OPERATIONALIZING R2P

An Integrated Approach for the Responsibility to Protect

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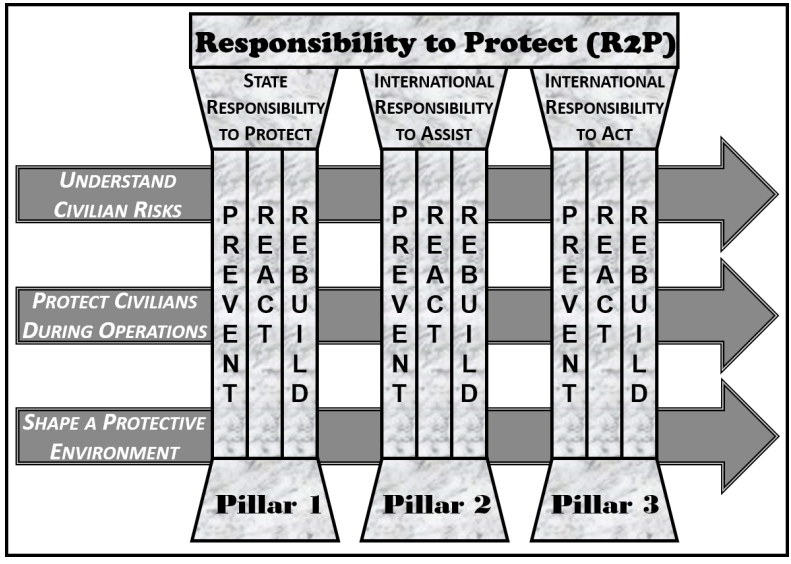
SUMMARY

This paper discusses the two prominent frameworks for the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which refers to the obligation of states toward their populations and toward all populations at risk of genocide and other mass atrocity crimes. The 2001 R2P report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty presented three phases for R2P (prevent, react, rebuild). Subsequently, the United Nations articulated R2P in three pillars (state responsibility to protect, international responsibility to assist a state, and international responsibility to act when a state is unwilling or unable to do so).

R2P can be viewed as a subset of the Protection of Civilians (PoC). The paper explains how three PoC fundamentals (understand civilian risks, protect civilians during operations, and shape a protective environment) can be employed from the local through political/strategic levels to operationalize R2P.



Operationalizing R2P: An Integrated Approach for the Responsibility to Protect

Introduction

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) refers to the obligation of states toward their populations and toward all populations at risk of genocide and other mass atrocity crimes.[1] In its 2001 *Responsibility to Protect* report, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) argued that sovereign states had a responsibility to protect their populations from avoidable catastrophe, especially mass atrocities, and that the international community assumes that responsibility when a state is unwilling or unable to do so.[2] The report further described three phased elements of R2P (prevent, react, and rebuild). Although many equate R2P with military intervention, the ICISS report repeatedly stressed that R2P is primarily about prevention, with military measures being the rare exception.

R2P was endorsed at the 2005 UN General Assembly summit, and the UN subsequently framed the concept in three pillars:

- Pillar 1: State Responsibility to Protect. Every state has the Responsibility to Protect its populations from four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

- Pillar 2: International Community Responsibility to Assist. The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility.

- Pillar 3: International Community Responsibility to Take Action. If a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter.[3]

While the ICISS R2P phases and the UN pillars are different, they are compatible. For example, the ICISS prevent/react/rebuild phases provide an effective way for individual states and the international community to approach each of the UN's three pillars.

Policy Considerations

R2P is a function of policy choices, not legal obligations. For example, nations will not automatically undertake costly military commitments every time a mass atrocity situation looms. Theoretically, they will balance often-competing national interests against resultant actions that may be some combination of diplomatic, informational, military, or economic tools.[4] Often, non-military measures will predominate.[5] Policymakers will wrestle with three problems: determining that a mass atrocity situation exists; deciding what (if anything) to do about it; and mobilizing adequate resources rapidly enough to make a difference. Domestic political considerations will always be a major factor in these calculations.

There are three general approaches to a mass atrocity situation, broadly determined by the nature and level of tools used, the amount of risk involved, and the degree of encroachment on the host nation's sovereignty. An important consideration is whether a nation will act unilaterally, or as part of a coalition, or under the

auspices of the UN or other international organization. These general approaches include:

- **Suasion**. This approach is primarily diplomatic, and includes inducements and pressure to convince would-be perpetrators and their supporters to act responsibly. Threats to deter unacceptable behavior may be included, as well as potential rewards such as economic benefits. While diplomatic tools comprise the centerpiece of the approach, other tools can be used in support.

- **Compellence**. This approach consists of tools to punish, isolate, undermine, intimidate, or apply significant pressure to coerce perpetrators. Tools employed include diplomatic, legal, economic, financial, and other measures that increase the anticipated and actual costs to perpetrators and supporters of activities related to mass atrocities. Limited military tools such as shows of force and blockades may also be considered within this approach.

- **Intervention**. This approach commits military and other resources to prevent or stop mass atrocities. Military forces could be employed in a peacekeeping role or to conduct combat operations if directed. The intervention could be consensual (with the agreement of the host nation and, potentially, other parties to the conflict) or coercive (without the host nation's consent). The intervention could be of short duration or entail an extended commitment to support peace building.[6]

Concerns about ineffectiveness, unintended escalation, collateral damage, protests from domestic or international audiences, the prospects of a potential quagmire, losses, resistance, and negative second or third-order effects will likely affect decision-making. Potentially, these concerns and risk-aversion could result in policymakers' reluctance to act.[7]

R2P and PoC

R2P is largely a subset of the Protection of Civilians (PoC), a broader topic which consists of efforts to reduce civilian risks from physical violence, secure their rights to access essential services and resources, and contribute to a secure, stable, and just environment for civilians over the long-term.[8] Mass atrocities are extreme civilian protection situations and include widespread and often systematic acts of violence against civilians or other noncombatants including killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, or deliberately inflicting conditions of life that cause serious bodily or mental harm.[9] While R2P addresses the extreme civilian protection issues of mass atrocities—which are frequently understood to include genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing—PoC encompasses a multilayered set of issues including physical protection from imminent violence (including but not limited to mass atrocities), civilian casualty mitigation, provision of basic necessities, protection of human rights, and enabling conditions that safeguard civilians.

