



**GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST
MASS ATROCITY CRIMES**

GAAMAC

Platform for Prevention

**MANUAL ON BEST PRACTICES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR GENOCIDE
AND MASS ATROCITIES PREVENTION**



By

The GAAMAC II Africa Working Group

in collaboration with the Uganda National Committee for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention
under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Manual on Best Practices for the Establishment and Management of National Mechanisms for Genocide and Mass Atrocities Prevention

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ACRONYMS

AIPR	Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation
AU	African Union
AWG	Africa Working Group
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ER	Early Response
EW	Early Warning
EWD	Early Warning Departments
GAAMAC	Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes
GIS	Geographic Information System
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IGAD	Inter Governmental Agency for Development
KNC	Kenya National Committee
NC	National Committees
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMs	National Mechanisms
NPC	National Peace Council
OSAPG	Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
REWC	Regional Early Warning Centre (SADC)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SSNC	South Sudan National Committee
TNC	Tanzania National Committee
UN	United Nations
UNC	Uganda National Committee
UNO GPRP	United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace-building

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PREFACE

In February 2016, during the second plenary meeting of Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC II) in Manila, the Philippines, I challenged participants to make Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes a practical reality, to translate commitment into action and develop concrete initiatives that would make the prevention of mass atrocities a reality worldwide.

The African members of Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes immediately took up this challenge by forming the Africa Working Group, which includes practitioners and policy makers from across Africa working in the mass atrocity prevention field, both Government and civil society representatives. The Africa Working Group decided to develop a manual that could provide guidance and best practices for the establishment and management of national mechanisms for the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities, drawing on their own expertise and experience in developing national prevention mechanisms.

This Manual is a significant achievement. It is the first of its kind and represents a critical milestone in fulfilling the commitment made by the Africa Working Group to move mass atrocity prevention from “theory into action” in the Africa. I have said many times, that no State or region can consider itself immune to the risk of atrocity crimes, because no region *has* been immune to the risk of atrocity crimes. Thus, all States should put in place national mechanisms that will enable them to identify risks and respond early to prevent atrocity crimes.

I cannot underline enough the importance of preventive action, i.e. acting early, when tensions first arise. Atrocity crimes take time to prepare, which means that there are multiple opportunities to take preventive action if close attention is paid and preventive action is more likely to succeed if the appropriate structural and operational mechanisms are in place, especially at national level.

We must focus our efforts on early prevention. The earlier we respond to warning signs, the more likely we are to succeed. We have seen this time and time again. The later we leave it, the fewer options we will have and the political and human costs will be far greater.

National mechanisms are essential because they embody the state’s primary responsibility to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes. This is why this manual is so important. It aims to provide a depository of best practices for the establishment and management of national mechanisms in Africa, in order to provide guidance and to foster partnerships among the national mechanisms to link their efforts for the prevention of mass atrocities.

This manual does two things, first of all, it shares key findings on ways to strengthen national atrocity prevention architectures so as to build resilience and secondly, it offers step by step guidance on how to establish and operate a national mechanism for the prevention of mass atrocities. Prevention is a long-term investment. Building and strengthening national mechanisms for atrocity prevention takes time and requires sustained commitment and leadership. The concept of establishing national mechanisms that focus on atrocity prevention is still relatively new, which is why it is so important to share best practices and to learn from experience.

This is a living document and I look forward to seeing how other States will use it and build on this important and timely initiative by the Africa Working Group.

Adama Dieng
United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

FOREWORD

Prevention of mass atrocities is a new phenomenon that is gaining momentum at a very encouraging speed across all continents. The initiative of having a manual on best practices by the African Working Group at the second annual meeting of Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC II) in Manila, the Philippines in February 2016, was worth an undertaking and commitment.

I commend the Uganda National Committee for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and Atrocity Crimes Secretariat for the sterling job of coordinating the work of the Africa Working Group to put this manual in place. This would not have been possible without the invaluable support of Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes and especially the Swiss Government to whom I extend our heartfelt appreciation.

As a patron of the Africa Working Group and honorary member of the Tanzania National Committee on Prevention of Genocide, I am personally encouraged by the tremendous work and wide-ranging discussions that went into preparing this manual.

The sharing of best practices in establishing and strengthening national atrocity prevention architectures underlines the significance and contribution of this framework in building collaboration between international, regional, national and local actors that is geared towards achieving common objectives of lasting peace and security for all mankind.

It is envisaged that users will build on the information contained in this manual to improve their ability and utilise best practices befitting of their specific local situations.

The manual, among other things, addresses important aspects and procedures that need to be taken into consideration when a country is establishing a national mechanism for prevention of atrocities. States and stakeholders are to take deliberate measures to prevent mass atrocities in Africa and elsewhere.

Strengthening national mechanisms or state capacities and institutions of governance, requires the political will for implementation and compliance at both national and regional levels, together with the active support of the international community, in order to make prevention and the responsibility to protect a reality.

A national mechanism must be a sustainable endeavour requiring resources and the commitment of leaders and communities to understand their obligations in protecting their citizens, educating the masses and building resilience capacities to avoid relapsing into conflict situations. It is a fact that interrelated factors and circumstances contribute to the outbreak of conflict in a society. This means that several actors have been involved. It is therefore very important to engage as widely as possible. Groups like religious leaders, the elderly, women, young people and civil society are key players.

Achieving the shared vision of prevention and the responsibility to protect requires concerted efforts and commitment. This manual provides a good step towards building capacity for atrocity prevention at national level. I am confident that this manual will act as a catalyst for other Regions to build or strengthen existing mechanisms and methods to prevent mass atrocity crimes and genocide. Let us get to work and keep using the momentum generated within Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes for the common good. It can be done if we all play our part.

Ambassador Liberata Mulamula
Patron of the Africa Working Group

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When the second meeting of Global Action Against Mass Atrocities was held in Manila in 2016, the concept of this Manual was born, when the Africa Working Group (AWG) was given the task of producing a manual on the best practices for setting up national mechanisms for atrocity prevention.

Several meetings and exchanges took place between the Africa Working Group to facilitate the collection and synthesis of the content for the manual. This culminated in the presentation of the manual to the third Global Action Against Mass Atrocities meeting held in May 2018 in Uganda, as well as its final publication and dissemination in August and September 2018.

This note therefore is to thank everyone who has made it possible for the manual to see the light of day. Special thanks therefore go to the Uganda National Committee for Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (UNCP-GMA) for managing the process of this manual, in particular Dr. Brian Kalenge and Ms. Lina Zedriga. The entire Global Action Against Mass Atrocities Steering Committee and in particular Ms. Mô Bleeker, the Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Danish government for their unwavering support in the process of producing this manual.

We also thank Dr. Ashad Sentongo and Ms. Haile Zewditu for the role they played in overseeing the production of this manual. We hope that this manual becomes a useful tool in the noble cause of halting atrocities worldwide.

Dismas Rugason Nkunda
Chair Africa Working Group
and Acting Chair of Uganda National Committee for Prevention and Punishment of Genocide
and Mass Atrocities

INTRODUCTION

National Mechanisms are formal organisations established for the purpose of preventing atrocities and promoting the responsibility of states towards this goal. National Mechanisms include various representatives from government, civil society, academia and other sectors relevant to atrocity prevention and operate at national level. Additionally, the appointment of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Focal Points¹ by governments to promote the implementation of R2P further demonstrates commitment by states to coordinate efforts within and between nations to prevent or counter atrocities.

Prevention may be varied out before, during and after genocide or other mass atrocities, such as a multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach to respond to identified risks and threats. In undertaking this task, National Mechanisms, as well as R2P, are supposed to be apolitical, free of conflict of interest, to be able to build trust and the confidence necessary to effectively contribute to preventing atrocities and protecting citizens. The majority of National Mechanisms in Africa are in the early stages of development and continue to emerge in various parts on the continent. The mechanisms are established to lead the development of coordinated national and community level strategies, which are implemented through a range of policies, programmes and projects seeking to engage with and respond to threats, risks and possible triggers for mass violence and atrocities (Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR), 2015).

Mechanisms differ from state to state because of differences in the conflict conditions and processes associated with their formation. In the same way, their composition, structures and operations also vary between countries and regions across the continent. In West Africa, for example, National Mechanisms function to implement regional agendas at national level, and therefore maintain clear links between the agendas of regional organisations, e.g. the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and country level activities. In the Great Lakes Region, a similar system is also beginning to emerge under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. In all cases, National Mechanisms implement activities related to the prevention of atrocities and the protection of vulnerable populations (Rosenberg, 2015).

Combatting and ending the commission of atrocities, including responding to conditions that give rise to such crimes, require multiple strategies and multi-pronged approaches. The formation of National Mechanisms should therefore include a range of stakeholders to bring together various skills and capacities to inform prevention. A number of international organisations also provide technical assistance, to underscore the need for greater collaboration, coordination and to build synergies towards the common goal of prevention. Global and regional partnerships often provide additional support to prevention. This is more so in situations of weak institutions requiring support with specialised skills or resources to implement local agendas, thus making prevention initiatives more efficient and productive.

This manual focuses on national level actions and processes in the establishment and management of National Mechanisms. Prevention often differs in terms of what it should look like and how to achieve the preferred end-state of associated activities. The contents can therefore be adapted to other situations by adding relevant elements and languages to become more understood and relevant to the work of different National Mechanisms. This is because to be effective, prevention requires robust but flexible and context-specific interventions, combining different forms of engagement.

¹ A Focal Point can be a single individual, or it may be an office, and the portfolio encompasses a broader set of responsibilities that correspond with and reinforce the function of preventing mass atrocities.

http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/recommendations_r2p_national_focal_points.pdf

OBJECTIVE OF THIS MANUAL

The objective of this manual is to provide best practices in the establishment and management of National Mechanisms that strengthen atrocity prevention. This manual is developed with support from the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC) and is to be used by states seeking to establish National Mechanisms, other actors that assist in this process, as well as by existing National Mechanisms already implementing prevention initiatives, in order to be able to:

- i. Leverage the lessons and best practices drawn from the everyday practices of National Mechanisms to improve their establishment and management.
- ii. Institutionalise shared know-how to improve the implementation and adaptation of approaches to atrocity prevention in emerging and already complex conflict situations.
- iii. Use it as a framework of reference to support and facilitate learning and training to build capacity for atrocity prevention

THE GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST MASS ATROCITY CRIMES AFRICA WORKING GROUP

GAAMAC is a global, inclusive and state-led voluntary network of partners that support, are interested in or are involved in atrocity prevention. It supports states that wish to develop national architectures for the prevention of atrocities in collaboration with other atrocity prevention initiatives, networks and actors. More information about GAAMAC can be found at <http://www.gaamac.org>.

The GAAMAC Africa Working Group (AWG) emerged during the GAAMAC II conference that was held in Manila, the Philippines, from 2-4 February 2016. The Second International Meeting was themed '*Preventing atrocities: How to strengthen national atrocity prevention architectures*'. The Africa Working Group was selected to draft a manual to support domestic architectures for the prevention of atrocities. The draft manual was presented and discussed at the GAAMAC III meeting in Kampala, Uganda, from 23-25 May 2018. The Africa Working Group is made up of a cross section of individuals working on atrocity prevention and in the responsibility to protect field from Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. This manual is the fruit of their joint efforts.

