Committee: Security Council (SC)

Topic: Evaluating the Codification of the Responsibility to Protect as a Mandatory Legal Obligation

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Position: President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Honourable Delegates,

I would like to welcome you to the 9th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki MUN. My name is Athanasios Theodorou and I'm an upcoming IB Year 1 student at Platon School. I am pleased to announce that I will be your President for this year's Security Council, specialising in the second topic, "Evaluating the Codification of the Responsibility to Protect as a Mandatory Legal Obligation". I believe it is a topic of immense importance, as it has become a critical concern of the international community in the past few years, one that requires an immediate solution in order for collaborative and respectful to the sovereignty of the states involved security to be achieved within the international community.

However, such efforts cannot be achieved without effective leadership within the United Nations and arguably its most significant body, the Security Council. The MUN community was built to prepare young leaders to face such situations with the integrity of true diplomats and ensure that the ever-evolving scene of international politics will never lack effective leadership. Thank you for being a part of the MUN community and growing alongside it, future leaders of our world.

Now, although this Study Guide engages the topic effectively and stands on thorough research, I strongly urge you to also perform your own external research. I suggest you use the footnoted links that you will find throughout the Guide, where you will be able to access more research material in order to understand the topic in-depth.

Should you have any questions while reading the Study Guide, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email is teothanos10@gmail.com.

Kind regards,

Athanasios Theodorou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Responsibility to Protect, more simply referred to as R2P, is a non-binding legal framework established and developed primarily by the United Nations during the early 2000s. Its main goal was to avoid earlier challenges in operations of peacekeeping, such as those in Rwanda and Kosovo, which proved devastating for the reputation of the UN and the state of the international community.

Under the principles of the R2P, states may intervene whenever a major violation of human rights and/or an international crime, such as a genocide, happens in a nearby state, in order to ensure peace and security in the region, while also fostering the values of international cooperation. It is a good concept in theory but it could be utilised as an excuse for unrelated states to become involved in the internal relations of their neighbors, coming in direct contradiction with and violation of the UN Charter's remarks on state sovereignty.

Negotiatory initiatives have been attempting to make progress since 2005, when the first major event regarding R2P in the international scene, the UN World Summit, took place, an attempt at reaching a consensus among all Member States on how R2P should operate. Although it was not, and still is not, recognised as an obligation of Member States, it has remained one of the main talking themes of the UN General Assembly in the past few years, highlighting its importance to international affairs and the willingness of Member States to finally address it.

Today, as war persists in Europe and the Middle East, while international tensions also continue to rise, the R2P principle is more relevant than ever, as states seek ways to support their allies but lack the legal authority to do so directly. Admittedly, the R2P is not a perfect solution; it requires strict oversight in order to not come into conflict with the fundamentals that define the existence of the United Nations and, naturally, the Security Council. The future of the R2P truly lies on a compromise which shall be achieved swiftly and decisively in order to address the modern problems of our world.

As such, the Security Council's mandate is the appropriate setting in which the matter at hand should be discussed, while keeping in mind our conference's theme "A more just world: The role of Peremptory Norms in International Law". For peremptory norms are those principles which allow for no violation or exemption to their regulations and so shall be the Responsibility to Protect as well. Although past practices have been plagued by selectivity, lack of oversight and other hardships, if the R2P is to become a mandatory legal obligation, all concerns regarding it should be resolved, in order for the international community to enjoy order, regional security and international peace, the fundamentals which shaped thinking regarding the R2P in the early 2000s and even the United Nations, when they were founded, in 1945.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Genocide

The term "genocide" refer to "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" [UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect][1].

International Crimes

The term "international crimes" refers to "acts that occur across national boundaries that violate international law and are typically prosecuted by international tribunals. International crimes include genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression" [Cornell Law School][2].

Interventionism

The term "interventionism" refers to "the theory or practise of intervening" and, more specifically in regards to state affairs, "governmental interference in economic affairs at home or in political affairs of another country" [Merriam-Webster Dictionary][3].

Non-Indifference

The term "non-indifference" refers to a policy of not attempting to ignore and, potentially but not necessarily, involving yourself in something that another person, country, etc. is going through/trying to do.

Non-Interference

The term "non-intereference" refers to "a policy of not trying to stop something or not involving yourself in something that another person, country, etc. is going through/trying to do" [Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus, modified][4].