Although PoC is commonly associated with peacekeeping operations, it is also an important consideration in other contexts including armed conflict, mass atrocities, and fragile states with

conditions of violent instability and poor governance. Many concepts developed for PoC or R2P are relevant to the other field. This paper explains the potential operationalization of R2P by using one such PoC framework with three dimensions:[10]

- Understand Civilian Risks
- Protect Civilians during Operations
- Shape a Protective Environment

This framework—Understand, Protect, Shape—can complement the ICISS and UN R2P approaches, as suggested in Figure 1, and is applicable to states fulfilling Pillar 1 and international actors concerned with preventing or halting mass atrocities in accordance with Pillars 2 and 3.

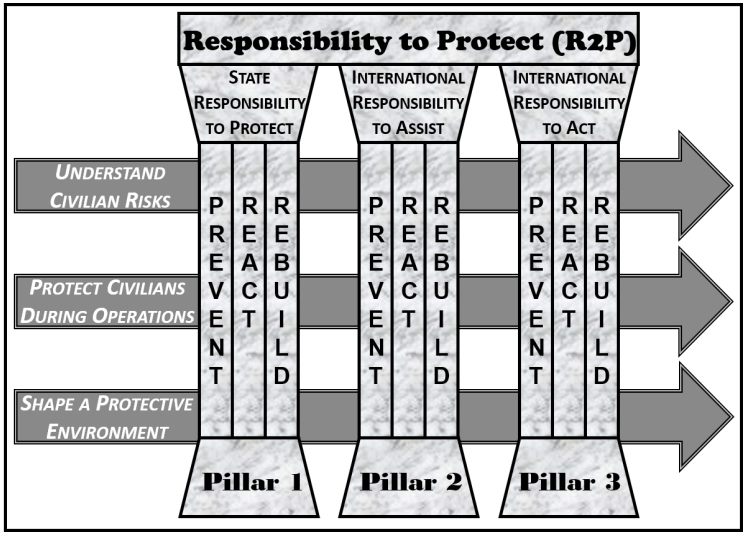


Figure 1: Operationalizing R2P

Figure 2 below depicts in greater detail how the three PoC dimensions can support R2P. The framework's first dimension, *Understand Civilian Risks*, entails comprehending the operational environment, the relevant actors, the dynamics, and civilian vulnerabilities and threats. It also includes information management and conducting effective assessments regarding mass atrocities. This dimension is vital at all levels, from the local/tactical through the political/strategic.

The second dimension, *Protect Civilians during Operations*, refers to planning, preparing, and conducting activities that directly protect civilians from mass atrocities. The term "operations" as used here refers to actions by civilian and police organizations, as well as military. It is translatable to the political/strategic level in the sense that governments and international organizations authorize diplomatic, informational, military, or economic measures to mitigate mass atrocities.

The third dimension, *Shape a Protective Environment*, includes information activities, engagements with key leaders and the population, comprehensive coordination among protection actors, building partner capacity and local communities, and fostering a legitimate state that reduces the risk of future mass atrocities. Like the other two dimensions, it has multi-echelon applicability from the local/tactical levels through the political/strategic.

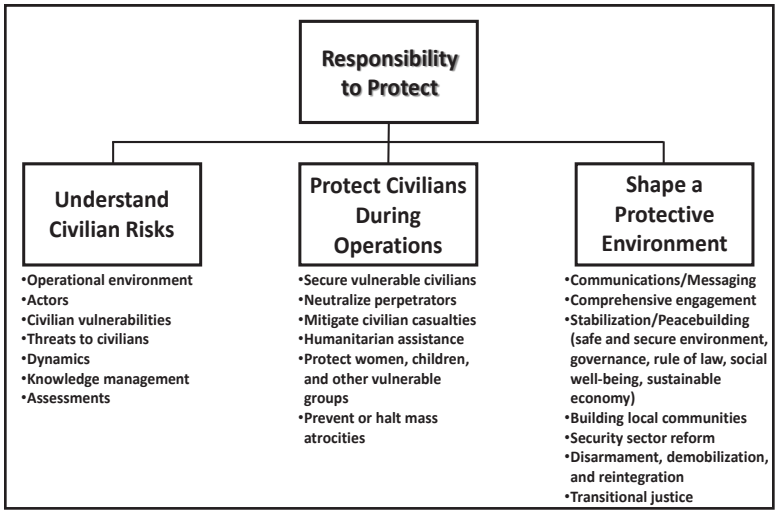


Figure 2: Operationalization Dimensions

Understand Civilian Risks

Protection actors must comprehend the operational environment, the relevant actors, the civilian vulnerabilities and threats, and the situational dynamics. They must obtain knowledge and manage information regarding these variables; for example, military and police organizations conduct intelligence operations, and diverse protection actors may share relevant information in some circumstances. Additionally, they conduct assessments of the situation as well as the effectiveness of their own efforts. Host state actors must understand how situational factors affect mass atrocity risks so they can meet their obligations under Pillar 1 (State Responsibility to Protect). Likewise, such situational understanding is critical for international actors in support of Pillars 2 and 3. This dimension is vital to prevent, react to, and rebuild from mass atrocities effectively. Situations will constantly change,

however, and protection actors must remain current in their understanding of the variables shown in Figure 3 so that they can anticipate and adaptively mitigate mass atrocity risks.[11]

