

# Responsibility to Protect, Sustainable Development Goal 16 and Parliamentary Oversight

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## R2P rests on three key pillars

- **State Responsibility (Pillar I):** Individual states have the primary duty to protect their populations from mass atrocities. This includes preventing such crimes and taking necessary actions to stop them.
- **International Assistance (Pillar II):** The international community has a responsibility to assist states in fulfilling their obligation to protect their populations. This can involve providing resources, training, and diplomatic support.
- **International Intervention (Pillar III):** As a last resort, when a state is manifestly failing to protect its population, the international community has the responsibility to take collective action, which could include sanctions or even military intervention. This is the most controversial aspect of R2P, as it requires careful consideration of sovereignty and authorization by the UN Security Council.

# R2P IN RELATION TO SDG16

## Key Targets of SDG 16:

- **Rule of Law and Justice for All:** This principle emphasizes a society where laws are clear, fairly applied, and accessible to all.
- **Inclusion and Participation:** SDG 16 recognizes that peace and stability require the participation of all groups in society. This includes ensuring everyone has a voice in decision-making processes.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Effective institutions are accountable to the people they serve. Transparency allows citizens to see how decisions are made and hold institutions responsible for their actions.
- **Non-Violence and Security:** A core principle is the promotion of peaceful societies where violence is reduced. This includes protecting people from all forms of violence, including crime and conflict.
- **Effective and Responsive Institutions:** Strong institutions are essential for delivering essential services, upholding the rule of law, and promoting development. These institutions should be efficient and responsive to the needs of the people.
- **Respect for Human Rights:** SDG 16 recognizes the link between peace, justice, and the protection of fundamental human rights

# LINKING R2P, SDG16 AND OVERSIGHT

## Parliamentary oversight and link to SDG 16

- **Reducing Violence and Promoting Peace:** Effective oversight can help prevent abuse of power by security forces and hold them accountable, reducing the potential for violence and human rights violations.
- **Fighting Corruption:** Oversight helps ensure resources are used efficiently and transparently, minimizing opportunities for corrupt practices.
- **Building Accountable Institutions:** Oversight pushes defence institutions to operate under the rule of law and answer to the people they serve.
- **Strengthening the Rule of Law:** By holding defence actors to the same legal standards as everyone else, oversight strengthens the overall rule of law in society.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Oversight can help broaden participation in policy decisions about security, leading to more inclusive and sustainable solutions that don't rely solely on military force.

# STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT

## Key challenges

- **Lack of capacity:** Parliaments may lack the resources, expertise, or political will to effectively oversee the defence sector.
- **Secrecy:** Security sectors often operate with a high degree of secrecy, creating tension with oversight processes.
- **Civil-military relations:** A healthy balance of power between civilian and military authorities is needed for effective oversight.

## Best practices

- **Dedicated committees:** Specialized defence committees with appropriate expertise
- **Access to information:** Laws should allow parliamentarians access to the relevant defence sector
- **Building relationships:** Fostering dialogue and trust between defence officials and
- **Civil society engagement:** Collaborating with NGOs and experts can bolster parliamentary capacity and create public pressure for accountability.