

**R2P Ideas in Brief: Growing Ethnic Tensions in Myanmar and Indonesia – R2P and Promotion of Communal Dialogue** Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect 25 April 2013

Ethnic tensions in Myanmar and Indonesia have been growing within the last year. The outbreak of communal violence in Meiktila in central Myanmar last month indicates that animosity between Muslim and Buddhist communities is spreading and intensifying since mid-2012. In Indonesia, violence against minority groups by militant Islamists is exacerbated by the lack of resolve on the part of the national government to enforce the rule of law in general and ensuring the protection of rights and freedoms of minorities in particular.

This policy brief examines recent developments in Myanmar and Indonesia in the context of ethnic tensions and how their respective governments have responded so far in averting further communal violence. It argues that growing ethnic tensions in these two countries should serve as a wake-up call for governments in Southeast Asia to take more seriously their primary responsibility in preventing the escalation of communal conflicts that could lead to mass atrocity crimes. Specifically, it underscores the need for adopting an atrocity prevention lens in dealing with ethnic conflicts, which is key towards implementing R2P and in protecting minority groups. It recommends, among other things, the importance of promoting inter-faith dialogue and community-based peacemaking in order to prevent the escalation of further communal violence. A regional response, through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is also necessary, particularly in the case of addressing the Rohingya issue, as it has become a transnational security concern in this part of the world.

What follows is a brief overview of recent ethnic violence in Myanmar and Indonesia. (...)

**Read full**  
[policy brief](#)

.