

“IF NOT NOW, WHEN?”:

The Responsibility to Protect, the Fate of the Rohingya and the Future of Human Rights

Dr. Simon Adams



GLOBAL CENTRE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect was established in February 2008 as a catalyst to promote and apply the norm of the “Responsibility to Protect” populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Through its programs and publications, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect is a resource for governments, international institutions and civil society on prevention and early action to halt mass atrocity crimes.

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COVER PHOTO:

Rohingya refugees continue their walk after crossing the Naf River that separates Myanmar and Bangladesh. In the background smoke rises from fires that the refugees say were started by the military.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Paris during December 1948, in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the fledgling United Nations adopted two aspirational documents – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention. In the 70 years since their adoption, norms, laws and structures for protecting against human rights abuses and genocide have evolved, moving from signed commitments to a variety of national and international policies, practices and institutions.

And yet, the threat of genocide persists. Nearly every decade since the signing of the Genocide Convention has featured at least one conflict where a genocide was perpetrated. The post-Holocaust promise of “Never Again” proved to be hollow for the victims of genocide in Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, as well as at the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. More recently, there have been a growing number of attacks on international law and human rights, with an alarming increase in mass atrocity crimes in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Central African Republic and a number of other countries.

In this paper Dr. Simon Adams tests the resilience of the international community’s commitment to defending human rights and upholding its Responsibility to Protect (R2P) populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The paper highlights the failure to respond to patterns of discrimination that eventually led to a genocide in Myanmar (Burma) during 2017. But it also draws attention to other recent situations, such as in the Gambia, when the international community seized the moment to respond in a timely and decisive manner to an emerging threat of devastating conflict. In doing so, Adams emphasizes that even when bodies such as the UN Security Council appear paralyzed and inert, a mobilized international community can still act to prevent atrocities, protect vulnerable populations, and hold the perpetrators accountable.



Map No. 4168 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS
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From his office on the shores of Lake Geneva the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, sent an e-mail to his staff in late December 2017 informing them that he would not be seeking reappointment when his term ended in mid-2018. Zeid wrote that upon reflection, his reappointment “in the current geopolitical context, might involve bending a knee in supplication; muting a statement of advocacy; lessening the independence and integrity of my voice – which is your voice.” Zeid announced that instead, he intended to use the remainder of his time as High Commissioner “pushing back” against the “many trends across the world that seem to negate and deny the value of human rights.”¹

Zeid’s e-mail marked the end of a dismal year for anyone concerned about human rights. With 68.5 million people displaced by conflict, persecution and mass atrocities – the highest number since the end of World War Two - and facing a rising tide of xenophobia, authoritarianism and religious extremism in many parts of the world, Zeid had been an indomitable defender of human rights principles that had been assiduously developed and advanced over the previous century.²

One year later, on 9 and 10 December 2018, the United Nations celebrated the seventieth anniversary of two of its most significant early political achievements – the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But celebrations in New York, Geneva and elsewhere recognizing this historic landmark occurred at a time when the entire post-1945 fabric of universal rights and multilateral diplomacy appeared to be unraveling.³

Since 2011 the international community has been confronted by seemingly intractable civil wars in Syria, South Sudan and Yemen; endemic violence and instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic; the rise of the so-called Islamic State, Boko Haram and other armed extremist groups; as well as deteriorating and deadly human rights situations in Burundi, Cameroon, Venezuela and elsewhere. In the midst of this turmoil there has been a general erosion of respect for international law, with the use of chemical weapons becoming increasingly normalized in Syria, and assaults on schools and other civilian infrastructure now almost routine. A report by the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition documented that there were “more than 700 attacks on hospitals, health workers, patients and ambulances in 23 countries around the globe in 2017,” with 252 attacks in Syria alone.⁴

All of this has contributed to a perception that the norms and institutions that are supposed to protect human rights and safeguard humanity are under threat. The United Nations, in particular, is facing a credibility crisis. Historically, no issue has done more to tarnish the reputation of the UN than the failure to halt mass atrocities. The decades-long list of examples reaches back to Indonesia during the 1960s, Cambodia and Bangladesh during the 1970s, and the genocide against the Kurds in Iraq during the 1980s, to name just a few. Arguably, however, it was not until Rwanda and Srebrenica during the 1990s that the United Nations began to grapple with that failure and with the need for the international community to better respond to such crises. Linked to this debate was a recognition that the UN’s long-term credibility depended upon its ability to not

only provide a global debating chamber, but to offer practical solutions wherever and whenever people face the threat of the machete, the mass grave or the death squad.⁵

It was this political reality that former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was alluding to when he spoke of the need for a reformed twenty-first century UN to confront “problems without passports,” such as poverty, climate change and “the persistence of deadly conflicts in which civilians are primary targets.”⁶ It was also this thinking that led to the development of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as a means of mobilizing “timely and decisive action” by the UN Security Council and the broader international community to prevent or halt mass atrocities wherever they may occur.

Despite the historic adoption of R2P at the 2005 UN World Summit, and its growing influence on the international response to a number of significant conflicts, implementation was always going to be most difficult in those intractable cases where a state is manifestly unwilling to uphold its responsibilities because it is itself a perpetrator. In such circumstances it becomes incumbent upon the UN Security Council to prevent or halt these crimes.

However, the civil war in Syria dramatically exposed the weakness of an international system where a permanent member of the Council can still use its veto power to insulate a state that is perpetrating atrocities from scrutiny or sanction. The “silent veto,” whereby a permanent member privately threatens to veto a resolution that endangers the interests of a key ally, has also been an effective impediment to action. For example, in late 2017 the Rohingya minority in Myanmar (Burma) faced months of atrocities perpetrated by the security forces without the UN Security Council doing anything to halt the killing. This political failure had catastrophic consequences for the Rohingya, but also threatened to eclipse the incremental and uneven progress that has been made in preventing atrocities through diplomacy, peacekeeping and the pursuit of international justice.

