

Building National Architectures for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities and Genocide

National Engagement as a Motivator of Regional Action

a) What are the challenges today of building national architectures?

- States with personal interests can sway regional action unfairly
- States can prevent regional action in their own countries
- Need to work on states and regional structures mutually reinforcing each other
- Need to have the national government and national committee leaders promote atrocity prevention (and religious inclusion), down to the community level.
- Regional structures need to establish resolutions directly about atrocity prevention.
- Weak national mechanisms weaken regional structures.
- Resolutions from some regional structures do not have to be implemented and if they are adopted they do not have to be implemented fully.
- States are challenged to reach young people with messages of interreligious coexistence, nonviolence, and peace – especially in countries at risk for those youth adopting some extreme visions.
- There is a need to strengthen the relationship between immigration policy and R2P, which are fully related. However, the immigration problem is a result of inadequate prevention.
- Some nations see themselves as immune to atrocity crimes, which makes it difficult to bring different government entities together to build a national structure for prevention.
 - This is helped by establishing a focal point for R2P with proper authority to convene other governmental actors.
- Some states don't seem to interpret R2P correctly.
- Regional institutions subscribe to different language for atrocity prevention.
- Consensus in regional organizations makes it difficult to achieve progress.
- Regional structures have to deal with political constraints/considerations. They are sometimes limited in their

ability to have conceptual/thematic debates, and therefore, they focus more on practical matters in ad hoc fashion.

- States continue to need to learn how to implement R2P, which began as a political commitment.
- We still have to address the need for states to protect their populations.

b) What have we learned about building national architectures?

- States help regional bodies build capacity
- States involved in regional networks enable joint action
- States set the agenda at regional and multilateral organizations
- In Africa, built article 4h into AU and in general helped bring R2P to the forefront.
- In SE Asia, states have brought human rights and non-discrimination to the level of a regional concern
- Nations help encourage preventive action within regional institutions
- ECOWAS has a subregional warning mechanism that contributes to regional action
- National R2P focal points have lobbied the European Union for years until the EU itself appointed a focal point
- All communities need to be included in peacebuilding at the national level – religious communities, ethnic, etc... This is important especially in providing everyone an opportunity to have a seat at the table and a space to share/speak.
 - This is true at all levels of governance, too: from the village level to the national government level
- It is very important to build respect for all groups and individuals. The focus should be on equality and coexistence. It works better not to think in terms of majorities and minorities.
 - Religious leaders need to foster this
- Any parliament in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentarian Assembly can form resolutions: when the ASEAN Secretariat considers such resolutions and refers them for consideration to individual governments, it assists states in developing laws. This also contributes to harmonizing laws in the region.
- Strong state mechanisms strengthen regional institutions.
- An R2P focal point with a high level of authority has convening and convincing power internally and with other governments. This is also true for focal points with high levels of authority from regional

structures. This strengthens the implementation of atrocity prevention and R2P.

- Regional structures have powerful foreign policy tools (diplomatic, economic, development and military) to implement atrocity prevention and R2P principles.
- Regional structures can build on the strengths of their national members to build strong tools for early warning and action.
- Structures for prevention and protection need to incorporate groups like women and youth. (for example, in interreligious dialogue and networks)
- We have learned that media and leaders need to work together.

c) What could be the contribution of GAAMAC to address these challenges?

- GAAMAC is an opportunity to bring all actors together to discuss important issues related to all atrocity crimes. Needs to emphasize prevention.
- GAAMAC is an opportunity to learn best practices from other states – especially how they engage in regional institutions
- GAAMAC could help streamline language and prevention initiatives for regional organizations.
- GAAMAC as a big tent for countries who are taking steps to strengthen national institutions and need mechanisms like GAAMAC to know what works

d) Other specific and very relevant issue to be recorded?

- National mechanisms require holistic government approach – participation by all government bodies.