

### The Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention

- **Member countries:** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, , Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay, Venezuela
- **Objectives:** Capacity building and policy development in the field of genocide and mass atrocity prevention
- **Tools:** National programs, regional initiatives, and a curriculum on genocide and mass atrocity prevention, finalized and approved by all member states

The Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (the Network) is a multi-step initiative through which a regional cooperation body has emerged on the issue of genocide and mass atrocity prevention. It is, to date, the first regional governmental initiative on genocide prevention in the world, making Latin America a leader in the implementation of regionally standardized mandatory training on genocide prevention.

This initiative began with a discussion among working partners in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Panama, all former participants of past programs of the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). These talks were then expanded to include the other countries of the region, and what was found was an across-the-board desire to prioritize genocide and mass atrocity prevention policy and training in each country, and in the region as a whole.

To initiate the Network, the Secretariat of Human Rights of Argentina, the Secretariat of Human Rights of Brazil and the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs have partnered with AIPR, supported by the Office of the Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on Genocide Prevention (OSAPG). Under this regional leadership, AIPR facilitated the development of a curriculum proposal for the educational component of collaboration, which was presented in the Official Launching Meeting of the Network.

This meeting took place in March 2012 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where representatives from the Ministries of Foreign affairs, Justice, Defense, and Offices of the Ombudsman from 18 Latin American countries gathered to discuss the future of policy development and training on genocide prevention in the region. The goal of the meeting was to discuss and finalize the structure and goals of the Network, as well as the proposed curriculum.

The structure of the Network was originally based on the establishment of National and/or Ministry Focal Points, who are charged with their respective government's or Ministry's participation in the Network. However, as a product of increased participation in various member states, this focal point structure has evolved into what are known as National Mechanisms for Genocide Prevention. National Mechanisms are inter-institutional structures that involve representatives from all areas of government, both at the national and state/provincial level, in managing the participation of their country in the Latin American Network, as well as in the development of a unified national policy on genocide prevention. In employing a horizontal structure of inclusion within the government, these national mechanisms are highly effective in supporting governments' prevention efforts. Several member states have created, or are in the process of creating their own National Mechanisms. As a crucial example of how the Network fosters the sharing of good practices, modules dedicated to exploring the ways in which to develop these National Mechanisms have been included into AIPR's training structure. These modules will create an open and inter-active

discussion led by member states with experience in developing these structures within their government.

The goals of the Network include the development and implementation of a genocide prevention curriculum into specific areas of each country's mandatory training programs for public officials, as well as a regional collaboration effort in the development of national initiatives on genocide prevention within member states.

The Latin American curriculum on genocide and mass atrocity prevention is already being piloted through bi-annual training seminars held in Auschwitz, Poland, and predetermined historical sites of mass atrocity in Latin America, where it is currently being tested and revised by participants from all member countries. Participants work with Network Focal Points and existing National Mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of this curriculum within the mandatory training structures of their respective countries after 2016. Each training seminar is followed by an evaluation meeting where each member state has the opportunity to submit their comments on the curriculum as well as the structure of these training seminars. The first training seminar took place in June 2013 in Auschwitz, Poland and culminated in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June of 2014. Based on participant feedback and the evaluation results of each seminar, AIPR continues to develop the curriculum. The next seminar will be in Poland in February of 2016. This seminar will complete the third cycle of seminars for the Latin American Network.

Beyond the educational component, each member country has been tasked with the identification of areas within their governmental structures where programs on genocide and mass atrocity prevention can be implemented. As these initiatives are conceptualized and driven by member states, a wide spectrum of programs has emerged. These national initiatives range from the establishment of inter-ministerial training seminars on genocide prevention and marginalized group inclusion, to policy development on the protection of indigenous populations. The latter programs prioritize a constant national review of efforts related to the development of anti-discrimination plans as well as processes of Memory, Truth, and Justice. Additionally, various countries have incorporated specific training for security forces and Peace Keeping Operations into their genocide and mass atrocity prevention agenda.

Member states envisage this Network to be the primary forum for cooperation in the region in the prevention of mass atrocities. The Network is also actively working on promoting its work in this area on a global scale, making their voices central in international work for genocide and mass atrocity prevention and marginalized group inclusion. This area of activity also specifically emphasizes South-South cooperation with the African Union, which recently established an African Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention in cooperation with AIPR, based on its observance of the Latin American Network.

The Network and AIPR are ready to commit to a localized approach to genocide and mass atrocity prevention that is spearheaded by the individual member countries themselves. This initiative is owned by the region; it was conceptualized and initiated by Latin American states, and each member country is the driving force behind the unprecedented development and progress the Network has seen since its launch. Regional ownership is seen as the most important factor in effective long-term genocide prevention practice and policy in Latin America.