

7th Biennial

**RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Conference

May 6-7, 2025

Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana



CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Editors: dr. Vasilka Sancin, dr. Maša Kovič Dine



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Abstracts of
Conference Proceedings

Seventh Responsibility to Protect
in Theory and Practice
Conference
May 6 and 7, 2025

Editors:

Dr. Vasilka Sancin
Dr. Maša Kovič Dine

Publisher:

University of Ljubljana
Faculty of Law
Poljanski nasip 2
1000 Ljubljana
Irena Kordež, Director

Online edition
Free copy

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About the Conference



The R2P Conference Series

2025 marks 20 years on from 2005 World Summit when the international community adopted the principle of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. The Responsibility to Protect has developed from its initial idea, faced the inaction of states and the United Nations Security Council, but has also seen progress in its implementation through 'R2P Focal Points' and in the UN General Assembly, as well as other parts of the UN system, and within regional organisations.

The Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice Series is a series of biennial international interdisciplinary conferences established by the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The series is devoted exclusively to the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P/RtoP), with the objective to create an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to engage in an interdisciplinary academic debate on the theoretical and practical implications of the principle. The conferences are organised as a forum where international experts and researchers have the opportunity to participate in a discourse on issues related to R2P and its applicability in practice.

The first conference was organised in 2013, followed by conferences in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023. This year we organize the conference together with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

Conference Organizers

Organizers



**Conference Chair:
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Member of the Department of International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana

Conference Program Overview

MONDAY, MAY 7, 2025

16:15 Optional program (see last page)

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2025

8:30-08:55 Registration

9:00-9:15 **OPENING REMARKS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA, H.E. TANJA FAJON**

9:15-10:0 **OPENING PANEL** (Part I)

10:00-10:15 Group photo

10:15-11:00 **OPENING PANEL** (Part II)

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-12:00 **Protecting both Free Expression and Victims of Crimes: twin missions**

12:00-13:00 **TWENTY YEARS OF PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING R2P BY SLOVENIAN DIPLOMATS**

13:00-14:00 Lunch break

14:00-16:00 **PANEL 1**

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-18:00 **PANEL 2**

20:00 **Conference Dinner with the keynote by the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, Mo Bleeker**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025

09:30-11:45 **PANEL 3**

11:45-12:00 **Closing remarks**

12:00-14:00 Break for lunch

14:00-17:00 Optional afternoon program

(NON)IMPLEMENTATION OF R2P ACROSS THE WORLD

The Responsibility to Protect and Russia's War Against Ukraine: Invoking Protection - Waging Aggression

Nazarii Stetsyk

This contribution is devoted to refuting the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as one of the many false and manipulative justifications for the use of force against Ukraine – an act that has been unequivocally and unanimously recognized by the international community as aggression. The focus is not on challenging the normative validity of the R2P doctrine itself, but rather on substantiating the factual falsity of the Russian claims and the abusive misapplication of R2P, based on legal assessments provided by mandated international organizations.

Such a refutation – though seemingly obvious and unambiguous to many – remains important given that the Russian authorities extensively exploit and distort the language and constructs of international law, including R2P. This manipulation serves both to garner support and justify their actions to a domestic audience in Russia, and to influence external actors who may lack familiarity with the local context.

The report begins with President Putin's official address, which was transmitted to the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice in the genocide case (Ukraine v. Russian Federation), where statements appeared to invoke arguments associated with the R2P doctrine. To counter these claims, the analysis draws on official data from international missions operating in Ukraine at the outset of the full-scale Russian invasion, including the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (OHCHR) and the OSCE. It also examines the Ukraine v. Russian Federation case under the Genocide Convention, particularly the ICJ's Order on Provisional Measures issued on March 16, 2022, which clearly refutes the prerequisites for the application of R2P.

