such as peace, harmony, intercultural understanding, the rule of law, good governance, respect, trust, tolerance, inclusiveness, moderation, social responsibility, and diversity; [and]
- iv. developing effective upstream preventive policies and initiatives such as transformative social protection, public information, responsible use of media, as well as strengthening the existing values-based education in schools and institutions.”<sup>6</sup>

Among others, the Declaration specifically: 1) calls for coordinated approach among the three pillars of the ASEAN Community (Political Security, Economic, and Social Cultural communities) for the “effective implementation of the thrusts identified for a culture of prevention”; 2) tasks the specific sectoral bodies of the ASEAN Social Cultural Community to “mainstream the culture of prevention into their respective Work Plans and to develop strategic activities to support the culture of prevention;” 3) encourages cooperation “with other relevant stakeholders to mobilise support at the grassroots level to promote a culture of prevention”; 4) recognises the importance of fostering “a culture of prevention through values-based education as well as lifelong learning, quality basic social services, youth engagement and sports”; and 5) calls for the “use all forms of media – mainstream and online/social media – to communicate strategically in order to engage, educate and empower the people, especially the youth, on a culture of prevention.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See “ASEAN Declaration on Culture of Prevention for a Peaceful, Inclusive, Resilient, Healthy and Harmonious Society” 13 November 2017, from [http://asean.org/storage/2017/11/9.-ADOPTION\\_12-NOV-ASCC-Endorsed-Culture-of-Prevention-Declaration\\_CLEAN.pdf](http://asean.org/storage/2017/11/9.-ADOPTION_12-NOV-ASCC-Endorsed-Culture-of-Prevention-Declaration_CLEAN.pdf), accessed on 10 August 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

As well, there are opportunities for engagement at various levels and in other relevant areas, such as on humanitarian and disaster management issues in the region, with the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre for example.

Raising public awareness on atrocities prevention at the regional level could also be pursued through partnership with other networks such as the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), the network of National Human Rights Institutions in Southeast Asia, and civil society groups such as Forum Asia, the Coalition for the International Criminal Court in the Asia Pacific, the ASEAN Universities Consortium, among others. The Asia Pacific Partnership for Atrocities Prevention (APPAP) could also play a role in building a regional constituency of R2P advocates and contribute to building awareness about atrocities prevention through policy relevant research, education and training, as well as linking the region to other international organisations and network (e.g., the UN, AU, Latin America, Global Network of R2P Focal Points, etc.)

### *Developing Action Plans for Building Public Awareness*

Apart from engaging in national and regional dialogues, it is also necessary for stakeholders to develop action plans that can be implemented using various tools of engagement. This include conducting public seminars, undertaking policy-relevant research, disseminating commentaries and op-ed articles in traditional and social media, and other innovative means that could promote deeper knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues related to atrocity crimes.

Public seminars can be an effective means of building public awareness about R2P especially if it is held in critical moments or appropriate times (e.g., when violent incidents erupt or atrocities and humanitarian crises continue) to help enlighten the general public on local, national or regional issues relevant to atrocities prevention or responding to crises situations. It is also important to use public seminars as opportunity to raise public awareness about the risks of atrocities that are relevant to each of the countries in the region in order to for critical stakeholders to start thinking of appropriate strategies and responses to prevent atrocities from happening. A pool of experts at home or abroad could be tapped to give commentaries, written opinions, or provide insightful analysis beyond the news headlines. Using R2P as a lens in examining issues affecting minorities, protected groups, and vulnerable populations could also raise awareness and appreciation for atrocities prevention especially if media reports fail to highlight the risks related to atrocity crimes.

Academic institutions and think tanks play a significant role in generating a pool of experts and in organising public seminars at home and in the region for this purpose. These experts can also contribute to writing policy-relevant commentaries and op-ed articles in traditional and social media, which can be disseminated to the wider public. They can also be engaged in writing or contributing inputs to risk assessment reports relevant to atrocities prevention and provide expert recommendations on how to manage risks for consideration by government institutions and non-government stakeholders.

