Critical thinking from Stanley Foundation conferences

POLICY *dialogue* BRIEF

The Power of the Private Sector in Preventing Atrocities and Promoting the Responsibility to Protect

Recommendations

New Opportunities for Atrocity Prevention-Private Sector Collaboration

- The atrocity prevention community should invite private sector actors to participate in ongoing atrocity prevention networks, formally and informally. These include national mechanisms for prevention and informal working groups dealing with specific acute crises.
- Atrocity prevention and private sector actors should jointly develop atrocity prevention toolkits for upstream and acute prevention.
- Government and civil society actors should include private sector actors in training programs dealing with the prevention of mass atrocities and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).
- Atrocity prevention actors should prioritize engaging with business associations for prevention action. Associations have more leverage over governments and more capacity to reduce risks for atrocities and stabilize operating environments than individual business actors.

Existing Venues to Promote Private Sector Action for Prevention

- Atrocity prevention experts should engage with private sector actors through important venues for exchange, including the UN Forum for Business and Human Rights, the Global Compact, and private associations/councils focused on specific sectors.
- During the next review of the International Finance Corporation's Standards for Environmental and Social Performance, atrocity prevention experts should advocate for the standards to include stronger measures to protect human rights and reduce practices that raise risk factors for atrocities.

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This brief summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the rapporteur, Jai-Ayla Sutherland, the organizer, Carrie DuLaney, and the chair, Conor Seyle. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this brief. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Additional information about this roundtable and others held as part of the 57th annual Strategy for Peace Conference is available at http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/spc-2016.cfm.

Past events have demonstrated that business can play a positive role in preventing atrocities. The private sector is frequently seen as politically neutral, allowing it to serve as a convener and participant in private diplomacy for peace. In addition, its role in providing a variety of services to state governments and citizens puts it in an important intermediary position that can be used to promote messaging for peace or complicate attempts to organize and form violent movements. Concrete examples of the private sector's action for prevention can be seen in many cases, including the role of a local business association in curbing widespread violence during Kenya's 2012–2013 elections and of telecommunications companies in making it more difficult for the Tunisian government to identify oppositionists through social media during the Arab Spring in 2011.

Although private sector actors have important power and influence in communities at home and abroad, they have been minimally engaged by civil society, governments, and multilateral institutions as potential partners in atrocity prevention. Past discourse has typically centered on the private sector's history of enabling or perpetrating atrocities. At the Stanley Foundation's 57th annual Strategy for Peace Conference from October 26–28, 2016, participants in the roundtable "The Power of the Private Sector in Preventing Atrocities and Promoting the Responsibility to Protect" broadened the narrative, exploring how private sector actors can contribute to preventing atrocities and making a case for why it is in their interest to do so. They agreed that the successful implementation of R2P requires a whole-of-society approach, with the private sector playing a positive role.

There has been too little attention paid to the strategic role the private sector can play in prevention.

Yet, there is currently no broad consensus about how the private sector, states, and civil society can productively work together to prevent atrocities. This uncertainty remains an obstacle to developing relationships across fields. Private sector actors are mostly excluded from atrocity prevention discussions, leaving them unaware of how they can contribute to preventing atrocities. Private sector actors who are interested in prevention face challenges in identifying partners who will be willing to work with them. State actors often do not know how to engage with the business community in at-risk contexts. Because civil society has generally held a negative perception about the private sector's role in atrocities, it has been hesitant to engage in dialogue and advocacy to push businesses toward prevention activities.

Overcoming Barriers

For private sector actors to engage and partner positively to prevent atrocities, roundtable participants first presented a variety of obstacles that need to be overcome by all stakeholders. Importantly, atrocity prevention experts admitted to not approaching private sector actors often enough; there has been too little attention paid to the strategic role the private sector can play in prevention. Business actors echoed this view, acknowledging they could be engaged more and questioning why they have not been considered a more important and relevant partner for prevention in the past. There is a perception among private sector actors that atrocity prevention stakeholders have been reluctant to engage in situations of mutual interest; instead, prevention actors have historically focused on the philanthropic arms of the private sector for funding or confronted companies to "name and shame" them for perpetrating or enabling violence.