METHODOLOGY

The following methods were used during the preparation of the manual:

- i. Desk research was used to review existing literature on prevention of atrocities, with respect to establishing national mechanisms, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of interventions, including stakeholder engagement processes at local and international levels. Literature on the responsibility to protect was also reviewed to help provide additional explanations, particularly regarding responsibilities towards prevention and protection of populations. Existing National Mechanisms were examined as cases and selected based on availability of information and accessibility.
- ii. SurveyMonkey, an online tool, was used to send 1,712 questionnaires to government officials, civil society and religious leaders, academics and selected practitioners with expertise in R2P and atrocity prevention in West, East, Central and Southern Africa. The survey was helpful in collecting qualitative and quantitative data from 221 respondents, the majority of whom were individuals working with National Mechanisms but mostly from governments and the civil society. The anonymity of the online survey allowed respondents

- to provide answers to structured and semi-structured questions. Typed responses were complemented by emails and Skype conference calls to deepen investigations into the findings that emerged from the online survey. Findings from the survey were compared with literature reviews to draw conclusions about best practices, approaches and general guidelines towards the establishment and management of National Mechanisms.
- iii. The final findings were compiled in a first draft of the manual, which was peer-reviewed by selected experts working with both governments and civil society from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Their observations and recommendations informed the second draft of the manual, which was further validated through two workshops by members of the GAAMAC Africa Working Group and selected experts in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The draft was further refined based on feedback received after the presentation at GAAMAC III in May 2018 in Kampala.
 - iv. This methodology also helped to ensure that the manual is oriented towards prevention as a practice, and therefore has avoided detailed theoretical and academic analysis and explanations. Atrocity prevention is not only a context-specific, but also a very practical endeavour that National Mechanisms undertake against complex realities. Readers of the manual are encouraged to be creative to tailor the contents to their local conditions, and to give as much feedback as possible to facilitate reviews and the publication of subsequent series.

STRUCTURE OF THE MANUAL

Chapter ONE - Introduction to the Manual and Working with Atrocity Prevention:

Types and processes of atrocities and the focus of prevention initiatives are explained. The principle of R2P as a political commitment aimed at enhancing prevention and the relationship between atrocity prevention and R2P are highlighted, as well as how National Mechanisms can work with both to advance prevention at local level.

Chapter TWO - Establishment of National Mechanisms:

General considerations in the establishment of National Mechanisms are highlighted with examples of top-down and bottom-up approaches, including characteristics, composition, functions, values and policies that can facilitate institutionalisation.

Chapter THREE - Management of National Mechanisms:

Organisation, roles and responsibilities are highlighted, drawing from established mechanisms, while also emphasising Early Warning and Early Response as a core function of National Mechanisms.

Chapter FOUR - Programming for Atrocity Prevention:

Approaches to programming for prevention are highlighted, emphasising the need to be sensitive to norms of equality, inclusiveness and diversity when undertaking programming functions. Particular focus is given to the key steps to be taken and working with cultural and religious leaders and the media as key actors in achieving sustainable preventive impacts at local level.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL AND WORKING WITH ATROCITY PREVENTION

Understanding Best Practices

In this manual, best practices are actions and procedures that have produced favourable results towards establishing and managing National Mechanisms to be able to prevent atrocities. Favourable results were considered to be in the form of impact from projects implemented, the tasks accomplished and plans and programmes that demonstrate potential to produce preventive impacts.

Particular focus is given to process of how National Mechanisms are established, managed and programme their work to achieve prevention goals and objectives. It is envisaged that users will build on the information contained in this manual to improve their ability to identify and utilise best practices to increase the recurrence of successful interventions to prevent mass atrocities. It is also observed that institutionalisation and results from the application of best practices may vary from situation to situation. National Mechanisms are thus encouraged to creatively find the best fit between the contents of this manual and their local situations.

Atrocity Crimes: Definitions

The term “atrocity crimes” is not a technical legal term, but in the United Nations (UN) context it is used to refer to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, so it is recognised and defined as a crime under international law. Ethnic cleansing, which is included in the scope of R2P, is not defined as an independent crime under international law, but includes acts that may themselves amount to one of the atrocity crimes. International instruments defining these crimes include the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocols of 1977, the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

Table 1: Atrocity Crimes

Crime	Definition
War Crimes	Serious breaches of the Geneva Conventions/laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts committed against persons or property protected by international humanitarian law, or by using prohibited weapons. In the context of an armed conflict and related to it.
Crimes against Humanity	Any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, e.g. as a policy of a State or an organisation to commit or promote them, with knowledge of the attack: Murder; Extermination; Enslavement; Deportation or forcible transfer of population; Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of the fundamental rules of international law; Torture; Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable severity; Persecution against any identifiable group or community on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognised as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court; Enforced disappearance of persons; The crime of apartheid; Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to the body or to mental or physical health.

Genocide	<p>Any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killing members of the group • Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group • Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its total or partial physical destruction • Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group • Forcibly transferring the children of the group to another group.
Ethnic Cleansing	<p>Ethnic cleansing is the systematic extermination or forced removal of members of a racial, ethnic or religious group from a community or communities in order to change the ethnic composition of a given region. Beyond killings, which are characteristic of genocide, ethnic cleansing involves forced removal of victims from their natural territory and does not have to occur as part of a war. It is considered as an easier way to avoid the complexities of war, yet is able to achieve the intentions of the perpetrators even by peaceful means.</p>

Atrocity crimes are large scale, not spontaneous or isolated events, evolving through processes that have a history and involving signs and factors that trigger their commission (United Nations, 2014). For example, Stanton (Stanton, 2003) explains the crime of genocide through a ten-stage process that involves predictably, which makes its occurrence possible to prevent. The stages can overlap into each other, but preventative measures can be applied to stop the process at each stage.

Table 2: Stages of the crime of Genocide

Stage	Attribute/Noticeable exposition	Examples of Preventive Actions
Classification	“Us” and “Them” considerations by ethnicity, race, religion and/or nationality.	Develop universal institutions that transcend ethnic or racial divisions, which actively promote tolerance and understanding and promote classifications that transcend division e.g. a common language in Tanzania
Symbolisation	Giving names or other symbols to the classifications to distinguish “them” from “us”, beyond what is universally human, to become identification signs for the destruction of “them” in favour of “us”; the threat becomes genocidal. Combined with hatred, symbols can become clear identifiers of “Us” and “Them”.	Legislate against tendencies of hate, including hate speech, sectarianism, gang markings, tribal codes, etc. However, the important thing is to note that making legal limitations should be strongly supported by a popular culture of enforcement.
Discrimination	A dominant group uses law, custom and political power to deny other groups their rights e.g. citizenship.	Full political empowerment, enforcement and protection of rights for all groups in a society. Outlawing discrimination on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, etc. while ensuring the right to sue when violations occur.
Dehumanisation	Denial of the humanity of the “other”, equating them with	Constitutional protection to vulnerable communities to offset the effect of

	animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Hate propaganda in print and hate speech on the radio are used to vilify the victim group, as perpetrators overcome the normal human disgust for murder.	hate speech and all forms of dehumanisation, including banning and closing down all forms of media that perpetrate hate and mobilising propaganda.
Organisation	Organisation to commit genocide is usually perpetrated by the state, ethnic or such group against the Other. Sometimes informally mobilised militia gangs of special army units are trained and purposefully armed to execute planned killings.	Outlaw membership of militias and similar groups, making their existence and their plans publicly known. Engage both moderate and extremist leaders in negotiations towards abandoning their plans and disbanding armed groups. Impose arms embargoes on states and those involved in massacres and create commissions to investigate violations.
Polarisation	Groups are torn apart through intensifying hate and polarising propaganda, speech and negativity against victim groups. For example: forbidding intermarriage or social interaction by law and/or apartheid.	States must offer security protection for moderate leaders and their communities, assist human rights protection in terms of law enforcement and implement projects that promote moderate positions between groups.
Perpetration	National or perpetrator group leaders often use understatement to cover their intentions as they plan the “final solution” against their victims. Goals are framed as “ethnic cleansing,” “purification,” or “counter-terrorism”, as they build the machinery to implement the “solution.”	Prevention of preparation may include arms embargoes and commissions to enforce them, as well as sanctions in situations of non-compliance. Incitement and conspiracy to commit genocide are prosecuted as crimes under Article 3 of the Genocide Convention, complementing other legal instruments and treaties.
Persecution	Victims are identified and singled out because of their ethnic or religious identity and assigned clear markers, e.g. wearing symbols, or through segregation. Death lists are drawn up and genocidal massacres begin.	Disseminate: clear alerts of a Genocide Emergency must be declared to mobilise the political will of the great powers, regional alliances or the UN Security Council. Armed international intervention should be provided to the victim group to prepare for its self-defence. Humanitarian assistance should be organised.
Extermination	Mass killings, where the killers believe their victims are not fully human and undesirable. Sometimes the genocide results from revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide.	Rapid and overwhelming armed intervention to prevent by stopping the genocide. Safe passages for refugees are established with heavily armed international protection. Nations should recognise that the international law of humanitarian intervention transcends the narrow interests of individual states for this type of prevention to stop genocide.

Denial	Perpetrators dig up mass graves, burn bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes and often blame what happened on the victims. Investigations of the crimes are blocked, as leaders continue to govern until driven from power by force and flee into exile where they remain with impunity.	Punishment by an international tribunal or national domestic courts. The evidence is heard and the perpetrators are punished there. Possibility of subjection to public discourse has to be legally prohibited and enforced.
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In the same way, atrocity crimes unfold over time during which various warning signs and indicators are often evident and this can offer opportunities for prevention. A number of strategies and plans can be developed and implemented to commit atrocities in which the state often plays a critical role. Therefore, during prevention, National Mechanisms organise and implement projects to be able to recognise signs and engage the processes by which atrocities could occur with a goal to prevent escalation to genocidal levels. Engagement with key policy makers at state level and collaborative partnerships with international and local actors and communities can contribute to developing relevant policies, sharing of information for early warning and early response and other interventions towards prevention.

Atrocity Prevention

Prevention of atrocities occurs through a broad range of strategies, in the form of measures and tools used to identify and respond to threats and risks with the aim of mitigating the occurrence or recurrence of these crimes, while also building local resilience for communities to survive and bounce back after the crimes. The measures may include strengthening state institutions, legal dialogue and other reforms to build trust, promote accountability, human rights and the rule of law, improve service delivery, democratic governance, support civil society, etc.

There is greater complementarity between atrocity prevention, conflict prevention (Taskforce on the EU Prevention of Mass Atrocities, 2013) and human rights work, but each requires distinct policies and interventions to assess and inform associated responses. In fact, atrocity crimes can be committed outside of conflicts. Also, prevention of mass atrocity crimes requires countering systematic discrimination and targeted hate speech. During this, human rights work may focus on reporting and monitoring of abuses or planning and programming to protect human rights. Similarly, forecasting, detecting, preventing and stopping atrocity crimes requires specific capacities, indicators and approaches that are different from prevention of violent conflicts or crisis management operations.

Effective atrocity prevention programmes focus on all levels of society to include relevant stakeholders. Supported by relevant policies and practices to implement them, prevention initiatives can promote good governance, justice and accountability and eliminate inequalities that predispose citizens to conflict and violence. To this end, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated the following at the 20th commemoration of the Rwanda genocide:

“We have learned important lessons. We know more keenly than ever that genocide is not a single event, but rather a process that evolves over time, and requires planning and resources to carry out. As chilling as that sounds, it also

means that with adequate information, mobilisation, courage and political will, genocide can be prevented.”

Similarly, the institutional structure and dynamics of most National Mechanisms clearly demonstrates how states and non-state actors have supported, and in some cases, fronted efforts to prevent atrocity crimes at regional and national levels. Even though it is important to highlight the crucial role non-state actors and other stakeholders play in preventing atrocity crimes, especially in Africa, states should take the foremost responsibility of protecting their citizens and their property.

Responsibility to Protect

Complementing legal instruments such as the UN Genocide Convention, at the 2005 World Summit, member states of the UN, inspired by the gruesome impact of the crime of genocide, mass atrocities and large-scale violations of human rights, questioned the role and responsibilities of the UN as a whole. During the summit, member states unanimously agreed on their responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity as members of the international community and through measures ranging from diplomacy to coercive means. The three pillars of this responsibility are:

Pillar One: Every state has the responsibility to protect its populations from four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Pillar Two: The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility.

Pillar Three: 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.