THE FAILURE TO PROTECT THE ROHINGYA

Between 25 August and 31 December 2017 hundreds of thousands of desperate ethnic Rohingya civilians crossed the border from Myanmar into Bangladesh, flooding refugee camps with 711,984 new registered arrivals.⁷ The Rohingya were fleeing so-called “clearance operations” carried out by Myanmar’s security forces in Rakhine State, including widespread killings, rape, and the systematic burning of more than 350 villages.⁸ High Commissioner Zeid initially called these attacks “a

textbook example of ethnic cleansing” and later described them as potential “acts of genocide” that should be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for investigation. The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, concurred, describing how the intent of the perpetrators appeared to be to destroy the Rohingya as a people, “which, if proven, would constitute the crime of genocide.”⁹ The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conveyed the unimaginable horror of the crisis from the point of view of those providing emergency assistance to Rohingya refugees:

Not only has the pace of arrivals since 25 August made this the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world, the concentration of refugees in Cox’s Bazar is amongst the densest in the world. Refugees arriving in Bangladesh – mostly women and children – are traumatized, and some have arrived with injuries caused by gunshots, shrapnel, fire and landmines. Entire villages were burned to the ground, families were separated and killed, and women and girls were gang raped. Most of the people who escaped are now severely traumatized after witnessing unspeakable atrocities.¹⁰

But while the scale and ferocity of the post-25 August violence was shocking, it was not surprising.

The Rohingya, a distinct Muslim ethnic minority group, have been persecuted for decades with tensions and violence dating back to disputes between Burmese nationalists and colonial loyalists about which side to support during World War Two, Britain or Japan. Independence from the British Empire in 1948 and an awkward post-colonial transition was followed by the imposition of military rule in Burma in 1962. The core of the military dictatorship was organized around the Bamar Buddhist majority, with other significant ethnic and religious minorities largely marginalized from political and economic life. These divisions resulted in decades of armed conflict between the military junta and various ethnic armed groups, including those fighting on behalf of the Karen, Kachin and Shan peoples in different parts of the country.¹¹ Meanwhile the country’s 1982 Citizenship Law did not recognize the estimated one million Rohingya – who were concentrated in Rakhine State, bordering Bangladesh – as one of the country’s 135 “national races,” rendering most of them stateless.¹²

Despite a gradual move away from military rule after 2011, anti-Muslim sentiment and the persecution of the Rohingya intensified. Hate speech derided the Rohingya as “Bengalis” – illegal interlopers from Bangladesh – despite the fact that the

overwhelming majority of Rohingya were born in Myanmar and know no other home. Discriminatory laws restricted their freedom of movement and access to employment and education, with more than 120,000 Rohingya confined to displacement camps in Rakhine State following inter-communal violence in 2012. In 2014 the Rohingya were prohibited from self-identifying on the national census, the first to take place in the country since 1983. The so-called Protection of Race and Religion laws, which were passed in 2015 and place harsh restrictions on women and non-Buddhists, further constrained the fundamental religious freedoms of the Rohingya, as well as their reproductive and marital rights. In short, the conditions under which the Rohingya minority were forced to live in Myanmar constituted a uniquely Southeast Asian form of apartheid.¹³

The military’s August 2017 operations began as collective punishment for a coordinated attack on police and army barracks by Rohingya militants armed mainly with knives. The attacks on 25 August resulted in twelve members of the security forces being killed along with more than fifty of the attackers, who were members of the self-styled “Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army.” Two of Myanmar’s light infantry divisions, the 33rd and 99th, had already been deployed to Rakhine State and were then unleashed in coordinated operations against at least twenty-two Rohingya villages.¹⁶ One week later the Commander of Myanmar’s military, General Min Aung Hlaing, described the “Bengali problem” as an “unfinished job” left over from World War Two. On 1 September the General’s official Facebook page declared that there was “no Rohingya

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Following an attack by Rohingya militants on several border posts in October 2016, a four-month “counter-insurgency” campaign by Myanmar’s security forces led to reports of mass arrests, torture, sexual violence, extrajudicial killings and the widespread destruction of Rohingya homes and mosques.¹⁴ At least 73,000 Rohingya fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh. Although the UN criticized the widespread and systematic human rights violations committed during the security forces’ operations, and described these as potentially constituting crimes against humanity, an internal investigation by the military exonerated itself of any wrong-doing. Despite this blatant attempt at obfuscation, there was no follow up from the UN Security Council nor the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and little accountability from major international donors and investors who generally turned a blind eye to the ongoing persecution. In many respects, the four-month campaign between October 2016 and February 2017 was a prelude to the expanded and deadlier offensive later that year.¹⁵

race” in Myanmar.¹⁷ Under General Min Aung Hlaing’s overall command, widespread atrocities committed by Myanmar’s security forces against the Rohingya population after 25 August clearly constituted crimes against humanity under international law and also appeared to be genocidal in intent.¹⁸

No one knew precisely how many civilians were dead or displaced inside Myanmar, but according to research by Médecins Sans Frontières, at least 6,700 Rohingya were killed in Rakhine State between 25 August and 24 September alone.¹⁹ With burning villages and the desperate exodus of tens of thousands of Rohingya dominating the international media, attention turned to the UN Security Council. The Council discussed Myanmar under “any other business” on 30 August, 13 September and 26 September. UN Secretary-General António Guterres also briefed the Security Council about the crisis on 28 September, noting that the UN had received “bone chilling accounts” regarding “excessive violence and serious violations of human rights” in Rakhine State.²⁰

As early as 8 September, fifteen days after “clearance operations” began, diplomats representing the majority of the Security Council also attended a private briefing (chaired by the author) where three civil society representatives provided satellite evidence and eyewitness reports. One of the briefers had just arrived from Bangladesh and read from interview notes with Rohingya survivors who had made it to the safety of the refugee camps. Council members also attended an Arria formula meeting on 13 October at which former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Chair of the Rakhine Commission, spoke about the underlying sources of conflict and persecution in Rakhine State. There was no question, therefore, that given the multiple sources of intelligence available to them, the entire Council was aware of the scale and intensity of the atrocities underway in Rakhine State.

