Institution: The University of Leeds

Unit of Assessment: 19 Politics and International Studies

Title of case study: Developing a more effective Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework to change awareness, policy and practice on mass atrocity prevention

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014-2020

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Cristina G. Stefan	Associate Professor in International Relations	2014 - current
Jason Ralph	Professor of International Relations	2000 - current
Adrian Gallagher	Associate Professor in International Relations	2012 - current

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Research at the University of Leeds European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (ECR2P) has changed policies on mass atrocity prevention at the United Nations (UN), informed United Kingdom (UK) government policy, and contributed evidence and capacity in the wider policy community. It changed UN policy on the inclusion of partners from the Global South, altering UN strategies to enhance the legitimacy and practice of the R2P prevention and protection agendas. ECR2P research also influenced the mainstreaming of R2P mass atrocity considerations into the UK's foreign policy and its promotion of stabilisation rather than intervention. ECR2P collective research provided new evidence-bases for a wide range of UK organisations, including NGOs and select committees, changing understandings on how to create more effective atrocity responses.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) 'embodies a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution' (UN). Amidst the resurgence of violent conflict there has been significant increase in atrocity crimes (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing) as evidenced by the fact that of the 81 UN Security Council Resolutions that invoke the R2P, 77 of them occurred since 2011. ECR2P aims to reduce atrocity harm and risk by providing research-based evidence to states and international organisations in their efforts to protect populations from mass atrocities. Launched in 2016, the year the World Bank reported that more countries experienced violent conflict than at any time in nearly 30 years, it is the only European centre on R2P and is a leading research and advisory group, from which the impact outlined in this case study arose. ECR2P is distinguished from the two other global R2P centres (Global Centre for R2P, Asia-Pacific Centre for R2P) by its pragmatic policy reform approach, which seeks to critically address and then locate often overlooked policy alterations that can bring about incremental and realisable reform to mass atrocity prevention policy. Comprising six staff and six PGR members from POLIS, the ECR2P operates an active engagement policy via problem-focused research, consultancy, fieldwork partnerships, public engagement, and informing policy and practice at the UN, European and UK levels. This includes active evidence-generating links with the UN Office for Genocide Prevention and R2P, and several key organisations in the UK and EU working on human protection and atrocity prevention. Three key research activities underpin the impact below.

1) Research conducted by ECR2P staff pertaining to UN processes and thinking on R2P and atrocity prevention strategies has argued for broadening the consultative processes shaping UN member-state policies and perceptions of R2P, contributing empirical evidence towards better legitimating R2P policy development. For example, Stefan's research argued for an increased role for non-permanent UN Security Council (UNSC) members and for the inclusion of alternative R2P views, such as those of Brazil and others in the Global South, to consolidate

R2P legitimacy and support **[1]**. Similarly, Ralph's and Gallagher's research on UNSC competence **[3,6]** and Stefan's collaborative research for the UN **[2]** stressed legitimacy concerns triggered by the limited implementation of R2P through Security-Council decision-making and the 'use of force' component of R2P. Ralph's research on the role the UK plays in the UNSC also highlights legitimacy challenges for R2P moving forward post-Brexit **[6]**. Stefan's first-of-a-kind study on 'Lessons Learnt from Guinea' **[2]** demonstrated that a specific combination of preventative, diplomatic, political and juridical tools could be employed at the UN when risk factors of the type seen in post-election Guinea are noticed elsewhere.

2) ECR2P research has collectively examined the need for states to better mainstream atrocity prevention into foreign policy 'stabilisation' efforts and to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law within the main tenets of R2P implementation **[1,2]**, especially when applying the R2P framework to specific case studies, such as Libya and Syria **[3-6]**. In particular, Ralph's research into UK government approaches to atrocity prevention provided concrete suggestions for mainstreaming R2P into UK foreign policy, demonstrating that the UK government needed to adjust its conflict analysis processes, clarify its position on R2P 'focal points', re-write its stabilisation policies to prioritize atrocity prevention **[5]**, and redesign its role within the UN Security Council **[6]** in a post-Brexit context **[7]**. Similarly, Stefan's research stresses the importance of identifying non-military tools available to operationalize R2P **[1]**, derived from successful preventative examples of R2P **[2]**, which has also informed ECR2P training of military personnel in Doha, Qatar.

