

Stanley Foundation Courier—Is human protection a priority? *The Stanley Foundation fall 2010 Courier issue reflects on the protection of civilians through four different articles and perspectives.* Genocide and Mass Atrocities Must Be Strategically Addressed, By Keith Porter

(...) Prevention can be advanced by full implementation of the **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** that includes promoting the acceptance of states' sovereign responsibilities to ensure basic human protection, improving international efforts to help states meet those responsibilities, and ensuring an effective multilateral response when states prove unwilling to honor them. Pre-crisis atrocity prevention efforts can also be improved by promoting greater international coordination in mobilizing mechanisms for Peacebuilding (...)

(...) A sad truth is that countries emerging from conflict and ethnic division are also among the most likely to slip back into war and potential genocide. This reality was acknowledged by the United Nations five years ago when they created the Peacebuilding Commission to specifically work with post-conflict societies (...)

(...) The weakest states in the world, rather than the strongest, are the most at risk for violent conflict and spreading strife and instability (...)

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What's an Ounce of Prevention Worth? By Rachel Gerber

On June 10, the international community found itself once again befuddled as political instability morphed into open, ethnically targeted violence in Kyrgyzstan (...)

(...)
R2P provides a framework to prevent and halt mass atrocities by identifying the mutually reinforcing state and international responsibilities to protect civilian populations against genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes. These responsibilities include not only the obligation of the state to protect its population but also an international commitment to assist states to fulfill this responsibility, and a promise to respond when a state fails to do so (...)

(...) The only element of the

R2P

framework that has attracted less attention in terms of implementation than immediate protection assistance is its promise to help states prevent mass atrocity crimes “before crises and conflicts break out.”

The responsibilities inscribed in the

R2P

framework are preventive, not simply responsive. The doctrine supports a spectrum of engagement that provides the international community tools to address the potential for mass atrocities well before slaughter begins. These tools range from targeted development and protection assistance for those unable to protect their populations, to various means appropriate to confront those unwilling to do so (...)

(...) The capacity to protect civilian populations from genocide and other mass atrocities is much narrower than governance capacity writ large. It is also conceptually distinct: few would accuse Stalinist Russia of state weakness, while the Yugoslavia that hosted the Sarajevo Winter Games in 1984 could hardly be labeled a failing state in terms of broad governance capacity (...)

(...) It would be foolish to assume that all states cited for high civilian atrocity risk have simply been waiting for the international community to lend a helping hand. For many states, perpetration of mass atrocities reflects unwillingness, not inability, to protect civilian populations.

However, for every Sudan there is a Kyrgyzstan. The international community must begin to think seriously about its obligation to prevent genocide and other mass atrocities and provide such governments with the support they require, before bodies are in need of burial (...)

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to view the other two articles:

- An Experiment in Building Peace: As the UN takes stock of five years of Peacebuilding, lessons are being learned in four African nations.
- Halting the Slide Toward Failure: Journalists examine international interventions in four countries in crisis