Participants also identified other important barriers to business engagement. Private sector actors might not feel obligated to participate directly in preventing atrocities. It is not their first business priority, and large companies may have no incentives from their shareholders to engage in prevention. Moreover, individual companies acting alone run the risk of formal or informal censure, particularly in cases where the state is complicit in the commission of atrocities. If advocates

for prevention are not engaging private sector actors, they might be unaware of the role they can play or that it is in their interest to be involved. Smaller, local businesses in particular largely do not know how adjusting their business practices could strengthen resilience within society to prevent atrocity crimes. Where do private sector actors fit in prevention? What can they do? Will getting involved negatively impact their business prospects? These important questions have limited the role of private sector actors at all levels in preventing mass atrocities.

The atrocity prevention community encountered similar questions and obstacles when first engaging with governmental actors on atrocity prevention. Many state representatives were not aware of warning signs, risk factors, and triggers for atrocities. There has been a marked improvement of governmental awareness and participation in specific atrocity prevention initiatives across the world, including the continued support for R2P, since the first stages of engagement in the mid-2000s. Atrocity prevention experts must similarly work with private sector actors to understand their role and influence in at-risk societies, acknowledging that strategies for engaging multinational corporations will be different than those for local businesses.

Participants noted the need for an exchange of ideas and ongoing dialogue between the atrocity prevention and business communities. To date, there are few opportunities for both sides to address key questions and engage in sustained conversation, but there are at least two ongoing discourses that can provide points of entry. The fairly well-developed theoretical and practical discussions around business and peace, bringing together private sector actors with state and civil society to determine how businesses can contribute to peace, are one point of entry. While atrocity prevention is distinct from peacebuilding, the ongoing business and peace discourse could be targeted to develop into a more focused discussion on atrocity prevention.

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A second point of entry is the discourse around the role of business in protecting and promoting human rights, a more contentious area. In certain forums that address the nexus between business and human rights, such as the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, there is a lack of participation from business actors because there is a general perception that they are often targeted as negative actors or adversaries and not appreciated as potential partners for prevention with a genuine concern for peace and stability.

By orienting future discourse around atrocity prevention specifically—an agenda most actors will be inclined to support because of the economic and social costs of atrocities—there might be more opportunities to reboot engagement and build relationships between the atrocity prevention and private sector communities. These forums that focus more broadly on human rights are less specific and often do not address the key factors unique to atrocity prevention, but they could provide opportunities to identify alignment and gaps between upstream atrocity prevention and fundamental human rights protections.

Developing a Common Language

To build on the need for dialogue, participants emphasized the importance of developing a shared language between the atrocity prevention and private sector communities. Both groups have well-developed discourses with specific terminology and practices, but they can only work together if they determine how to effectively communicate. It was generally agreed that this is not an easy task; establishing a shared language and common understanding will require long-term, sustained engagement by all actors, building the foundation for collaboration.

Participants recognized that private sector actors are already engaged directly in prevention in certain contexts (e.g., the Kenya Private Sector Alliance's involvement in atrocity prevention per the case study below) and that other corporate social responsibility and human rights protocols also directly and

indirectly contribute to prevention. While many private sector actors have operations in areas with a history of atrocities—from Myanmar to South Sudan—some participants suggested these businesses might better understand how to operate in conflict zones while not fully appreciating the unique difficulties of engaging in contexts at risk of atrocities. Developing a common discourse and understanding of these nuances can help private sector actors and atrocity prevention experts identify appropriate steps for positive action.

In particular, participants stressed that both communities need to be precise and specific in the terms they use for two reasons: (1) the capacities and incentives of different types of private sector actors vary tremendously, and (2) atrocity prevention is distinct from peacebuilding and conflict prevention more broadly. Representatives at the roundtable came to the following working definitions of atrocities and the private sector for this conversation.

Atrocities

There are two kinds of definitions of atrocities: (1) a legal definition, which includes crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide, derived from the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, and the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and (2) a broader, nonlegal definition that describes atrocities as large-scale, deliberate attacks on civilians. These definitions share important elements, stipulating that violence is large scale, systematic, intentional, and targeted toward civilians. Participants established that atrocities occur within or outside of conflict situations.

