Responsibility to Protect ("RtoP" or "R2P")

The responsibility to protect embodies a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution. It seeks to narrow the gap between Member States’ pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.


UN Entities

- **United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect:**

UN Events

- General Assembly plenary meetings on “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity [item 132]: Report of the Secretary-General (A/77/910)”, 26 June 2023
  - Webcast: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1yzzp34fe

- General Assembly plenary meetings on “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity - Item 134: report of the Secretary-General (A/76/844)”, 23-24 June 2022

- General Assembly plenary meetings on agenda item 135 “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”, 17 and 18 May 2021
  - A/RES/75/277: The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity: http://undocs.org/A/RES/75/277


- General Assembly Plenary Meeting on agenda item 168 “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” (27-28 June 2019)
  - Meeting Records: [https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.93](https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.93), [https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.94](https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.94), [https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.95](https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.95), [https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.96](https://undocs.org/A/73/PV.96)

- Formal Debate of the General Assembly under agenda item “The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” (25 June 2018)
  - Meeting Records: [http://undocs.org/A/72/PV.99](http://undocs.org/A/72/PV.99), [http://undocs.org/A/72/PV.100](http://undocs.org/A/72/PV.100)

  - Summary: [https://bit.ly/3v0RdRN](https://bit.ly/3v0RdRN)
  - Webcasts: [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1t/k1tozx4h9n](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1t/k1tozx4h9n), [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1s/k1shmv4kpz](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1s/k1shmv4kpz)

- High-level event on “Upholding the Responsibility to Protect: The Indispensable Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing Atrocity Crimes” (at the ministerial level) (co-organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect) (20 September 2016)
  - Webcast: [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1e/k1etb5otrz](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1e/k1etb5otrz)

  - Webcasts: [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1c/k1ct27ib8x](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1c/k1ct27ib8x), [https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1u/k1utb263p5](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1u/k1utb263p5)

Webcasts:  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1o/k1os6cgwng,  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1t/k1tjq5iv9

- General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the responsibility of States to protect their populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (8 September 2015):  
  
  • UN News Centre Story:  
  
  • Webcasts:  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1ywv28mkr,  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1l/k1l58le8s9
  
  • Press Conference with Mr. Adama Dieng, Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Ms. Jennifer Welsh, Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect:  
http://media.un.org/en/asset/k1n/k1nhyl8hl

- General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect (8 September 2014):  
  
  • UN News Centre Story:  
  
  • Webcasts:  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1l/k1lzl2h683,  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1k/k1e0b9e4az

  
  • Webcasts:  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k17/k173bqi713,  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1k/k1kpzp7am

- General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on “The Responsibility to Protect: Timely and Decisive Response” (5 September 2012):  
  
  • Webcasts:  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1n/k1nx0gpw5p,  
https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1g/k1gudq824

Selected UN Documents

- **A/77/910-S/2023/409** (6 June 2023): Development and the responsibility to protect: recognizing and addressing embedded risks and drivers of atrocity crimes: report of the Secretary-General:  
https://undocs.org/A/77/910

- **A/76/844-S/2022/428** (26 May 2022): Responsibility to protect: prioritizing children and young people: Report of the Secretary-General:  
https://undocs.org/A/76/844

- **A/75/863-S/2021/424** (3 May 2021): Advancing atrocity prevention: work of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary-General:  
http://undocs.org/A/75/863

- **A/74/964-S/2020/501** (23 July 2020): Prioritizing prevention and strengthening response: women and the responsibility to protect: report of the Secretary-General:  
http://undocs.org/A/74/964

- **A/HRC/RES/44/14**: Fifteenth anniversary of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as enshrined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome: resolution / adopted by the Human Rights Council on 17 July 2020:  
http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/44/14

https://undocs.org/A/73/898

- **A/72/884-S/2018/525** (1 June 2018): Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action: Report of the Secretary-General:  
http://undocs.org/A/72/884

- **A/71/1016-S/2017/556** (10 August 2017): Implementing the responsibility to protect: accountability for prevention; Report of the Secretary-General:  
http://undocs.org/A/71/1016

- **A/70/999-S/2016/620** (22 July 2016): Mobilizing collective action: the next decade of the responsibility to protect; Report of the Secretary-General:  
http://undocs.org/A/70/999
  Transmits summary and conclusions of the 5th meeting of the Global Network of Responsibility to Protect Focal Points, held in Madrid, 23-24 June 2015.