Beyond addressing the factual baselessness of invoking R2P, the report highlights its misapplication – especially the failure to exhaust peaceful means of resolution and the absence of UN Security Council authorization, both of which are essential for its lawful implementation. Special attention is paid to the manipulative use of the so-called "invitation to intervene" by the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, recognized by Russia as independent states only two days prior to the use of force. Furthermore, Russia's conduct and its declared aims to "denazify" and "demilitarize" Ukraine reveal its true objective – the seizure of power and regime change – an objective which runs counter to the humanitarian spirit and lawful aims of the R2P doctrine.

In this way, the falsity of Russia's claims is comprehensively and systematically debunked, and the manipulative and distortive nature of its invocation of R2P is demonstrated.

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At the same time, the Ukrainian case is situated within the broader framework of the R2P doctrine. It offers a meaningful contribution to ongoing debates and longstanding discussions regarding the admissibility and normative credibility of R2P itself. On one hand, the case provides further support to pessimistic critics who argue that R2P has once again been misused by a powerful state as a pretext for violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a weaker one. On the other hand, it may also bolster the position of more optimistic proponents of the doctrine by highlighting the unequivocal international condemnation of Russia's actions and the unified rejection of R2P as a legitimate justification. Thus, an analysis of the Ukrainian case enables a critical re-examination of entrenched views concerning R2P's strengths and limitations, and invites reconsideration of its potential role in contemporary international law and practice.

Biography:

Nazarii Stetsyk is a graduate of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine, with a BA (2006), MA (2007), and PhD (2011). He served as Associate Professor at the Department of Theory and Philosophy of Law (2015-2024) and Vice-Dean on Scientific Activity at the Faculty of Law (2018-2021). Stetsyk has held several prestigious international fellowships, including the Fulbright Scholar Program at the University of Notre Dame (2021), the Kellogg Institute for International Studies (2023), and the IIE Centennial Fellowship (2022-2023). Since 2024, he has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Vienna and Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Fundamental and Human Rights under the IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund Fellowship, conducting a course on legal responses to the Russian War of Aggression against Ukraine. He is an expert on judicial reform, constitutional justice, and human rights, working on projects for the Council of Europe, the European Union, and USAID. His research focuses on human rights, case-law development, and judicial dialogues on human rights.

Sovereignty Reconsidered: Regional and Grassroots Approaches with Reference to Syria

Esmail Alsaghir

My thesis critically examines how the Arab Spring and Syrian conflict challenge traditional notions of sovereignty, particularly through grassroots governance structures that emerged during the 2011 Syrian Revolution. This directly engages with Francis Deng's "sovereignty as responsibility", the conceptual foundation of R2P.

The dominant principles of sovereignty are profoundly influenced by the Western, state-centric traditions rooted in Westphalia. These frameworks overlook the legal, historical, cultural and social specificities of non-Western regions, which has informed how the UN and Western states have addressed the Arab Spring with little attention to context-sensitive conflicts. Syria reveals the inadequate nature of applying Western perspectives to non-Western states as the UN failed to stop the violence of the Assad regime and other involved parties during the Revolution. While alternative frameworks, such as R2P, have gained traction in recent decades, they too remain state-focused and top-down in nature. My Ph.D. project seeks to question the marginalisation of alternative traditions of sovereignty and advocates for a framework centred on individual voices.

Through a critical examination of colonial legacies, regional dynamics, and grassroots movements, this study addresses what a grassroots, non-Eurocentric view of sovereignty might look like and how it might challenge contemporary understandings of sovereignty. To answer this, my research mobilises a view of sovereignty grounded in Arab thought that challenges Western biases. The thesis uses the example of the Syrian conflict to analyse both current discourses and the implications of grassroots-oriented approach. The Syrian conflict highlights a dialectical nexus between Arab states' theoretical conceptualisation of sovereignty and Syria's lived political realities.

My research draws on Arabic legal and political traditions and encourages international lawyers to consider sovereignty from other traditions, such as those rooted in the lived realities of individuals and communities. My work challenges current debates by reframing sovereignty as a bottom-up process that centres the needs and voices of the most affected communities. This vision not only encourages scholars to rethink sovereignty from other perspectives but also contributes to broader debates in international law by addressing the shortcomings of dominant approaches and offering new insights for understanding sovereignty in various contexts.