Their response was tepid at best. It took ten weeks for the UN Security Council just to release a Presidential Statement on the crisis. That 6 November statement emphasized that the “Security Council stresses the primary responsibility of the Government of Myanmar to protect its population including through respect for the rule of law and the respect, promotion and protection of human rights.”²¹ Part of the reason for the delay was that China remains a powerful ally of the Generals who still dominate Myanmar and has extensive economic interests in the country.²² But facing global outrage, China avoided having to veto a binding Security Council resolution by reluctantly and belatedly agreeing to a unanimous Presidential Statement instead. Words, but no action.

began a campaign of bulldozing and clearing the remains of burned and abandoned Rohingya villages.²⁵

Undeterred by years of warnings about the threat of mass atrocities in Rakhine State, a number of governments had taken refuge in the idea that quiet diplomacy – including acquiescing to Myanmar’s insistence on not publicly mentioning the Rohingya – would create space for gentle reform. Instead it had the reverse effect, encouraging those generals who desired a “final solution” in Rakhine State and wanted to test the limits of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi’s moral authority. However, democracy in Myanmar cannot be built on the bones of the Rohingya. Or as an extremely critical report from the United Kingdom parliament’s International Development Committee subsequently argued:

*In fact, continuing engagement with Burma seems to have been interpreted as tacit acceptance of the treatment of the Rohingya, reinforcing the problem. There appears to have been over-optimism about the speed and breadth of democratic reform in Burma. The Rohingya have paid a heavy price for the lack of consensus amongst the international community on how and when to decide to act effectively to prevent or end emerging crises.*²⁶

It was due to the brave testimony of Rohingya survivors - as well as the efforts of journalists, humanitarian workers, and civil society activists - that there was international awareness and outrage regarding the plight of the Rohingya. Partly in

“ Democracy in Myanmar cannot be built on the bones of the Rohingya. ”

Despite the Security Council’s inertia, the flow of Rohingya refugees eventually ebbed. This was not because atrocities were halted, but because an estimated 80 percent of the Rohingya population had fled by the end of the year with the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh eventually reaching around 890,000 people.²³ Another report by the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, based upon findings by the Bangladesh government, calculated that the approximate death toll during the so-called “clearance operations” included 43,000 Rohingya adults.²⁴ Meanwhile the authorities in Myanmar

response, during October 2017 the United States suspended its training programs with Myanmar’s military, and then in December they placed sanctions on Maung Maung Soe, the General responsible for overseeing operations in Rakhine State.²⁷ France and the United Kingdom suspended bilateral training programs with Myanmar’s military, while the European Union said it would maintain its arms embargo.²⁸ But these measures were not coordinated globally, nor were they mandated by the UN Security Council and therefore binding under international law.

LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR DIPLOMACY

Seventy-three years after the end of World War Two, the UN Security Council is still the only legitimate global body mandated with the maintenance of international peace and security. With regard to the prevention of mass atrocities, the Council’s recent failures have come in many forms. The most public, dramatic and tragic have been a result of the abuse of the veto – with twelve vetoes since 2011 regarding the Syrian situation (six by China and Russia together, six by Russia alone). But another form of diplomatic failure has resulted from not even putting a draft resolution forward because a permanent member has used its “silent veto” behind closed doors to delay or deny a vote. Together these dynamics combine to create a situation whereby the Security Council is left looking powerless and irrelevant as mass atrocities and historic levels of civilian displacement threaten the multilateral system.

Despite the UN Security Council’s failure to act regarding Myanmar, at the start of September 2017 the government of Nigeria issued an official statement condemning atrocities committed against the Rohingya and calling upon “the United Nations to invoke the principle of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ and intervene in Myanmar to stop the ongoing ethnic cleansing and create conditions for the safe return” of displaced Rohingya.²⁹ Similarly, Australia’s Foreign Minister, speaking at the UN during September, argued that the “Government of Myanmar has a responsibility to protect all citizens in its territory, and where human rights violations have taken place, those responsible must be held to account.”³⁰ Even Malaysia, an ASEAN member state that has previously been critical of R2P, issued a formal statement expressing “grave concerns” over atrocities against the Rohingya, “which have unleashed a full-scale humanitarian crisis that the world simply cannot ignore but must be compelled to act upon.”³¹

These sentiments were echoed in a joint appeal from eighty-one human rights, faith-based and humanitarian organizations to the UN Security Council. The appeal argued that the “Myanmar government has the primary responsibility to protect its diverse population without discrimination and regardless of ethnicity, religion or citizenship status.” It also called for “prompt, concerted and effective international action,” including an arms embargo and targeted sanctions against “senior officers responsible for crimes against humanity or other serious human rights abuses.”³²

Responding to widespread criticism, on 28 September 2017 Myanmar’s National Security Advisor, U Thaung Tan, spoke at the UN Security Council, stressing that the international community had been provoked by “emotionally charged” accounts in the global media. However, according to the National Security Advisor, those with expert knowledge of Rakhine State and prior “exposure to the propaganda tactics of terrorists” would be able to determine that “there is no ethnic cleansing and no genocide in Myanmar.”³³

One month later U Thaung Tan participated in a televised discussion in Myanmar, commenting that the concept of the Responsibility to Protect was “very dangerous for our country.” Among other things, he noted that Myanmar had been listed as “a red color country,” meaning a country where atrocities were occurring and that urgent action was needed by the international community.³⁴ While arguing that China and Russia would defend Myanmar’s interests at the UN Security Council and noting that “international pressure did not hurt our sovereignty” in the past, U Thaung Tan worried that because of the R2P principle, “it could this time.”³⁵