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Within the atrocity prevention community, stakeholders generally view prevention as a process. Long before the outbreak of atrocities, there are structural conditions that may make institutions weak and society more vulnerable to atrocities. In this upstream phase, there may be institutional and social discrimination against particular groups in society, horizontal economic inequality, and unequal protection for marginalized groups under the law. Atrocities, as defined above, occur during the midstream phase of the process, which is often, but not always, characterized by grave instability and conflict. This phase encompasses perpetration of and response to acts of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and/or ethnic cleansing. Before a crisis is resolved, responses to atrocities can entail diplomatic and observation missions, sanctions against perpetrators, and at times kinetic military action. The downstream phase of atrocity prevention consists of post-conflict rebuilding and peacebuilding. The economic and social costs for engagement increase as the phases of atrocities evolve. It was also noted that state actors remain the largest perpetrators of mass atrocities, but there is increasing awareness of and attention to the role of nonstate actors as perpetrators.

Private Sector

The private sector consists of multiple levels and types of actors, including small- and large-scale local businesses, national businesses, international businesses (i.e., multinational corporations), business associations, business philanthropy, and illegal businesses. Within a national context, participants proposed a hierarchy of business arrangements, ranked from smallest to largest: (1) individual corporations, (2) sector-specific conglomerates, (3) the larger business community, and (4) the business community with the addition of the informal private sector. Participants also mentioned parastatal entities—corporations controlled partly or wholly by governments—as part of the landscape in specific countries.

Participants consistently recognized the diversity of business types and the respective roles they can play in the prevention ecosystem. In particular, they drew a distinction between indigenous businesses and multinational corporations. Local businesses have a direct stake in their communities, as they

must maintain operations and a reliable customer base to succeed. Because indigenous businesses are wholly integrated into and dependent upon their local communities, they directly suffer the social and economic consequences of an outbreak of violence. Multinational corporations have larger reach than their local counterparts, including access to multiple markets and greater opportunities to drive behavior change. Although they often have in-country staff, their leadership may have less of a stake in and direct contact with local communities, causing the corporation as a whole to not feel the effects of atrocities as intensely and immediately as local business actors.

The discussion consistently returned to the tension between multinational and local businesses, raising the question of which type of private sector actor is best suited for effective prevention activities—indigenous businesses, with their deep knowledge of and influence on the local landscape, or multinational corporations, with their significant economic weight and potential political leverage—and which should be most intensively targeted by outreach from the atrocity prevention community. Participants agreed on the need to further explore this tension and better define the relative strengths of private sector actors along the spectrum of atrocity prevention.

Mapping the Private Sector in Regions of Operational Interest

For effective relationship building, participants emphasized the importance of mapping the private sector. That way, there would be a better understanding of the business actors across sectors in a specific country or region, which would help determine their potential leverage in upstream and acute prevention. Participants suggested these mapping exercises would be particularly useful for countries demonstrating key risk factors for atrocities, many of which can be identified through qualitative and quantitative forecasting models, including the publicly available information from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum's Early Warning Project and the Global Centre for R2P's *R2P Monitor*. Through these mapping exercises, atrocity prevention experts in civil society and government could identify local business associations and influential multinational corporations in order to communicate key atrocity risk factors and provide them with tools to positively engage in prevention.

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Participants noted that these mapping exercises would also be useful to identify relevant preexistent atrocity prevention networks and actors who could readily connect and incorporate private sector actors into their activities. These include national networks and mechanisms for genocide and atrocity prevention; regional networks such as the Latin America Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention or the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region; and global networks such as the Global Network for R2P Focal Points. Ongoing communication already occurs between government and civil society actors within these communities, and they have acknowledged the need to begin bringing private sector voices into these conversations.

Participants mentioned that there should also be an effort to understand current relationships among various groups of private sector actors, governmental bodies, and trade and commerce organizations in contexts at risk of atrocities. Likewise, the roundtable participants called for a greater understanding of private sector actors' indirect or direct relationships with perpetrators and victims of atrocities, key regional and international actors, and transnational criminal networks. Better fleshing out these connections would illuminate additional points of engagement and potential obstacles for the atrocity prevention community.