Biography:

Esmail is a final-year Ph.D candidate at the University of Warwick, where his research bridges Arab and Western traditions in International Law. His work explores international humanitarian law, human rights law, international criminal law, and Transitional Justice, with a particular

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focus on sovereignty and revolutionary movements. He examines how legal frameworks engage with political transformation in the Arab world, especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Esmail also works as a Senior Graduate Teaching Assistant at Warwick and has undertaken training in negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution.

Abandoning Responsibility? The Collapse of R2P in Post-Withdrawal Afghanistan

Ramin Mansoory.

This paper interrogates the failure of the international community to invoke or operationalize the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in Afghanistan following the Taliban's takeover in August 2021. Despite clear and ongoing violations of human rights—including gender-based persecution, targeted violence against ethnic and religious minorities, and suppression of civil society—there has been little to no serious engagement with the R2P framework in international forums. This paper argues that Afghanistan represents a critical turning point in the normative credibility of R2P, where the international community has effectively abandoned its commitment to protect vulnerable populations in the face of geopolitical fatigue, institutional paralysis, and waning humanitarian consensus. Through a critical reading of post-2021 developments, including UN Security Council responses, aid conditionality, and the absence of enforcement mechanisms, the paper maps the practical collapse of R2P in this context.

Biography:

Ramin Mansoory is an Afghan scholar with academic backgrounds in International Law and Diplomacy (Balkh University) and International Relations with a focus on counterinsurgency and security policy (University of Warsaw). He has worked across diverse regions in the areas of diplomacy, humanitarian response, international security, legal affairs, and governance reform. His experience includes both field operations and policy-level engagements with governments, international and civil society organizations. Ramin is also the co-founder of a non-profit organization that supports vulnerable groups in remote areas, advocates for protection, and promotes quality education for girls. His research focuses on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), humanitarian governance, and EU migration and border policy within evolving global security frameworks.

Applying R2P to North Korea's Human Rights Situation

Kim Tae-Hoon

Despite the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in 2005, atrocity crimes remain widespread globally. The 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) report recommended applying R2P to North Korea's human rights situation, but these measures have not been implemented. As a result, North Korean human rights have continued to deteriorate, culminating in the recent deployment of North Korean troops to Kursk to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine, threatening world peace. Marking R2P's 20th anniversary in 2025, this paper examines more effective ways to apply R2P to North Korea's human rights crisis.

Biography:

Kim Tae-Hoon is the former presiding judge of the Seoul District Court; Former commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea; Former chairperson of the Special Committee on North Korean Human Rights and Reunification of the Korean Bar Association; and currently the President of People for Successful COrean Reunification(PSCORE), and North Korean Human Rights Cooperative (NKHRC).

R2P TOOLBOX - CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and other International Crimes

Marko Rakovec

The Ljubljana-The Hague Convention is a landmark treaty designed to help bring justice to the victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, and to significantly reduce impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes. The Convention fills a gap in international law and justice by clarifying and strengthening the duties and obligations of states to assist each other in cases of international crimes. It provides a "toolbox" to combat impunity for these crimes and strengthens the role of national judicial systems in prosecuting them. The fight against impunity has long been a priority of Slovenian foreign policy. This is also reflected in the fact that Slovenia was part of the core group of MLA Initiative states (together with Argentina, Belgium, Mongolia, the Netherlands and Senegal) since 2011 and organised the diplomatic conference for the adoption of the MLA Convention in Ljubljana at which the Ljubljana – The Hague Convention was successfully adopted by consensus on 26 May 2023. Marko Rakovec served as the Secretary General of the Diplomatic Conference. By the time the Diplomatic Conference opened, 80 countries had endorsed the MLA Initiative. It brought together 53 supporting countries, 15 observing countries, seven international organisations and ten civil society organisations. To this moment 40 countries have signed the Convention.