3) ECR2P research provided insights on ongoing R2P-related developments in Libya **[1,3]**, Syria **[3,4,6]** and other mass atrocity situations **[2,4,6]**, which informed the presentation of evidence to a number of UK select committees and UK-based institutions working on protection, prevention, and R2P. The insights stem from a body of research providing acute analysis on how, when, and under what circumstances, military intervention may play a role in the operationalisation of the R2P. This includes investigating complex and ongoing challenges associated with mass atrocity in Libya and Syria **[3,4]**, and what effective response parameters are available within the R2P framework and international law **[1-3,6]**.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[1] Stefan, C. (2017) 'On non-Western norm shapers: Brazil and the Responsibility while Protecting', *European Journal of International Security* 2 (1), 88-110: https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2016.18.

[2] Stefan, C. (2018) ECR2P Working Paper 1 'Guinea: A Successful Case of Atrocity Prevention?' Forthcoming as 'Atrocity Prevention Assessment: Lessons Learnt from Guinea', in A. Bellamy and I. Simonovic (eds.) *Atrocity Prevention and the United Nations*. Penn State University Press.

[3] Ralph, J. and A. Gallagher (2015) 'Legitimacy fault-lines in international society. The responsibility to protect and prosecute after Libya', *Review of International Studies* 41 (3), 553-573. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000242.

[4] Gallagher, A. (2014) 'What constitutes a "Manifest Failing"? Ambiguous and inconsistent terminology and the Responsibility to Protect', *International Relations*, vol. 28 no. 4 428-444: https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0047117814552144.

[5] Ralph, J. (2014) *Mainstreaming the responsibility to protect in UK strategy*: 'The Responsibility to Protect and preventing mass atrocities – UNA-UK Briefing Report No.2'.

[6] Ralph, J. and J. Gifkins (2017) 'The purpose of United Nations Security Council practice: Contesting competence claims in the normative context created by the R2P', *European Journal of International Relations* 23 (3), 630-653: https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1354066116669652.

[7] Ralph, J., J. Gifkins and S. Jarvis (2019) 'The United Kingdom's special responsibilities at the United Nations: Diplomatic practice in normative context', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*: https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148119887317.

ES/L00075X/1. Gallagher Co-I). Output **[6]** Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship (University of Queensland-University of Leeds) 'Moral Progress and Political Limits. Liberal Responsibilities in an age of shifting international power balances' (2013-15: GBP251,000. Ralph PI) and RCUK, Rights and Ethics in Security Context - 'Responsibility to Protect in the context of the Continuing War on Terror. A study of liberal interventionism during the Syrian crisis' (2014-16: GBP250,000, ES/L013355/1. Ralph PI). Output **[7]** British Academy Tackling the UK's International Challenges Programme 2017 'The UK Role and Reputation as a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council after the Decision to Leave the European Union' (GBP37,543, IC2\100081. Ralph PI).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

ECR2P research is shaping the development of R2P policy in three significant ways: i) by the Centre becoming an evidence-generating knowledge hub changing policy understandings within the wider R2P policy community through global intellectual leadership; ii) setting the agenda and changing policy at the UN, and iii) shaping UK policy on mainstreaming R2P and atrocity prevention.

i) ECR2P has become an evidence-generating knowledge hub changing stakeholder understanding, strategies and policies for preventing mass atrocity. Since 2016, the scope of policy engagement and influence by ECR2P is illustrated by repeated invitations to its members to contribute written and oral research evidence to the UK Defence Select Committee and Foreign Affairs Select Committees and through directly influencing the work of NGOs and charitable organisations in the UK, such as the United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK) and Protection Approaches **[A,B]**, which are the two flagship UK organisations working on protection, prevention of atrocities and R2P, and who are now affiliated partners with ECR2P (see **iii)** below). As just one set of examples, Gallagher presented research with follow-up oral evidence to the House of Commons Defence Committee on Iraq and Syria and threats posed by ISIS in October 2014. Gallagher's evidence-base was cited in the CDC report on ISIS in Iraq and Syria (p. 16) and provided influential recommendations on the legality of airstrikes in Iraq and Syria **[C]**. A former MP and Defence Committee member remarks: '*Dr Gallagher played a key role in shaping the Committee's understanding of this topic which is reflected in the fact that the final report cites his evidence [which] helped the Committee differentiate between legal and illegal action under the Responsibility to Protect framework'* **[D]**. In addition, Gallagher was invited to give written evidence on 'The Extent and Effectiveness of Post-Conflict Planning in Libya' to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, which was cited in its final report (2016-17, pp. 26-27) **[E]**. Written evidence from Gallagher and Ralph provided post-Brexit strategy recommendations to a 2018 Foreign Affairs Select Committee on 'Global Britain: R2P and Humanitarian Intervention' (Report, pp. 6, 8, 10) **[F]**. In non-governmental settings, ECR2P has directly influenced The UK Working Group on Atrocity Prevention, an umbrella group which includes all UK organisations focusing on reducing the risk of mass atrocities worldwide and on influencing the UK government policy on the topic. This UK Working Group has drawn upon ECR2P's research expertise and findings **[5]** to inform about which R2P policies to lobby the UK government **[A,B]**, specifically within a post-Brexit context.