Participants discussed important tools that could help atrocity prevention stakeholders begin to map business actors in key locations. Although there are no openly available resources that list all business actors within a specific country, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank country reports provide general overviews of domestic economies. Other useful resources include national and regional chambers of commerce and the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. Participants mentioned that the Business and Human Rights Resource Center provides articles describing the private sector's specific human right initiatives by country.

Engaging the Private Sector

To generate business interest in prevention, atrocity prevention actors must appreciate key business motivations, helping businesses understand why it is in their interest to be positive players in atrocity prevention and providing them concrete incentives and tools to take action.

Fundamentally, private sector actors face a strong economic incentive to maintain peace and stability.

When private sector actors are approached, how can they be convinced to engage in prevention? Some participants felt that private sector actors are only likely to take action if their risk of exposure as an enterprise is low and if the business costs of not engaging are perceived as catastrophic. In general, there is a higher probability for engagement if there is shared risk across businesses. Additionally, private sector actors are likely to disengage over the long run if threats to their business are not acutely perceived and the importance of long-term engagement not fully understood—damaging important relationships, lines of communication, and opportunities for upstream prevention work. The difficulty in engaging the private sector at the upstream level demonstrates the importance of continued engagement along the atrocity prevention spectrum between civil society, governments, and private sector actors.

Participants recommended that one way to motivate private sector actors is to clearly discuss the risks atrocities present to business at all levels. Fundamentally, private sector actors face a strong economic incentive to maintain peace and stability. The atrocity prevention community should communicate how atrocities drastically affect the operations of a business or sector. Atrocities cause enormous economic harm to businesses by disrupting their activities and ruining business prospects. All businesses need to manage and mitigate risk, ensuring they maintain a stable operating environment. Large corporations are accountable to their shareholders, and they need to maintain their reputations. The onset of atrocities imperils all elements of business success.

Atrocity prevention experts inside and outside of government should help private sector actors understand where they can have an impact in atrocity prevention and why their role is important. This education and training for atrocity prevention should focus, in particular, on the risks and warnings signs of atrocities—including structural factors and triggering events—that business may be uniquely positioned to influence. The atrocity prevention community has well-developed resources to identify underlying risk factors and triggers for atrocities, including the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes. Participants stressed the importance of providing private sector actors with these resources, including relevant international standards for business and human rights to help them generate a deeper understanding of warning signs and potential triggers for large-scale violence, alongside the tools available to avoid large-scale violence that help strengthen society and operating environments, to the benefit of citizens and businesses alike.

Sustained relationships between civil society, governments, and private sector actors can also help identify and answer questions that will allow businesses to develop an understanding of the structural conditions that mitigate atrocity risks

over time and the roles and responsibilities of different atrocity prevention actors, with an eye toward how these factors can positively affect business stability and productivity. For example, are there specific employment, supply-chain, revenue-transparency, security, and human rights measures that should be implemented? When multinational companies are setting up operations in at-risk countries, what factors and provisions should they consider to assist with prevention and avoid exacerbating risks? In the upstream phase, these recommendations are likely to be more generalizable to all business actors, but there may be specific actors or country contexts that require atrocity prevention experts to tailor their engagement strategies and recommendations.

Governments and multilateral institutions must hold businesses that operate within their borders accountable to relevant international frameworks, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and existing regulatory mechanisms. Governments need to support business actors when there is potential for them to be influenced or co-opted by perpetrators of atrocities. If governments cannot provide viable legal and rights-based support to business actors, it is possible they could be co-opted by perpetrators or engage in practices that enable atrocities.

In discussing engagement strategies, participants consistently referred to the atrocity prevention spectrum. At all phases of prevention, the atrocity prevention community must develop robust narratives and engagement strategies with the private sector. However, some participants were cautious regarding the ability of private sector actors to have a major influence in at-risk countries. They warned that many business representatives do not have a firm understanding of how their practices may enable or contribute to the onset of atrocities. Businesses also may not exert significant power or influence in certain contexts. Single businesses, in particular, are unlikely to have a large effect on governments, either because they are too local and small scale or because competitors can readily replace them.

