

A Common Standard for Applying R2P R2P Ideas in brief Vol. 2 No. 6 Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

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The Responsibility to Protect provides an opportunity to overcome international inaction in exceptional situations of genocide or other mass atrocities. During R2P's first decade, however, its unique potential to unite approaches in addressing mass atrocity situations has been hamstrung by uncertainty over whether a situation comes within the R2P remit - from early prevention to the use of force as a last resort. This uncertainty stems - in part - from the fact that as a preliminary matter, there is not a common standard against which to measure and analyze incoming information to determine whether R2P applies (...)

(...) The main issue on the table has been the legality, morality and prudence of intensely coercive forms of intervention, particularly military action. This late term engagement with R2P continues in spite of the fact that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and UN member states have unambiguously stated that prevention is the single most important dimension of R2P.

Our research aims to advance the ability of states, regional organizations, international institutions and civil society to focus on the practical implementation of measures to prevent mass atrocities through R2P at a mid-term stage when such prevention has a reasonable prospect of success. The research seeks to achieve this aim by developing a standard and its guiding principles, against which relevant actors can assess incoming information in respect of R2P to determine when they should act pursuant to their R2P commitments (...)

A widely-accepted standard specifically developed for R2P will assist in the effort of preventing atrocities and protecting populations in four ways:

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Promote the full continuum of R2P action

(...)

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Target application of limited resources

(...)

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Legitimizing effect...transparency, credibility and accountability

(...)

•

Reduce Uncertainty

(...)

Standard and Guiding Principles

The Standard aims to provide a systematic and coherent approach to incoming information that can be utilized on a case by case basis for assessment and analysis of potential R2P situations. The application of the standard aims to increase transparency and accountability to deliberations on the application of R2P to a given situation to promote consistent State action (...)

The Standard and the guiding principles take the salient features of, and build upon, well-established national and international practice in determining existing risk levels as a basis for assessing future developments with an acceptable level of certitude (...)

Principle 1: Determination of Relevant Human Rights Violations (...)

Principle 2: Determination of the level of gravity or seriousness of potential violations (...)

Principle 3: Application of R2P (...)

Principle 4: Determination whether a State is “manifestly failing” to meet its responsibility to protect (...)

(...) In the context of R2P, the

level of harm that would occur must be, by definition, exceptionally grave

, as described by the crimes considered at the apex of international crimes. At the same time, engagement to prevent such crimes must be measured and reasonable in light of the precautionary principle as well as the prerogatives of sovereignty.

This briefing has outlined how a common standard of assessment against which to analyze incoming information, developed specifically to engage the normative concerns of R2P, will assist in the effort of preventing atrocities and protecting populations. It does so by promoting the full continuum of R2P actions, by enhancing the credibility of engagement taken within the R2P framework, by establishing the type and scope of evidence analyzed to reach a judgment, and finally by reducing the depth and duration of debate that is centered on whether R2P

applies, to focus at an earlier stage on appropriate action to protect lives.

Read the
[report.](#)