U Thaung Tan’s hopes, rather than his fears, were realized as Chinese diplomats continued to insist in various private UN Security Council negotiations that they were prepared to veto a binding resolution on the crisis in Myanmar. A unanimous Presidential Statement censuring the government was one thing, but any attempt by the Council to adopt a formal resolution imposing sanctions or an arms embargo remained anathema.³⁶ In their intransigent backroom diplomatic defense of Myanmar, Chinese diplomats exposed the enduring problem of a UN Security Council that is immobilized and unable to function when a permanent member threatens to use its veto power to protect the interests of a state that is committing atrocities. Syria, Yemen and Myanmar are all contemporary cases in point, despite the best efforts of 115 states who have signed the “Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.”³⁷

Australia’s former Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, who was co-Chair of the international commission that developed the R2P principle, has written that the whole point of the exercise was “to create a new norm of international behavior which states would feel ashamed to violate, compelled to observe, or at least embarrassed to ignore.”³⁸ Fundamentally, the Myanmar crisis was not just a failure of the UN Security Council to uphold their collective responsibility to protect, it was a failure to challenge

the calculus of lowest common denominator diplomacy, and to defend the basic norms and principles of human rights and humanitarianism. In this context it is also worth recalling the words of the UN's first Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Edward Luck:

*Some norms do little more than codify existing patterns of behavior, while R2P, like other human rights and humanitarian norms, has an aspirational quality in that it challenges governments, groups, and individuals to do better and aim higher. Without some level of discomfort and dissatisfaction with current practice, we will never get better at prevention and protection.*³⁹

Eight months after so-called “clearance operations” began in Rakhine State, the UN Security Council did, however, undertake an official visit to the region. During April 2018 Council members visited Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, while in Myanmar they met with political and military leaders, including de-facto head of state Aung San Suu Kyi and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

On the flight to Rakhine State the ambassadors flew over scorched villages and several of them photographed the charred landscape below, noting that you could still see the outline where the huts and homes of the Rohingya had once been. Entire communities had clearly been purged.⁴⁰ The visit had a profound impact on several of the ambassadors and although a group of states on the UN Security Council have worked to keep the issue of the Rohingya in the Council's focus, as of December 2018 there had still not been a single formal resolution adopted to name the nature of the crime committed against them, nor to hold the perpetrators accountable.

GLOBAL PROGRESS VERSUS PERPETUAL CRISIS

The UN Security Council's failure to adequately respond to catastrophic crises like Myanmar has led to an exponential increase in human suffering. Although this has become a global crisis, one region in particular has borne the brunt of the resulting instability. In the words of a joint report by the World Bank and United Nations:

The Middle East and North Africa have seen the most rapid expansion and escalation of violent conflict. Although home to only 5 percent of the world's population, in 2014 the region accounted for 45 percent of the world's terrorist incidents, 58 percent of battle-related deaths,

*47 percent of internally displaced people, and 58 percent of refugees.*⁴¹

By 2016 at least 17.5 million people were displaced in Yemen, Syria and Iraq alone.⁴² Such statistics serve as a reminder that when conflicts metastasize they can destabilize entire regions and jeopardize millions of lives, throwing the entire international system into crisis and disrepute.

They also skew our perception of the world. Psychologist Stephen Pinker argues that the nature of human cognition and the immediacy of satellite news and social media combine to feed a “negativity bias” in modern society. The horrific consequences of airstrikes on civilians in Syria can be watched on an iPhone or satellite TV just moments after they occur. By comparison, incremental decades-long progress regarding human rights is never “breaking news,” and atrocities that are prevented cannot be broadcast because they did not occur. Correspondingly, journalism that focuses on the horror of war can inspire human empathy and mobilize political action. But it can just as easily inculcate unbalanced pessimism regarding our ability to end man-made conflicts.⁴³

For example, in a speech listing the various threats currently facing humanity, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, argued that:

*Every day, those who work in humanitarian response are confronted with extreme misery and complex problems to tackle. Therefore, it is good to remind ourselves that progress is possible. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty fell from 1.9 billion to 836 million. The child mortality rate fell by more than half over the same period.*⁴⁴

In the words of the UN's 2018 Human Development Index, “across the world, people are living longer, are more educated and have greater livelihood opportunities,” with average lifespan seven years longer than it was in 1990.⁴⁵ However, these global gains don't mean very much if you have the misfortune to be living in Syria or Yemen, where health, the economy and human security are in precipitous decline.⁴⁶ In this context it is also worth keeping in mind that 68 percent of all the refugees in the world in 2017 came from just five active conflict zones – Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.⁴⁷ Correspondingly, while 2017 will be remembered as the year that the international community failed to halt atrocities in Myanmar, in all likelihood the prevention of conflict in the

tiny West African country of the Gambia will be relegated to the footnotes of history.

On 1 December 2016 Gambians voted and elected the opposition’s presidential candidate, Adama Barrow. Despite initially accepting defeat, incumbent President Yahya Jammeh, who had held power since a 1994 military coup, refused to step down. Instead Jammeh started targeting opponents, eventually declaring a state of emergency. According to Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall:

*Jammeh had a long history of inciting divisions based on ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. In June 2016, he threatened to exterminate the entire Mandinka ethnic group, whom he did not consider authentic Gambians. He routinely endangered lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, notoriously threatening to “slit the throats” of all gay men in the Gambia. In the weeks following his electoral defeat, some of his supporters blamed political instability in the country on gays and their alleged foreign supporters, signaling growing fractures in Gambian society that Jammeh could use to mobilize his political supporters.*⁴⁸

In late December and early January, Jammeh’s “disturbing and inflammatory rhetoric, his long history of human rights violations,” and his determination to hold onto power, “combined to create a delicate and dangerous situation.”⁴⁹