Biography:

Marko Rakovec is a Legal Adviser of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia. He has been employed at the Ministry since 2001, where he has held various positions. He served as Secretary General of the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of the Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and other International Crimes (MLA Convention) held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 15 to 26 May 2023. He is the agent of Slovenia in the Ukraine complaint against the Russian Federation for alleged violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide at the International Court of Justice. In 2018 he was appointed head of the Slovenian delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Association (IHRA). Between 2018 and 2020, he served as the Director of the Human Rights Department. Prior to that, he served as the Deputy Ambassador to Croatia (2013-2018), Legal Adviser at the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN in New York (2005-2009) and in different departments within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Toolbox Used in Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Evaluating Türkiye's Policies Through the Lens of the Responsibility to Protect

Meltem Sarıbeyoğlu-Skalar

The Syrian refugee crisis, one of the most pressing humanitarian emergencies of the 21st century, has posed complex legal, political, and humanitarian challenges. Türkiye, hosting the largest Syrian refugee population under a sui generis temporary protection regime, has played a pivotal role in shaping regional and international responses. This paper examines Türkiye's domestic policies toward Syrian refugees through the lens of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework, particularly focusing on the obligations to prevent, react, and rebuild in the context of mass displacement and atrocity risks.

Adopting a comprehensive legal and political analysis, this study evaluates Türkiye's evolving refugee policies – from the initial open-door approach based on humanitarian considerations to more securitized strategies involving voluntary returns and safe zone policies. Special attention is given to the Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, and the broader geopolitical dynamics influencing Türkiye's refugee management, including its interactions with the European Union and the utilization of refugee flows as strategic leverage.

While Türkiye's early response, characterized by inclusive access to health, education, and labor markets, reflects an alignment with the preventive and humanitarian dimensions of R2P, subsequent measures raise concerns regarding compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and the voluntariness of returns. The analysis draws on critical reports highlighting deficiencies in the guarantees of safe and dignified return, and assesses the implications of Türkiye's practices for the operationalization of R2P outside armed intervention contexts.

By framing refugee protection as an essential component of atrocity prevention and post-crisis reconstruction, the paper argues that Türkiye's experience illustrates both the opportunities and limitations inherent in implementing R2P through non-coercive, state-led mechanisms. It emphasizes the necessity of strengthening international burden-sharing and enhancing legal safeguards to uphold the rights of displaced populations. Ultimately, this study offers a critical perspective on how domestic migration governance intersects with global norms of protection and responsibility in contemporary forced displacement crises.

Biography:

Meltem Sarıbeyoğlu-Skalar is a professor of Public International Law at Marmara University Faculty of Law. She earned her law degree from Marmara University Faculty of Law in 1998, followed by a master's degree at Marmara University's European Studies Institute and a Ph.D. at the Social Sciences Institute. In 2000, she worked at the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights for one year. She was awarded the title of Associate Professor in Public International Law in 2016 and became a full

professor in 2022. She is currently conducting research at the Faculty of Law at the University of Ljubljana with the support of the TÜBİTAK 2219 Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program.

Sanctions as the R2P Toolbox Measures

Maruša T. Veber

Sanctions have become a common measure of institutional and unilateral responses to violations of international law, including in the context of the four mass atrocity crimes enshrined in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. As a third pillar collective action of the international community adopted without the consent of the concerned State, sanctions represent an important alternative to the coercive military actions. However, the adoption of such measures often gives rise to a range of international legal issues, particularly in circumstances where recourse to the United Nations Security Council, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, is not feasible. This paper focuses on sanctions adopted by international organizations in this (non-UN) context and has the following three-fold contribution. First, it analyses their legal positioning within the R2P, the UN Charter, institutional law and the general international law on responsibility. Second, it will demonstrate that in practice international organisations such as the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and the Arab League (AL) commonly adopt sanctions in response to R2P atrocities in various forms, e.g. financial sanctions, targeted sanctions and membership sanctions. Third, while sanctions are typically employed as a means of responding to protect populations from grave harm, this paper will argue that they also appear to be used in the context of the responsibility to rebuild in the aftermath of R2P situations. This will be demonstrated by case study on the EU sanctions against Russia, which include proposals for the adoption of sanctions in the form of the confiscation of property to secure reparations.