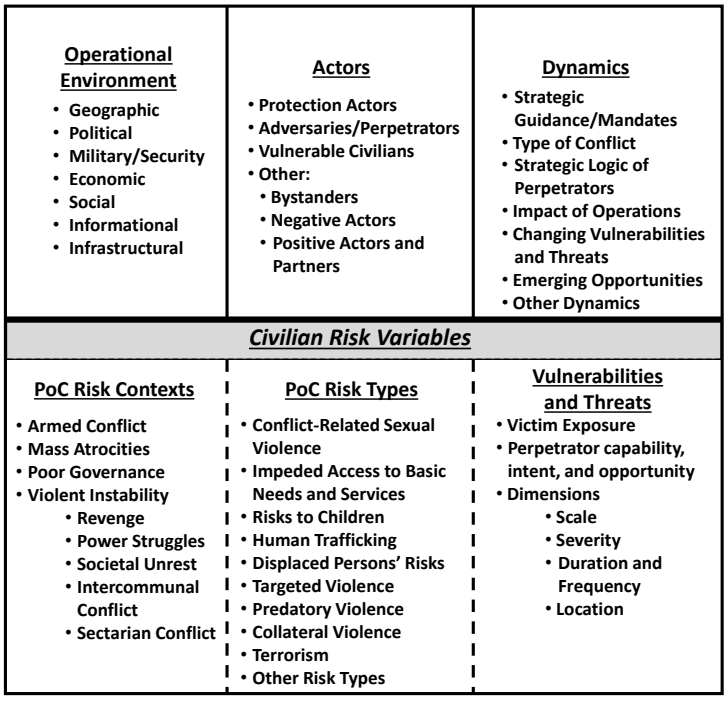


Figure 3: Situational Variables

Operational Environment

The operational environment includes geographic, political, military/security, economic, social, informational, and infrastructure (GPMESII) categories. It is important to understand how these relate to the likelihood of mass atrocities and any efforts to mitigate them.

Geographic factors such as terrain, water, climate, and natural disasters can have a powerful impact on civilian vulnerabilities, the ability of perpetrators to conduct mass atrocities, and operational capability to protect civilians, as support for civilians isolated in remote areas may be delayed. Civilians located in open areas may receive help more readily, but they could also be easier targets for perpetrators. Access to water can often be a source of conflict and water pollution can pose a more serious threat to civilians than violence. On the other hand, excessive water pooling can cause pestilence, disease, and flooding. Weather and seasonal changes can threaten the well-being of civilian groups vying for resources and open land. Extreme weather often isolates populations, thus preventing their access to basic needs and services.

Political issues arising out of frictions due to boundaries, sovereignty, ideology, and the struggle for political power can result in violence between groups, potentially leading to mass atrocities. In mass atrocity situations, ethnic frictions are often manipulated by leaders for political purposes. Efforts to prevent or respond to mass atrocities may be constrained and shaped by local, regional, national, and international political contexts.

Protection actors must take into account the military/security factors such as the size, organization, locations, activities, capabilities, vulnerabilities, objectives, and intentions of armed groups. These may include military, paramilitary, police, intelligence services, and criminal groups. Armed groups have the capability to threaten civilians, protect civilians, or both. In a lawless environment, the population could be vulnerable to decentralized armed groups conducting acts such as

murder, rape, robbery, and kidnapping on a wide scale.

Economic issues, including illicit economic activity, affect the population's welfare and can provide incentives for armed conflict and mass atrocities. Armed conflict and natural disasters can further disrupt normal livelihoods and create hardship. Illicit activities such as human trafficking, kidnapping, theft, looting, extortion, corruption, narcotics trafficking, and black marketeering typically flourish during such periods of instability and are often propagated by organized criminal groups.

Social factors can affect the likelihood of mass atrocities and must be considered in any prevention and response efforts. Ethnic, religious, gender, regional, or other social divisions often create tensions and motivate inter-group conflict. This could displace large numbers of civilians and further increase their vulnerability.

Information is an important consideration both for perpetrators of mass atrocities and protection actors. Informational factors include audiences, messaging, and means of delivery. Audiences could include the local population, host-state leaders, adversaries, international audiences, and the leaders and populations of countries relevant to the situation. Messages could convey the measures taken to prevent mass atrocities or expose perpetrators and their supporters. They should also promptly counter "hate media" that could exacerbate divisions or incite mass atrocities. Appropriate communication means (e.g., radio, internet, or crowd-sourcing) should be used to reach intended audiences.

Infrastructure may affect how perpetrators conduct mass atrocities; for example, limited road networks could allow perpetrators to establish checkpoints to seize victims. Perpetrators may destroy infrastructure to deprive victim groups of essential services. Infrastructure will also be a key consideration in any international response efforts. Infrastructure damaged during conflict could pose threats to civilians and impede later recovery efforts.

Actors

An understanding of the different actors is essential to comprehend potential vulnerabilities and threats, as well as the role some groups may have in reducing concerns about mass atrocities. Broadly speaking, actors with a role in mass atrocity situations may be categorized as follows:

- Protection actors—those who prevent or halt mass atrocities, or who provide direct assistance to vulnerable populations.

- Adversaries/perpetrators—those who conduct mass atrocities, are threats to do so, or who oppose protection actors.

- Vulnerable civilians—those at risk of being victims of mass atrocities.

- Other actors:

    - Bystanders—those who avoid involvement.

    - Negative actors—those who provide material, financial, political, or sanctuary

support to perpetrators, or who contribute to conditions that make mass atrocities more likely.

- Positive actors—those who provide support to protection actors or vulnerable civilians.

These categories may be fluid; for example, a particular group could be a bystander today and become a perpetrator in the future. Spoilers, power brokers, and individuals such as corrupt politicians may create or exploit conditions that contribute to mass atrocities. In intercommunal conflicts, opposing groups could be both vulnerable to and perpetrators of mass atrocities. In operationalizing R2P, one objective is to influence nations, groups, or individuals to become positive actors or protectors.[12]

Civilian Vulnerabilities and Threats

Mass atrocity situations often include a wide variety of risk types, with the widespread, deliberate killing of civilians being the most prominent. Typically, this is accompanied by sexual violence, impeded access to basic needs and services, risks to children (such as recruitment as child soldiers), human trafficking, displacement, targeted violence against selected individuals such as political, social, or religious leaders, predatory violence, collateral violence, and terrorist acts. In addition, other risk types could include food and water insecurity, adverse health effects, adverse environmental impacts, adverse societal and economic impacts, destruction of cultural heritage, property disputes, border tensions, corruption, and regional instability.