While progress towards implementation varies between states and regions of the world, the general view is that the pillars function to contribute to atrocity prevention and stability of states and communities. National Mechanisms, in collaboration with R2P Focal Points, can complement each other in advancing this responsibility within their respective states. To deal with associated challenges, policymakers, experts and practitioners from the UN, regional organisations, governments and civil society continue to engage with institutional and policy issues posed within the UN system and member states during the implementation of R2P. Events like those in the Central African Republic, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, and Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Sudan inform continuing deliberations to explore suitable responses with respect to R2P implementation.

Box 1: Relating Atrocity Prevention and Responsibility to Protect

- Different terms for the same agenda: they seek to help states to politically and institutionally commit and support each other to prevent atrocity crimes.
- They are mutually reinforcing in situations of potential violence and enable collaboration between United Nations systems and those to prevent implemented at regional, country and community levels.
- They privilege early warning and recognise factors that tend to indicate an enabling environment for atrocities to be committed, which should be identified and addressed early enough to avoid escalation into crimes.
- They require and function to strengthen institutional connectivity to expand options and the space to counter threats and advance peace-building work.
- They function to integrate international, regional and sub-regional partners into working arrangements to build capacities to plan and execute interventions to help states protect civilians and advance community resilience.

Institutions and Organisations Working on Atrocity Prevention and Responsibility to Protect

The following are some of the international and regional organisations that advance atrocity prevention and R2P, which can also assist National Mechanisms to function in their countries drawing from international instruments ratified by their respective countries.

- i. At the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (UNOGPRP), the Special Advisers have distinct but complementary mandates, working together to advance national and international efforts to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. The Office of the Special Adviser in Genocide Prevention has developed a Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes. It is an assessment tool and provides an integrated analysis of the risk of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes from an early warning perspective (United Nations, 2014). The framework provides a range of risk factors and indicators that National Mechanisms can use in collecting reliable information to be able to provide early warnings and engage with the relevant stakeholders to respond to identified threats in countries at risk.²
- ii. National level R2P Focal Points appointed by their governments participate in the Global Network of R2P Focal Points (Global Responsibility to Protect, 2017) to foster cooperation with other focal Points towards promoting the implementation of R2P in their respective states. Currently, 60 countries are members of the network, including 12 from Africa with National Responsibility to Protect Focal Points i.e. Angola, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Paraguay, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania.³
- iii. There are also regional mechanisms established to, among other things, prevent atrocity crimes. At this level, the dynamics of atrocity crimes (causes, triggers, drivers, impacts, and ultimate resolution) are considered to require regional approaches, despite linking them to local, national, sub-regional and in some cases international contexts. Examples of such mechanisms include:
 - The African Union (AU). The African Union Constitutive Act, Article 4 (African Union, 2000), requires Member States of the union to peacefully resolve any conflicts between them. It also states the right of the Union to intervene in situations of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. A Member State can also request such intervention to restore peace and security. From this perspective, the AU Department of Peace and Security,⁴ the Department of Political Affairs⁵ and other departments work with Member States to implement a range of initiatives towards atrocity prevention.
 - The ECOWAS (ECOWAS , 1993). Established under The Treaty of Lagos⁶, the ECOWAS is a 15-member regional organisation with mandate to promote the economic integration of the constituting countries.⁷ Article 3 of the treaty emphasises the

² On the Joint Office see: <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/>. On the Framework of Analysis see : http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/Genocide_Framework%20of%20Analysis-English.pdf

³ For additional information about the Global Network and on how to contact the individual Focal Points - Savita Pawnday: Email: spawnday@globalr2p.org, or Tel. +1 212 817 2104, or +1 917 680 5477.

⁴ Contacts: Elizabeth Choge-Nyangoro (Ms). Email: choge2000@gmail.com; chogenyangoroe@africa-union.org
Tel.: +251 11 551 3822 (ext. 3127)

⁵ Contacts: Mr John G. Ikubaje. Email: GbodiJ@africa-union.org Tel: +251 92 320 8041/11 151 82622

⁶ Contacts: Executive Secretariat, 6 King George V Rd, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel.: +234 1 63 68 41, Fax: +234 1 63 68 22

⁷ The Member States of the Economic Community of West African States are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through good neighbourliness, peaceful settlement of disputes and active co-operation between countries to promote a peaceful environment as a prerequisite for development. Against these principals, the regional body has undertaken various peace-building and conflict prevention initiatives in Benin, Liberia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

- The Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace (AMANI Forum). This regional inter-parliamentary initiative advances peace and solidarity across the Great Lakes Region by strengthening the capacity and role of parliamentarians in regional peace-making. Through national chapters in the six-member countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya), the forum conducts dialogue, participates in regional analysis of conflict situations, holds regular inter-parliamentary meetings and organises delegations to undertake peace initiatives. In the past the forum conducted inter-parliamentary dialogue sessions with Members of Parliament from Rwanda and Uganda and fact-finding missions on urban conflicts in Kenya (AMANI Forum, 2008).
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC). This 15 Member State organisation⁸ promotes sustainable economic growth and socio-economic development through integration, good governance, peace and security. The Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation guides decisions of Member States and encourages prevention and constructive resolution of conflicts as fundamentals to achieving regional peace and stability (SADC, 2015).

NB: At different levels of organisation and operation, these and other regional institutions and organisations can provide legal, technical, moral or logistical support that National Mechanisms can utilise in their work and present them with opportunities to expand partnerships and collaboration. For example, the founding regional treaties for the ECOWAS, the SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region provide legal basis for national mechanisms to be established and operate to implement them at country level.

⁸ Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania, Angola, Mauritius, Madagascar, Namibia, Mozambique and the Seychelles.

CHAPTER TWO - ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS

International and regional instruments

As explained above, these often require the establishment of regional or national mechanisms for the prevention and punishment of atrocity crimes to facilitate their implementation. However, the instruments do not guide states on how to go about establishing these mechanisms. Much of this is often left to the interpretation and creativity of states during implementation, including determining the minimum qualifications and other requirements for leadership and membership of the mechanism.

The process to establish the National Peace Council in Ghana and the National Committee under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region provide examples of bottom-up and top-down approaches to establishing National Mechanisms. While the bottom-up approach has generated greater buy-in from stakeholders at grassroots and national levels and has produced better institutionalisation with improved performance, as is the case in Ghana, the top-down approach is often troubled by these key challenges, despite well demonstrated political will, as in the case of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Heads of States.

For example, the process of establishing the National Peace Council⁹ in Ghana is an evolving bottom-up best practice and a step-by-step model to consider when establishing National Mechanisms. Some of the key steps taken by Ghana include:

- i. Advocacy by Civil Society Organisation groups and local political leaders to establish the National Peace Council as an organisation.
- ii. Formal proposal by District Assemblies of Civil Society Organisations and local leaders to Parliament through the Minister for the Interior, for the National Peace Council to have a four-tier structure, i.e. government, national Security Council, religious leaders and traditional leaders from the National House of Chiefs.
- iii. Writing and presentation of a bill to Parliament by the Interior Minister defining the structure, operational parameters, composition and funding of the National Peace Council.
- iv. Passing the Bill into law, i.e. The National Peace Council Act 2011 (Act 818)¹⁰.
- v. Setting up community, district, regional and national organs, as well as the Secretariat of the National Peace Council.
- vi. Developing strategic plans, rolling out capacity building programmes and implementing projects.

On the other hand, the emerging network of National Committees under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region¹¹ is also evolving as a regional top-down best practice in setting up National Mechanisms to prevent atrocity crimes. Despite being at different stages of establishment,¹² National Committees in the region have generally evolved through the following steps:

⁹ The National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818), available from

https://www.peaceportal.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b98844ce-04c0-4700-98dc-cd21fa97ac1f&groupId=130272224

¹⁰ https://www.peaceportal.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b98844ce-04c0-4700-98dc-cd21fa97ac1f&groupId=130272224

¹¹ International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and all Forms of Discrimination. The member states include Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, The Republic of Congo, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan and Zambia.

¹² Article 26 - 27 of the Protocol establishes a Regional Committee with 12 Members, i.e. one person from each Member State, following which National Committees for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination are formed at country level.

- i. Government appoints a National Representative to the Regional Committee as per the protocol in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Pact 2006.
- ii. National Representatives in Member States generate proposals to their governments to form National Committees.
- iii. Consultative meetings with government, local Civil Society Organisations and academic institutions to nominate representatives on the committee.
- iv. Inaugural seminars are often followed by electing a bureau, where the National Representative officially becomes the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary.
- v. The National Representative collaborates with partners, e.g. the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, etc. to launch and/or conduct capacity building seminars for members towards atrocity prevention.
- vi. Subsequent meetings of the National Committee consider rules of procedure, work plans, budget and other aspects of formalising the functioning of the National Committee.
- vii. The National Committee acts on this mandate to develop and implement prevention projects.

General Purposes of National Mechanisms

In general, National Mechanisms are established for the purposes of:

- i. Developing and advocating for concrete prevention and protection policies that commit and guide activities of the state and other stakeholders.
- ii. Domesticating regional and international instruments and institutionalising structures for coordination, communication, engagement and dialogue concerning prevention and protection.
- iii. Developing and maintaining effective partnerships between state and non-state actors at local and international levels in support of prevention initiatives.
- iv. Building and improving local capacities for prevention, including supporting government and communities to develop and implement peace-building and atrocity prevention initiatives.
- v. Implementing systems to assess and analyse risks and generate early responses through clear monitoring and evaluation strategies.
- vi. Undertaking interventions that seek to transform risky situations and prevent the escalation of hostilities and further violence.
- vii. Developing regional and national specific action plans for the prevention of atrocity crimes.

Setting the vision, mission and objectives for National Mechanisms

Atrocity prevention ought to be stated clearly as a mission and vision of National Mechanisms, seeking to direct all undertakings and commit resources towards this purpose. The development of clear prevention strategies and communication to stakeholders equally requires defined goals to inform corresponding activities. The following are some of the necessary considerations during this process:

- i. Clarity of vision, mission and objectives set by a National Mechanism to provide direction and indicating how prevention should look like at local level, including a description of the intended outcomes.¹³
- ii. Flexibility that allows a range of actions to be taken in evolving atrocity situations, e.g. conducting peace forums in the short-term, which can inform the development of a national policy in the long term.
- iii. Be able to facilitate programming by allowing those responsible for implementation to understand, plan in greater detail and undertake relevant activities more effectively.
- iv. Utilise traditional frameworks for setting Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) goals providing good practices to ensure that prevention is not only achievable, but also effective and can be assessed to determine progress towards peace.

Box 2: The National Peace Council of Ghana

- **Vision**: The National Peace Council’s vision is to have a country characterised by a dynamic environment where people can engage in their lawful activities confident that the institutions, mechanisms, and capacities for mediating differences and grievance are effective and responsive.
- **Mission**: The National Peace Council will facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peace-building in Ghana by promoting cooperative problem solving for conflicts and by institutionalising the processes of response to conflicts to produce outcomes that lead to conflict transformation, social, political and religious reconciliation and transformative dialogues.
- **Objective**: The object of the Council is to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country.

Organisation of National Mechanisms

Lean organisational structures allow greater flexibility and adaptability and can enable National Mechanisms to act more effectively, especially in conditions that may require responses in the shortest time, particularly as they are quick at decision making, reporting, control situations better and are easier for empowering members. In Ghana for example, the National Peace Council has a Board of Directors with 13 members who are eminent persons appointed by the President of the Republic of Ghana and service for a period of four years. The Executive Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the affairs of the Council, including regional and district level peace councils and assemblies.

National Mechanisms within member states of the ECOWAS are established and function as National Centres for the Coordination of Early Warning and Early Response. Each National Centre has the mandate to coordinate, monitor and activate responses to identified threats, through a Liaison Officer who links the Centre to ECOWAS Early Warning and Response headquarters. For the purpose of sustainability and ownership of the mechanism, the Centre is supervised by a Statutory Board led by the Prime Minister/Vice President of each Member State.