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[1] United Nations. "Definitions of Genocide and Related Crimes | United Nations." United Nations, 1948, https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[2] Unknown. "International Crimes." LII / Legal Information Institute, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/international_crimes. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[3] Merriam-Webster Editors. "Definition of INTERVENTIONISM." Www.Merriam-Webster.Com, 20 Aug. 2026, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interventionism. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[4] Cambridge Dictionary. "Non-Interference." CambridgeWords, 26 Aug. 2026, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/non-interference. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

Reckless Intervention

The term "reckless intervention" refers to a state of a country which is intervening in the internal affairs of another country without the interests of the international community or the original country in mind and without being mindful of the consequences of this action, solely with its own interests in mind.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The term "Responsibility to Protect", more simply known as "R2P" refers to "a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution" [UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect][5].

Right to Intervene

The term "Right to Intervene" refers to an older concept which existed before the emergence of R2P and essentially suggested that states are entitled to intervene in the internal affairs of another state if they believe that their own interests are and/or regional stability is at risk.

Sovereignty

The term "sovereignty" refers to "the power of a country to control its own government" [Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus][6].

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Context

After the conclusion of the Cold War and the numerous proxy conflicts during it, the international community required a concrete solution to foreign intervention from dominant regional actors which were present in the Cold War, mostly as influence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America. Although some frameworks regarding the matter of intervention to prevent serious human rights violations existed, such as Geneva and Genocide conventions, no single document defined the principle of the Responsibility to Protect in its entirety and international affairs were mostly governed by another principle, that of the "right to intervene", which gave regional actors

[5] United Nations. "About the Responsibility to Protect | United Nations." United Nations, United Nations, 2005, https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/responsibility-protect/about. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[6] Cambridge Dictionary . "SOVEREIGNTY | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." Cambridge.Org, 2019, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sovereignty. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

the right to intervene in the internal affairs of a foreign state in order to ensure its own, as well as the region's stability.

This feeling of uncertainty within the international community was the cause for major challenges in peacekeeping efforts worldwide, including in Rwanda, were weak UN mandate and lack of coordination failed to prevent a genocide [Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations][7], and Kosovo, where international actors acted without proper Security Council authorisation [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][8]. These isolated incidents caused great concern within the international community and immediate action regarding the consolidation of the fundamentals of facilitated intervention were deemed crucial. In 2000, Canada established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), a body which would later produce the first landmark document which defines the standards under which R2P initiatives would operate. In 2005 the UN World Summit, conducted with the matter of R2P as the central point of the agenda, would reach a consensus on what R2P truly represented in the international community, as well as proper standards for intervention and prevention mechanisms, while the UN Secretary General would separate the concept into three pillars, namely the protection responsibilities of the state, international cooperation and capacity building and timely and decisive intervention, four years later, solidifying the concept of R2P within the authority of the UN.

Results of these efforts would not be observed until 2011, when Libya became the first state on which controlled and integrated Responsibility to Protect peacekeeping would be practiced, with the initiative being deemed a success by a majority of the international community, despite its various controversies, which included an overextended mandate and flawed judgement by the UN under international pressure.

Case Studies

Failed Intervention during the Rwandan Genocide (1994)

The Rwandan genocide was an especially difficult happening to prevent, considering that all international actors in the country were either unable to act, such as the UN Assisted Mission to Rwanda, which was a mission designed to simply oversee the peace processes between the Tutsi and Hutu populations, or had departed, such as the Belgian forces, which withdrew after Belgian peacekeepers in the region lost their lives, leaving Rwanda in a worsening condition, with the country's president assassinated in a helicopter strike and civil unrest rising. After the events of the Rwandan genocide, which resulted in up to one million

[7] United Nations. "Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations." *Un.Org*, 2019, https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/backgrounders.shtml. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

[8] UN Security Council. "SECURITY COUNCIL, WELCOMING YUGOSLAVIA'S ACCEPTANCE of PEACE PRINCIPLES, AUTHORIZES CIVIL, SECURITY PRESENCE in KOSOVO | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *Un.Org*, 10 June 1999, https://press.un.org/en/1999/19990610.sc6686.html. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

deaths as of recent estimates [Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations][9], the events were reevaluated and it was discovered that they could have been presented with proper early-warning systems and rapid responses, capacity for civilian protection, as well as not treating the matter as purely domestic, all aspects that the R2P emphasises.