• **A/69/981-S/2015/500** (13 July 2015): A vital and enduring commitment: implementing the responsibility to protect; Report of the Secretary-General: [http://undocs.org/A/69/981](http://undocs.org/A/69/981)


  Transmits a concept note developed by the Government of Brazil on the issue entitled “Responsibility while protecting elements for the development and promotion of a concept”.

• **A/65/877-S/2011/393** (28 June 2011): The role of regional and subregional arrangements in implementing the responsibility to protect: report of the Secretary-General: [http://undocs.org/A/65/877](http://undocs.org/A/65/877)

• **A/64/864** (14 July 2010): Early warning, assessment and the responsibility to protect: Report of the Secretary-General: [http://undocs.org/A/64/864](http://undocs.org/A/64/864)


• **A/63/958** (9 September 2009): Concept note on the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity: note / by the President of the General Assembly: [http://undocs.org/A/63/958](http://undocs.org/A/63/958)


  In the second preambular paragraph of this resolution, the Security Council recalled its earlier reaffirmation of the provisions regarding the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document.

  In paragraph 4 of this resolution, the Security Council reaffirmed the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

• **A/RES/60/1** (adopted 16 September 2005): 2005 World Summit Outcome: resolution [http://undocs.org/A/RES/60/1](http://undocs.org/A/RES/60/1)
  Paragraphs 138 and 139 of this document: “Responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”


  Transmits report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty entitled “The Responsibility to Protect”
Selected Statements and Speeches by UN Officials


- Deputy-Secretary-General says ‘responsibility to protect’ must be translated into more systematic implementation at early warnings of atrocity crimes (DSG/SM/793-GA/11539, 8 September 2014): [http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/dsgsm793.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/dsgsm793.doc.htm)


- Secretary-General, in Message on Responsibility to Protect, says prevention must start at home, with ‘honest assessment of both risk and resilience’ (SG/SM/15351, 27 September 2013): [http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/smg15351.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/smg15351.doc.htm)


Effective prevention requires early, active, sustained engagement, Stresses Secretary-General at Ministerial Round Table on ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (SG/SM/13838, 23 September 2011): http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sqsm13838.doc.htm

Interview with Edward Luck, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General (UN Newsmaker, 1 August 2011): http://www.un.org/apps/news/newsmakers.asp?NewsID=38


History of atrocity crimes is not one of acting too boldly, but of doing too little, too late, Secretary-General tells General Assembly (SG/SM/13700-GA/11113, 12 July 2011): http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sqsm13700.doc.htm


Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tells Center for Strategic and International Studies he has ‘hit the ground running’, as year ahead will be ‘deeply taxing’; priorities include responsibility to protect, Middle East, Darfur, Kosovo, non-proliferation, development goals, HIV/Aids, climate change, human rights (SG/SM/10842, 17 January 2007): http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sqsm10842.doc.htm


Selected UN Publications & Articles available online

• The European Union’s Role in Promoting and Implementing the Responsibility to Protect in Africa: Turning Political Commitments into Effective Action / by Andrej Kirn (United Nations University, Comparative Regional Integration Studies, Bruges Regional Integration & Global Governance Papers 2011/1): http://cris.unu.edu/sites/cris.unu.edu/files/BRIGG_2011-1_0.pdf
• Refugees, internally displaced persons and the ‘responsibility to protect’ / Susan Harris Rimmer (UNHCR, March 2010): http://www.unhcr.org/4b97b0909.html
• Embracing the “responsibility to protect”: a repertoire of measures including asylum for potential victims / by Brian Barbour (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, July 2008): https://www.unhcr.org/media/26709

Further Information

• International Criminal Court (ICC): http://www.icc-cpi.int/
• Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict: http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/
• Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: http://www.refworld.org/civilians.html
• UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Thematic Areas: Protection: https://www.unocha.org/themes/protection
• UNRIC Library Backgrounders
  o Genocide: https://unric.org/en/unric-library-backgrounder-genocide/
  o Combat Misinformation – Selected Online Resources on Misinformation, Disinformation and Hate Speech: https://unric.org/en/unric-library-backgrounder-combat-misinformation/

Non-UN Sources

• International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP): https://www.globalr2p.org/international-coalition-for-the-responsibility-to-protect/
• Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect: http://www.globalr2p.org/

15 December 2023
not an official document – for information only https://unric.org/en/unric-library-backgrounder-r2p