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Editorial: a New Era of *GR2P*

This year, a new editorial team has stepped in to take the reins of *Global Responsibility to Protect (GR2P)*. In light of the tremendous contributions this journal has made in pioneering and shaping a generation of scholarship on R2P, we recognise that continuing this legacy is both an exciting and challenging prospect. We are indebted to the outgoing editors, Alex Bellamy, Sara Davies and Luke Glanville for their dedication to high-quality scholarship from a diverse set of scholars as well as their impressive achievements in chaperoning this journal from new entry to established and respected outlet. We also wish to thank the Editorial Board for their notable contributions to *GR2P* over the past eleven years; we are pleased to work with a team of such highly reputed and experienced individuals. We will strive to live up to the high standards they have all set while seeking to innovate and push *GR2P* to new heights.

The year 2020 marks fifteen years since R2P was formalised at the UN World Summit and almost twenty years since the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty brought the concept into popular imagination. As has been evidenced and elaborated in the pages of this journal over the years, R2P has travelled a long way in an extremely short space of time, but its effectiveness in eliciting responses to mass atrocities around the world is chequered. Occasions where R2P seems to have played an important role in debates and even actions to prevent and halt atrocities are matched or outnumbered by the times when they have not.

R2P is no panacea; rather it is a political principle that generates a set of expectations around practical efforts to prevent and halt mass atrocity crimes. As such it is part of a set of norms that seek to regulate behaviour towards civilians and put in place mechanisms to ameliorate their suffering. R2P works in tandem with a range of other contiguous normative agendas that enable and reinforce, or inhibit and undermine, its efficacy. At a time when the norms safeguarding civilians are being flouted and in some instances seemingly 'unmade', the need for scholarly research that evidences where and how these norms can be promoted as well as consolidated is essential.

The current global context has transformed in significant ways since 2005; the international community has advanced the international human protection regime in leaps and bounds. It has created new normative and legal safeguards for vulnerable populations, and recognised the intersections between

accountability, human rights and minority protections that allow policymakers to understand the drivers of conflict and mass atrocity through a more holistic lens. Yet, geopolitical tensions have also moved to the fore in defining interstate relations, and genuine international cooperation is wanting in the face of an unprecedented rise in the global population in need of humanitarian assistance and forced displacement. R2P is often said to have been born in a liberal era, yet now finds itself in a time of shifting power balances as academics debate the demise of the so-called Liberal World Order. As the world changes, so too does the relationship between international relations and mass violence. The rise of populism, non-state armed groups, and climate change raise new questions that may require new ways of thinking.

In order to advance R2P scholarship both conceptually and practically in this dynamic context, the editors recognise that scholarly research on R2P must continue to expand its engagement with these broader thematic and policy agendas. The journal will continue to support 'the publication of cutting edge research on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle'.¹ We invite both theoretically imaginative and empirically grounded research on themes related to human protection and global cooperation on the reduction of mass violence to grapple with these complex challenges.

Above all we hope to retain the pages of the journal as a place for 'critical debate and diversity of opinion, seeking insights and approaches from every region of the world that might contribute to understanding R2P and its implementation in practice'.² The editors seek to facilitate constructive dialogue between scholars and practitioners and to provide space for reflection on practical experience. To help bridge the scholar-practitioner divide, we have introduced some new features to the journal. Combining short-form reflective essays from leading practitioners in the field with high-quality peer-reviewed academic research, we hope to generate increased dialogue and learning between these communities. These new features are outlined below.

1 What to Expect in a New Era of GR2P?

1.1 *Vision*

Our vision is for *GR2P* to be at the forefront of theoretical innovation and grounded research on human protection. To achieve this vision, we welcome

1 Alex J. Bellamy, Sara E. Davies and Luke Glanville, 'Editorial: Global R2P at Ten ... and Beyond', *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 10/4: 389–392 (2018), p. 389.

2 *Ibid.*

contributions that are theoretically rigorous, empirically grounded and methodologically diverse. Contributions should speak from whichever historical and regional vantage point their research is situated to contemporary developments in the international political and security landscape. Importantly, contributions should be able to clearly communicate the implications of their research to a diverse range of practitioner and scholarly audiences to help foster genuine dialogue and knowledge transfer between these communities.