The response of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was both timely and decisive. During December ECOWAS sent a delegation comprised of the heads of state of Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria to reason with Jammeh. Alongside this diplomatic initiative, an ECOWAS summit in Nigeria underlined its commitment to a democratic transfer of power. These efforts were publicly supported by both the UN and the African Union. An ECOWAS military force was then mobilized on the Senegal border (which surrounds the Gambia), mandated to remove Jammeh if he did not de-escalate tensions and respect the electoral result. With Senegalese troops eventually entering the country, Jammeh fled into exile on 21 January. Hardly a shot was fired and there were no reported casualties.⁵⁰

Reporting to the UN Security Council four days later, the head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel described the Gambia as “a success of preventive diplomacy that has been achieved through the mobilization of regional actors in perfect coordination with the international community.”⁵¹ What was

crucial was the unwavering role of ECOWAS, which consistently sought a diplomatic solution while maintaining the credible threat to militarily intervene if the situation continued to deteriorate. Senegal, who was serving as an elected member of the UN Security Council, also “played a pivotal role in linking the actions of the United Nations and ECOWAS,” keeping the Security Council engaged with the situation in a small, distant country that might otherwise not have received the Council’s attention until too late.

After being sworn in, President Barrow attempted to repair the damage done by more than two decades of authoritarian rule.⁵² The new government initiated a constitutional review and announced its intention to establish both a truth and reconciliation commission and a national human rights commission. In January 2017 the Gambia requested assistance from the UN Peacebuilding Commission and financial support was provided for security sector reform and transitional justice programs. The new government also rescinded Jammeh’s decision to withdraw from the ICC.⁵³ As a result, according to Freedom House’s 2018 report on “Freedom in the World,” at a time when the global trend is of “emboldened autocrats” and a weakening of human rights, the Gambia “secured one of the largest-ever improvements” in political rights and civil liberties in a single year.⁵⁴

While cynics will argue that the Gambia is a small West African country, far from the nerve center of global politics, it is worth recalling that Rwanda was a small country too. But the international community’s failure in Rwanda in 1994 not only resulted in a genocide, it directly contributed to years of instability and refugee flows across the entire Great Lakes region. Some of those conflicts continue to reverberate decades later.⁵⁵ In short, ECOWAS’ intervention in the Gambia played an important role in preventing another violent conflict with potentially disastrous consequences for the country and for West Africa as a whole. It remains an example of how early warning, preventive diplomacy, and structural reform can make all the difference in the world.

THE PRICE OF PREVENTION

All too often it appears that the international community still prefers solemn hand wringing in the aftermath of mass atrocities to being accused of acting prematurely to avert them. As a result, in the words of Edward Luck, “artificial lines have been drawn between prevention and response and between pillars one and three of the [UN] Secretary-General’s implementation strategy.”⁵⁶ The net effect has been to radically increase political

rhetoric around the need for the UN system to improve its preventive capacity, combined with an unwillingness to actually invest in improving or utilizing that capacity.

The price of failure has been exorbitant. In 2006 around 80 percent of international humanitarian assistance funding went to dealing with the consequences of natural disasters. By 2016 the proportions had been reversed, with approximately 80 percent of humanitarian aid going to the victims of man-made conflicts. The social and economic effects are ruinous. According to the UN and World Bank, countries lose “an average 8.5 percentage points in economic growth in the first year of civil war and 4.5 percent in subsequent years,” throwing people into unemployment, hunger and dependence upon emergency aid.⁵⁷ Syria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), for example, decreased by more than 60 percent between 2010 and 2016 as a result of the civil war – dramatically increasing poverty as the conflict displaced over 12 million people, destroyed entire cities, and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians.⁵⁸ By 2017 the World Bank estimated that the civil war had demolished one third of Syria’s housing and half of its educational and medical facilities.⁵⁹ In 2012 Syria was still ranked 128 on the UN’s Human Development Index, placing it in the middle grouping. By 2017 it had fallen 27 places to 155 out of 189 surveyed countries and territories, placing Syria amongst the poorest, most underdeveloped and insecure countries on the planet.⁶⁰

Overall, the international community spent almost \$8 billion on peacekeeping and \$22.1 billion on humanitarian operations while responding to violent conflicts during 2016.⁶¹ Meanwhile, research by the World Bank and UN suggests that preventing the outbreak of violent conflict could actually save “over \$34 billion in damages” at the national level and save the international community “at least 1.2 billion per year.”⁶² Despite this reality, actual investment in prevention still amounts to a miserly fraction of the amount spent on military aid or emergency relief. An analysis by Mercy Corps found that in 2014 donor governments spent only approximately one percent of their official development assistance funding on conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Even in the most fragile states, the percentage spent on prevention or conflict mitigation programs only rose to four percent.⁶³

In one of the most remarkable examples, in 2011 – three years before armed extremists from the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) swept across the Nineveh plain

seizing territory and committing atrocities - the United States spent \$47 billion on military funding in Iraq. That same year, however, they spent a comparatively minuscule \$184 million on “democracy, human rights, conflict mitigation, and reconciliation programs.”⁶⁴ Given the poor return that the United States government got for its massive investment in Iraq’s military (who retreated in the face of ISIL’s offensive), one can only wonder if a greater investment in countering violent extremism and mediating tensions between Sunnis, Shia and Kurds might have helped better prevent the bloodshed ISIL later unleashed upon the country.

The failure to systematically invest in proximate efforts to prevent mass atrocities is definitely not the result of a paucity of information. Most conflicts where atrocities occur are situations that develop over years, rather than days. These conflicts are often the result of deep structural problems rooted in protracted disputes over the use and abuse of power, such as Myanmar where the international community failed to adequately respond to years of early warning regarding the persecution of the Rohingya.⁶⁵

Most importantly, prevention works. The international community successfully supported structural reforms in Kenya after the bloody 2007 election pitted ethnic and political rivals against one another. Measures to control and punish hate speech and ethnic incitement, as well as the implementation of constitutional reforms and the restructuring of governmental power, helped ease some of the underlying sources of conflict in Kenyan society, contributing to a largely peaceful election in 2013. Meanwhile in Guinea, following a notorious stadium massacre in 2009, an election in 2010 paved the way for the country’s first civilian government in five decades. The UN’s undervalued Peacebuilding Commission then helped mobilize funds for the retirement of more than 3,000 members of Guinea’s bloated and abusive security forces. Reform of the security sector in Guinea was a key component of the overall effort to protect democracy and strengthen human rights. None of these efforts were without blemish, but they all helped prevent a recurrence of atrocities.⁶⁶

A key lesson of the current global crisis is that the international infrastructure for both early warning and structural prevention isn’t being effectively mobilized where and when it is most desperately needed. As a result, when prevention fails it is often UN peacekeepers who are belatedly tasked with upholding the international community’s responsibility to protect.