Social media and other internet platforms can also be a useful tool for building public awareness about atrocities prevention. For example, individual champions and organisations involved in promoting R2P can use Facebook, Twitter, etc., to disseminate timely risk assessment reports, news articles, commentaries, UN documents, speeches, audio-visual materials related to atrocity prevention. Curating these materials in accessible sites or group links can help build resources for use by human rights



advocates, government institutions and research staff, students, and academic/think tank institutions. Social media can also be a useful tool for building networks of R2P champions and advocates of atrocities prevention not only within each country but also across the region and the globe, which can open opportunities for collaborative work through research, information and knowledge exchanges, as well as dialogue across regions on best practices in atrocities prevention. Indeed, networking amongst critical stakeholders needs to be sustained and social media provides an essential platform for deepening commitments of R2P champions locally as well as globally. It is also critical to build and strengthen the network of friends of R2P in the region for exchange of knowledge, ideas, and good practices in awareness raising, education and training, as well as advocacy on atrocities prevention.

### Sharing Stories and Personal Narratives

Telling stories and personal narratives of victims of human rights violations, discrimination, and/or other forms of atrocities can be a powerful tool for raising awareness about the importance of R2P and atrocities prevention. Some civil society groups in the region have used this tool to engage in a conversation with students and youth sector, as well as the general public to provide an opportunity to hear from actual stories and experiences of victims and/or their communities. Individual narratives are often lost or overshadowed by media stories that fail to account for nuances of victims' experiences and struggles. Even documentary films, which may provide some nuances to victims' stories, are sometimes inadequate in generating empathy for those who have suffered from atrocities because it has a bigger and complicated narrative to tell. The text box below provides an example of how sharing of stories and personal narratives can contribute to building awareness about preventing discrimination, human rights violations, and atrocities.

#### **CERITA Indonesia**

Rising mistrust, intolerance, and radicalism has been threatening the unity in Indonesia, which is directly and indirectly caused by the rapid spread of provocative and false information. In this modern era, interactions are made easier through the Internet, but unfortunately social media is one of the where conflicts of opinions and thoughts are intensifying. On top of the reluctance of people to actually listen to others based on the lack of trust in each other, the conflicts are dividing people into opposing clusters and sparking strong tensions and acts of violence.

Community Empowerment for Raising Inclusivity and Trust through Technology Application, or CERITA (meaning "story" in Bahasa Indonesia), a program by The Habibie Center, aims to strengthen social cohesion and counter social tension based on attitudes towards differences. CERITA uses the art of storytelling to fight discrimination, promote inclusivity, and build trust within communities, as it strongly relies upon the strength of communities at the grass-root level in encouraging them to create safe, diverse, inclusive spaces to sit and listen to what each other has to say. CERITA also harnesses the potentials of Internet through introducing a technological element into the program. Peta CERITA, an online platform for sharing CERITA stories and mapping memories through videos, is devised to encourage people to create positive, shareable multimedia content for tackling false information and messages.

The pilot phase of CERITA has reached 146 young influencers in five Indonesian cities, training them to act as facilitators and storytellers in their own communities. These selected young influencers were given the opportunity to join Kafe CERITA – a workshop series of training sessions which would make them Duta CERITA (or CERITA Ambassadors). Kafe CERITA workshops in each city include facilitated dialogues, training in skills of storytelling, interfaith/intercultural dialogue facilitation, and conflict transformation, learning how to use the Peta CERITA platform – all done while giving the chance for Duta CERITA to practice the acquired skills in an interactive and fun setting. Feedbacks from the workshop have highlighted that CERITA is providing open, safe, and diverse spaces for more people to know and understand each other better. The facilitated dialogues were also said to have widened

the participants' horizons in understanding the diverse backgrounds of people in their area, and how broad of a spectrum their local communities actually are.

Through the workshop, Duta CERITA who have been empowered with the necessary knowledge and resources are then able to replicate workshops similar to what they have had, facilitating them to spread CERITA to an even larger audience. Duta CERITA are also encouraged to create similar follow-up events within their own networks and communities, enabling more people to connect and later digitally share their own stories and experiences in the provided platform. This far, Duta CERITA has been able to reach more than 1000 people in approximately 14 cities in Indonesia. These replication activities, supported by Peta CERITA as an easily accessible online platform, are crucial to sustain the positive impact of Kafe CERITA in building empathy, compassion, and trust towards each other and, in turn, each other's communities.