Protection actors must be alert to the types of risks in specific situations and understand the civilian vulnerabilities and threats. They should also be aware that the local population's perspective of vulnerabilities and threats may differ from that of international actors. Circumstances differ and could change; for example, women, children, elderly, infirmed, or disabled individuals are often vulnerable, but in some cases military-age males may be the most likely targets of perpetrators. Protection actors must anticipate the dimensions of civilian vulnerabilities and threats, specifically:

- Scale—the number of affected civilians.
- Severity—the level of violence against civilians and civilian depredations.
- Duration and frequency—length of time and rate of occurrence.
- Location—where violence is committed against civilians.

Dynamics

Conflict dynamics will present ever-changing challenges including new vulnerabilities and threats, as well as new opportunities that can be capitalized upon. Dynamics are the major influences that affect the overall situation and potentially include strategic guidance and mandates, the type of conflict, the strategic logic of perpetrators, and the impact of the military force's own operations.

Strategic mandates and guidance provide the political and legal authorities but may be subject to change. Different protection actors should ideally have a good working relationship and shared understanding, but may operate under dissimilar mandates from their respective authorities.

Conflicts—such as inter-state war, proxy war, civil war, insurgency, secessionist or irredentist struggles, or terrorism—can create conditions that result in mass atrocities. Conflicts could emerge from a variety of causes including failed state situations or political instability after natural disasters. While 'conflict prevention' and 'mass atrocity prevention' are not synonymous, conflicts can easily result in mass atrocities if perpetrators deliberately target populations to achieve their objectives.

Dynamics can also refer to major changes in the operational environment, the actors, or the civilian vulnerabilities and threats.

Knowledge Management

Protection actors must gather, analyze, and disseminate information regarding mass atrocities. Military and police intelligence processes should be calibrated to include mass atrocity situations to provide early warning and guide effective operations. Civilian organizations will require their own processes for gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information.

Ideally, protection actors should share information, but this requires the cultivation of relationships and mutual trust. Military organizations will often be constrained by their classification procedures while

civilian actors may be reluctant to exchange information and compromise their neutrality or operational security. Nevertheless, protection actors should strive to develop formal and informal information-sharing mechanisms that help prevent mass atrocities while protecting information sources and methods.

Assessments

Protection actors should assess potential mass atrocity situations to gauge early warning indicators, understand the circumstances if mass atrocities occur, and assess the performance and effectiveness of their own activities. Assessment includes monitoring, evaluating, and recommending or directing action. Research suggests that mass atrocity situations share common characteristics, and several useful frameworks exist that provide potential early warning indicators.[13]

In addition to general assessments regarding the mass atrocity situation, assessments can also be conducted on particular topics. For example, it may be useful to assess host-state policing capabilities including the number of police, their organization, training, special capabilities, status of equipment, and their human rights record. Assessment frameworks should be comprehensive and informative, but should avoid being overly-cumbersome, especially for those in the field who often must provide the required information while contending with more immediate concerns.

Protect Civilians during Operations

Policymakers must decide what actions (diplomatic, informational, military, or economic) they will authorize to prevent or respond to mass atrocities.

Within the parameters of policy decisions, military, police, and civilian organizations all have a potential role in protecting civilians from mass atrocities, though their roles may vary under the different R2P pillars and whether the objective is to prevent, react to, or rebuild from mass atrocities. Some key areas include planning and preparation, the actions of different organizations, and the mitigation of specific risk types.

Planning and Preparation

All protection actors need to plan appropriately to ensure their organizational activities adequately address the potential for mass atrocity prevention and response. This essentially requires situational understanding of the civilian risks, as discussed earlier. Protection actors must also identify options based on the operational tools available and synchronize their ends, ways, and means. Plans may address known situations or potential contingencies and the available tools (e.g., diplomatic, informational, military/security, economic, or humanitarian) vary by the type of organization.[14]

Unprepared organizations may be unable to address civilian vulnerabilities and threats and could themselves pose a threat to civilians or make mass atrocities more likely. Preparation may include acquisition of personnel (especially leaders, but also specialists such as interpreters), training, equipping, funding, and establishing operational procedures.

Military Operations

Domestic military forces (under Pillar 1) and international military forces (under Pillars 2 and 3) can be used to prevent mass atrocities in the following ways:

- Monitoring a situation.
- Supporting/enabling other protection actors (such as diplomatic missions or local security forces.
- Conducting a show of force to deter potential perpetrators.
- Preparing for contingencies, including coercive intervention.
- Conducting limited operations to protect victims or neutralize perpetrators. Limited operations may also include peace operations or preemptive actions.[15]

When military forces react to mass atrocities under Pillar 1 (domestic militaries) or Pillar 3 (international militaries) their operational concept may incorporate one or more of the following approaches:

- **Area Security**. Establish control and prevent mass atrocities over a large area with sectors assigned to dispersed units.
- **Clear-Hold-Build**. Focus initially on securing key areas within the force's capability, then gradually expand security to other areas.

- **Separation**. Establish a buffer zone between perpetrators and vulnerable populations.

- **Safe Areas**. Provide local security for areas with high densities of vulnerable civilians, such as camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

- **Partner Enabling**. Support host-state security forces or other actors that prevent or halt mass atrocities through their operations.

- **Containment**. Influence perpetrator behavior through preemptive and retaliatory strikes, raids, and other measures to deter violent acts against civilians.

- **Defeat Adversaries**. Attack perpetrators to eliminate their ability to threaten civilians.