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BLUE HELMETS AND CIVILIAN PROTECTION

Eight out of fourteen current UN peacekeeping missions have Protection of Civilians mandates – including some of the biggest, most complex and dangerous missions. This means that more than 95 percent of the approximately 100,000 peacekeepers currently on active duty are in missions where civilian protection is a key operational objective. UN missions in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Sudan and Mali – as well as the African Union mission in Somalia - also have mandates that specifically reference the state’s primary responsibility to protect its population from mass atrocity crimes. The current price tag for the fourteen missions is \$7.3 billion, or about 0.4 percent of current annual global military expenditure.⁶⁷

The past failures of UN peacekeepers to prevent mass atrocities – especially in Rwanda in 1994 and Srebrenica in 1995 - have been exhaustingly analyzed. But two decades later a 2014 report by the UN Office of Internal Oversight found that UN peacekeepers still failed to use force to protect civilians in 80 percent of cases. Examining 507 incidents where civilians were attacked between 2010 and 2013, the review found that UN peacekeepers only intervened in 101 cases.⁶⁸ In many situations a lack of adequate training and leadership contributed to the failure. A number of reviews since then - including the 2015 High Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations – have sought to bring greater clarity and coherence regarding the future of UN peacekeeping.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, over the last two decades UN peacekeepers have helped end conflict in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste, to name just a few. Peacekeepers have also paid with their lives, with more than 310 personnel killed during attacks on UN peacekeeping missions between 2012 and 2017.⁷⁰ Facing complex threats from non-state armed groups in Mali and Central African Republic, government obstruction in South Sudan, and the threat of major budget cuts championed by the

United States, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations is struggling to deal with the harsh realities of “twenty-first century peacekeeping.” Widely criticized for its shortcomings, the historic successes of UN peacekeeping are seldom heralded.

On 30 June 2017, for example, the UN formally ended its peacekeeping operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI). While UNOCI had been present in the country since 2004, its profile and mandate were dramatically altered following President Laurent Gbagbo’s refusal to accept the outcome of presidential elections in December 2010. Over the following three months the situation in Côte d’Ivoire steadily deteriorated with security forces and militias loyal to Gbagbo attacking civilians perceived to be supporters of President-elect Alassane Ouattara on the basis of their ethnic identity. An estimated 3,000 people were killed, around 300,000 fled the country, and while most atrocities were perpetrated by pro-Gbagbo forces, armed Ouattara supporters also committed several massacres. At the peak of the crisis in March 2011 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1975, invoking the international community’s responsibility to protect and authorizing UNOCI to use force to protect civilians.⁷¹ This was only the seventh time the Council had ever mentioned R2P in a formal resolution and came just days after the more controversial decision to militarily intervene in Libya.⁷²

UNOCI forcibly intervened to end atrocities and helped stabilize Côte d’Ivoire, enabling the consolidation of an elected government under President Ouattara. Despite numerous political and security setbacks over the following six years, UNOCI disarmed and demobilized 70,000 former combatants, facilitated security sector reform, and helped advance the rule of law. More than 250,000 refugees returned and the number of violations recorded by the National Commission on Human Rights fell from 1,726 in 2011 to only 88 by 2016. The economy also achieved annual GDP growth of more than 8 percent every year between 2012-2016. Peacekeepers also helped ensure that Côte d’Ivoire held peaceful elections during 2015 and

2016. The official end of the mission in 2017 was described as a remarkable achievement by the UN Security Council, despite some unresolved domestic political issues.⁷³

Success in Côte d'Ivoire was the result of sustained political intervention. In the words of one post-mission assessment:

*The Security Council passed fifty-one resolutions on UNOCI during its thirteen years of existence. On the ground, the mission had 11,058 uniformed personnel at its maximum strength, with an annual budget of \$584 million (in June 2013). The Council has used every tool at its disposal to solve the Ivorian crisis, including political missions, mediation, arms embargoes, sanctions on individuals, the use of force, referral to the International Criminal Court, and a peacekeeping operation. In the end, UNOCI was able to lift Côte d'Ivoire out of its most serious crisis since independence.*⁷⁴

The total cost of UNOCI was around \$6 billion, considerably less than the estimated \$10 billion that has already been spent on hosting Syrian refugees in Jordan alone.⁷⁵ Similarly, while at least \$362 million was spent on the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh during 2018, the long-term costs of that human catastrophe remain unknown.⁷⁶ Meanwhile those Rohingya who remain inside Myanmar are unprotected and totally susceptible to further attack by the security forces.

If Côte d'Ivoire represents a success for UN peacekeeping, then current missions in Democratic Republic of the Congo or Central African Republic represent the peril of stasis, or potential failure.⁷⁷ The laudable decision of the peacekeeping mission in South Sudan to open the gates of its bases to fleeing civilians at the start of the civil war in December 2013 was an example of the UN living up to its ideals, and the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians point to how states can ensure that past mistakes are not endlessly repeated. But the principle challenge of contemporary UN peacekeeping is to ensure that whenever and wherever civilians see a blue helmet they should feel certain that they will be vigorously protected, not abandoned. In order for that to be a consistent reality not only requires the right mandate, but sustained engagement from the UN Security Council.

