

# "V 4 PREVENTION"

## SERIES OF WORKSHOPS IN VISEGRAD GROUP TO PREVENT MASS ATROCITIES

**Fourth workshop**

**5-7 October 2015**

OLD LIBRARY BUILDING  
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW (MAIN CAMPUS)  
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927  
**Warsaw, Poland**

**Report**

The following document contains a summary description of the main topics addressed during the various sessions of the "V4 Prevention" Workshop held in Warsaw from 5-7 October 2015.

## Day 1

### Morning session: What are genocide and mass atrocities?

- *Introductory session: presentation of the workshop programme and participants*

The opening session of the workshop enjoyed the outstanding contribution of Dr. Henryka Moscicka-Dendys, Polish Undersecretary of State, Dr. Tomasz Giaro, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw, and Dr. Elżbieta Mikos-Skuza, Director of the NOHA programme at the University of Warsaw. Dr. Gyorgy Tatar, Chair of the Budapest Centre, was joined by the three of them in the panel introducing the workshop.

The floor was then given to Mark Barwick, Policy Adviser on Programmes for Dialogue at the Budapest Centre, who facilitated the presentation of the participants and a brief discussion on their expectations and main topics of interest.

- *Historical and contemporary examples of genocide*

This session was led by Enzo M. Le Fevre Cervini, Director of Research and Cooperation at the Budapest Centre. Professor Le Fevre opened his lecture with an outline of how the notion of genocide evolved through time, starting from the definition of Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin. In 1944, Lemkin coined the word “genocide” to indicate a coordinated plan aiming at the destruction of a specific ethnic group. Le Fevre stressed that the notion of genocide does not necessarily imply physical elimination of a significant number of human beings, but can also be targeted at the culture of certain groups and be perpetrated against even one single individual.

Attention was then moved to the description of the 10 stages of genocide as classified by Gregory Stanton in 2013: from the process of identification and dehumanization of “the enemy”, building up to the preparation and physical extermination. As Le Fevre pointed out, among the different stages denial is one of the peculiar elements that define genocide.

The discussion continued with a brief overview on genocides occurred throughout history, from the early cases of Sparta and Carthage to the mass killings and violations of human rights taking place today in Syria and Iraq. Contrary to common understanding, among the long list of genocides perpetrated throughout the XX century, Cambodia cannot technically be defined as genocide since the groups subject to extermination were targeted for political and cultural reasons.

- *Legal and practical tools for prevention and punishment of genocide and mass atrocities at national and international level*

In this session, led again by Professor Le Fevre, attention was focused on the legal instruments provided by international law that punish genocide and mass atrocity crimes. In particular, the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was mentioned as the primary tool that offers a broadly recognized legal definition of genocide and specifies the punishable acts that fall under the notion of genocide.

Le Fevre concluded the session underlining the central role that civil society actors and civil servants can play in the context of genocide and mass atrocities prevention. Raising awareness and responsibility of institutions and government actors while fostering cooperation with and within civil society players shall be considered a key priority for the implementation of successful mass

atrocities prevention strategies.

### **Afternoon session: Addressing threats**

- *Countering extremism and hate speech in Poland with an outlook on the region*

Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias, Senior Researcher at the Poznan Human Rights Centre, opened this session drawing a preliminary distinction between the concepts of extremism and radicalism. The notion of “extreme” was defined as anything that falls far from our positions, whereas radicalism involves the refusal of compromise and moderation.

The lecture continued with an analysis on extremism phenomena spreading throughout European societies. A distinction was drawn between (1) extremist movements using slogans and ideas that are blatantly racist, hateful and incompatible with the basic principles of democracy and (2) right-wing institutionalized radical movements that adopt hate speech towards vulnerable ethnic or religious minorities. Possible counter actions and responses to address the challenges linked to the spreading of extremist movements were identified in political and legal domestic instruments as well as EU law principles concerning human rights protection.

Gliszczyńska-Grabias concluded the session with a case study analysis of Poland from a hate speech point of view. In Poland the current migration crisis is leading to the spreading of radical views and positions in the political arena as well as among civil society in general. An opinion poll carried out by the Warsaw University in August 2015 showed that 80% of Poles do not personally know a single Muslim, yet 73% has a negative attitude towards them.

- *Countering anti-Semitism, xenophobia and the far-right in Poland with an outlook on the region*

Rafał Pankowski, deputy editor for the Never Again Association in Poland, led this session. Mr. Pankowski briefly described the socio-political context that led to the proliferation of nationalistic and neo-Nazi movements throughout Germany and Poland during the 1990s. In 1996 the “Never Again Association” was created as a national umbrella of anti-Nazi groups with the aim of breaking the silence and raising awareness on far-right violence, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In recent years, the association has launched several successful educational campaigns such as “Music Against Racism”, which registered a positive reaction by the Polish musicians’ community, and “Let’s kick racism out of football”. The goal of this initiative is to engage Physical Education teachers in trainings aimed at raising their awareness on the issue related to the widespread racist culture present in today’s sports environment. Pankowski stressed the crucial role that youth educators can play today in obtaining a long-term impact on racism phenomena in football stadiums.