Biography:

Maruša T. Veber, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Ljubljana, where she also obtained her PhD (summa cum laude). She currently leads a postdoctoral research project on the topic 'Seizure of State-owned and Private Property under International Law: Mapping the Applicable Legal Rules and Identifying Conditions that Frame and Limit Seizure of Frozen Assets in the Context of the Situation in Ukraine (2023-2025)' funded by the Slovenian National Research Agency. Previously she was a visiting scholar at various international Universities and Institutes, including the University of Auckland Law School and Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. She is a rapporteur at the Oxford International Organizations database, the editor-in-chief of the Ljubljana Law Review (LLR) and a member of various associations, including the Multidisciplinary International Network on Sanctions (MINOS).

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES TO R2P

Legal consequences of using population attrition techniques in armed conflicts and the risk of Genocide

Michele Cannella

Modern armed conflicts increasingly feature strategies that undermine the resilience of civilian populations, often through indirect means such as the restriction of essential resources, the blockade of humanitarian aid and the control of access to food, water and medical care. These practices - referred to here in the abstract as population attrition techniques - raise important questions about their compatibility with international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention).

Using the ongoing conflict in Gaza as a central case study, the analysis places current events in a broader historical and legal context that includes past instances in which unlawful methods of warfare, such as starvation, have been used. It considers whether restricting or delaying humanitarian access during hostilities may constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, drawing on the provisions of Article 54 of Additional Protocol I (1977), which prohibits the use of starvation as a method of warfare, and Article 70, which regulates humanitarian assistance. In this context, the analysis assesses how legal norms relating to the protection of civilians operate in scenarios where essential supplies are restricted or blocked and civilian infrastructure is severely affected by the conduct of hostilities.

The work will also examine the ongoing proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case of South Africa vs. Israel, where allegations have been made of possible violations of the Genocide Convention in relation to the military operations in Gaza. Of particular importance are the interim measures ordered by the Court from 26 January 2024, which include an obligation to permit the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to prevent acts that may fall within the scope of Article II of the Genocide Convention. These developments underscore the importance of preventive obligations and judicial oversight in addressing the consequences of population attrition during armed conflict.

By analysing this case, the proposed study aims to contribute to the understanding of whether existing international norms sufficiently regulate the use of methods of warfare that indirectly affect the survival of civilians, and whether such conduct may give rise to state or individual responsibility under international law. While the focus is on the Gaza context, the broader implications of the legal framework are also considered, including the evolving standards for prevention, accountability and reparation in situations where military tactics risk

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undermining the core protection of civilians and their rights.

The study concludes by reflecting on the adequacy of current legal mechanisms to address the humanitarian consequences of modern warfare, and the potential need for a more coherent and enforceable set of international norms to prevent and respond to practices that progressively erode civilian populations during armed conflict.

Biography:

Michele Cannella is a PhD Candidate in International Law at the University of Palermo. She earned a master's degree in Law with honors, completing a thesis on the limits of self-defense in international law. During his final year at university, he undertook a research period abroad in the United Kingdom, where he delved into the implications of the use of force and the rules of international humanitarian law. As a doctoral candidate at the University of Palermo, he is now engaged in his research project "Typologies of Genocide and International Law."

Poverty as a Consequence of Population Attrition Techniques in Armed Conflict: An Analysis of the International Legal Duties

Alice Stillone

Poverty is a global phenomenon that threatens the universality of human rights by undermining the economic, social, civil, and political rights of individuals. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of poverty, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defined it in 2001 as "a human condition characterized by chronic or persistent deprivation of the resources, opportunities, choices, security, and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, political, and social rights."

Given the causal link between war and poverty, this work aims to assess the existence of international obligations to combat poverty – or at least certain forms of it – resulting from armed conflicts.

In particular, this study will examine the existence of the duties to prevent and repair poverty within the framework of International Humanitarian Law and International Law.

Regarding the duty to prevent certain forms of poverty, the analysis will be conducted starting from the population attrition techniques currently employed in armed conflicts, which aim at exhausting the civilian population for military purposes (such as the blockade of humanitarian aid, or starvation as a method of warfare). Considering that such conduct necessarily results in the impoverishment of the civilian population during and after an armed conflict, the first part of the contribution will assess the compatibility of these practices with both the general and specific provisions of International Humanitarian Law.

