

Building National Architectures for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities and Genocide

Combating Incitement of Hate Speech and the Role of Local Dialogue in Atrocity Prevention as Key Inhibitors

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

Hate Speech

- The connection between genocide prevention and hate speech is a direct one: Genocide's most frequent targets are minority groups, and genocide is usually preceded by hate crimes, discrimination, and biases.
- The tension between limiting hate speech and free speech are well known, of course. Yet, we need to remember that the freedom of expression and efforts to prevent hate speech and incitement are not contradictory, but mutually supportive. It is only when there is a free flow of thoughts and ideas that friendship and understanding can be fostered; and hate speech prevents the free flow of these ideas, and shuts down lines of communication between communities.
- This means that freedom of expression is not an absolute standard, and can be limited for many reasons—such as the protection of the reputation of other people, and so forth. So we already have socially and legally accepted standards for limiting speech.
- We do not need to counter hate speech only because it is bad for minorities. We need to counter hate speech because of its social consequences to entire societies. Of course, minorities and the victims of hate speech are damaged and affected by hate speech. But society at large, and entire communities, are also affected because hate speech creates a processes where people begin to accept dehumanization and insensitivity as norms of conduct.

Dialogue

- Dialogue is a process that requires trust and respect; once parties agree to engage in dialogue, they tacitly enter into an agreement to trust each other and to speak opening with each other. Local level

dialogues and community peace projects, therefore, are spaces where local officials and local actors can come together to not only resolve conflict, but create durable relationships

- 7 take away points:
 - Dialogue gets a peace agreement
 - Facilitates agenda development through consensus and constituency building
 - As communication vessel to access information and exact accountability
 - As entry for greater participation in official structures and mechanisms
 - As powerful persuasive tool for quick policy response
 - As embodied in solidarity action
 - As a moving spirit for teaching humanity

b) What have we learned about building national architectures?

Hate speech

- We have learned, through the Kenya case, that international pressure to get leaders to back away from hate speech works. Therefore we need national architectures that have bodies dedicated to this (see possible GAAMAC contributions below)
- Critical Race Theory teaches us that when a minority community that is considered inferior in society speaks up, their voices will be considered inferior. Therefore, we need to find ways for dominant, majority voices to speak up on these issues (see possible GAAMAC contributions below).

Dialogue

- We have learned that there is an important connection between the dialogue processes and traditional practices: dialogue is built around consensus building, and cultural traditions and beliefs that both groups share can be an avenue for getting people to discuss what they have in common. This benefits the dialogue immediately, but it contributes to strengthening social fabric and consolidating the gains of a peace processes afterwards.
- One technique is to encourage people to together think about how previous cultural practices were used to resolve conflicts, and then to encourage parties in conflict to use these own methods

- For example, traditional practices are often used to seal agreements in dialogue and conflict mediation, such as inter-marriages between parties, or traditional land dispute resolution mechanisms.

Bringing together lessons on hate speech & dialogue

- From a peacebuilder's perspective, the question is how can we monitor our societies for hate speech. Legislation becomes important; but we also need to find ways of transforming narratives of victimhood and hatred, and working with people who are positioned socially to disseminate messages of tolerance and inclusion (which is especially important in the case of local communities that do not have access to media or internet).

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

Hate Speech:

- GAAMAC can create or support non-legal, social initiatives to counter hate speech. Examples of successful campaigns:
 - a) Myanmar Flower Sticker campaigns to counter negative images of Muslims
 - b) International Federation of Journalists adopted the "Brussels Declaration": recommendations to journalists and their unions aimed at upholding the principles and ethics of responsible journalism
 - c) "Get the Trolls Out!" responds to the concerning rise in antisemitic attitudes and statements
 - d) Press Ethics Code of Benin: "Journalists must refuse to publish any incitement to tribal, racial and religious hatred. They must make a stand against all forms of discrimination" (art. 10).
 - e) Singapore's Internet Code of Practice considers as prohibited material what "glorifies, incites or endorses ethnic, racial or religious hatred, strife or intolerance" (art. 4 (2)(g)).
 - f) Civil society movement in Japan to almost fully eradicate hate demonstrations in Tokyo's Korea town

g) Dune Voices: a network of journalists in Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Libya shed light on underreported issues from the Sahara

- GAAMAC can promote people to denounce hate speech and defend those who are the targets of hate speech.
- GAAMAC can help show that there is a majority of people who belief in peace and tolerance, and to not allow our public discourses to be hijacked by hate groups.
- GAAMAC can develop a panel to support independent observatory bodies investigate hate speech, observe the media, and forward complaints to relevant international and national bodies.
- GAAMAC can develop commissions to focus on addressing history narratives that are the primary drives of hate speech, such as helping reform history text books.
- GAAMAC can lobby social media companies to address hate speech on their networks.

Dialogue

- GAAMAC can help promote the inclusion of dialogue processes within National Architectures because dialogue is a valuable tool for generating policy recommendations and building trust between participants.
- Dialogue is embodied in solidarity actions, and dialogue such as interfaith becomes especially important for accessing cultural aspects of dialogue, and attempt to blend traditional and legal aspects of dialogue.
- GAAMAC can help make dialogue processes sustainable by bringing in local voices, and helping to document the best practices of peacebuilding in history books and popular memory. This can help make the case that dialogue is something worth investing resources in.

Bringing together lesson of hate speech and dialogue

- GAAMAC can help get people to embrace principles of tolerance.

- Dialogue and engagement with civil associations, sports groups. Etc., is important to support.
- GAAMAC should hold a session in GAAMAC III on how dialogue can be used to counter hate speech.