We are committed to reflecting a diversity of voices with grounded insight into the challenges of human protection, both geographically and at different levels of practice and/or governance. We therefore encourage participation by scholars and practitioners from diverse backgrounds with particular attention to gender and representation in/from the Global South. The editorial team will support inclusivity by soliciting individual submissions, special-themed issues and forums to reflect a broader range of voices featured in the journal. These considerations will also continue to be factored in the submission and peer-review process to ensure that feedback genuinely supports our commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

1.2 *Scope*

In that vein, we pledge to support contributions and collections that advance innovative approaches and grapple with complex challenges relating to the R2P by encouraging submissions that address a broader range of related topics that complement its broader principles and objectives. We welcome discussions that include – but are not limited to – atrocity prevention, protection of civilians, peacekeeping, human rights, transitional justice, international accountability, and global governance. This includes essays that deal with any aspect of the politics, legality and/or ethics of prevention, response and resolution of large-scale human rights violations and violent conflict within and across state borders.

GR2P is an interdisciplinary journal. It is open to articles that engage with a wide range of theoretical and conceptual approaches, including international relations, international law, international ethics, political science, security, peace and conflict, genocide studies, global governance and development studies. Importantly, we share a focus on inquiries grounded in empirics and real-world scenarios. As part of this, we will continue to welcome proposals for high-quality special (themed) issues at a time when such opportunities are diminishing.

1.3 *Format*

We are introducing a number of new features to *GR2P* intended to enhance the relevance and utility of the journal for established and uninitiated readers.

New Interventions Section: *GR2P* has frequently included articles from senior figures including former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisers on R2P, Edward C. Luck and Jennifer Welsh, policymakers, civil society, humanitarian actors, and those who have played key roles in national and community-based protection efforts. These contributions provide an invaluable channel to bridge the practitioner-scholar divide. We hope to build on this feature by including a new shorter section, *Interventions*. We will invite and welcome submissions from experienced practitioners to write short essays (1,000–2,000 words) reflecting on how key ideas in the area of human protection translate to practice, and vice versa. These will be topical, practice-informed pieces that introduce new perspectives and policy-relevant insights.

New Forum Section: The new *Forum* section will feature in occasional issues where a few key practitioners hold a conversation through a series of very short contributions (500–800 words) on a current topic or case study that is of particular relevance to the *GR2P* readership. We will accept proposals for prospective forums, and will solicit forum pieces at times to provide timely and informative analysis and debate.

Intervention and *Forum* articles will be reviewed by the editors to facilitate the timely publication of these pieces.

In looking ahead to our tenure, we hope we will be able to draw on the expertise and generous support of the community that make the publication of this journal a success. These include the editorial board members, the community of peer reviewers, and to our prospective authors who will ultimately dictate the innovation, quality and direction of *GR2P* going forward.

1.4 *Special Issue: the Rohingya Crisis and Implications for Myanmar's Peace Process*

The future of the R2P and more importantly, the rights of those that it sets out to protect, will only be advanced if we pause to reflect, and learn lessons, from each failure. With this in mind, this first issue brings together cutting-edge research that critically analyses the *on-going* mass violence against the Rohingya in Myanmar. First, Rosyidin draws attention to Indonesia's quite diplomacy to argue that non-interference does not necessarily negate R2P norms. Situating the crisis within the context of global norms, the article has broader implications for contemporary debates over ASEAN's relationship with the R2P.

Second, Ryan's investigation into the use of sexual violence in Myanmar's military operations leads her to evidence a pattern of rape-permissive military doctrines across multiple military operations over many decades and many sites. Notably, this shines a spotlight on Tatmadaw recruiting, training and

deployment processes that have created a culture in which such violence is tolerated. Third, Morada argues that despite the international outrage, the international community continued failure to protect the Rohingya stems from three factors, i) a divided UN, ii) a lack of political will in ASEAN, and iii) a lack of accountability for the Tatmadaw. This raises urgent and important questions regarding how each of these can be addressed in the coming year.

Fourth, in a novel approach, Palmer examines the relationship between private actors, infrastructure and the responsibility to protect in the context of Myanmar. In so doing, the author highlights the opportunities and risks involved whilst calling for due diligence. Finally, Arraiza and Davies focus on the 2015 National Ceasefire Agreement to examine how the peace process is being communicated amongst different actors, including, civil society organisations, international organisations, donor organisations, and government representatives. In so doing, they highlight the opportunities and challenges involved. As a collective, therefore, this issue provides much needed insight into critical aspects such as accountability, diplomacy, gender, public-private relations, national, regional, and international dynamics. These will undoubtedly shape the future of Myanmar but clearly, the Rohingya do not need these lessons to be learnt in the future, they need protection now. With this in mind, we hope this issue gains as wide an audience as possible.

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