Historically, UN peacekeeping is most successful in situations where the host state and the UN Security Council are in strong agreement regarding the core mandate of the mission. However, in three of the most catastrophic conflicts in the world today

– Syria, Yemen and Myanmar – UN peacekeeping is not a political option and no such unanimity exists. Indeed, in each of these cases one or more veto-wielding permanent member of the Council is actually an ally of a party to the conflict that is responsible for atrocities. In such situations the prevention of further crimes will require political imagination from the international community, including a determination to hold the perpetrators accountable under international law.

PURSuing INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

During November 2017 – while Myanmar's military was still conducting its "clearance operations" in Rakhine State – the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) found Ratko Mladić guilty of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. As Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army during the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, Mladić appeared all-powerful and untouchable, presiding over the genocide at Srebrenica and wantonly committing war crimes. His conviction at the ICTY means that he will now die in prison.

While the Mladić verdict was welcomed as a warning to contemporary perpetrators, it also posed the uncomfortable question of whether the international community is doing enough to hold those responsible for atrocities today accountable for their crimes? In this regard, the International Criminal Court is still the most important institutional development in the battle to end impunity for mass atrocity crimes. Of the 193 member states of the United Nations, more than 120 have ratified the Rome Statute and the ICC is, to quote its Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, the "legal arm of the responsibility to protect."⁷⁸

As the ICC marked its twentieth anniversary in 2018 it has never been more needed, with eleven situations currently under investigation. On 26 September 2018 six countries wrote to the ICC Prosecutor in The Hague, invoking Article 14 of the Rome Statute and requesting that her office also open a formal investigation into possible crimes against humanity in Venezuela. The six states – Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru – made history as the first countries ever to refer a situation to the ICC for crimes that have taken place in another state.⁷⁹

But the international battle against impunity is not restricted solely to the ICC. It includes the 2016 conviction for crimes against humanity of former Chad dictator Hissène Habré at the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal. France,

Germany and the Netherlands have also established specialized war crimes units that have utilized the principle of universal jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute perpetrators (including Syrians) who have fled to Europe from their country of origin.⁸⁰ Meanwhile Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Guatemala have all conducted domestic processes to confront crimes committed during times of dictatorship. This has included holding several powerful politicians and military figures accountable for their role in atrocities, such as former Guatemalan President General Efraín Ríos Montt whose historic 2013 conviction for genocide and crimes against humanity was later overturned on a legal technicality. These efforts have not been without disappointment, but an essential part of preventing a recurrence of atrocities in Latin America has been exposing the truth about the past, and denying perpetrators the impunity upon which they depend.

In the same way that metastasizing conflicts and mass atrocities weaken international norms, justice can be contagious and accountability in one country can deter potential perpetrators elsewhere. Even in the most desperate cases, with the Security Council immobilized and inert, the international community can pursue other options to ensure that international law is upheld. For example, on 21 December 2016 the UN General Assembly voted to establish an International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and collection of evidence of atrocities in Syria. While the IIIM has no prosecutorial power and is funded by voluntary contributions from concerned countries, its very existence sends a message to the permanent members of the UN Security Council that the broader membership is not prepared to passively accept their failure.

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Despite the failure of the UN Security Council to act with regard to atrocities committed in Myanmar during late 2017, a myriad of civil society organizations - working with Rohingya survivors and advocates - continued to push for accountability. International media attention gradually waned as compared to the peak of the crisis, but a number of journalists also continued to expose atrocities committed in Rakhine State, including Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo who were arrested and imprisoned for investigating a massacre in the village of Inn Din.⁸¹

Partly in response to this persistent international scrutiny and pressure, on 25 June 2018 the European Union and Canada imposed sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans, on seven senior members of Myanmar’s military and police. The sanctioned officials included General Maung Maung Soe, the former head of the army’s Western Command. Following the announcement of the sanctions, the general was fired for alleged under-performance of duties.⁸²

Similarly, on 27 August 2018, one year after “clearance operations” in Rakhine State began, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) on Myanmar, mandated by the Human Rights Council, reported that atrocities committed against the Rohingya amounted to four of the five prohibited acts defined in the Genocide Convention. The devastating 400-page IFFM report found evidence of “genocidal intent,” including discriminatory government policies designed to alter the demographic composition of Rakhine State, and a premeditated plan for the destruction of Rohingya communities.⁸³

According to the IFFM, Myanmar’s civilian authorities, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, had not met their “responsibility to protect the civilian population” and were complicit in the commission of crimes. The report listed alleged perpetrators of these atrocities, including the military’s Commander-in-Chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, and called for Myanmar’s top military officers to be prosecuted for

genocide, as well as for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Kachin and Shan states. The FFM also called upon the UN Security Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC or to create an ad hoc international criminal tribunal.

With a possible Chinese, Russian or United States veto making an ICC referral via the UN Security Council highly unlikely, the Human Rights Council then proposed an independent investigative mechanism. Like the IIIM for Syria, the mechanism could collect, preserve and analyze evidence of atrocities in Myanmar, and help prepare potential cases against alleged perpetrators.⁸⁴ Remarkably, on 27 September, thirty-five of the Human Rights Council's forty-seven members voted in favor of establishing an investigative mechanism for Myanmar, with only China, Philippines and Burundi opposing. The resolution had been proposed by the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and was co-sponsored by more than one hundred states. Just as significantly, unlike the IIIM for Syria, the Human Rights Council voted to incorporate the Myanmar mechanism into the UN's regular budget. Pakistan's Ambassador, commenting on the outcome, said that it showed that "multilateralism remains very important," and that the "UN works, the Human Rights Council works."⁸⁵

In the aftermath of the Geneva vote, at the end of October the chair of the FFM, Marzuki Darusman, was invited to brief the UN Security Council in New York. Although China and Russia tried to block Mr. Darusman from speaking, this was put to a procedural vote and was not subject to a veto by one of the Council's permanent members. Nine of the Council's fifteen members voted in favor of the briefing, at which Mr. Darusman emphasized that "national sovereignty is not a license to commit crimes against humanity or genocide," and that the "Rohingya and all of Myanmar's people, in fact the entire world, is looking at you to take action."⁸⁶