The exploration of whether a duty to repair poverty exists in International Law attempts to assess how the damages, resulting from the aforementioned violations, can be "repaired". The hypothesis of a duty to repair will be examined considering poverty as damage under Article 31 of the Draft Articles on State Responsibility, caused by the aforementioned methods of warfare. In conclusion, this work will study the role the International Court of Justice (ICJ) can play in interpreting and applying international law in the context of armed conflicts, considering the complexity of quantifying damage and determining appropriate reparations in the post-conflicts' contexts. To this purpose the analysis will then focus on the jurisprudential developments, particularly in *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)*, where the ICJ uses the global sum criteria to quantify damage caused by illegitimate military attacks. Populations affected by armed conflict, even when compensation for the harm suffered is provided, often find it impossible to use it effectively for reconstruction. This inability stems from the destruction of essential infrastructure, which affects both the material ability to initiate reconstruction projects and access to the services and resources needed to ensure sustainable recovery.

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Biography:

Alice Stillone is a PhD Candidate in International Law at the University of Palermo. She earned a master's degree in International Relations with honors and completed a thesis on the Judicial Assessment of Genocide. She then furthered her studies with a second-level master's in International Humanitarian Law and Armed Conflict, also with honors, and produced a thesis on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017) within the framework of international non-proliferation instruments. She is currently working on a research project entitled "Gender Binarism in the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights: New Parameters and Guarantees in Light of Queer Legal Theory."

Action for Peacekeeping as a mechanism for enhancing R2P norm strength

Andraž Melanšek

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, established at the 2005 World Summit, embodies the international community's commitment to prevent mass atrocities—including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Despite its foundational principles, R2P's implementation has been affected by inconsistent application and perceptions of partiality, thereby challenging its legitimacy. The literature suggests that without robust micro-level implementation mechanisms, R2P remains vulnerable to politicization and selective enforcement.

Drawing on Antje Wiener's norm theory, which posits that norms are dynamically constructed through meaning-in-use and contested through everyday practices, this paper conceptualizes R2P as an evolving norm within global security. In this context, the United Nations' Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative—and its subsequent evolution, A4P+—can be examined as micro-level implementation practices with the potential to reinforce R2P's normative strength.

A4P embeds standardized protocols, accountability mechanisms, and feedback loops into peacekeeping, creating structures for legitimacy-enhancing contestation and refining R2P's commitments. This structured contestation, both proactive and reactive, ensures the continuous adaptation of protection measures, thereby strengthening R2P's legitimacy. A4P+ accelerates this process by targeting intervention inconsistencies and realigning operational practices with R2P's core principles. By addressing gaps in implementation, A4P/A4P+ not only corrects immediate shortcomings but also has the potential to support a long-term structural shift in peacekeeping norms, reinforcing R2P's credibility and effectiveness in global security governance.

Specifically, A4P streamlines peacekeeping operations, improves interagency coordination, and bridges normative aspirations with practical political processes by converting broad commitments into actionable procedures. In doing so, it mitigates discretion and political bias, ensuring that the duty to protect is both tangible and enforceable on the ground. This paper argues that integrating A4P practices not only addresses operational inefficiencies but also contributes to the normative strength of R2P, ensuring its relevance and robustness in the complex arena of international security.

Biography:

Andraž Melanšek (MPhil Cantab) is a PhD student in Defence Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, where he studies the robustness of international norms in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations. He graduated from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana in 2006 with a BA in International Relations, and a year later completed his MA at the University of Cambridge. After graduating, he worked for more than a decade at the UN in the field of

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international peace and security and administration. During his career, he served in Vienna, Haiti and Kosovo, as well as in New York, Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali. He is involved in research projects in the field of defence studies on a regular basis and occasionally lectures and trains soldiers on gender equality and the protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping operations.