On the other hand, National Mechanisms under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region are National Committees are composed of 10–20 designated members. Unlike the National Peace Council in Ghana or ECOWAS national structures, the organ within the International

¹³ <https://www.mint.gov.gh/agencies/national-peace-council/>

Conference on the Great Lakes Region National Committees is the Bureau composed of a Chairperson, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and a Secretary, while the rest are just members, and they all serve for 4 years on average. The Chairperson also represents that Member State on the Regional Committee and is appointed by the government. Other members of the Bureau are elected once the membership of the committee is constituted on the invitation of the line Ministry in each country, e.g. the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in Uganda. Most National Mechanisms in the region still operate at national level and have not yet developed to the point of establishing out-posts or appointing focal point persons at district and community levels. The committees collaborate with a wide range of actors at governmental and non-governmental levels to implement projects.

Membership of National Mechanisms

Membership of existing National Mechanisms is greatly influenced by how the mechanism is established. While the majority of states in Africa still do not have National Mechanisms or R2P Focal Points for atrocity prevention, the following characteristics manifest across existing mechanisms.

- i. Multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary membership with diverse academic backgrounds and work experience. This is useful for generating broadly informed interventions and building cross-sectoral cooperation on prevention.
- ii. Inclusion of key institutions, as is the case in Ghana, i.e. government, security, religious and traditional leaders, which expands ownership and buy-in during prevention work.
- iii. By the magnitude of their work towards prevention and R2P, National Mechanisms require the government to be represented in the mechanism and to play a key role in coordinating other stakeholders and their activities.

In the Great Lakes Region for example, National Mechanisms were established following the ratification of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Pact by Member States and the membership is sourced by government. The R2P Focal Points also require appointment by government, but should have the necessary influence, especially within government, to be able to promote implementation of R2P and to mobilise other National Mechanisms for prevention. On the other hand, membership of National and District Assemblies of the National Peace Council have minimal government representation, but still draw their legitimacy from an Act of Parliament. They are largely constituted by religious, traditional and respected community leaders, including women and People with Disabilities.

In the Great Lakes Region, membership of National Mechanisms is characterised as follows:

- i. Senior and mid-level civil servants and Civil Society Organisation leaders.
- ii. Regional, gender and ethnic representation.
- iii. Multi-disciplinary professional backgrounds, e.g. law, security, peace-building, human rights, etc.
- iv. Multi-sectoral representation, for example:
 - Ministries of Justice, Internal affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Regional Affairs.¹⁴
 - National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI)
 - National Police Services.
 - National Defence Forces.

¹⁴ Non-exhaustive list

- Institutions of Higher Learning, e.g. universities and colleges.
- The civil society, especially those working on related issues.
- Religious bodies and institutions.

This type of composition, although appearing to be state centric, suggests that National Mechanisms should be carefully constituted with appropriate competences to allow prevention initiatives to be informed by, but also to respond to, a wide range of needs in atrocity situations. This membership further suggests that atrocity prevention does not depend on a single sector of government or society, but requires greater outreach and is a collective responsibility.

Table 3: Example of the Composition of Existing International Conference on the Great Lakes Region National Mechanisms

Member Government Institution/Organisation	Uganda	Kenya	Tanzania	South Sudan
National Police Force	✓	✓	✓	
Ministry of Defence/National Defence Forces	✓		✓	✓
Civil Society Organisations	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Human Rights Institutions	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ministry of Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academia and Academic Institutions	✓		✓	
Media	✓			
Office of the President	✓	✓	✓	
Office of the Prime Minister	✓		✓	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inter Religious Council	✓		✓	✓
Ministry of Education			✓	✓
Ministry of Gender and Youth	✓		✓	✓
Ministry of Internal Affairs/Home Affairs	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Law Societies		✓		
Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee		✓		
Amnesty Commission	✓	✓		
International Non-Governmental Organisations		✓		
Department of Public Prosecution	✓	✓		
Attorney General's Office		✓	✓	
Ministry of Education			✓	
Ministry of East African Co-operation			✓	
National Legislative Assembly				✓
Council of Traditional Authority Leadership				✓
National Cohesion and Integration Commission		✓		
Federation of Women's Lawyers/ Empowerment Networks for Women		✓		✓

Source: (Researcher)

Notes about the Table:

- Tanzania: The Tanzania National Committee was the first to be established in the region on February 2012 with support from the UNOGPRP. The selection of the members was based

on the model provided for in the Rules of Procedure of the Regional Committee, but localised according to the Tanzanian administrative system. The main goal was to draw membership from all key ministries and sectors dealing with peace and security, either directly or indirectly, and the structure has not changed since its inception. However, individual members have been replaced by new representatives due to departmental transfers and promotions within government. To date, the committee has undertaken various prevention initiatives, including the establishment of interfaith peace forums and programmes involving religious, civil society and political leaders, tailored training and technical assistance programmes to increase capacity in order to carry out its mandate and is the process of establishing a Regional Early Warning Centre to serve International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Member States.

- ii. Kenya: The Kenyan National Committee was launched on 22 March 2012 with support from the UNOGPRP, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but coordinated in the Office of the Great Lakes Region. Its composition caused great debate and emerged out of a series of consultation meetings between Ministries, the Office of the President and the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The Kenyan National Committee has established sub-committees on: the construction of a National Memorial for Post-Election Violence, Early Warning, Rules, Resource Mobilisation, a national Genocide Prevention Bill and Policy, as well as the use of punishment as a preventive mechanism. The Kenyan National Committee has further undertaken training and capacity building initiatives to enhance skills and knowledge of the members and implemented Peace Forums ahead of the 2018 election involving County Commissioners, Provincial Commissioners and community leaders from hotspots for potential violence. The committee is also developing a National Law on Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and Mass Atrocities in Kenya.
- iii. Uganda: The Ugandan National Committee was officially launched on 15 October 2012, with support from the UNOGPRP. Its composition closely reflects that of Kenya with guidance from the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The Committee engaged in community-level consultative and mediation meetings to address tensions in Western Uganda, conducted an initial assessment of national strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of atrocity prevention and has drafted the “Genocide Bill”, as the national law on genocide and mass atrocity prevention already needed to be introduced on the floor of parliament and was referred to a select committee for further discussion, seeking to a domestic legal framework for the National Committee and its mandate.
- iv. South Sudan: The South Sudan National Committee was established on 9 July 2011, with support from the UNOGPRP. The Republic of South Sudan joined the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on 24 November 2012 after the Pact on Security, Stability and Development was amended in the same month. The country became the 12th Member State of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and is therefore bound by the Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination. From its launch until the present day, the Committee has attempted to consolidate its membership to be able to function, but the political environment has not been conducive to even convene meetings.

Box 3: Principle guidelines for the Establishment of National Mechanisms

The following provide a good reference when establishing a National Mechanism and seek to increase support for its functions while minimizing resistance to domestication of their work.

- Involve government and civil society in defining the mechanism and its mandate.
- Establish relevant international links to share experience, expertise and support.
- Clarity and orientation of members in the mission, vision and mandate of the National Mechanism.
- Utilise existing expertise within government, civil society and academia.
- Identify the appropriate skillsets necessary for leadership and management.
- Knowledge and previous experience in relevant work are assets to the National Mechanism.
- Prioritise development of competencies among members to support the work of a National Mechanism.
- Clarify roles, duties and responsibilities, duration of membership and succession.
- Strong consideration of gender, geographic and ethnic diversity.
- Avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- Plan and pursue stable and reliable funding options, including from the state.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks for National Mechanisms

Various national and international instruments provide a legal basis for the establishment, functioning and regulation of National Mechanisms. For example, The UN Charter (1948), Chapter VIII: Article 52 encourages Members to form regional arrangements for dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, and to make every effort to achieve peaceful settlement of local disputes. However, the majority of states are still struggling to create space in which such binding obligations can be effectively fulfilled especially in Africa. To this end, some of the international, regional and domestic instruments provide a legal basis for National Mechanisms to do their work.

- i. UN Charter, as well as other international treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1967).
- ii. The Outcome Document of the UN World Summit 2005
- iii. Regional Treaties, e.g. The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (1987).
- iv. Sub-Regional Treaties, i.e. the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Pact on Security, Stability and Development (2006) and the East African Community Treaty (1999).
- v. Inter-state (bilateral) arrangements.
- vi. Rules of procedure and guidelines for National Mechanisms.

General Mandate of National Mechanisms

National Mechanisms fulfil a range of functions which can be referred to while establishing or working to improve similar structures. For example, R2P Focal Points promote atrocity prevention, including enabling and convening institutions and policy actors at national and international levels, coordination of intra and inter-governmental initiatives, reviewing national level policies to support implementation of R2P and monitoring for Early Warning to be able to advise national leadership.

Other national and regional instruments that establish National Mechanisms in Member States often describe their mandates too, although the implementation of these mandates often differs between countries and regions. In some cases, this may undermine the effectiveness of the establishment of the mechanism's regional instruments to be able to function more coherently at national and regional levels.

While National Mechanisms may differ from state to state, their mandates describe broad tasks, relationships and tend to indicate the forms of interaction necessary for effective prevention. Mandates of National Mechanisms also generally seek to promote lasting international principals, norms and objectives articulated in most international instruments and frameworks. The following are common in existing National Mechanisms under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the ECOWAS.¹⁵

- i. Advisory: Risk assessment of country situations and providing early warnings to relevant stakeholders. This includes data gathering and analysis of this information from an atrocity prevention perspective in order to detect threats, vulnerabilities and to alert the appropriate authorities in order to take recommended early action.
- ii. Capacity Building: Development of training programmes for state and civil society leaders, and other relevant actors offering preventive approaches and practical tools for local, national and regional peace-building, conflict management and prevention.
- iii. Policy: Develop and recommend policies geared towards the protection of vulnerable populations from the risks of genocide and other atrocity crimes
- iv. Communication: Communication with national, regional and international organisations on issues concerning conflict prevention and peace-building.
- v. Infrastructure: Development of appropriate, integrated and coordinated infrastructures¹⁶ to deliver on atrocity prevention and peace.

The process by which the National Peace Council in Ghana got to describe its mandate provides a best practice in generating mandates that primarily respond to local contexts and priorities.¹⁷ This process evolved through consultations with political and military leadership, religious and traditional leaders' forums, district assemblies and other stakeholders. The output was a clear articulation of the specific functions of the National Peace Council, which are as follows:

- i. Harmonise and co-ordinate conflict prevention, management, resolution and build sustainable peace through net-working and co-ordination.
- ii. Strengthen capacities for conflict prevention, management, and sustainable peace, including but not limited to chiefs, women, youth groups and community organisations.
- iii. Increase awareness on the use of non-violent strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country.
- iv. Facilitate the amicable resolution of conflict through mediation and other processes including indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace-building.

¹⁵ This was generated from Protocols establishing the International Conference on the Great Lake Region Regional Committee in Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention and Protocol and the ECOWAS.

¹⁶ Infrastructure in this case refers to facilities and systems that enable a multi-sectoral coordination to connect relevant structures and build the necessary relationships between stakeholders towards more comprehensive approaches to effectively prevent atrocity crimes. It also calls for greater communication and collaboration, involving international, national and local actors, to ensure comprehensive prevention agendas.

¹⁷ Abdul Karim Issifu (2015). *The Evolution of Ghana's National Peace Council: Successes and Failures*. October 10, 2015.

Modern Ghana. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/648337/the-evolution-of-ghanas-national-peace-council-successes-a.html>

- v. Promote understanding of the values of diversity, trust, tolerance, confidence building, negotiation, mediation, dialogue and reconciliation.
- vi. Co-ordinate and supervise the work of the Regional and District Peace Councils.
- vii. Facilitate the implementation of agreements and resolutions between conflicting parties.
- viii. Make recommendations to the Government and other stakeholders on actions to promote trust and confidence between and among the group.
- ix. Perform any other function which is axillary to its object.