Whether a particular military action is preventive or responsive depends on its intended objective. The UN's four-phased model for using force (assurance/ prevention, preemption, response, and consolidation) provides a useful framework for military operations.[16] Military forces can be used defensively to protect vulnerable civilians, offensively to neutralize perpetrators, and can conduct stability actions to prevent and rebuild from mass atrocities. It may be impossible to counter every adversary that is conducting a direct act against civilians, and it may be necessary to attack targets further up the "threat chain," such as logistical or command and control nodes.[17]

Military operations should be carefully planned and conducted in accordance with the law of armed conflict and the rules of engagement to avoid civilian harm. Civilians could be located with or close to intended targets, and in accordance with the principle of proportionality their potential harm must be balanced against the military necessity of conducting the attack. There may also be cases where civilians are used as human shields or are otherwise present against their will, and provisions should be required for the possibility that perpetrator ranks include child soldiers. Commanders should include nonlethal means, such as information activities and electronic warfare (e.g., jamming of media), in their efforts to neutralize or defeat their adversaries. Defensive measures such as the deployment of air and missile defense and counter-fire units can protect population centers if they are likely to be deliberately targeted by perpetrators.

Police Operations

Effective police forces are essential for protecting the population, maintaining public order, supporting good governance, and enforcing the rule of law. They are particularly instrumental at the community level, though national-level organizations are necessary to counter widespread networks and high-level perpetrators including those in government positions. Transitional public security arrangements will be an important focus area as civil control is progressively transferred from military units to police forces. The host nation's police forces may be culpable in mass atrocity situations, and international police agencies may be required to assume policing responsibilities and assist in reforming the state's police organizations until they can perform responsibly. An important issue

during international interventions is the authority of international police, or military forces, to detain perpetrators.

Police forces must establish a system for intelligence gathering and have sufficient presence to maintain understanding of local environments, usually through effective community policing initiatives. To the extent possible, their composition should be representative of the local population, including participation by minorities and women, as civilians will be more likely to voice their security concerns to police officers with the same ethnicity or gender. Police forces should understand and incorporate the unique needs of all members of their populations including traditionally disenfranchised groups. Police patrols are an integral part of preventing atrocities. They help to understand the situation, reassure the population, deter or defeat perpetrators, and provide area security. Police forces are particularly critical in maintaining order during public demonstrations and election periods which could aggravate tensions and potentially lead to mass atrocities.

Political and Legal Actions

Political and legal measures are among the most important efforts to prevent or halt mass atrocities and may include a combination of negotiations, inducements, and threats. They can be conducted at all levels from local to international. These measures are intended to encourage constructive action by all parties, gain support for efforts to mitigate mass atrocities, and dissuade undesired behavior by perpetrators and negative actors.

Specific actions may include diplomatic pressure, contacts and meetings, negotiations, fact finding missions, consensus building, organizational coordination, speeches, meetings with victim groups, the use of intermediaries, resolutions by international organizations or legislative bodies, coalition building, leader engagement, criminal investigations, legal actions, and sanctions or other isolation measures.

Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian action is designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies.[18] Mass atrocities are often accompanied by acute needs for essential goods and services. As civilians flee threats, they lose access to livelihoods, services, and support networks. Perpetrators may destroy sources of food, water, and shelter or otherwise purposefully restrict access to essential services.

Humanitarian organizations abide by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.[19] Humanitarian assistance includes distribution of food, water, shelter, medical care, and other items (such as blankets or cooking materials) to provide for essential needs as well as the necessary coordination, logistics, and communications. Some humanitarian actors also provide protection programming such as rights education, local conflict mediation, and trust building. Others monitor, report on, and conduct advocacy regarding the crisis. Humanitarian protection activities related to R2P include:

- Monitoring conditions of individuals and communities affected by conflict.

- Tracking displacement.
- Ensuring access to assistance.
- Collecting data and analyzing the threats to civilian populations.
- Providing support to especially vulnerable groups.
- Witnessing and documenting human rights abuses.
- Referring victims to services.
- Separating civilians from armed actors through relocation or evacuation.
- Negotiating cease-fires.
- Engaging with authorities and armed actors to remedy or redress harm.[20]

UN agencies, as well as international and local NGOs, have different governing and accountability structures. Many organizations may have different mandates, providing both short-term humanitarian relief and long-term recovery and development assistance which often contributes to long-term state sustainability.

Many humanitarian actors strive to remain neutral and independent to gain access to communities in need. This is especially important in politicized or conflict environments where political or armed actors do not respect international humanitarian law and target humanitarian workers, the assistance they

provide, or the communities they are trying to assist.[21] Humanitarian neutrality can be problematic when a conflict party is clearly intent on harming innocent civilians.

Humanitarian actors can be confused with participants in an armed conflict because military or other security forces also directly provide goods and services to communities or because some humanitarian organizations are funded by or otherwise associated with armed actors. Consequently, humanitarian agencies will have different interests and limitations regarding engagement with political and military actors, regardless of whether military actors have been tasked to facilitate humanitarian assistance or protect civilians.

Specific Risk Types

Mass atrocity situations typically include risks to children, conflict-related sexual violence, and threats to cultural heritage. While some protection actors specialize in mitigating these risks, all organizations involved in mass atrocity prevention and response should be aware of them.

Children are particularly vulnerable in violent situations as they are dependent upon others to provide care and could be easily impacted by dislocation and disruption to their normal lives. They face a multitude of threats including malnutrition, disease, psychological harm, separation from or loss of families, physical attack, unexploded ordinance, sexual abuse, child pornography exploitation, abduction, and forcible conscription as slaves, laborers, child-soldiers, or auxiliaries (e.g., lookouts, smugglers, suicide

bombers, or messengers). Girls are marginalized in some societies and may even be sold into bondage by their families. Protection actors should be aware of the six internationally-recognized grave violations against children: killing or maiming; recruitment or use of children by armed forces; attacks on schools or hospitals, rape or other sexual violence, abduction of children, and denial of humanitarian access.

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) refers to violent acts of a sexual nature, including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy enforced sterilization, mutilation, indecent assault, trafficking, inappropriate medical examinations, strip searches, or any form of sexual violence of comparable gravity. CRSV is often a deliberate strategy used by perpetrators of mass atrocities and is a frequent practice of undisciplined militaries, police forces, or other armed groups who believe they can act with impunity against vulnerable persons, particularly if the victims are from a group targeted during mass atrocities. Sexual violence is not simply a social problem; it is a crime against international human rights, humanitarian, criminal, and refugee law. While it is usually directed against women and girls, CRSV also includes assaults against men and boys. In many cases, CRSV will require responsive actions such as medical treatment for victims, inquiry or investigation, accountability of perpetrators, and remediation.