For this reason, participants emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding which specific decision makers to engage within private sector entities, agreeing that top-level leadership buy-in is crucial. Business associations—collectives of individual businesses across sectors and at all levels in a country—were acknowledged as particularly strong partners to engage throughout the spectrum because of their interest in maintaining a vital economy within their own borders and their ability to act as a larger group, reducing the likelihood they are viewed as partisan or biased. A larger business community, particularly if it includes a hybrid of multinational and local entities, will have greater influence than individual businesses.

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Participants noted the importance of identifying specific individuals who can lead other private sector buy-in to engage in atrocity prevention. For instance, if the goal is to engage a large private sector association, it will be particularly useful to identify leaders within constituent multinational corporations who can influence others to participate as well. If the objective is to work with an individual national business, it would be useful to work with a governmental official or media source to approach a high-level leader in that entity to advocate for the importance of playing a role in atrocity prevention.

All participants acknowledged that partnerships between private sector and atrocity prevention actors will be a learning process. As previously mentioned, civil society learned about engagement with other actors when first advocating to and partnering with governmental actors for prevention. There will be a similar learning process that is reshaped and refined over time as private sector representatives and atrocity prevention experts learn each other's languages and develop relationships.

Encouraging Private Sector Action Across the Phases of Prevention

Kenya Case Study

As previously noted, there are past examples of business actors playing a positive role in prevention. To ground the conversation, participants briefly discussed the 2012–2013 elections in Kenya, wherein the large-scale violence of the 2007 elections was avoided in large part because of the engagement of a private sector business association, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA).

The elections in 2007 were contested by the two major political parties of Kenya, leading to more than 1,000 deaths and the displacement of many thousands more. Civil society and faith leaders were delegitimized for their affiliations with political parties, leaving a vacuum of actors who are generally at the forefront of atrocity prevention. As a result, KEPSA, a business alliance of 40 private sector actors, jumped into the void by appealing to the president-elect about the need for a peaceful solution to mitigate the long-term economic effects of the violence. KEPSA neutrally described the condition of the country to both sides of the conflict. After a few days of negotiations, the politicians agreed to meet—at the behest of KEPSA—and called for their supporters to cease violence for the greater common good.

KEPSA has been actively involved with the Kenyan government since the 2007 elections, and it regularly engages with civil society. Its advance work with telecommunications companies to promote peace messaging and combat the transmission of inflammatory hate speech during the elections in 2012–2013 helped avoid a relapse of large-scale violence. Its top priority is to be seen as a neutral entity that does not take sides in a conflict, and it conducts all of its work behind the scenes, allowing it to remain a potent but nonpartisan force.

The most important aspect of engaging the private sector at all phases of prevention is for government and civil society actors to be specific and pragmatic about what private sector actors can do and what tools are at their disposal.

There was consensus among roundtable participants that the most important aspect of engaging the private sector at all phases of prevention is for government and civil society actors to be specific and pragmatic about what private sector actors can do and what tools are at their disposal. In the upstream phase, businesses should not be approached with requests to "prevent atrocities"—the language of atrocity prevention is one with which they are unfamiliar and one with a potentially adversarial tone. Rather, private sector actors can develop and implement "inclusive business practices" in line with some corporate social responsibility standards that include provisions for gender equality and environmental protection, with a particular focus on building strong relationships with local communities and atrocity prevention experts.

Participants agreed that it will be difficult to get businesses to act—even after they have been successfully engaged—before there are definitive signs of impending violence. However, the barrier for atrocity prevention activities does not need to be high at the early stages of prevention. The private sector can lower risks by contributing to the construction of just and stable societies, with minimal inequality between social groups, through their compliance with the ethical business practices in human rights and social responsibility frameworks, including fair employment practices, equitable service provision, and responsible approaches to land and natural resource use. Participants suggested that atrocity prevention experts and advocates should distill the important international human rights and social responsibility frameworks, such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights and the International Finance Corporation's Standards for Environmental and Social Performance,

into language that local and multinational companies will understand, adding an atrocity prevention lens. All levels of private sector actors should play a role in defending and upholding those frameworks.

