

□ **The Responsibility to Protect Minorities and the Problem of the Kin-State** United Nations University – Institute for Sustainability and Peace

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*Overview*

Genocide and ethnic cleansing have all- too-clearly demonstrated the dangers of failing to protect minority groups. A “kin-state” with strong ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic links to a minority population abroad, may be well-placed to assist in its protection. But unilateral interference by kin-states can raise tensions with host-states, endangering international peace and security. If a state neglects its primary responsibility to protect minorities under its jurisdiction, the subsidiary responsibility lies with the international community as a whole, not the kin- state in particular. Kin-state interest in minorities abroad must be pursued through constructive engagement, rather than unilateral interference. At the same time, international and regional organizations must build domestic state capacity while strengthening the tools and political will to deliver timely collective responses when states fail in their responsibilities. Bilateral and multilateral mechanisms alike can counter nationalist rhetoric and policies by emphasizing that a diverse, well- integrated society is in the interest of both the majority and minorities. **Read the full [policy brief](#) .**