R2P may require the protection of a targeted identity group's cultural heritage, as perpetrators often attempt to eliminate any vestige of the group's existence. Cultural heritage is a consideration across the three UN R2P pillars and the three ICISS R2P stages. Cultural attacks may be an early sign of an impending

mass atrocity campaign, as is a concerted effort to ban a native language or traditional practices. Perpetrators may attempt to destroy worship houses, grave yards, historical sites, schools, monuments, or other locations. Cultural and religious artifacts may be stolen and sold on the black market. In the aftermath of mass atrocities, restoration of cultural heritage may be an important component of rebuilding a society.

Shape a Protective Environment

Mass atrocity prevention depends on the creation of a surrounding environment that ensures civilian protection. A protective environment applies to all three R2P pillars and, broadly speaking, is achieved through messaging, comprehensive engagement, and effective stabilization activities. An existing climate or culture may need to be changed to create a protective environment. Such a process may take time and will likely require four concerted lines of effort. Would-be perpetrators can also detrimentally manipulate these lines of effort and make mass atrocities more likely.[22]

- Laws and policies
- Institutions
- Public discourse (including statements from leaders)
- Education

Several elements are often essential to shape a protective environment. These include communications and messaging, comprehensive engagement among various actors, and stabilization (peacebuilding) efforts.

They are facilitated by building resilient communities and programs including security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and transitional justice.

Communications and Messaging

Messaging, or strategic communication, includes informing audiences, and/or influencing perceptions regarding a situation. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, every statement and action can be instantly monitored. Messaging can dissuade perpetrators and their enablers, influence other actors to behave positively, inform vulnerable populations, and increase support for mass atrocity prevention. It is also an essential tool for managing expectations, countering perpetrator narratives, and mitigating effects of incidents that result in civilian harm. Effective messaging magnifies the impact of other actions related to atrocity prevention. It is a continuous effort that should be incorporated into every activity to shape the environment, inform outside audiences, and enable subordinates. It can deter and preempt perpetrators when mass atrocities are imminent and call attention to ongoing mass atrocities that are occurring.

Effective messaging requires an understanding of the audiences, messages, and available methods. These three variables will likely result in different approaches, as a single information activity will seldom be effective. Audiences may include the general civilian population in the host state and its subsets (such as women), host-state leaders, victim groups, NGOs, perpetrators (leaders or followers) and other potential adversaries, bystanders, positive or negative actors, the media, international audiences,

and domestic leaders and populations in coalition states or troop-contributing countries. Messages may emphasize tolerance, reconciliation, accountability, legal obligations to respect international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL), international commitment and objectives, or may be intended to counter propaganda from perpetrators.

Delivery methods should be appropriate to the intended audience; for example, local populations can be reached by signs, leaflets, loudspeakers, newspapers, engagements during patrols, and radio or television broadcasts. In some cultures, radios and televisions may be the primary way to inform groups with whom participating organizations have limited contact (e.g., women). It may be effective to create radio or television stations, support their creation by host-state organizations, or otherwise obtain airtime. In many situations websites and social media can reach relevant audiences and should be created in different languages as appropriate.

Comprehensive Engagement

Comprehensive engagement entails cooperation between a variety of actors including government agencies, military and police forces, NGOs, international organizations, host-state organizations, the media, civil society, and businesses, among others. Mass atrocity prevention is a multidimensional challenge with military and nonmilitary aspects, and protection actors must cooperate to some degree even if they have dissimilar goals, priorities, authorities, and methods. Such coordination is essential to achieve an integrated approach to mass atrocity prevention, avoid gaps and redundancies, and resolve disagreements.

Organizational leaders should determine the possible and preferred level of cooperation with other actors. This determination is largely shaped by political guidance, will naturally change over time, and will be dependent upon how other protection actors view the desirability of a cooperative relationship. The overall operational-level determination may differ from that at local levels in certain areas. Topics for coordination may include information regarding civilian risks and needs, humanitarian space considerations,[23] planned operations, requests for assistance, transitions, and security concerns. It will eventually be important for host-state actors to assume ultimate responsibility for preventing mass atrocities, maintaining security, and achieving the desired outcomes necessary for an enduring protective environment. This can be problematic if host-state actors to be entrusted with the future are the same individuals who perpetrated actions against civilians in the past.

Different levels of integration include the spectrum of coexistence, communication, information sharing, formal coordination, and collaboration, as depicted in Figure 4. Higher levels of integration may be possible when organizations have common objectives and a mutual level of trust exists. In some cases, it is only possible or necessary to understand each other's objectives, requirements, capabilities, limitations, procedures, and terminology.

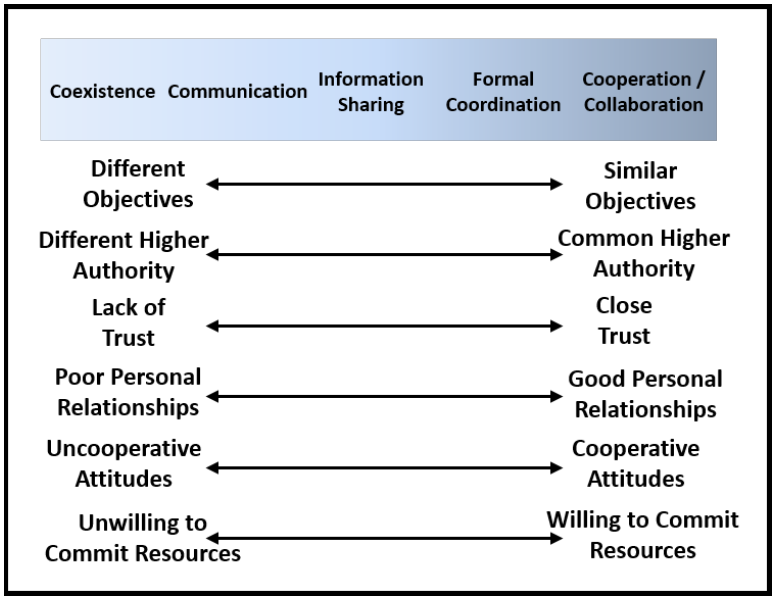


Figure 4: Integration Spectrum

Coexistence occurs when multiple groups are present in an area, but do not interact or communicate with each other. *Communication* occurs when parties have periodic contact such as meetings, but do not share substantive information on a regular basis, if at all. *Information sharing* entails the periodic exchange of substantive information, but those activities are likely to be circumspect and may not occur on a regular basis. *Formal coordination* is when parties regularly exchange information on a wide range of topics, to include some planned operations. Parties will generally answer most requests for information when they are reasonably able to do so. *Cooperation* represents the highest level of interaction that entails cooperation or collaboration, which could include jointly conducted planning and operations, collocation, a loosely collaborative relationship, or when military or police