The strong sense of identity that binds together opposing team supporters allows for the creation of a strong contrast between the perception of an “us” as opposed to “them”, making football stadiums ideal recruitment spots for the far-right. Polish far-right movements are well established on national territory also thanks to the financial support originating especially from the broad Polish diaspora settled in the US. Pankowski concluded the session pointing out that in order to contrast the spreading of extremist political movements in Poland, it is not necessary to create new laws that punish racism, but rather focus on the effective implementation of the ones that are already in place.

- *EU Capabilities to prevent mass atrocities*

Gyorgy Tatar, Chair of the Budapest Centre, opened this session with an analysis on the distinction between Conflict Prevention and Mass Atrocity Prevention. Tatar pointed out that mass atrocities are a distinct phenomenon and not just a subset of violent conflict. In addition, since mass atrocities can occur outside times of violent armed conflicts or after fighting has ended, mass atrocity prevention may be needed even in situations requiring no conflict prevention.

The lecture then focused the attention on past and present international efforts addressing mass atrocity prevention. In this context, the designation of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P within the UN system constitutes a concrete example of the ever-growing attention on mass atrocities prevention by the international community. Moreover, Tatar stressed that the core priorities of the R2P principle over the next decade should call for a greater focus on prevention, enhancing political commitment at the national, regional and global levels.

The session continued with an insight on the EU Early Warning framework. In Tatar's view, the EU has the potential to become the leading provider and long-term warning intelligence on mass atrocities. However, the EU response system is currently too slow to react to early warnings as quickly as needed, mainly because it lacks a long-term, structural prevention strategy suitable to guarantee an effective and timely response to mass atrocity risks.

In conclusion, emphasis was put on political will as the key factor in implementing a successful mass atrocity response strategy. Tatar stressed that the more we shall be able to exclude political will and considerations from the decision-making procedures when dealing with mass atrocity crimes, the higher the chance to effectively intervene in the negative processes.

## Day 2

### Morning session: How to prevent?

- *Risk assessment of atrocity crimes: the methodology developed by the UN Office of the Special Adviser to Prevent Genocide*

This session was led by Mario Buil-Merce, Political Affairs Officer for the UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. Buil-Merce's presentation provided a detailed description of the specific mandate of the UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, which focuses mainly on (1) collecting information on massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law of ethnic and racial origin that, if not prevented or halted, might lead to genocide and (2) acting as a mechanism of early warning to the Secretary General.

Discussion was then focused on the concept of early warning, defined as the monitoring and channelling of relevant information on the presence or the absence of risk factors that could lead to atrocity crimes. Buil-Merce stressed that a well-functioning early warning system requires information to be transmitted far enough in advance in order to allow decision-makers to undertake timely and effective preventive measures.

The session was concluded with the description of the framework of analysis adopted by the UN to assess the risk of atrocity crimes. The framework consists of a list of risk factors that could be conducive to genocide. They are divided into common risk factors and specific risk factors, which explicitly apply to the cases of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Buil-Merce noted that even though not all risk factors are always present simultaneously, the more risk factors present, the greater the risk of mass atrocities occurring.

- *(Exercise) Assessment of specific country situations from an atrocity crime perspective and identification of possible options for response*

This session was led again by Mario Buil-Merce, which focused discussion on relevant policy options to respond to atrocity crimes in relation to the three pillars of the R2P principle. Criminalizing genocide and mass atrocities in national legislation and appointing specific national focal points were mentioned among policy options concerning national responsibility. As for policy options regarding international responsibility of the R2P, emphasis was put on offering capacity-building assistance as well as financial support to States aiming at strengthening human rights protection. Policy options concerning the third pillar of R2P regarding international response comprise more radical actions such as imposing sanctions or, in extreme cases, military intervention.

In the second part of this session, participants were divided into groups and presented with an exercise where they were invited to choose between two specific country situations, namely Myanmar and Syria, to assess from an atrocity crime perspective. Each group was provided with a socio-political background of the scenario selected and asked to identify potential risk factors that, if verified, could lead to a mass atrocity event, as well as possible policy options for response and the challenges to their implementation. Following a lively debate among participants, each group was called to produce a brief presentation on the findings emerged from the group discussion. Participants noted that almost all of the 10 common risk factors delineated by the UN framework applied in both case scenarios.