In preventing atrocities, it is important to understand the different risk factors in each area. CERITA provides an alternative narrative by diversifying the effort of understanding what problem lies within the smallest of communities in five pilot cities, encouraging people to comprehend that how understanding your neighbourhood and communities can help in further acknowledging why conflicts happen and prevent them from escalating, as well as how safe dialogue spaces can foster eye-opening exchange of thoughts and be beneficial in creating a cohesive society.

### *Capacity Building for Promoting Awareness on Atrocities Prevention*

The level of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of R2P and atrocities prevention in the region remains low. While there is now a growing interest among critical stakeholders in the Asia Pacific and Southeast Asia in particular (e.g., human rights advocates, academic/think tank institutions, media sector, and some member states) to know more about genocide and atrocity crimes due to increasing awareness about the plight of refugees around the world due to conflicts, the concept of Responsibility to Protect is still not widely understood. Even amongst members of the informed or well-educated sectors from government and civil society, for example, there is still some misconception about R2P: that it is similar to humanitarian intervention; a Western concept used by powerful states to intervene; or a doctrine used as a pretext to impose regime change. In Southeast Asia, some skepticism and discomfort about the principle's compatibility with ASEAN's traditional norms—in particular, sovereignty and non-interference—have been expressed by those in government. While this perception may pose as a challenge to promoting R2P and atrocities prevention in the region, the principle may still resonate with the wider public and gain wider acceptance if domestic and regional champions of human rights protection and R2P could undertake capacity building activities. This includes providing for education and training, engaging with the media sector, building domestic constituencies in capitals to create a community of commitment for atrocities prevention. Networking with global and regional stakeholders is also important in this regard as they could also contribute to capacity building.

#### *Providing for education and training*

Education and training on R2P and atrocities prevention should be a priority for capacity building. Specifically, through seminars and workshops, stakeholders from various sectors can deepen their knowledge and understanding about developments and trends in the evolution of R2P, its implementation, and relevant issues related to its implementation. Apart from contemporary issues on atrocities prevention, education and training could also contribute to a better understanding of other issues linked to R2P such as protection of refugees, sexual violence against women and children,

peacekeeping operations by the UN, as well as International criminal justice. Workshops and training seminars could be provided for university lecturers, parliament research staff, media practitioners, and civil society groups.

As pointed out earlier, some countries that experienced past atrocities should endeavour to promote education and memorialisation as part of building public awareness about the dark periods in their history. It will also help the youth and emerging future leaders in the region to develop values such as respect human for rights, rule of law, and accountability, as well as enabling them to become champions of diversity and tolerance.

In some cases, it may be necessary to also develop and produce instructional materials in the local language that may be useful for domestic stakeholders to have a deeper understanding of R2P and atrocities prevention. For example, there may be a demand for such materials from community-level advocates in conflict areas to use these materials as part of providing tools and knowledge to critical actors and stakeholders on the ground. It may also be necessary to organise a training for trainers of community-level advocates on how to use these translated documents, which may include the R2P Toolkit, the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocities: A Tool for Prevention, and other relevant UN documents.

### *Engaging the media sector*

Media practitioners play a critical role in promoting awareness of R2P and atrocities prevention. First, they are at the frontline of covering events all the way down at the community level where they have access to relevant actors that make the news. They also know the nuances of situations, including conflict areas and when crises are about to happen. As well, they have their ears close to the ground, so to speak, and can feel the pulse of affected communities who are facing risks of atrocities, have experienced systematic human rights violations, or are vulnerable to hate speech or attacks from certain groups who incite violence against them. Indeed, media stakeholders can alert local and national government officials to prevent or respond to potential atrocities from happening based on how they frame the news about events or developments on the ground using the R2P lens.

Engaging the media sector is a critical component of raising public awareness about atrocities prevention. This may be undertaken through their participation in national and regional dialogues, training workshops and seminars, and regional and international conferences on R2P. Indeed, it is important to encourage them to cover local, national, and regional news by providing them with media kits, media releases, and other forms of media feeds that would help them in raising awareness about conflict or crisis situations that could escalate into systematic human rights violations or large-scale atrocities.

