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 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](http://undocs.org/A/RES/75/277)
    - Meeting records: [https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.64](https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.64), [https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.65](https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.65), [https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.66](https://undocs.org/A/75/PV.66)


- 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)

  o Concept Note: https://bit.ly/2xQtaYV
  o Summary: https://bit.ly/3v0RdRN
  o Webcast - 2nd meeting: https://un4.me/2fGdbEF

• 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)

  o Concept Note & Programme: https://bit.ly/3fnvYLC

• General Assembly High-level Thematic Panel Discussion “From Commitment to Implementation: Ten Years of the Responsibility to Protect” (26 February 2016): http://www.un.org/pga/70/events/r2p/
  o Concept Note: https://bit.ly/3ypredBK

• 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): https://un4.me/2dA2u9
  o 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: https://bit.ly/2SXdFq


• General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on “The Responsibility to Protect: Timely and Decisive Response” (5 September 2012):

• Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Responsibility to Protect (12 July 2011):

• Informal Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly "Early Warning, Assessment, and the Responsibility To Protect", 9 August 2010, United Nations Headquarters:

• Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect, 23 July 2009, United Nations Headquarters:
  o Meeting records: A/63/PV.97 - http://undocs.org/A/63/PV.97

• Panel discussion on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide — “A Decade After Rwanda: The United Nations and the Responsibility to Protect” (7 April 2004) - Webcast:
  http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/specialevents/sg040407rwanda.rm

Selected UN Documents


• 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


• 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

• S/2015/815 (26 October 2015): Letter dated 22 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General: http://undocs.org/S/2015/815
  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


  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
• 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
• A/RES/63/308 (adopted 14 September 2009): The responsibility to protect: http://undocs.org/A/RES/63/308
• 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

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

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

• Statements by the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on the Responsibility to Protect: https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/public-statements.shtml
• Amid increased suffering, responsibility to protect all the more necessary – UN Special Adviser (UN News Centre Interview, 24 March 2017): http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56422
- 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)
• 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/sgsm13700.doc.htm


• Responsibility to protect 'profound moral imperative in today’s world', says Secretary-General in message to Global Centre opening (SG/SM/11419, 14 February 2008): http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sgsm11419.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/sgsm10842.doc.htm


Selected UN Publications & Articles available online


• R2P and the UN / by Beatriz Escriña Cremades (UN Chronicle, Volume XLVIII, Number 2, 2011): http://unchronicle.un.org/article/r2p-and-un/


• The European Union’s Role in Promoting and Implementing the Responsibility to Protect in Africa: Turning Political Commitments into Effective Action / by Andrej Kirin (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-_0.pdf

• Refugees, internally displaced persons and the 'responsibility to protect' / Susan Harris Rimmer (UNHCR, March 2010): http://www.unhcr.org/4b97b0909.html

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- 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): http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/487b619b0.pdf

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/
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Thematic Areas: Protection: https://www.unocha.org/themes/protection
- UNRIC Library Backgrounders

Non-UN Sources

- International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP): http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/
- Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect: http://www.globalr2p.org/