### **Afternoon session: Tools for response**

- *The EU Conflict Early Warning System: a tool for structural Conflict Prevention*

This session was led by Cornelia Kratochvil, member of the Security Policy and Conflict Prevention Directorate for the EEAS. Kratochvil provided an overview of how the Conflict Prevention division of the EU External Action Service deals with conflict prevention and early warning response. In particular, the EU Early Warning System (EWS) uses data sets from different sources such as UNICEF data on child mortality or World Bank data on a country's economic performance and through a statistical regression model assesses the likelihood of a conflict break out. The EU EWS "warning" combines quantitative and qualitative data, external analysis, internal assessments, open source information and intelligence-based inputs. The Early Warning mechanism is based on the data acquired and organized in a specific country Conflict Prevention Report, which is drafted and discussed in the context of a common decision-making process at the Directorate level.

Kratochvil concluded the session pointing out that early warning, capacity to respond and political will embody the three key interlinked elements essential for an effective prevention strategy. In particular, political will today appears to be crucial in the enhancement of decision-making processes.

- *Conflict Prevention and Early Warning: The OSCE's Toolbox*

David Champion, representative of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, led this session. Mr. Champion delivered a presentation of the OSCE structure with a particular focus on its conceptual approach to addressing crises and conflicts. The OSCE conflict prevention strategy is based on a tiered approach that encompasses the succession of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict rehabilitation and peace building.

Following a brief focus on the key OSCE actors engaged in the early warning system and its functioning, participants were divided into five groups and engaged in an exercise where each group was called to impersonate the role of one of the OSCE actors involved in the Ukrainian crisis and faced with several policy options to respond to the crisis scenario.

- *Dialogue and mediation – tools for addressing situations at risk*

This session was led by Mark Barwick, Policy Adviser on Programmes for Dialogue at the Budapest Centre. Attention was focused on the distinction between the concepts of dialogue and mediation, where dialogue was defined as a relationship-centred phenomenon, involving mutual understanding and a trust-building process facilitated by a third party, whereas mediation consists of a problem-controlled solution where a third party leads the discussion.

- *Preparation for Country X*

Mark Whitlock, adjunct professor in the Negotiation and Conflict Resolution programme at Columbia University, concluded the daily session with a preparatory description of the web-based simulation platform "Country X", to be used for the simulation exercise in the final day of the workshop

## Day 3

### Prevention in practice

- *Country X simulation*

The daily session was opened by Mark Whitlock and Tucker Harding, senior educational project manager at the Columbia University. Participants were invited to share their previous experiences dealing with simulation platforms both for educational and non-educational purposes. Harding pointed out how the use of simulation software products in public administrations as well as business contexts has proved to deliver a dynamic and effective support to the enhancement of decision-making capacity by relevant actors.

In the second part of this session, participants were provided with a detailed explanation on the structure and functioning of the “Country X” platform. “Country X” is a mass killing early warning simulation designed with the aim to educate policymakers and future professionals in the fields of government, human rights, security, media, and international law on the complexities involving conflict and mass killing preventive action. The lecturers stressed that one of the key objectives of the Country X project is to convert theoretical knowledge into practice.

Participants were divided into groups and instructed to identify a relevant political issue in present-day Polish society that could potentially lead to a mass killing event. The attention was focused on the political and social tensions that Poland is currently facing in managing the EU migration crisis. Moving from an analysis of the current socio-political and economic background in Poland, each group was asked to develop a set of variables that could contribute to the deterioration of the situation, such as levels of violence recorded, economic (in)stability, the country’s international prestige and freedom of media.

- *Country X simulation debriefing*

This session was led again by Mark Whitlock and Tucker Harding. As from the analysis of the scenario and variables outlined earlier, participants were invited to identify key government and political actors whose decisions would result crucial in shaping future events. Participants learned that the actions undertaken by each stakeholder in a certain context are not only dictated by their own interests, but are also influenced by the perceptions and interests of the other actors involved. Thus, when confronted with decision-making, all actors are called to take into account a series of factors that will most likely lead to different outcomes than the ones expected.

- *Lessons learned during the training focusing on the development of national capabilities*

Gyorgy Tatar led the final session of the workshop engaging participants in a stimulating discussion regarding their personal impressions and conclusions on the issues addressed during the three-day training. Participants emphasized that the goal of developing solid national capabilities to prevent and respond to the risks of atrocity crimes, within EU Member States and in general, is still far from being accomplished. Tatar underlined that the reason for this is that mass atrocities prevention as a distinct phenomenon from conflict prevention is still a relatively new concept among the international community. Thus, policy-makers both at the national and international level still appear sceptical in investing time and resources in building effective preventive measures.