ii) Directly influencing and shaping UN agenda on R2P and atrocity prevention through formal partnership agreements and consultancies to the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the R2P. As detailed below, these activities include the development of policy to change the UN Office's consultancy process with UN Member States, direct contributions towards redefining the strategic priorities of the UN Joint Office, drafting contributions to the UN Secretary-General's Annual Report on R2P, and providing analysis and research-based critical evidence synthesis to shape the development of prevention-oriented policy through the UN's Atrocity Prevention Assessment project **[G,H]**.

One of Stefan's research contributions highlights the importance of including states from the Global South in designing R2P-related responses at the UN **[1]**. This is critical, because while most atrocity prevention efforts occur in the Global South, states from these regions are often absent from policy design and decision-making at the UN, thereby undermining both the legitimacy and efficacy of R2P interventions. Her analysis was used during the organisation of preliminary discussions running up to the drafting of the Secretary-General's Annual Report

on the R2P, during Stefan's secondment to the UN in May-June 2017. It was during this secondment that Stefan's recommendation to broaden inclusion of regional powers like Brazil within preliminary UN discussions was adopted by the UN Office. The former UN Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on R2P remarks: '*Dr. Stefan's research on legitimating R2P processes within the UN, and the need to include emerging powers such as Brazil, has made us reconsider the role of Member States from the Global South and to change the way we invite and encourage these actors to participate in R2P related processes and decision-making. This change in policy has been a crucial first step towards making the R2P more inclusive, and more representative of regional perspectives, thus increasing R2P's legitimacy*' **[G]**. This inclusion '*has directly changed the way the UN Office engages with the policy preferences from the Global South*' and provided strategic opportunities for R2P advancement in terms of increased legitimacy and support **[G]**.

Stefan was asked by the R2P Special Advisor to the Secretary General to contribute written text to the 2017 UN Secretary-General's report on 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention', which acknowledges the regional potential towards the prevention of atrocities **[G]**. Stefan's research-based evidence **[1,2]** informed the *2017 UN Report on R2P* to stress the relationship between legitimate processes, Security Council processes, and the need for collaborative work, with Stefan being '*the first to propose including a section on the important role played by regional players, to highlight the need for collaborative efforts to address atrocities effectively … In the longer term, this will lead to much greater legitimacy in the UN's operationalization of R2P*' **[G]**. The final report was submitted to the Secretary-General and his executive office. Stefan was also consulted by *Strategy for Humanity,* an organisation commissioned to conduct a strategic review of the priorities of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P in 2016. The former Head of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and R2P affirms that Stefan's '*recommendations pertaining to strategic priorities for the Responsibility to Protect agenda at the United Nations contributed to the subsequent recalibration of the Joint Office's strategy and priorities*' **[H]**.

As a result of Stefan shaping UN thinking on inclusionary R2P practices, the UN Special Advisor on R2P invited her to contribute to a new Atrocity Prevention Assessment project, designed to inform the United Nations' overall policy on atrocity prevention **[G,H]**. The project's '*final report is shaping UN's policy on atrocity prevention, being the first comprehensive UN assessment of prevention risk factors*' **[G]**. Stefan's research on Guinea **[2]** was one of seven cases informing the Atrocity Prevention Assessment project **[G,H]**, and '*supplied an evidence-base for [UN Office] prevention analysis and identified the combination of effective preventive tools used in Guinea, which the UN could replicate elsewhere under similar conditions and in collaborations with regional and national actors*' **[H]**. The prevention measures that Stefan identified '*provided useful examples to inform our [UN Joint Office] overall prevention assessment and further recommendations, [which] aimed to facilitate practical implementation*' **[H]**. From Stefan's research findings, '*the UN Joint Office was able to incorporate the evidence into the final assessment, which made a significant contribution to [UN Office] overall thinking and prevention strategy*' **[G]**. The overall assessment '*produced lessons learned to advance atrocity prevention and to improve cost effectiveness ... The project also provided practical implementation advice for the United Nations Secretary-General's overall prevention vision*' **[G]**.