Creating a database of media personalities and organisations in the region is an important step to developing a network of journalists who may be committed to covering issues related to R2P and atrocities prevention. Priority should be given to journalists who have extensive knowledge of human rights issues and communal or ethnic conflicts, for example, in their respective national contexts as well as those who have covered regional or international issues on protection of vulnerable populations, minority rights protection, etc. Existing media forum or networks may also be tapped for this purpose even as some of them may be interested to join the APPAP.

### *Engaging with Faith-Based Organisations*

Leaders of religious communities and faith-based organisations play a critical role in promoting respect for diversity in the region. Southeast Asia and the larger Asia Pacific region is where various faiths converge and their communities have lived in relative peace and harmony. However, given the rise of violent extremism, religious or ethnic-based nationalism, and intolerance through the use of incitement or hate speech in social media, engaging religious leaders and faith-based organisations are indeed crucial in promoting public awareness about the risks of atrocities. Through a series of inter-faith dialogues and public seminars, for example, some misunderstandings and prejudices between or among groups or faith communities could be managed and help ease communal tensions, which could otherwise lead to violent conflicts if not averted early on. Bringing R2P and atrocities prevention at the community level is necessary to gain traction and support from communities on the ground and where local officials and other community leaders would be the first responders to any potential communal conflict.

### *Building domestic constituencies of R2P champions*

As pointed out earlier, international norms do not automatically cascade in the domestic sphere. A bottom-up approach to promoting R2P and atrocities prevention must complement efforts at the international level. Building a constituency of R2P champions is necessary in order to deepen the community of commitment to atrocities prevention and implementing the norm at home. Such constituency building efforts must engage government and non-government sectors in society, including the youth and emerging young leaders, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions, security sector, justice and law enforcement agencies, local government officials, peace advocates, human rights defenders, representatives of minority groups and vulnerable populations, among others.

A domestic network of R2P champions must commit itself to holding regular national dialogues, monitoring risk factors and producing assessment reports, conducting capacity building workshops and seminars for atrocities prevention, and engaging government officials and parliamentarians into implementing action plans to strengthen state capacity to prevent atrocities. Developing national action plans on atrocities prevention should also include incorporating human rights protection, R2P, and/or international criminal justice, for example, as part of the curriculum in tertiary education, law schools, military and police academies, and in training seminars for staff and executive courses for career officials in government.

As well, the domestic network of champions should advocate for national and regional resilience by strengthening national institutions, ratifying international treaties and conventions on human rights protection, humanitarian law, protection of refugees, etc., and enhancing regional mechanisms for atrocities prevention and building the capacity to respond to humanitarian crises situations in the region. It is also important to speak in a collective voice in calling out domestic and regional actors and officials to do better in protecting minority rights and vulnerable groups, including women and children, especially in the context of ethnic and communal conflicts happening in member states of ASEAN, for example. In societies where there are existing risks for escalating religious or communal conflicts, R2P champions must encourage inter-faith dialogue among leaders and speak strongly against the use of hate speech, fake news, and incitement by groups against vulnerable populations and engage with critical actors in a constructive dialogue on atrocities prevention at the community level.

### *Creating partnerships with regional and global networks*

Beyond the domestic sphere, the network of R2P champions at home must also consider creating links with relevant regional and global networks of advocates for atrocities prevention. Such partnership links could in fact enable R2P advocates to build its capacity to conduct policy-relevant research, develop programs in atrocities prevention (e.g., security sector reform, human rights education, conflict prevention, and women, peace and security, etc.), and explore opportunities for engagement with regional mechanisms (e.g., AICHR, ACWC, and AIPR) in promoting human rights protection, international humanitarian law, peace and conflict prevention, and protection of vulnerable populations in the agenda of ASEAN.

Building links with the UN and its regional and local agencies is also important particularly in promoting awareness about the role of the UN in preventing atrocities, protection of civilians, and human rights protection. Often, the relevance of debates and discussions on these issues in New York and Geneva are lost because there is hardly any mechanism for regular dialogue with advocates in the domestic and regional spheres from all sectors. In fact, statements by UN officials as reported in the local and international media are taken out of context and create misperceptions, tensions, and to some extent deepen mistrust of the UN among critical state actors in the region. Civil society groups and other R2P champions in this part of the world can help in bridging the gap between the UN and member states in the region by identifying opportunities for dialogue that would encourage states to take the primary responsibility to protect vulnerable populations from atrocities more seriously and also voluntarily ask for international assistance to enhance their capacity to prevent atrocities.