Upstream efforts form the building blocks for partnership at times of acute crisis. Businesses are more likely to engage in prevention activities in a crisis if a foundation of mutual understanding and trusting relationships with local communities and atrocity prevention experts has already been built and maintained. As violence escalates, business actors need to understand and implement concrete and targeted actions to prevent atrocities. In these instances, using the language of "atrocities" is warranted because of the severity of the situation, the limited time horizon for response, and the specific tools required for prevention. Those tools will also depend heavily on the specific country or regional context.

As risk evolves along the spectrum toward more acute threats of an atrocity outbreak, the available options for private sector engagement narrow, and repercussions from a failure to prevent rise. Even as a crisis escalates, however, a clear space for private sector actors may emerge. In some contexts, for example, business actors are viewed as less partisan than their state or civil society peers, enabling them to engage in high-level diplomacy with key regional or international mediators. In these situations, businesses can coordinate with other actors in the atrocity prevention community on proximate measures to stem the violence.

One specific, bounded recommendation was for private companies to develop risk-management plans that include responses to atrocities. These plans are necessarily focused on protecting the staff of the company and avoiding contributing to larger-scale conflicts, and, as such, they are not likely to be as impactful as the kind of diplomatic engagement discussed above. Even though these plans are more limited in scope than aforementioned approaches, they can contribute to the protection of civilians and harm mitigation overall. For example, one suggestion was for corporate crisis plans to include a provision to temporarily disable vehicle fleets; in the past, some armed actors have raided corporate vehicle fleets to increase their mobility. The plans should be expanded to include guidance regarding how a company can help protect its local employees and their families, how continuing operations could harm or help in a deteriorating environment, how information technologies can and should be used during a crisis, and how to secure equipment so that it is not co-opted by perpetrators during violence.

Some participants referred to the experience of governments in previously learning about logistics and operations from private sector actors during a crisis, such as when major retailers have mobilized their extensive transportation networks in disaster response and humanitarian operations. Others noted the breadth of data accessible to private sector actors. In Mexico, for example, private convenience stores have some of the best local-level data because they operate across the country in all contexts and have access to real-time, on-the-ground information. In circumstances of impending violence, such actors could be crucial in-kind partners to governments and civil society actors working to disrupt possible atrocities. Through these anecdotes, it was well recognized that there are mutual opportunities for learning on both sides of the relationship between atrocity prevention and private sector actors, demonstrating the potential value of future public-private partnerships.

Additional opportunities for private sector actors to participate in prevention include investment in peacebuilding ventures, analysis of supply and value chains to ensure they are not indirectly or directly enabling atrocities, and the development of voluntary agreements or principles, as appropriate for a specific sector or business community, for action in atrocity contexts.

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Next Steps

Building Relationships

An important next step in further defining the positive role of the private sector is to convene additional cross-sectoral meetings. All participants called for further dialogue on the subject that will include a broad range of private sector representatives with experience in atrocity contexts and atrocity prevention experts. The major points and outcomes of this initial discussion should be reviewed by this larger set of private actors to provide opportunities to hone the abovementioned shared language, understand the fundamental motivations of the discrete sectors, and determine future points of engagement between the two communities. By increasing the audience for this discussion, additional private sector actors will have opportunities to share their concerns; atrocity prevention experts can elaborate on the range of actions private sector actors can take to, at minimum, ensure they do not enable atrocities or harm prevention efforts and, in certain circumstances, directly use their unique influence and resources to reduce risk and prevent outbreaks of atrocities.

Participants argued that one of the best next steps moving forward is to analyze different cases to illuminate lessons learned and opportunities for private sector actors to play a positive role in prevention.

There may be opportunities to fold these discussions into ongoing forums for business and peace and business and human rights, for example, through the UN Global Compact. There is no reason to re-create the wheel for productive exchanges and relationship building if preexisting venues or structures are suitable. However, there may be important barriers, such as those previously mentioned, when business actors feel sidelined or targeted in some current venues. Therefore, new, independent initiatives may be more likely to succeed. In these circumstances, some participants mentioned that individuals within companies appointed to corporate responsibility positions do not always have the authority or influence to drive behavior change, and they stressed the importance of engaging senior-level business actors with the capability of influencing company practices and priorities. Identifying the right people to participate in the first stages of relationship building is a crucial first step toward any long-term success.