forces occasionally provide direct security for the other protection actors. The potential level of integration is affected by the variables shown in Figure 4. Key among these are positive personal relations and trust, which will take time to cultivate.

Stabilization and Peacebuilding

Stabilization, or peacebuilding, addresses root causes of conflict or mass atrocities and are vital for civilian welfare. Five desired outcomes, including a safe and secure environment, good governance, the rule of law, social well-being, and a sustainable economy will help mitigate grievances that could result in conflict and mass atrocities.

Effective stabilization helps prevent mass atrocities and assists in recovery from such events. It is a lengthy process and, ultimately, the host-nation's leaders and population must be committed to stabilization efforts so they can be sustained after the withdrawal of external support. To this end, it is important to build up host-nation capacity by creating an environment that fosters institutional development, community participation, human resources development, and strengthened managerial systems. Building host-nation capacity also contributes to the development of the five desired outcomes.

A *safe and secure environment* includes the cessation of large-scale violence, public order, legitimate state monopoly over the means of violence, physical security, and territorial security.[24] It precludes the potential for mass atrocities in the near term and enables the other desired outcomes which address fundamental issues that can result in future mass

atrocities. Police, military, and other security actors play a major role, but other actors can be significant as well. **Security Sector Reform (SSR)**, often necessary for establishing a safe and secure environment, is the development of legitimate and accountable security institutions that provide effective internal and external security. SSR functional areas include institutional structure, resource management, operational capacity, and civilian oversight. These functional areas should all be addressed with a view towards preventing future mass atrocities. **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)** will typically be required to prevent mass atrocities and in their aftermath. As a highly politicized process, it will require careful planning and implementation, and should be integrated with SSR as well as any Transitional Justice measures (discussed below).

Good governance includes the provision of essential services, stewardship of state resources, political moderation and accountability, and civic participation and empowerment.[25] Governance includes the state's responsibility to protect civilians (Pillar 1), and transparent, accountable, and effective governance is critical to preventing mass atrocities. Civilians are often at risk under conditions of poor governance, such as in authoritarian regimes that violate human rights, or in failed and fragile countries with governments that are unwilling or incapable of preventing mass atrocities. Poor governance is manifested in corruption, incompetence, or oppression. It results in inadequate provision of essential services, thereby creating human suffering. Poor governance also results in dissatisfaction and grievances that can result in conflict and the potential for mass atrocities.

Rule of law includes just legal frameworks, public order, accountability to the law, access to justice, and culture of lawfulness.[26] It ensures that civilians are protected from human rights violations and crimes, that authorities behave properly, that perpetrators are deterred, and that individuals and organizations are held accountable. A perceived absence of justice can create grievances that lead to violence, vigilante justice, and mass atrocities. Rule of law is particularly vital for mitigating violence and other crimes against women and children and reducing corruption that undermines all desired outcomes. It is also essential for adjudicating grievances such as disputes over property rights and to ensure legitimate governmental, economic, and security activities. **Transitional Justice** measures are often appropriate in the wake of mass atrocities and include truth seeking (such as truth commissions), criminal prosecution, making amends, memorialization, institutional reform. Transitional justice programs should be integrated with SSR and DDR efforts.

Social well-being refers to the ability of the people to be free from want of basic necessities and to coexist peacefully in communities with opportunities for advancement. It includes access to basic needs and services, access to and delivery of education, the return and resettlement of those displaced by violent conflict, and social reconstruction.[27] The population must have access to adequate water, food, shelter, and health services as well as the requirements for human dignity such as human rights, education, and a hopeful future. Inadequate social well-being can trigger violence and conflict leading to mass atrocities, which in turn

often create humanitarian crises with acute water, food, and shelter shortages, large-scale population displacement, and the absence of critical health services. In addition to their own personal security, individuals will be concerned with the well-being of their families and communities when identity groups are targeted by perpetrators. Community building and the strengthening of civil society and legitimate police forces can help prevent mass atrocities. Local efforts are essential because community members have the presence, interest, and possibly the skills required, while credible national institutions may not exist.

A *sustainable economy* refers to the ability for the people to pursue opportunities for livelihoods within a system of economic governance bound by law and includes macroeconomic stabilization, control over the illicit economy and economic-based threats, market economy sustainability, and employment generation.[28] Economic considerations are relevant to all R2P pillars. Problems such as unemployment, inflation, and shortages of goods or services can result in grievances that result in identity groups being designated as scapegoats, potentially leading to mass atrocities. Large-scale violence disrupts market activity by destroying infrastructure and critical production facilities and driving away external investments. This creates a number of economic challenges ranging from depleted human capital, increased illicit economic activity, and debilitated economic institutions that are vulnerable to expropriation by illicit actors or spoilers. Deprivation results in civilian suffering including malnutrition, exposure, and illness. Without adequate economic growth, lack of employment opportunities can hamper DDR efforts and increase the likelihood that ex-combatants resume violence. It can also lead

to situations in which poorly-resourced security forces prey upon the population. Illicit economic activities such as human trafficking threaten civilians, and some industries (such as "conflict minerals" and security companies) may contribute to and profit from conflict. Rebuilding an economy often requires the involvement of international institutions, such as the UN Development Program and the World Bank, as well as foreign investors.