iii) Influencing UK policy on R2P and atrocity prevention through formal partnership agreements, research collaborations, and the production of policy reports for key institutions working on prevention and protection in the UK. Ralph's research on R2P in the UK context **[3,5]** has directly changed UK advocacy groups' policy recommendations as well as their efforts to inform UK government policy in its effort to develop more effective strategies to prevent mass atrocities through the R2P **[A,B]**. The Director of Protection Approaches, one of the UK's leading advocacy groups on ending identity-based violence, states, '*[Ralph's] recommendations on how to integrate atrocity prevention into government practices significantly helped to shape our thinking on UK R2P mainstreaming, and we both incorporated its findings and cited the report in our own policy brief of May 2018, Towards a national approach to atrocities*' **[5,B]**. Similarly, the Head of Policy at UNA-UK states that Ralph's research '*formed the centrepiece of our lobbying efforts in this area*', and they invited

him to write its briefing report on *Mainstreaming the Responsibility to Protect in UK Strategy* **[5]** and to co-write a second report on 'Global Britain' **[I]**. The first report was presented in the UK Parliament in April 2014 and was made the focus for discussion at a one-day practitioner workshop on the R2P hosted by the UNA-UK at the British Academy. According to the Head of Policy for UNA-UK, '*it was through the publication of the report that we were able to get the government to clarify who the UK R2P Focal Point was*' **[A]**, designating Paul Arkwright as the first of several diplomats to hold this position – in-line with Ralph's recommendation to heighten the significance of the role **[A]**. Similarly, Ralph's co-authored report on R2P and Global Britain **[I]** was presented in the UK Parliament and to the House of Lords in February 2019. Following these engagements, in July 2019 the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Policy Paper on the UK's Approach to Preventing Mass Atrocities **[J]** explained that *'[g]iven that the majority of atrocities occur in and around conflict, the UK has dedicated significant resources to addressing crises and conflict by means of a comprehensive cross-governmental response'* and also stressed the usefulness of the Joint Analysis of Conflict and Stability assessment tool (JACS) for the identification of situation-specific interventions, both of which were recommendations made in Ralph's UNA-UK report (**[5]**, pp.14-19; 26-27). As confirmed by the Head of Policy at UNA-UK **[A]**: '*The analysis and recommendations of the report formed the basis of subsequent UNA-UK lobbying efforts on R2P, and these have, through the collective efforts of the Working Group [on Atrocity Prevention], helped to deliver change in UK policy. In particular, and in response to the Foreign Affairs Committee's recent call for a coherent and more precise strategy on atrocity prevention, Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmed promised to do more in this area*'. Likewise, the Head of Protection Approaches **[B]** writes: '*Prof. Ralph's underpinning research, combined with these efforts across civil society, has impressed upon the government the need for more systematic thinking in this area. The Foreign Secretary and Foreign Office Minister have stated publicly that they are committed to do more to prevent atrocity and government departments, including the Foreign Office and Stabilisation Unit, who are now reaching out to Protection Approaches and ECR2P for advice on how to change strategy and practices, including CSSF and JACS*', a research recommendation of Ralph **[5]**.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] Head of Policy at United Nations Association UK, in relation to 4(i) and (iii). Letter of corroboration received via email 25 March 2020.

[B] Executive Director and Head of Research at Protection Approaches, in relation to 4(i) and (iii). Letter of corroboration received via email 26 May 2020.

[C] House of Commons Defence Committee, in relation to 4(i). 'The Situation in Iraq and Syria and the response to al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq al-Sham (DAESH)'. Seventh Report of Session 2014-15; Oral evidence.

[D] Former MP and member of House of Commons Defence Committee, in relation to 4(i). Letter of corroboration received via email 9 November 2020.

[E] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, in relation to 4(i). 'Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options'. Third Report of Session 2016–17; Written evidence.

[F] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, in relation to 4(i). 'Global Britain: The Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention'. Report 2018; Written evidence.

[G] Former Special Adviser on R2P to the UN Secretary-General, in relation to 4(ii). Letter of corroboration dated 18 December 2019.

[H] Former Head of the UN Joint Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the R2P, in relation to 4(ii). Letter of corroboration dated 2 January 2020.

[I] UNA-UK report, February 2019, in relation to 4(iii). 'Global Britain in the United Nations'.

[J] UK Government policy paper, 16 July 2019, in relation to 4(iii). 'UK approach to preventing mass atrocities'.