Partnership with the UN in increasing public awareness about the importance of R2P can be pursued through commemorations of important historical events such as the Holocaust, International Human Rights Day, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, etc. In fact, this may be useful opportunities to reflect on the relevance of these events to remember past atrocities at home that remain unresolved and in calling on the government to do more to address these issues.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the foregoing discussion, the APPAP Working Group on Awareness Raising recommends the following to advance and deepen knowledge and understanding of R2P and atrocities prevention in the region.

### *Priority Areas for 2018-2019*

#### 1. Capacity building for domestic stakeholders

APPAP should give priority to capacity building of domestic stakeholders in the region by conducting workshops and seminars on R2P and atrocities prevention for media practitioners, government sector (including parliamentarians), civil society groups, and the youth sector (e.g., Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative).

Education and training should also be an important component of capacity building. This is particularly important for countries that have a history of past atrocities. To reiterate, without a strong

commitment on the part of states and non-state actors in recognising and memorialising past atrocities, the next generation of future leaders are likely to repeat the horrible mistakes of the past. It is therefore important that educational institutions, with the support of governments, should include the promotion of human rights protection to help foster a commitment among the youth and future generation of leaders to universal norms and human protection values. This is also necessary in promoting ASEAN's culture of prevention, which was recognised by its leaders in the summit in Manila in 2017.

## 2. Engaging with ASEAN mechanisms

APPAP should engage with existing ASEAN mechanisms—in particular the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR)—on R2P and atrocities prevention. Specifically, it should explore opportunities for dialogue and capacity building seminars and workshops, as well as openings for collaborative research. AIPR is a clearing house/platform for knowledge and research generation in ASEAN, specifically in developing a database of knowledge, information, and best practices in conflict prevention and peace. APPAP should also explore engaging other ASEAN mechanisms including AICHR and ACWC, the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre, and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting on relevant issues such as dealing with humanitarian crisis, disaster management, and international humanitarian law, among others.

## 3. Resources and support mechanisms

APPAP can provide complementary resources and support for ongoing projects already in place in the region. Collaborative projects can be pursued by partner institutions in APPAP for research on various issues related to atrocities prevention, such as incitement, SGBV, hate speech, and conflict prevention among others. As well, support for the work of AIPR has been lined up by some funding agencies and it would be a good opportunity for APPAP to provide inputs and resources for its research and capacity building priorities. Other projects in the region that can be tapped through the YSEALI under the ASEAN-US initiative include HARMONI (on extremism) and PROSPECT (focused on prevention). Linking atrocities prevention with these projects could also contribute to building awareness about R2P at the regional level. Australia as a dialogue partner of ASEAN could also contribute to providing resources and support mechanisms for linking R2P with these projects.

## 4. Media engagement

APPAP should actively pursue engagement with the media sector in the region. Specifically, media practitioners should be invited to participate in APPAP activities (e.g., national and regional dialogues and workshops). It is also important to identify critical media practitioners who know the relevant local, national, and regional issues that can be linked to atrocities prevention. Journalists who are familiar with ASEAN inside-out should also be engaged and encourage them to contribute in mainstreaming R2P and atrocities prevention in their media reports. The media sector can in fact be knowledge and resource partner of APPAP in developing R2P-related learning tools and materials for use by media practitioners in the region.

## 5. Statement of commitment by partner institutions

APPAP partner institutions should seriously consider submitting a statement of commitment to undertake activities within the next 18-24 months as part of their contribution to raising public awareness about R2P and atrocities prevention. This includes holding public seminars on atrocities prevention, generating policy-relevant research and publications (e.g., op-ed articles, blogs, reports, etc.), conducting public lectures or seminars in universities on relevant domestic or regional issues on atrocities prevention, and exploring the creation of domestic networks of stakeholders on R2P in universities (e.g., R2P Student Coalition) as well as involving government and non-government sectors. The Friends of R2P Cambodia may be a useful template for creating a domestic network of champions for atrocities prevention.