Tradeoffs, Challenges, and Risks

Tradeoffs

Tradeoffs occur when conflicting considerations exist and a balance must be struck. For example, peace and justice are both important objectives, but perpetrators may continue to commit atrocities if they fear that they will be held accountable for past actions if they do not win the conflict. Conversely, an amnesty may help achieve peace, but would subvert the idea of justice.

While host-state commitment is vital to prevent mass atrocities over the long-term, the country's officials and security forces may lack adequate will or capacity to do so, or may actually be perpetrators. Protection actors may have to balance atrocity prevention with other objectives, considerations, or interests. They must also balance immediate measures with long term efforts to ensure that adequate resources have been invested and that long-term goals are not continually subordinated to spontaneous crises that could easily consume all available capacities.

Challenges

Although each mass atrocity situation is unique, protection actors can anticipate four common challenges including lack of resources, harmonization difficulties, corruption, and constraints. These challenges become increasingly complex when efforts are extended beyond physical protection to the establishment of a protective environment necessary for long-term prevention of mass atrocities.

Protective capacities and capabilities depend on resources, characterized by factors such as numbers, types of organizations, funding, training, locations, equipment, logistics, and leadership. Inevitably, requirements will exceed resources, essentially resulting in increased risk. Mitigation approaches include prioritization of objectives, efforts, locations, personnel to support, vulnerable populations to protect, and actors to influence. Protection actors can also economize in non-critical areas, be flexible and adaptable, and develop expedient measures to improve capabilities and capacities.

Harmonization emphasizes the necessity for protection actors to work together even though they may have different interests and objectives and will be responsive to different authorities. However, PoC ultimately depends on effective cooperation between national and international civilian, police, and military organizations involved in mass atrocity prevention.

Corruption may be the biggest obstacle to achieving desired outcomes. It leads to the diversion of resources from their intended purposes, which can greatly undermine efforts to prevent mass atrocities, and can empower spoilers who jeopardize stabilization

and threaten responsible actors. Corruption can foster a culture of impunity rather than a culture of lawfulness. Local and international actors may have differing interpretations of corruption, creating a fine line between corrupt activities (such as bribes, misappropriation, and nepotism) and behavior with some level of cultural acceptability (such as gifts, reallocation of resources, and patronage).

Finally, protection actors may be constrained by mandate limitations or other restrictions placed by their political leadership or authorities, including the host government. These may include limitations on where operations are conducted, the types of activities permitted, restrictions on efforts such as intelligence collection or the ability to conduct investigations, and stabilization actions. Such restrictions may counter the needs on the ground regarding atrocity prevention. In particular, local armed groups may neglect their civilian protection responsibilities if they believe that international actors will permit them to do so.

Risks

In addition to the risk of mass atrocities and other civilian risks discussed earlier, protection efforts may be ineffective or result in violence escalation, mission creep, casualties, host-nation resistance, partner friction, negative second-order effects. There are also risks associated with inaction. Ineffectiveness could result from efforts that are too benign, inadequately resourced, or too late to prevent mass atrocities. Inadequate efforts can weaken the credibility of international organizations, possibly encouraging—rather than discouraging—future mass atrocities in the host state and elsewhere.

Strong actions may ignite a volatile situation, thus prompting or expanding mass atrocities. Perpetrators may accelerate their conduct of atrocities because they may perceive that a window of opportunity is closing. As a result of the multidimensional requirements to achieve desired outcomes, preventive efforts could result in an extended commitment as protection actors attempt to address root causes of conflict, inadequate capacity in a fragile state, and a variety of challenges and unforeseen second-order effects. Protection actors could experience casualties or equipment loss because of hostile acts or accidents. Different international and host-state protection actors may disagree on goals, methods, burden-sharing, mandate interpretation, or other issues.

Risk mitigation is a deliberate effort to assess what can go wrong and identify ways to reduce the likelihood and consequences. It can occur formally and informally at all levels and encompasses situations, needs, plans and operations, and specific decisions that are made. Typical risk mitigation approaches involve identifying risks, assessing probability and severity of risks, identifying mitigation measures, and implementing controls. Mitigation refers to efforts that prevent potential risks from occurring, reduce their impact should they occur, and respond appropriately. Mitigation measures may include training, contingency planning, key leader engagement, information activities, as well as reduced or expanded information sharing with other actors.

Conclusion

Mass atrocities are complex situations with political, informational, security, economic, and social considerations. Prevention, response, and rebuilding measures must likewise be multi-faceted, whether they are implemented by the host state under Pillar 1 or international actors under Pillars 2 and 3. The ICISS and UN R2P frameworks are complementary and both are instructive.

To integrate these frameworks effectively, protection actors at all levels must **understand civilian risks** through related variables such as the operational environment, actors, civilian threats and vulnerabilities. Information gathering and analysis processes, such as military and police intelligence, and efficient assessment mechanisms are vital to achieve this understanding.

Additionally, protection actors prevent or respond to mass atrocities through a variety of functions to **protect civilians during operations**. They may secure vulnerable civilians, dissuade or neutralize perpetrators, provide humanitarian assistance, or take other steps such as mediate disputes. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of women, children, minorities, and other potentially vulnerable groups. Armed protection actors must be careful to mitigate civilian casualties from their own actions.

Finally, protection actors should **shape a protective environment** with communications and messaging, comprehensive engagement, and stabilization (peacebuilding) activities. Among other things,

these efforts should address the root causes of mass atrocities and strive for long-term prevention beyond the timeframe of a crisis.

These three dimensions—understand, protect, and shape—can be used by international and host state actors to operationalize R2P from the local through the policy levels. Their integration with the ICISS framework and the UN's three pillars provide a comprehensive approach to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

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9. Adapted from Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.3 *Peace Operations*, B-7, and Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-07.6, *Protection of Civilians*, 2-4.

10. This PoC framework is used in the *Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide* as well as joint and Army doctrine on PoC. See Appendix B of JP 3-07.3 *Peace Operations* and ATP 3-07.6 *Protection of Civilians*.

11. Discussed in detail in the *Protection of Civilians Military Reference Guide*, 13-41.

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