FOREWORD

We launched the European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (ECR2P) to advance the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) through research, education, and policy dialogue. In our first year of existence, we ensured that our partners from The University of Leeds, The Budapest Centre for Mass Atrocities Prevention, and The Hague Institute for Global Justice have been at the forefront of theoretical and policy-led debates related to R2P. We have worked closely with academics from across the continent, by coordinating the European Network of R2P scholars, and we collaborate with the only other regionally-based Centre of its kind, the Asia-Pacific Centre for R2P at the University of Queensland, as well as the Global Centre for R2P, and the UN Office for Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. We also set up the Women Network on R2P, Peace and Security to highlight the work women academics and practitioners have done on the topic, and to further empower women working in the field.

While ECR2P aims to contribute to the global effort to prevent mass atrocity crimes and to protect vulnerable populations, its focus has been on the policies and practices of European states and the European Union. It is always a timely moment to be studying this issue, but in some respects we launched ECR2P at a particularly significant moment in European history. The rise of populist movements across the continent reminds us that Europe is not immune to political extremism, and Europe’s response to atrocity crimes and refugee flows across its borders calls into question the depth of its commitment to R2P. We have launched new collaborations and research networks, and we have started working with and supporting our partner institutions so that they can continue to have impact beyond academia. We are also acutely aware of the contribution we can make through education and training at all levels, and have prioritised internationalisation in our first year of existence as a Centre.

Cristina Stefan and Jason Ralph
Co-Directors ECR2P, University of Leeds
The ECR2P is undertaking ground-breaking research on six priority themes which seek to advance R2P understanding at the theoretical and empirical level.

R2P and Human Solidarity and Refugees
Despite the rapid growth in R2P literature, there has been relatively little analysis on the relationship between the R2P and humanity. Addressing this lacuna, the ECR2P calls for interdisciplinary research from International Relations, Political Theory, History and International Law in order to gain a more informed understanding of the relationship between R2P and humanity.

R2P and Early Warning, Conflict and Mass Atrocity Prevention
Our research unpacks the R2P’s preventive dimension, focusing on the following research objectives: 1) To conceptualize structural prevention; 2) To cover the relationship between state and non-state responsibility and prevention; and 3) To elaborate on the range of prevention and response measures available to policy makers to strengthen domestic, regional, and international preventive and response tools.

R2P and the International Criminal Court
The R2P and the ICC are viewed as complementary processes which can be used in tandem to address gross human rights abuses. However, the different ways in which they go about seeking to achieve this shared objective has given rise to tensions in their relationship. The ECR2P investigates how these processes relate, where the tensions manifest, how they can be resolved, and interrogates the basis of their shared challenges.

R2P and Norm Theory
R2P has been examined in the context of the ‘norm life-cycle’ theory associated with constructivist IR theory. Our research critically assesses the usefulness of this approach for R2P studies, and emphasises that assessing state responses to atrocity and the way in which the R2P norm (and its various meanings in use) are both more demanding processes than what has been suggested by the current constructivist research.

R2P Military Intervention and Peacekeeping
Our research and policy analysis explores how and when – and under what circumstances – military intervention may play a role in the operationalization of R2P. It investigates recent and ongoing challenges related to military intervention – in cases such as Libya, Syria, Mali and the Central African Republic – and the controversies raised by this aspect of R2P in a changing international order.

R2P and European Policies
The ECR2P investigates the EU’s relationship to R2P over time, which involves analysing both the EU’s overall conception and practice of the norm, and the specific approach of some of its key member states. Additionally, through rigorous interdisciplinary research and dialogue between academics and practitioners, the Centre aims to provide recommendations on how the EU and EU states can strengthen promotion and implementation of R2P.

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Supporting and training future researchers through the supervision of postgraduate students

To date, ECR2P researchers have published over 50 R2P related journal articles. A full list of our publications is available on our website (https://ecr2p.leeds.ac.uk/research/), but some of our 2017 publications include:


IMPACT

- Cristina Stefan contributed toward the Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General on R2P, “Accountability for Prevention” and other projects, while working in the UN Joint Office in New York, in May-June 2017.
- ECR2P was invited to submit contributions toward the Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General on R2P.
- The ECR2P has authored major reports for organisations such as UNA-UK and Protection Approaches, including most recently “Maintaining Momentum in a Changing World: Atrocity Prevention in UK Policy”, May 2017 (Ben Willis, PhD student Leeds).
- Coordination of The European Network of R2P scholars.
- Founding The Women Network on R2P, which brings together women academics and researchers with expert practitioners and policy-makers, women, working on R2P-related topics.
- ECR2P researchers and interns producing briefs on key conflicts and the European response to these.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The ECR2P is also committed to advancing the Responsibility to Protect through education and training.