Developing Retrospective and Current Case Studies

Participants argued that one of the best next steps moving forward is to analyze different cases to illuminate lessons learned and opportunities for private sector actors to play a positive role in prevention. Private sector and atrocity prevention actors should jointly choose country cases through a robust selection process, and the cases should include a mix of past atrocities and current at-risk and upstream conditions from a range of geographical areas.

Retrospective case studies should share lessons learned from situations in which private sector actors got involved and others where there were opportunities for private sector action that were not pursued. These cases should consider which private sector actors have positively engaged in prevention and how those actions have benefited the business environment. However, it will also be equally, if not more, valuable to assess where private sector actors missed opportunities for engagement or were forced to change behavior after realizing their practices were leading to atrocities.

Participants also called for a review of current cases. These studies should assess how business actors' practices and behaviors might be unintentionally contributing to risk or where there are existing but untapped opportunities for business engagement. It would also be useful to look at regional cases, determining the spillover risks to business-operating environments across borders. Are there opportunities for private sector actors to form regional coalitions that could pressure and hold leverage over governments? Such studies

should also recognize the important governmental actors and regime type for each country to understand how private sector actors may influence states.

Forming a Research Agenda for Unanswered Questions

While there was agreement that private sector actors can play a positive role in atrocity prevention, there are many outstanding questions to explore:

1. How do current business-for-peace and business and human rights forums encourage private sector participation in atrocity prevention? How do those discourses need to be bolstered to ensure that atrocity prevention-specific elements are folded into ongoing conversations?

   Participants called for additional work to understand where there are gaps in current exchanges between private sector, human rights, and peacebuilding stakeholders around atrocity prevention. Although basic human rights protections strengthen society and help to prevent violations that rise to the level of crimes against humanity, there are likely specific atrocity prevention measures currently not addressed in those conversations around business and human rights. Private sector actors require targeted recommendations on how to prevent atrocities above and beyond what is available from the current discourses around business and peace and business and human rights.

2. How do capabilities for prevention differ across business sectors?

   Participants acknowledged that different business sectors have various capabilities and capacities to productively contribute to atrocity prevention, influenced by their size and the type of business they conduct. Research should identify the particular advantages different business sectors bring to support atrocity prevention.

3. How does engagement differ for parastatal companies, and can they be productively engaged in atrocity prevention?

   Parastatal companies will likely require different engagement strategies, but their role was left unexplored in the discussion. How can Chinese companies, for example, contribute to atrocity prevention in the African context? Although parastatal companies may have a history of violating human rights, there have been encouraging behavioral shifts from some of the larger global powers in recent years; for example, an increase in foreign investment has come with an increase in commitment to UN peacekeeping operations.

4. How does the private sector role in atrocity prevention change when atrocities are perpetrated by nonstate actors?

   The role of private sector actors in assisting with prevention of atrocities perpetrated by nonstate actors has not been explored. In highly sectarian contexts, for instance, business associations might contribute to prevention by ensuring that all business actors, regardless of religious affiliation, have opportunities to succeed, lessening the economic pull to join extremist organizations.

Although basic human rights protections strengthen society and help to prevent violations that rise to the level of crimes against humanity, there are likely specific atrocity prevention measures currently not addressed in those conversations around business and human rights.

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.

The Stanley Foundation

The Stanley Foundation advances multilateral action to create fair, just, and lasting solutions to critical issues of peace and security. Our work is built on the belief that greater international cooperation will enhance global governance and spur global citizenship. The foundation frequently collaborates with a wide range of organizations using different forums, formats, and venues to engage policy communities. We do not make grants.

Our programming addresses profound threats to human survival where improved multilateral governance and cooperation are fundamental to transforming real-world policy. Current efforts focus on policy improvement to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, eliminate the threat of nuclear terrorism, and drive collective and long-term action on climate change. The foundation also works to promote global education in our hometown of Muscatine, Iowa, and nearby.

A private operating foundation established in 1956, the Stanley Foundation maintains a long-term, independent, and nonpartisan perspective. Our publications, multimedia resources, and a wealth of other information about programming are available at *www.stanleyfoundation.org*.

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