Meanwhile, in response to the FFM's conclusion that Myanmar's military had displayed genocidal intent with regard to the Rohingya, it was reported that the European Union was considering trade sanctions that would deny Myanmar tariff-free access to the world's largest trading bloc.⁸⁷ This was part of an overall process of escalating measures directed at those responsible for atrocities, including the targeted sanctions imposed by the European Union and Canada in June, and further sanctions imposed by the United States during August that focused on two military units, depriving their commanders of access to foreign financial assets and prohibiting the United States military from training or collaborating with them.⁸⁸

At the end of October Australia, an important regional power, also imposed targeted sanctions on five senior officers from Myanmar's military.⁸⁹

A number of states are now reviewing their trade, investment and development programs in Myanmar, ensuring that they do not reinforce discriminatory structures or enable the perpetrators of genocide to profit from the seizure of Rohingya lands. In August even Facebook was forced to take action after reporting by the FFM and in the media revealed how Myanmar's army had "turned the social network into a tool for ethnic cleansing." Facebook banned eighteen personal accounts, including that of Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, and shut down fifty-two pages promoting hate speech and disinformation regarding the Rohingya. These accounts were followed by almost 12 million people and had been proscribed, according to Facebook, in order to prevent them from being used to "further inflame ethnic and religious tensions."⁹⁰

Altogether, these combined measures sent a powerful message to Myanmar's generals that they can no longer rely on "business as usual." And while it is true that targeted sanctions and the Human Rights Council's independent investigative mechanism cannot end the persecution of the Rohingya, they can help ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable. It took more than two decades for the victims of Ratko Mladić to see justice. Rohingya survivors, Syrian refugees and other victims of atrocities in the world today should not have to wait that long to see their persecutors in a courtroom.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

During 1994 the fifteen members of the UN Security Council adopted almost eighty resolutions, including on the peace processes in Mozambique and El Salvador, conflicts that consumed thousands of lives and shattered both countries. That year will forever be remembered, however, for the Security Council's historic failure to adequately respond to the genocide in Rwanda, a shame that completely eclipses any diplomatic achievements.

As the Security Council dithered, approximately one million ethnic Tutsi were murdered in Rwanda between April and July 1994. Declassified diplomatic cables reveal that as early as 20 April, just thirteen days after the genocide began, New Zealand's Ambassador, Colin Keating, who was serving as President of the UN Security Council, "observed that it was becoming increasingly difficult to explain credibly why in the face of

the most horrific killings the Council could remain formally silent.”⁹¹ After the Presidency passed to Nigeria during May, their Ambassador also lamented that the Council “had to take some action very soon; otherwise it would become a laughing stock.”⁹² History records that atrocities in Rwanda were not ended due to action by the Security Council, but because the genocidal regime was eventually overthrown by armed rebels from the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

Two decades later, in April 2014 Keating was invited back to the Security Council to speak on the twentieth anniversary of the genocide. Keating detailed how the threat of the veto had been brandished by some permanent members to forestall any action and that, “I had the dreadful responsibility in April 1994 of presiding over a Council that refused to recognize that genocide was being perpetrated against the Tutsi in Rwanda and failed in its responsibilities to reinforce the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Rwanda in order to protect as many innocent civilians as possible.” Keating was, however, sanguine about a new draft resolution before the Council on the issue of the prevention of genocide:

*I would like to add that the development of the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, which is referenced so clearly in the draft resolution before the Council today, gives further reason for hope. Recent Council practice in Mali and the Central African Republic and with the Force Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo further demonstrates that some important lessons have been learned.*⁹³

regarding how to protect vulnerable populations from atrocities in order to achieve faux unanimity and elude controversy. History will, however, definitely record that while over 700,000 Rohingya were being systematically displaced from Myanmar over a four-month period at the end of 2017 – with hundreds of villages burnt down and thousands of civilians killed - the Security Council failed to pass a single resolution to halt these atrocities or to hold the perpetrators accountable.

If we want to avoid endlessly repeating the failures of the past, human rights and humanitarian principles cannot continue to be selectively applied or diluted and discarded. Norms, laws and institutions remain essential. Collective responsibility also begins with individual responsibility.⁹⁴

The celebrated author and Holocaust survivor, Primo Levi, wrote movingly about his experience of Auschwitz during the final year of World War Two. Less well known is the fact that before his transportation to the concentration camp, Levi had briefly been an anti-fascist partisan in the mountains of Italy. After the war Levi met other Jewish survivors who had fought in the forests of Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe. In 1982 Levi drew on these encounters in his final novel. Levi’s book, a story of resistance, was entitled, “If Not Now, When?”

Levi’s rhetorical question seems like a fitting rejoinder to all who say that it is too difficult in the current political climate to stand up for human rights and push back against the anti-humanitarian tilt in global diplomacy. It is also a confutation of the politics of inaction and what Pope Francis has called “the

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Learned, but not always implemented. Twenty years from now it is unlikely that the history books will commend the contemporary concern of some members of the UN Security Council that the divided body always speak “with one voice,” therefore deliberately avoiding some political discussions

globalization of indifference” with regard to refugees.⁹⁵ Levi reminds us that the work of those who created the Genocide Convention and crafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues.

“Never Again” was not intended as a silent prayer. It was a demand by the survivors of the Holocaust that we, the subsequent generations, actively prevent mass atrocities wherever or whenever they occur, no matter how politically uncomfortable or inconvenient it might be to do so. The Gambia, Côte d’Ivoire, the establishment of international investigative mechanisms for Syria and Myanmar, and the conviction of Habré and Mladić, all show us that sustained action can and does make a difference. Now is the time to uphold our collective responsibility to protect by consistently preventing, halting and punishing mass atrocities. Because if not now, when?

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FFM	Independent, International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IIIM	International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
UNOCI	UN Peacekeeping Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

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