Values and principles in Establishing National Mechanisms

Establishing National Mechanisms is a complex process of bringing different interest groups from diverse cultural, ideological and other knowledge backgrounds to work together towards prevention. The following are common values and principals which are important to reflect on during this process, particularly from the perspective of governments and leaders of National Mechanisms. These function to support the vision, mission and shape the organisational culture within which the mechanism functions, and include:

- i. Participatory and inclusive values with respect to ethnic, religious and other considerations.
- ii. Flexibility, which is oriented to serve and empower all stakeholders involved in prevention.
- iii. Attentiveness to ongoing training and other capacity building needs.
- iv. Transparency and accountability as the basis to develop partnerships and collaboration.
- v. Information sharing to facilitate decision-making.
- vi. Wholeness, involving urgent and inclusive approaches to act on identified risks effectively.

Governing policies and procedures for National Mechanisms

Once established, National Mechanisms require clear policies to formalise roles, responsibilities and work procedures the actions to be implemented and their outcomes. Effective governance of National Mechanisms will maintain clear strategic goals to guide performance and direct all activities to ensure they are undertaken in the best interest of atrocity prevention. To this end, National Mechanisms should therefore have:

- i. A vision and mission statement.
- ii. Clear and lean management structures.
- iii. Rules of procedure and lines of reporting.
- iv. Annual work plans and performance evaluation guidelines with monitoring indicators.
- v. Job descriptions and other staff engagement procedures.
- vi. Financial management and reporting policies and procedures.
- vii. Code of conduct for members of National Mechanisms

Lessons from Establishing National Mechanisms

Important lessons from the above processes towards stakeholders include:

- i. Ensuring that scopes of work for the mechanism at the level of issues, expertise and roles are defined.

- ii. Ensuring the membership has the multiple skills necessary to develop and implement appropriate strategies in complex atrocity situations.
- iii. Mobilising and maintaining extensive outreach and awareness programmes across stakeholders and potential partners.
- iv. Participation of grassroots leadership and local communities is critical to ensure local ownership and clarifying on priority areas where resources can be applied to be more impactful.
- v. Trust building among adversarial stakeholders, networking and consultations helps to build the necessary relationships for parties to understand prevention from positive perspectives.
- vi. Naturally, groups participating in prevention may have competing interests and agendas which may disrupt the work of a National Mechanism. Strong relationships and trust facilitate the management of competing interests and can reduce dissatisfaction in atrocity conditions.

Box 4: National Mechanisms effectively fulfil their mandates when:

- Their leadership is legitimate and dedicates time to guide all members in the National Mechanism in their work.
- There exists functional autonomy to be able to act more freely, sufficient financial and organisational capacities to collaborate effectively and moral authority to influence government and communities.
- The membership cooperates effectively to execute atrocity preventive programmes.
- Communication mechanisms are effective and receive feedback from the state and communities.
- Permanent structures for coordination and administration are functional and accessible.
- Management structures are transparent and accountable.
- Mandates, membership and methods of work are clearly defined.
- Long-term planning establishes clear goals, sustainability plans and strategies for the long term.
- Motions and decisions reflect the collective expertise and broad membership of the mechanism.
- International engagements constructively support atrocity prevention at local level.
- Policies and procedures for the management and administration of National Mechanisms are clear and enforced.
- The National Mechanism functions strategically, guided by an overall vision for prevention, and builds strategic partnerships.
- The National Mechanism develops and utilises regular monitoring and evaluation of their work.
- Produce periodical reports and act on recommendations therein.
- Individual members act as ambassadors for prevention of atrocities in their countries.
- Declare any conflict of interest during the activities the National Mechanism.
- Create a favourable and transparent working environment.

Domesticating and operationalisation of legal instruments to support National Mechanisms

Governments across Africa are party to various international and regional treaties and other instruments that often require domestication so that National Mechanisms can operationalise them more effectively to support their work. The following are some of the steps taken by National Mechanisms towards this goal:

- i. National dialogues and consultations with relevant stakeholders to develop measures to help apply the instrument in local contexts and to help government to comply with its obligations.
- ii. Seek interpretation by domestic courts to ensure the instrument helps the National Mechanisms to function appropriately within state laws, and facilitate and decision-making when crimes are committed.
- iii. Advocacy to help expand understanding of obligations associated with the instrument, thereby strengthening the instrument as a deterrent tool to mobilise early response efforts.
- iv. Demonstrate complementarity between international and state-level instruments, so that states are more capable of meaningfully and substantially contributing to prevention.
- v. Regular consultations and partnerships between government, civil society and community groups help to clarify the issues, risks and threats covered by the instruments and provide solutions thereto.

General considerations when establishing National Mechanisms

- i. Institutionalisation involves legal, leadership, structuring, administration and coordination is critical to effective engagement in prevention work and also fosters the information sharing and positive relationships with stakeholders that are necessary for National Mechanisms to be transparent and accountable.
- ii. Regulate prevention related priorities with human and financial resources and social and political conditions, especially in vulnerable states and communities.
- iii. Political and economic realities have shaped the work of National Mechanisms to include fundraising which occurs over extended periods of time and may come through when opportunities to prevent atrocities have been lost, making it necessary to establishing stable and responsive funding options for National Mechanisms.
- iv. Ongoing training is necessary to provide ongoing learning about prevention at local level and transfer skills from international agencies to build local capacities.
- v. Draw from local knowledge and experiences to develop training programmes and materials, including when deciding on content, timing, selection of participants, trainers, location and related arrangements.

Box 5: Uganda National Committee Domesticating the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Protocol by Developing a National Legislation for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention

Perhaps one of the major and significant achievements for the Uganda National Committee to date includes the drafting and subsequent tabling of the **Prevention of Genocide Bill** to the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, with financial assistance from the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. The Bill is one of a kind in the region and the process provides learning experience for other National Mechanisms wishing to enact and aims to criminalise the crime of atrocities in the domestic legal system. It also seeks to establish a National Commission for Genocide Prevention, as a statutory body responsible for carrying out activities for the prevention of Genocide and other mass atrocities in Uganda.

The process took a more formal approach in March 2015 when the Uganda National Committee contracted an expert consultant to draft a Bill on the Prevention of Genocide and other Mass Atrocities to be presented to Parliament as a private members Bill. The Uganda National Committee held various preparatory meetings on the Draft Bill and invited a cross section of stakeholders on atrocity prevention in Uganda, during which Hon. Jacob Booth, currently the Chairperson of the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, was identified as the Member of Parliament to table the Bill in Parliament. Thereafter a motion was tabled to introduce a private member's Bill called the Prevention of Genocide Commission Bill 2015, which was then referred to the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee for scrutiny and recommendation. Currently, more workshops and consultative meetings are still ongoing with other committees of parliament, including the Human Rights Committee, the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, the Ministry of Justice, the Uganda Human Rights Commission, and local experts in the genocide prevention to help steer the Draft Bill into law.

Challenges in Establishing National Mechanisms

There are a number of general challenges faced in establishing and managing National Mechanisms, despite remaining active in finding innovative solutions to be able to continue with their work. These include:

- i. Genocide and mass atrocity crimes are still very sensitive and politically charged concepts that attract lots of attention and resistance, especially from political leaders. National Mechanisms are therefore best suited to adapting international definitions of these concepts into easily understandable and locally relevant vocabulary and other forms of explanation of what they actually mean and how they can be operationalised.
- ii. National Mechanisms operate in varying political, geographical, and social environments that present unique local conditions, which would suggest that mechanisms cannot have common approaches or methods of work across countries towards the prevention of atrocity crimes. Some situations may require both long-term and short-term engagements, yet balancing the two is equally hard. Under such conditions, demonstrating value addition and determining actual areas of impact from prevention and R2P initiatives may be difficult, although it does not undermine the relevance of National Mechanisms in providing useful entry points to deal with even large-scale atrocity situations.
- iii. At state level, many governments have not fully or even started to integrate National Mechanisms within national systems to be able to relate atrocity prevention and R2P work with other state and local community programmes. Many National Mechanisms continue to

struggle to become more institutionalised and to be able to receive government support, including funding. Unlike the National Peace Council in Ghana, this has been the case in International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Member States.

- iv. Failure to domesticate international instruments that give rise to regional and National Mechanisms for prevention and R2P renders much of this work subject to political connections of National Mechanism members within relevant departments of government to facilitate their registration, operations and outreach to communities without interruption.
- v. Absence of stable and long-term funding of activities suggests that National Mechanisms will remain endlessly dependant on donations and grants in order to carry out their activities, which is not a sustainable practice.
- vi. There are glaring capacity gaps in various National Mechanisms in terms of training and experience in the field of atrocity prevention and R2P. In Africa, these are relatively new concepts with just a few years of research and academic engagement behind them; therefore, the majority of stakeholders working with National Mechanisms require tailored capacity building programmes to ensure they are adequately skilled.

Box 6: Best practices in institutionalising National Mechanisms

- Incorporate the mechanism as a legal entity through official registration, logo, securing office space, and official contacts including a general email and phone number, among others.
- Develop an organisation-wide commitment to the vision, missions, policies and established processes of control and accomplishing tasks in the National Mechanism, including entrenching relevant beliefs and norms within management systems.
- Develop institutional measures to translate plans into actions to achieve them, with roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, rules of procedure and other internal guidelines to support the functioning of the National Mechanism.
- Establish channels of influence to impact state policies and programmes to be sensitive to atrocity prevention.
- Advocate for legal provisions to facilitate the functioning of National Mechanisms.
- Build stable and resilient internal systems concerned with institutionalisation as follows:
 - **People sphere** – Working with supportive political constituencies to advocate/support institutionalisation, especially political actors with mandates and capacity to be influential.
 - **Policy sphere** - Clarity about concepts and advocate policies that support institutionalisation, including securing the necessary human and material resources to implement associated activities.
 - **Organisational sphere** – Advocate to mainstream the responsibility to prevent in larger state systems of the state, through routine activities based on good practices and norms that build the capacity of state leaders and civil servants to support the institutionalisation of National Mechanisms.
 - **Delivery sphere** – Involves adopting methods of work that guide staff to be sensitive to institutionalisation during the implementation of prevention projects/programmes. This sphere also concerns developing tools that support ongoing research and learning about the effects of institutionalisation, while being aware of and sensitive to cultures that may enable or constrain it.

CHAPTER THREE - MANAGEMENT OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS

The disruption, destruction and speed associated with the occurrence of atrocities should not predispose prevention to inefficiency and incompetence. Instead modern forms of management that characterise effectiveness within government and Civil Society Organisations should also apply in the work of National Mechanisms, including ensuring proper planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation of their activities. It is therefore important to build appropriate capacities within National Mechanisms to undertake these functions, including the leadership skills necessary for policy and project development and implementation. This also involves developing favourable attitudes towards prevention for National Mechanisms to be able to partner and collaborate with various stakeholders to respond to threats and consequences of atrocities.

General Tasks of National Mechanisms

- i. Awareness: National Mechanisms accomplish this task through maintaining elaborate systems and proper awareness programmes, structures, as well as tools to reach out to government and the general public to understand and participate in prevention initiatives. Awareness activities seek to educate and clarify to stakeholders and the public the nature of threats and their roles towards prevention, e.g. through media campaigns at community, national and regional levels.
- ii. Collaboration and Information Exchange: Information is a valuable resource in atrocity prevention as it facilitates the planning of interventions and building the necessary collaboration between stakeholders to implement them. National Mechanisms constantly collect information for this purpose, coordinating between all stakeholders as situations may demand. To this end, undertaking research assignments, baseline studies and conflict mapping by National Mechanisms is useful to have the necessary sources of information more readily defined and available.
- iii. Fundraising: Funding of National Mechanisms should be one of the primary tasks of national governments towards the prevention of atrocity crimes. Developing and maintaining diverse funding sources also contributes to the financial sustainability of National Mechanisms. Most often these include individual donors, foundations, businesses, earned income, grants from governments or consultancies that are consistent with the mandate and mission of National Mechanisms. Effective fundraising is founded on strong relationships, which National Mechanisms cultivate by educating funders and communities about prevention and maintain through good stewardship.