Public Participation in R2P early warning mechanisms

Maša Kovič Dine

While the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine has advanced significantly, public participation in atrocity early warning mechanisms remains underdeveloped. This presentation argues that atrocity prevention frameworks can draw critical lessons from participatory practices institutionalized in environmental governance and sustainable development regimes. Instruments like Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the Aarhus Convention, and the Escazú Agreement have embedded public participation as a procedural right, operationalizing community monitoring, citizen science, grievance mechanisms, and technology-assisted participatory reporting.

The 2023 UN Secretary-General's report on early warning and atrocity prevention explicitly highlights the need to broaden participation and strengthen civil society partnerships in early warning and response systems. Yet, most atrocity early warning remains expert-driven and state-centric. This presentation explores how participatory rights and operational models from environmental regimes can be adapted to atrocity prevention, emphasizing the normative basis for integrating civil society input and the practical mechanisms required to make participation meaningful.

Further, while public participation must remain human-centred, technology can play a supportive role. AI-powered tools can assist in identifying concerns over hate speech and incitement on social media, offering a better insight into the sentiment of the public and its alarms over messages that could contribute to the four R2P crimes. However, such technologies must be used cautiously, with strong ethical safeguards and a clear understanding that they cannot replace the legitimacy and knowledge provided by participatory human engagement. The presentation concludes by proposing to incorporate public participation into R2P early warning as a procedural element, such as setting up a formalized civil society input. This approach recognizes participation as essential to effective, legitimate, and accountable atrocity prevention.

Biography:

Maša Kovič Dine, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana. After graduating at the University of Ljubljana, she continued her studies at the University of Toronto, where she also worked a few years at the Research Group for G7/G8 countries. She defended her PhD thesis at University of Ljubljana, where she teaches a wide array of courses. She has been a visiting scholar at the School of Law, University of Miami and is a regular guest lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of Antwerp, Belgium. She is a member of the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law and its Rights of Nature Task Force, the secretary of the Slovene branch of the International Law Association and a member of its Committee on Urbanization and International Law.

Implementation of R2P in outer space

Anže Mediževc

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as an international norm was unanimously adopted in 2005 at the UN World Summit, which witnessed the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government to record. While R2P has been repeatedly referenced and reaffirmed in UN resolutions, including by the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council, the discourse on R2P rarely refers to a State's obligation to protect its populations against threats of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity originating elsewhere than planet Earth.

The purpose of this contribution is thus to address several aspects of the functioning of R2P in space-related contexts, focusing on possible threats emanating from outer space and the State's corresponding duty to address them. In this framework, threats may be either connected to natural causes, involving in particular the dangers presented by Near Earth Objects (NEOs) to the populations of a State, or man-made, including for example attempts to exercise crimes against humanity with selected space weaponry. Both aforementioned situations will be scrutinised through the lens of R2P, elaborating on the applicability of the principles vis-à-vis the two different space-related sources of threats, thereby offering greater clarity on the applicability and implementation of R2P in outer space.

Moreover, since outer space is already regulated by international space law and its set of rules and agreements that govern how States operate in space, it is important to consider any existing international norms which may affect the implementation of R2P in space. Provided that R2P applies to a certain source of threats stemming from outer space, the aim of this contribution is also to assess whether the Outer Space Treaty (1967) imposes any limitations on a States's means and methods in the exercise of R2P to counter space-related threats against its populations on Earth.

Biography:

Anže Mediževc, LL.M. (College of Europe, Bruges, Summa cum laude), LL.B. & LL.M. (University of Ljubljana, Summa cum laude), is a Teaching Assistant and Researcher at the Department of International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana. For his thesis at the College of Europe, he was awarded the Stefan Zweig Prize for the best thesis on an interdisciplinary subject (Evens Foundation). He is a Rapporteur at the Oxford International Organizations (OXIO) database and advises the Slovenian Government in proceedings before the International Court of Justice. He co-founded the Chagos Archipelago Research Group at the University of Ljubljana and is a member of the international Western Sahara Research Group. His main research areas include the relationship between international law and EU law, EU external action, as well as critical approaches to international law.

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