Training practitioners and policy makers

The Centre is involved in various events which aim to bolster how key policy makers and practitioners understand the R2P. For instance, the ECR2P participated in:

- The workshop on ‘The Role of the Legislative Branch in Building National Mechanisms for Atrocity Prevention’ (Convened by the Hague Institute to train parliamentarians from around the world, April 2017)
- The training session on ‘R2P and Atrocity Prevention’ organised by the European External Action Service for its delegation staff and desk officers (C. Stefan and J. Ralph from University of Leeds, Dec. 2016)
- The training programme on ‘Atrocity Crimes’ organised by the Ahmed Mohammed Military College, Officers’ Training Institute (OTT) in Doha, Qatar (C. Stefan from University of Leeds, Nov. 2017)
- The training programme on ‘International Criminal Law’ organised by the Hague Institute for Global Justice, Global Public Policy Institute, and Mount Holyoke.

Supporting and training future researchers through the supervision of postgraduate students

The ECR2P currently supervises ten PhD students on topics including:

- North Korea and the Responsibility to Protect: The International Politics of Atrocity Crimes
- Manifest Failure? Towards a Common Standard for Pillar III Application
- Protecting in an Era of Change: An Analysis of the UK’s Commitment to Human Protection within the Context of a Transitional Global Order
- The International Criminal Court in a Changing World Order
- The Responsibility to Protect and the Making of the Responsibility to Prosecute: History and Politics
- Investigating Sexual Abuse and Exploitation by United Nations Peacekeepers: Establishing Accountability to address a legitimacy crisis at the United Nations
- Norm Socialisation and Behaviour of States: the Case of the Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia
Teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students about the R2P

The University of Leeds is the only university in the UK to offer courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels that are exclusively dedicated to studying the R2P. This year, the third year module attracted 90 students.

Welcoming interns to help them gain and develop key skills

In 2017, ECR2P is training 10 interns who are exploring how the European Union and key European states prevent and respond to mass atrocity situations in the Middle-East and Africa. It will also welcome its first Erasmus+ student (Matteo de Conte) from the University of Bologna, Italy, in March 2018.

Supporting student initiatives

The Responsibility to Protect Student Journal

The Centre supports the Responsibility to Protect Student Journal, which is the world’s first student-led, free, online journal that focuses on responses to mass atrocities. It provides a global platform for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to publish their academic work and start meaningful and informed conversations about R2P and related themes such as international criminal justice, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, women peace and security, and international human rights.

The Responsibility to Protect Student Coalition

The ECR2P also provides assistance to the R2P Student Coalition Leeds, which was founded in 2015 and aims to increase awareness about the R2P among students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, through educational events and networking opportunities.

ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

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Organising Major International Conferences at The University of Leeds

• “Putting the Responsibility to Protect at the Centre of Europe”, International Conference organised at The University of Leeds, October 2016.

Launching the ECR2P Annual Lecture Series

• Inaugural ECR2P Annual Lecture delivered by Professor Alex Bellamy, Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for R2P, “Implementing R2P: Progress, Challenges and the Next 10 Years”, 8 December 2016.
• Second Annual lecture delivered by Dr Ivan Šimonović, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, “Responsibility to Protect: Operationalization or Marginalization?”, 30 November 2017.

Establishing ECR2P Post-Doctoral and Visiting Fellowships

• The first Visiting Fellow of the Centre, Associate Professor Chiara de Franco, arrives in January 2018 from the University of Southern Denmark, to work on the EU and R2P.
• The first Post-Doctoral Fellow affiliated with the ECR2P (ESRC funded), Dr. Outi Donovan, starts her project on the Responsibility to Rebuild on 1 December 2017.

Engagement Events and High-Profile Practitioners and Policy-Makers Invited to The University of Leeds

• ECR2P participates in “How to Stop the Killing” Conference organised on the occasion of the anniversary of the adoption of the 1948 Genocide Convention, Paris, 9 December 2017.
• ECR2P partnered with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary to organise the Pre-Conference Roundtable on “Atrocity Prevention” prior to The 10th Budapest Human Rights Forum, Budapest, 27 November 2017.
• ECR2P is a partner to the coalition informing The All Party Parliamentary Group on the Prevention of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity (APPG), and participated in the APPG events in 2017, including the latest in September 2017 at Westminster.
• Key members of ECR2P convene the British International Studies Association (BISA) Working Group on Intervention and R2P, and have organised panels on R2P at the BISA Annual Conference in Brighton, June 2017.
• ECR2P participated in the Annual European R2P Focal Point Meeting, Ljubljana, May 2017.