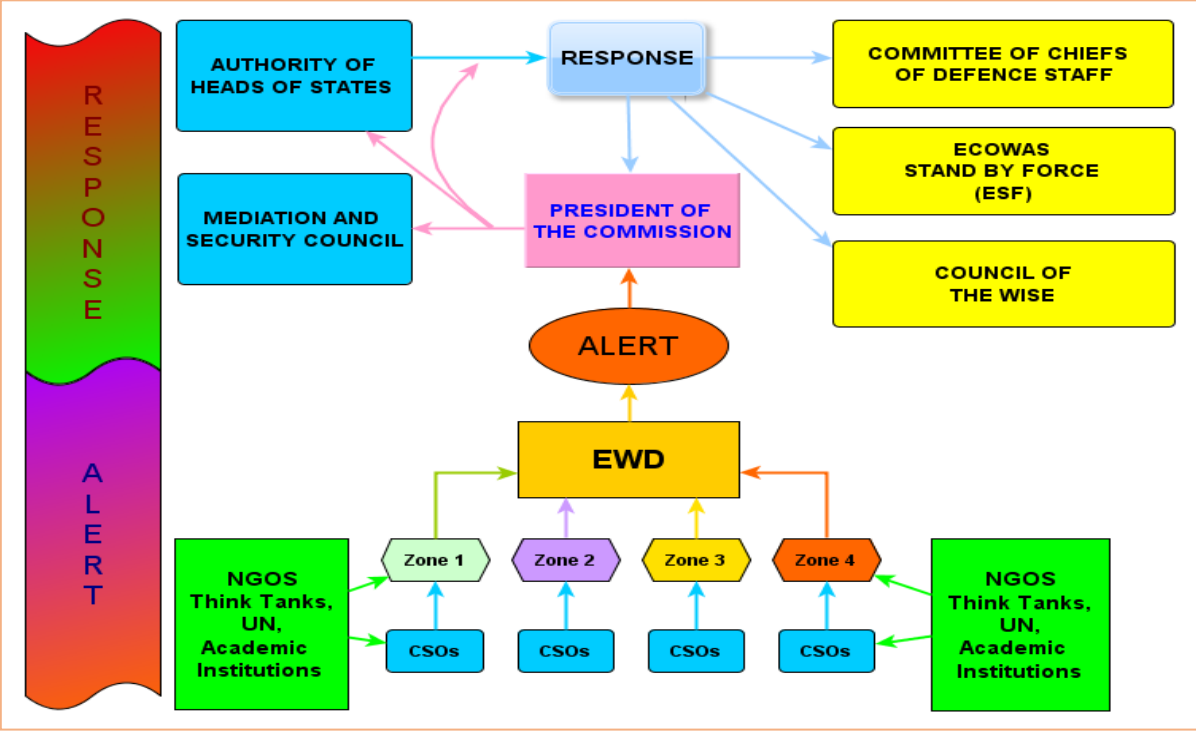
Early Warning as a Core Task during Atrocity Prevention

Effective prevention rests mainly on proper early warning and early response. The task concerns providing evidence-based information to relevant stakeholders about risks, threats of atrocity crimes, including where and how atrocities are likely to be committed. In doing so, various mechanisms undertake a range of activities, utilise standardised language, indicators and assessment instruments that allow proper verification to appropriately inform responses to address both manifest and underlying causes and drivers of atrocity situations.

For example, the AU, the ECOWAS and the Inter-Governmental Agency for Development utilise indicator-based statistical modelling to assess risks, while the SADC's Early Warning Department utilises a Geographic Information System to provide geo-spatial mapping of events and incidents that represent risks and threats. National Mechanisms have a range of such options to explore in terms of systems and tools to support this core task.

The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN)¹⁸ implemented since 2003 presents learning experiences for National Mechanisms on this core task. The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network is an observation and monitoring tool for Early Warning and Early Response across the West Africa region.

Figure 1: The Economic Community of West African States Early Warning and Response Network Alert and Response Structure



While at the alert level the system functions through zones in which local political leaders, academic institutions, the civil society and international organisations collaborate to provide Early Warning and alert states, it is clear that states take responsibility after alerts have been issued. Responses are coordinated at regional level and these combine a range of interventions mobilised within the concerned state and other Member States in the region.

The ECOWAS Conflict Management Framework¹⁹ also outlines the common functions of systems and these provide useful references that National Mechanisms can use to develop national-level Early Warning systems. These include:

Detecting risk and promoting action

- i. Identifying hot spots and developing watch lists where there is a high risk of mass atrocities, e.g. armed conflict, inter-communal hostilities, state-inspired discrimination, or a history of mass violence, as factors that indicate threats.
- ii. Develop and constantly review indicators and related causal models to help identify future outbreaks of violence, monitoring of crisis situations and their escalation, establish thresholds that lead to atrocity crimes and to identify opportunities for Early Response.

¹⁸ http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=59&Itemid=99
¹⁹ <http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/womenandjustice/upload/ECOWAS-Conflict-Prevention-Framework.pdf>

- iii. Turning early information into early action, i.e. collection and analysis of data²⁰ to determine risks of atrocities and present findings to the relevant stakeholders for early action.
- iv. Strengthening and prioritising information sharing systems about organized crimes, e.g. acquisition of weapons, transportation and other resources that can aid perpetrators. This also involves identifying third-party “enablers”, i.e. institutions, organisations, enterprises, or countries that play a role in the organisation and perpetration of these crimes.
- v. Expand local and international networks to cooperate and collaborate to engage state and non-state actors to de-escalate hostilities and open opportunities to transform atrocity conditions.

Diplomacy

Utilise preventive diplomatic approaches to prioritise atrocity prevention in national security arrangements and operations, including creating awareness and training of security organs and personnel in conflict management, early warning, dialogue, mediation and negotiation.

Building resilient communities

This involves strengthening vulnerable and weak communities that may be unable to protect themselves to resist incitement and reconstruct their lives from the effects of atrocity crimes. It also involves support programmes that enhance tension reduction and advance peace-building at local level. In this process, communities should be empowered to overcome adversarial tendencies, while building sustainable and enduring relationships.

International action

This involves mobilising the necessary legal, diplomatic, monetary and other resources more sufficiently and in a timely fashion, and provision of guarantees that action has to be taken to protect civilians. Comprehensive security arrangements provide effective Early Response assistance and these should combine human rights protection, sustainable development initiatives, international humanitarian law enforcement, enhancing good governance and civilian control, in addition to measured military interventions where necessary.

Lessons emerging from literature

- i. Using Early Warning to trigger early preventive responses is a big challenge worldwide. Specific response plans must be developed as part of the Early Warning system (Brigitte, 2015). Preventative interventions to reduce the potential for atrocities should also:
 - Improve or strengthen the quality of policy-making decisions.
 - Reduce inequalities and injustices that predispose communities to conflict.
 - Involve both government and civil society.
 - Strengthen legal mandates and prevention standards
 - Strengthen capacities for controlling destructive weaponry.
- ii. Prevention can be carried out through a combination of various sectors, e.g. economy, governance, diplomacy, the military, human rights, agriculture, health, education and journalism, etc.

²⁰ Some of the sources of data include national and local media, eye witness reports, internet reports and similar publications, meetings, cultural institutions and community forums.

- iii. Early Warning and Early Response interventions are less effective if they fail to address the underlying causes of conflicts, and thus should be part of a whole-of-society peace infrastructure. Longer-term peace-building efforts are important for sustaining peace, not just managing to avert violence.
- iv. The use of local knowledge of issues and interest is crucial for effective Early Warning and Early Response.
- v. New technology has the potential to allow affected populations to be actively involved in data gathering and atrocity prevention.
- vi. Effectiveness of Early Warning and Early Response programmes is significantly associated with:
 - Accurate, consistent and timely information from a wide range of sources.
 - Ability to monitor conflict dynamics at different levels.
 - Participation and ownership by a range of actors across the affected community.
 - Involvement of local actors to build trust and confidence in the system.
 - Enhancing community level cohesion to strengthen the will for peace.
 - Linking Early Warning to other mechanisms, e.g. local level cultural traditions for peace.
 - Flexibility within systems to capture evolving atrocity conditions, including emergencies.

Challenges of Early Warning in National Mechanisms

Provision of Early Warning

- i. Existing mechanisms leverage both human expertise and statistical modelling for conflict Early Warning, while most conflicts require socio-psychological explanations around issues of identity, self-esteem, belonging and security.
- ii. Early Warning of potential atrocities is regular and reliable, especially within communities; yet the effective flow of information within and between states and regional actors to provide responses is minimal and non-existent in some cases. This is particularly the case where Early Warning may emphasise and rely on civil society reporting while governments rely on intelligence for Early Warning.
- iii. Failure to apply an atrocity perspective when examining data and providing alerts, while in other cases a lack of specific indicators or benchmarks for atrocity crimes tends to undermine interventions.

Operational Capacity

- i. There is strong variance in capacity to respond to Early Warning at national and regional levels, expanding from providing good offices, preventive diplomacy, mediation, inter-communal dialogue, to coercive interventions involving the military (African task force on the Prevention of mass Atrocities , 2016). However, with the exception of inter-communal dialogue, Early Warning systems currently have no or very limited capabilities to even influence other forms of interventions by governments, e.g. the deployment of the military to protect civilians.
- ii. Many Early Warning systems are supported by regional and international legal frameworks but not at national level. This undermines their ability to function more effectively to produce longer lasting prevention effects.

- iii. Despite the preference and improvements in rapid deployment of the military in operations by states, National Mechanisms recognise the effectiveness of negotiation and dialogue as critical responses to threats of atrocity crimes. The most recent examples of continuing engagement with national leaders, communities and Non-Governmental Organisations include the Central African Republic, Burundi and South Sudan.
- iv. Expertise in the prevention community is limited to mostly traditional human rights, justice and governance approaches. Additionally, a broad range of expertise is required to produce encompassing responses to multiple aspects of activity conditions including security, economics, health, educational cultural, religious and other relevant actors necessary to produce effective prevention.

Political Will

- i. The gaps that exist between local level Early Warning and Early Response are often attributed to lack of political will to support and facilitate warnings and to respond or act on them. At regional level, this challenge is exacerbated by orthodox views over sovereignty and the unwillingness of concerned states to interfere in affairs of those at risk.
- ii. There is remarkable political will from ECOWAS Member States to act on Early Warning, as demonstrated in 2007-2010 in Guinea and 2005-2010 in Guinea-Bissau, to influence political and security environments towards peace in the region. However, in the Great Lakes Region, political will remains a challenge with respect to failures to resolve ongoing hostilities in Burundi, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is despite invoking the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Pact on Security, Stability and Development (2006) and holding various summits with regional Heads of States. States should refrain from being mere signatories to treaties, hosts and conveners of summits during crises, while leaving individual states to decide how and when to act when crimes are committed.

Box 7: Lessons Learned from Early Warning towards Early Response in West Africa

- Community-based Early Warning systems are more effective at preventing mass violence.
- Well managed data collection and analysis generates useful response options for prevention.
- National Mechanisms should build capacity for intensive monitoring in high-risk situations.
- A clear definition of concepts and indicators is necessary to make Early Warning data useful.
- Early Warning alerts should be marked by: (i) a good understanding of the local context and long-term trends, (ii) accuracy in estimating risks, (iii) efficiency and feasibility of methods, and (iv) legitimacy of the process by stakeholders.
- Early Warning coordinators must communicate directly to relevant and influential community, national, regional and international stakeholders and bodies, as well as perform regular follow-ups.
- Maintaining functional networks of experts in research, atrocity prevention and related fields provides useful resources to help the National Mechanism to analyse and interpret atrocity situations.
- Defining and sequencing immediate, medium and long-term response options is helpful to capture the full scope of prevention before, during and/or after atrocities.

Mainstreaming gender in prevention

Recent developments (Sarah, 2014) in atrocity prevention, including the implementation of Responsibility to Protect, have opened a number of avenues to recognise women and young people not only as the most vulnerable and common victims, but also to affirmatively leverage them as stakeholders and agents of atrocity prevention. This is important to enhance sensitivity to gender-based violations in atrocity crime situations, as well as to be able to develop relevant approaches to mainstreaming their clear roles in prevention initiatives.

In this case, mainstreaming refers to ideas and practices that ensure that prevention efforts equally attend to gender-related needs and interests. It may include appointing gender advisors to National Mechanisms and maintaining a network of gender experts to provide skills and approaches to prevention, for example, in areas of sexual and gender-based violence or human rights violations (social, political, economic and religious) during atrocity situations. To this end, some of the best practices include:

- i. Development of gender-specific indicators to help identify gender-related issues during atrocity situations, e.g. economic, social, and political practices against women at family, communal and national levels. Identified indicators can be factored into Early Warning systems in order to forecast threats and risks faced by women and young people.
- ii. Early Responses to acts of violence against young people and women, e.g. countering sexual violence against women by strengthening relevant institutions of the state, including access to resources and political opportunities by women and legal guarantees for gender-based rights.
- iii. Adopting gender analysis and mainstreaming as a cross-cutting theme in capacity building and outreach programmes by National Mechanisms.

- iv. Ensuring members and staff of National Mechanisms are well trained on gender sensitivity and mainstreaming, e.g. associated risk factors, rights, obligations, strategies, approaches and tools to ensure coordinated actions to respond more effectively to gender issues during atrocity prevention.
- v. Attach a gender advisor to each mechanism to provide technical assistance at all stages during programming for atrocity prevention.
- vi. Incorporating gender resilience training in atrocity prevention capacity building programmes at family, community and national levels.
- vii. Advocacy to increase overall youth and female participation in major national processes concerning health, education and security sector reforms, economic planning, etc.

Box 8: What gets mainstreamed about gender?

- Recognition and respect for gender differences during prevention.
- Gender equality as an essential value during atrocity prevention.
- Promoting gender equality as a society wide responsibility.
- Gender-sensitive political, social and economic programming for atrocity prevention.
- Full participation (formally and informally) of women and young people in prevention.
- Gender-based understanding of the context of prevention to ensure critical values of equality and inclusiveness are properly integrated in programming against atrocity crimes.

CHAPTER FOUR - PROGRAMMING FOR ATROCITY PREVENTION

Programming for atrocity prevention concerns National Mechanisms taking a series of planning, organisational, legal, structural, and managerial actions to intervene in atrocity situations, guided by principles of equality, inclusiveness and diversity. Since atrocity prevention involves dealing with differences proactively, programming addresses key questions such as how to deal with atrocity conditions constructively and what to implement to address the causes and escalation of hostilities.

The West Africa Network for Peace-building²¹ maintains a two-pronged approach to programming and is a model that National Mechanisms can employ in developing their work. At national level, the national secretariat takes responsibility for guiding local networks during all programming while the regional secretariats provide the necessary technical support. This is because “national networks understand their local situation and its realities and are better placed to engage their communities and government to intervene effectively.”²² The networks facilitate a bottom-up approach to allow interventions to reflect the specificities of local conditions.

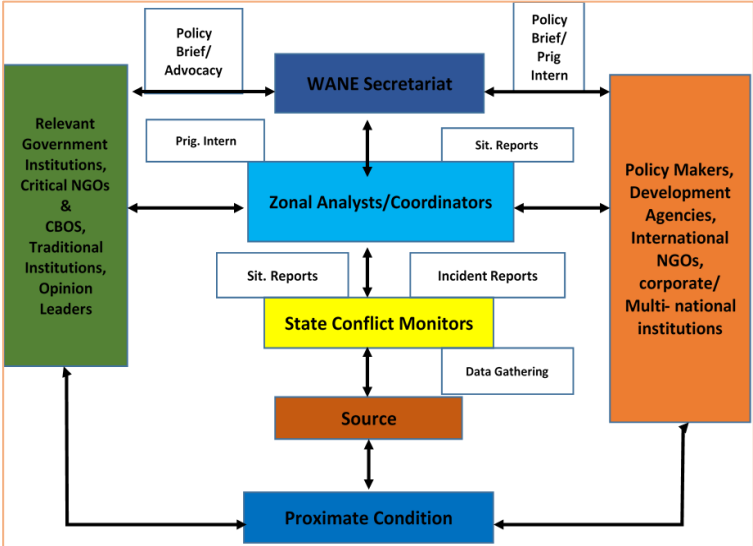
At regional level, programming and provision of technical expertise is coordinated from the regional secretariat on the understanding that risk factors and their escalation in the sub-region are not restricted to the geographical boundaries of Member States. Therefore, programming at regional level cuts across national networks, which are often designed to leverage multi-stakeholder engagement at all levels of society. During programming for atrocity prevention, National Mechanisms should also aim to empower, support and provide technical expertise to local actors to be able to mobilise regional and national level capacities to respond to risks and threats within their communities. The following diagram²³ is an example of a programming framework at the West Africa Network for Peace-building and indicates all actors in the system, their relationships and reporting lines.

²¹ http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2:our-programs&catid=17:about-programs&Itemid=27

²² Ibid

²³ Early Warning and Early Response. Workshop on “Early Warning & Early Response Practice: Sharing the West Africa Network for Peace-building Experience & Strategy Planning, Ghana, August 7-9, 2007, Organised by the West Africa Network for Peace-building (WANEP) and the European Centre for Conflict Prevention /Global Centre for the Prevention of Armed Conflict Global Secretariat

Figure 2: The West Africa Network for Peace-building -Early Warning Operational Framework



Programming Effectively

Effectiveness in programming for prevention is indicated by transformative impacts from the interventions implemented to reduce risks or occurrence of atrocities, while building the relationships necessary to make any gains more sustainable. Whereas various strategic and operational challenges endure, and sometimes render programming ineffective, a number of approaches and tools can be utilised to engage various aspects of atrocity conditions.

Table 4: Key questions during programming

Key questions during programming by National Mechanism, partners and other stakeholders.	
What?	a. What prevention needs require programming? b. What is the most appropriate programming approach? c. What changes will the programming achieve and what are the appropriate indicators? d. What contribution will this programming make towards prevention? e. What material and human resources are required to make this contribution? f. What will be left unaddressed by the intervention?
Why?	a. Why is the National Mechanism correct to programme to intervene? b. Why is the identified intervention appropriate? c. Why is the programming approach and location suitable for the intervention?
How?	a. How long is the intervention going to last? b. How will work be done by experts and staff? c. How will the National Mechanism know that the intervention is working? d. How will the intervention be concluded? e. How will the impact be determined and sustained?
Whom?	a. Who is the identified target(s) by the intervention? b. Who will play specific role(s) during implementation and why? c. Who will be the primary and secondary beneficiaries? d. Who stands to gain or lose from the intervention?

When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. When will the intervention be most suitable for implementation? b. When will material and personnel resources become accessible? c. When should a change in atrocity conditions be expected? d. When is the right time for normative and summative evaluation?
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Conceptualising Programming

- i. Various programming terminologies continue to inform atrocity prevention options. National Mechanisms maintain clear concepts that underlie their work, their meaning and application to avoid simplification and broad referencing to issues that may not be covered during programming. Such detailed explanations help to focus all programming, without leaving room for ambiguity or manipulation of prevention processes.
- ii. For example, Conflict Analysis and Needs Assessment are concepts that National Mechanisms commonly use while seeking to understand causes and actors in atrocity situations, and the needs of communities that interventions should respond to. While the two concepts rarely contradict each other directly, they emphasise quite different operational processes (Rachel M. Macnair, 2003). For example, conflict analysis may locate a conflict within power structures and thereafter recommend a local institution building for security, justice and accountability for redress. On the other hand, a needs assessment may determine how the needs of each party are incompatible with those of the others, and therefore recommend activities and services that enable each party to meet their basic human needs. In this case therefore, programming atrocity situations can combine both processes to provide a broader scope of options for prevention to be more effective and to produce a stronger impact.

Programming as a Goal and Process

- i. Deeper prevention goals require long-term approaches to deal with a combination of underlying and manifest issues at structural and relational levels in atrocity situations. National Mechanisms develop creative strategies to be effective at both levels and implement communication and decision-making processes in which all stakeholders participate to help define short-term and long-term prevention goals.
- ii. Programming processes should also build pathways for the peaceful regeneration of what has worked, to counter the fragility that comes from one-off prevention projects. This involves continuously identifying and applying the lessons learned and best practices from atrocity prevention projects, for example, to promote harmony, local peace, justice and reconciliation and how to obtain interests and needs through non-violence.²⁴
- iii. Programming processes envision prevention as a transitional process in which planned activities seek to gradually transform atrocity conditions into peaceful environments. In doing so, the strategies and approaches adopted by National Mechanisms should contain incentives that guide and attract actors towards moderation and transformation while remaining sensitive to issues that may interrupt this process.

²⁴ Martina Fisher, *Recovering from Violent Conflict: Regeneration and (Re) Integration as Elements of Peace-Building*, “A self-sustaining process of social, political and economic adjustment to, and underpinning of, conditions of relative peace in which the participants, not least those who have been disempowered and impoverished by violence, can begin to prioritise future goals beyond their immediate survival”, pg. 3, available from: www.berghof-handbook.net.

Box 9: Programming to Localise Prevention

- Ensuring participation of local stakeholders to promote local ownership, buy-in and programme sustainability.
- Mainstreaming communal dialogue and reconciliation programmes in atrocity prevention initiatives.
- Involving local governments in projects to develop capacities for atrocity prevention at local level.
- Prioritising protection of civilian communities.
- Developing partnerships between the state and Civil Society Organisations to jointly implement community prevention initiatives.
- Programming to provide basic services to meet local needs and stabilise communities to regain a normal life, e.g. health amenities, restore and improve sanitation, access to water, education and reintegration of displaced people.
- Creating opportunities to help communities become economically productive and revitalising community- based infrastructures for service delivery and development.

Programming as Institutionalisation, Learning and Integration

- i. Institutionalising atrocity prevention requires robust stakeholder engagements and partnerships with local leaders, civil society and grassroots people during programming. National Mechanisms engage with stakeholders to build partnerships, clarify their roles and the required capacities for prevention.
- ii. Organisational learning occurs during programming when National Mechanisms regularly undertake to assess their work to be able to improve, considering that atrocity situations constantly change. Determining how particular approaches to prevention have worked with respect to issues and target communities provides good learning experiences that can help with future programming.
- iii. Integrating traditional/cultural and modern mechanisms and approaches improves effectiveness in programming for atrocity prevention. Balancing these approaches expands opportunities for local knowledge and values to inform prevention initiatives, thus becoming more effective.
- iv. Integration during programming also includes fostering opportunities that scale up gains and impacts from atrocity prevention projects. Scaling up involves enlarging and linking prevention projects to impact the broader and larger social, political and economic systems and structures within which atrocities manifest.

Programming for Capacity Building

- i. The challenges, setbacks and tenacity inherent in atrocity prevention projects and programmes require significant attention to capacity building during programming. This follows from having a clear understanding of atrocity situations to be able to determine the essential skills and other capabilities required, for example, conflict analysis, needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, information systems, negotiation and networking.
- ii. National Mechanisms function in unique environments and therefore capacity building strategies may be different in each situation. Each mechanism will have its own performance needs to effectively respond to the threats, resource challenges and unique sets of constraints

inherent to local situations. Nevertheless, capacity-building specifications for atrocity prevention would prioritise giving actors skills, participation of stakeholders and building local ownership of prevention initiatives. To this end, National Mechanisms benefit from developing clear and tailored capacity-building plans, means and tools.

- iii. Capacity-building plans particularly articulate, among other things, the strategic role of capacity-building in supporting the implementation of atrocity prevention initiatives. Although the roles are defined on a case by case basis, having a clear plan is useful to propagate a common approach to engage with and guide performance of members and staff of National Mechanisms.

Programming with Local Stakeholders

Working with traditional and local leaders.

Traditional and community-based approaches to prevention often aim to restore relationships between parties, through consensus-based and participatory processes.²⁵ The Gacaca and Ingando traditional practices in post-genocide Rwanda demonstrated how traditional mechanisms apply specialised knowledge to contribute to stabilise fragile situations through inclusive and participatory processes. Apparent contradictions often emerge during the application of traditional or community-based approaches alongside international systems to prevent or respond to atrocities, e.g. in the case of the International Criminal Court and traditional leaders in Northern Uganda on how to deal with Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army. However, during programming for atrocity prevention, it is critical to recognise the role of cultural leaders and traditional institutions and to integrate cultural practices and languages while communicating and implementing atrocity prevention initiatives.

²⁵ Volker Boege (2006). *Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation — Potentials and Limits*. Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/boege_handbook.pdf

Box 10: Kenya National Committee in Isiolo County

Kenya held general elections in August 2017 and the country remains predisposed to post-electoral violence. During this time, reports by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), as well as the Uwiano Platform for Peace identified 33 out of the 47 counties as critical hotspots for possible electoral violence. Isiolo County is one of the hotspots that often experiences violence between the Borana, Meru, Somali, Turkana and Samburu communities. Political contestations in Isiolo County are marked by ethnic tensions. The county is also marked by ethnic violence over administrative and electoral boundaries, youth radicalisation by Al-Shabaab, perceptions of marginalisation and is a transit route for small arms and light weapons to Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.

With respect to the prevention of electoral related violence the Kenya National Committee collaborated with the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and conducted a two-day peace and dialogue forum themed ‘never again!’, involving 150 stakeholders, i.e. cultural, religious and other community leaders, policy and decision makers, women and young people from the conflicting communities. These came from Isiolo Triangle, consisting of the Isiolo, Samburu, Marsabit, Garissa, and Laikipia counties. They assessed the state of intercommunal relations, divisive issues, then developed violence prevention and intercommunal cohesion strategies to counter electoral violence, cattle rustling and radicalisation.

After lengthy discussions, participants formulated a Guide to Strategic Isiolo Triangle Community Action Plans: Towards Strengthened Social Cohesion. The plan is comprehensive, with clear objectives, action plans, expected timelines and possible partnerships to fulfil these objectives. Participants also produced a declaration marking their commitment to peaceful coexistence between tribal and political groups in Isiolo Triangle leading up to and after the General Elections scheduled to take place in August 2017.

Working with Civil Society Organisations

Civil Society Organisations creatively engage actors at local, national and international levels to share information, advocate, build prevention capacities, monitor and share information towards Early Warning and Early Response. For example, various Civil Society Organisations in West African countries partner and coordinate their work under the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding to implement a range of democratic governance projects involving different stakeholders. Civil Society Organisations also promote peaceful democratic transition in the region through structures, institutions and practices for good governance at various levels. In doing so, Civil Society Organisations create and constantly expand networks connecting to the wider international community and grassroots communities as well and therefore are especially favoured in advocacy work on legal and policy issues, education, rule of law and justice, service delivery during atrocity prevention.

Box 11: Civil Society Organisation roles in Atrocity Prevention

- Establishing and managing community-based early-warning mechanisms
- Overseeing the implementation of prevention initiatives in accordance with human rights and humanitarian standards.
- Reaching out, engaging and collaborating with local leaders and communities.
- Assisting development of multi-stakeholder prevention networks to facilitate the mobilisation of expertise, resources and to encourage governments to respond to Early Warning.
- Advocating for democratic institutions and building citizens' capacity to exercise their rights.
- Managing development assistance to address inequalities and support prevention.
- Advocating for effective judicial and non-violent policing systems that provide formal protection of civilians
- Undertake fact finding missions, dialogue and mediation, and seek international assistance.

Working with Religious Leaders.

Religious leaders connect directly with grassroots communities where they can implement practical approaches towards prevention. Through religion, religious leaders articulate values systems and morals that followers can utilise to rebuild broken relationships, defuse tensions and also become more resilient to incitement. Religious leaders and institutions can also disseminate religious-based messages that counter hate speech and hostile propaganda and can provide alternative narratives and explanations to rehumanise victims and redress hate speeches formulated in the language of faith and peace. The credibility of religious actors and institutions can also facilitate conducting inter-communal dialogue and interactive processes that contribute to prevention.

Box 12: Tanzania National Committee Working with Religious Leaders

For a period of about one year (July 2013 – August 2014) the Tanzania National Committee organised a series of workshops to engage religious leaders in peace-building. Religious leaders were identified as the specific target group as they play such an integral role in maintaining peace and security in the country. The leaders, chosen from the various faiths, participated in capacity building and knowledge sharing discussions spanning a variety of thematic areas.

Under the theme “**The Role of Religious Leaders in Mainstreaming sustainable peace and social cohesion in Tanzania**”, workshops were conducted in six different regions across United Republic of Tanzania. These included; Mbeya, Mwanza, Arusha, Morogoro and Tanga in mainland Tanzania and Unguja in Zanzibar. The workshops were interactive, allowing the participants to own the process right from the start and to understand better the various issues affecting peace and harmony in their regions and in the country as a whole; as well as experience self-realisation, which in the end brought about the various recommendations and commitments made by them. The outcome of these series of workshops was a detailed report, capturing the intricacies of the discussions spanning the different regions in Tanzania. This 81-page report titled ‘Engaging the Public in a Peace-Building Campaign’ was published in December 2014 and is available for references online. It is now being used to inform discussions in policy formulation and implementation at regional and national levels.

Working with the International Community

Partnerships and collaboration at this level help to increase acceptance by governments of their responsibility to prevent atrocities, as well as to protect populations. Regional inter-governmental bodies and civil society organisations help to expand institutional and in-country policy options for prevention. National Mechanisms coordinating prevention work through such partnerships bring new ideas and approaches to prevention that help communities, practitioners, policymakers and opinion leaders to function better.

Such approaches may be related to conceptualising prevention in times of crisis, mainstreaming prevention in national policies and programmes, advocacy, awareness and strengthening capacities for prevention, reinforcing state and civil society roles, development and application of appropriate programming tools and mobilising resources for prevention.

Embassies and other development agencies continue to provide National Mechanisms with technical and operational support to develop knowledge of atrocity prevention and R2P and implement associated programmes and activities, particularly at national levels. National Mechanisms are therefore able to advance this collaboration, especially when they are able to articulate atrocity prevention initiatives in relation to broader development cooperation strategies between the Embassies, agencies and respective countries, by demonstrating how threats and proposed interventions fit into existing and future development programming and how atrocity prevention can strengthen short- and long-term development goals.

For example, the United States Agency for International Development has also developed a field guide to help with a range of issues related to preventing and responding to mass atrocities.²⁶ Denmark also collaborated with Ghana and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect to launch the R2P Focal Points initiative in September 2010 and currently a number of countries representing all regions of the world have appointed a R2P Focal Point within their governments. Under the Denmark-Ghana Partnership Policy 2014-2018, this partnership continues under various themes, including R2P, conflict prevention, security and peace keeping.

Working with the Media

The media has a big role to play in preventing atrocities. However, there have been negative incidents of fuelling of tensions and spreading hatred, which ultimately lead to commission of atrocity crimes. Modernisation and other changes in how the media functions, especially with respect to conflict, presents unique challenges²⁷ but also provides possibilities that National Mechanisms can utilise to counter incitement and negative reporting to facilitate atrocity prevention.

For example, the ECOWAS provides a clear guide to the role of the media in prevention, i.e. “to forge an enabling West African information landscape of freedom, transparency and accountability, where the electronic and print media shall become veritable watchdogs of human security and platforms for mobilisation and discourse on the processes to promote human rights and the rule of law, common citizenry, social cohesion and integration, social harmony, democracy and development.”²⁸ Member States are obliged to create regulatory and ethical bodies to oversee and monitor compliance with this guidance.

²⁶ United States Agency for International Development Field Guide: Helping Prevent Mass Atrocities April 2015.

²⁷ This concerns the influence and risks, especially from “New Media” forums, e.g. WhatsApp, blogs, mobile phone text messaging, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a systematic means of relaying information.

²⁸ <http://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/womenandjustice/upload/ECOWAS-Conflict-Prevention-Framework.pdf>

The following are some of the benchmarks from the ECOWAS and provide a good reference for National Mechanisms in structuring their engagements with the media:

- i. Enforcement of targeted laws to combat hate media.
- ii. Adherence to an ECOWAS Code of Conduct for the Media.
- iii. Freedom of information laws in member states.
- iv. Responsibility, fairness and objectivity in promoting unity and regional integration.
- v. Reduced incidence of persecution of journalists.
- vi. Popular awareness about protocols and interventions to promote peace and security.
- vii. Financial support and expertise for the functioning of networks of media practitioners.
- viii. Targeted workshops and monitoring of media practice in the region.
- ix. Appropriate support to the disadvantaged media, particularly in post conflict environments to promote national reconciliation.
- x. Expertise and training for community radio stations in vulnerable communities.

Utilising Local Media Outreach

- i. The print, broadcast and social media play vital and central roles in transmitting Early Warning information to decision-makers and the wider public to ultimately prevent possible atrocities. It is also important to be aware of the implications of this work in creating or precipitating evolving crises, and instead ensure that the media is an avenue for monitoring and prevention in the short and long term.
- ii. Utilise local mass media, including newspapers, magazines, radio or television, to widen their reach and in local languages.
- iii. Conduct outreach activities to all audiences to generate public discussions, debates and opinions about prevention initiatives, including dealing with the issues underlying the conflict, the intervention being implemented and to receive feedback.
- iv. Utilise a variety of electronic and internet-based communication avenues to disseminate preventive information.
- v. Maintain functional relationships with the media as part of the communication strategy.

Box 13: Best Practices in Media Outreach

- Develop clear outreach goals, a communication strategy with specific prevention messages and a system to decide between reactive and proactive massaging with respect to alerts, reporting or appeals about atrocity concerns.
- Research and identify the most appropriate and relevant media contacts and channels that are most receptive to prevention and make time to ensure managers and reporters understand the National Mechanism.
- Review previous programmes, paying close attention to individuals and the programmes covered and the impact on prevention.
- Prepare a precise but rich one-page statement introducing the National Mechanism, internalise it well to be able to explain issues in greater details. Then begin stakeholder outreach while positioning the National Mechanism as a resource for atrocity prevention.
- Develop websites and other social media sites where one can learn about National Mechanisms and atrocity prevention in general.
- Respect media schedules and deadlines, knowing that news and other materials about prevention compete with lots of other material, which may be more newsworthy.
- Respect and follow ethical responsibilities, ensuring the credibility of the information communicated at all times in relation to target audiences, e.g. local leaders, policy makers or the general public.
- A Press Statement is the most common official method of presenting information to the public through the media break news, dissemination through broadcast media or press conferences to publicise or condemn actions in accordance with the mandate of a National Mechanism. In this respect therefore, the framing, timing and delivery of the message is critical to achieving the goal of the media or outreach campaign.
- Monitor the performance of the media campaign to determine its reach and impact or effects on target audiences, while also continuing to collect media information about the conflict as part of Early Warning data to continue informing the prevention campaign.

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