Unauthorised Intervention in Kosovo (1998-1999)

Intervention in Kosovo, as a part of the post-Yugoslavian consolidation of order within the country, was expected to be decided upon by the UN Security Council once terms were set for China and the Russian Federation to agree upon the matter. However, when intervention by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) occurred in Kosovo due to the ongoing situation of oppression and violence [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][10], which the UN had addressed in previous resolutions, the UN Security Council had yet to debate nor deliberate upon the matter of foreign intervention regarding civilian protection in Kosovo. Although this miscommunication was eventually cleared and NATO withdrew its forces [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][11], the airstrikes which unmistakably occurred on Kosovar ground pose a stark reminder of NATO's failure to follow UN Security Council doctrine as well as the failure of the two mechanisms to coordinate themselves for a unified response.

Structured R2P Initiatives in Libya (2011)

The first fully-structured and standard-defined R2P attempt was the reconsolidation of national order in Libya, in which the UN, through the assistance of NATO, launched a comprehensive campaign to protect civilians within the country by recapturing key cities and institutions and implementing a "no-fly zone", unless for flights of purely humanitarian purposes, above the country [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][12]. However, the UN Security Council was also made to call for the protection of civilians by "all means necessary" along with the establishment of the no-fly zone, relying on reckless intervention to continue initial efforts, in clear violation of R2P standards and regulations, showcasing that there has been no fully-coordinated R2P initiative which has been deemed an absolute success, posing the question of whether codification would assist in such.

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[9] United Nations. "Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations." *Un.Org*, 2019, https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/backgrounders.shtml. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

[10] United Nations. "NATO ACTION AGAINST SERBIAN MILITARY TARGETS PROMPTS DIVERGENT VIEWS as SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS URGENT MEETING on SITUATION in KOSOVO | UN Press." *Press.Un.Org*, 24 Mar. 1999, https://press.un.org/en/1999/19990324.sc6657.html. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[11] UN Security Council. "SECURITY COUNCIL, WELCOMING YUGOSLAVIA'S ACCEPTANCE of PEACE PRINCIPLES, AUTHORIZES CIVIL, SECURITY PRESENCE in KOSOVO | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *Un.Org*, 10 June 1999, https://press.un.org/en/1999/19990610.sc6686.html. Accessed 4 Sept. 2026.

[12] UN Meetings and Press Releases Editorial. "Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" Over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour With 5 Abstentions | UN Press." *Press.Un.Org*, 17 Mar. 2011, https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm#Resolution. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

Major Causes for the Introduction of the R2P Principle

Considering that the initial report from the ICISS outlining how the R2P would operate was introduced in 2001, it is important to examine the legal and humanitarian climate of the time. Released in the December of 2001, ten years after the dissolution of the USSR, seven years after the Rwandan genocide, two years after the NATO intervention in Kosovo and three months after the September 11 (9/11) Twin Tower attacks, the ICISS report was released with major challenges in the past, the present, as well as the future of the international community. With Cold War dynamics still applicable, two UN intervention attempts that were considered failures and new grounds for the West to intervene in the Middle East due to the War on Terror, international affairs required a responsible, structured plan of action, advanced capacity-building, as well as standards on how modern intervention would operate. The Responsibility to Protect principles provided all of these elements and were considered a revolutionary effort to make peacekeeping and post-Cold War intervention more targeted and successful.

In the international political scene, civilian protection was prioritised due to the War on Terror and there was also a greater push for international cooperation on all aspects of the operation of a proper international community, which allowed politicians to present the R2P as a method to promote assistance between neighbouring states, that was also specifically centered around the protection of civilians, rendering it the ideal solution for the problems of both more and less economically developed countries at the time. After its utilisation in Libya and the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, the Responsibility to Protect principles were considered a success by many in the political West and such is why they were established as a regular topic of discussion within international affairs shortly after. The R2P, therefore, was introduced at a remarkably convenient point in time and political support, as well as a lack of existing frameworks for foreign intervention in the international affairs of states, rendered it one of the most highly-regarded intervention methods in modern history.

Institutional Progress

Various mechanisms regarding the prevention of conflict, primarily genocide and the violation of human rights, existed before the initial ICISS report and the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document, such as the Genocide convention, which outlined plans for the prevention and punishment of genocide under standards of international law, as well as the Geneva conventions, potentially the first treaty to set standards on the protection of civilians during conflict. However, the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome document was the first politically significant document to introduce collaborative efforts in the protection of civilian population of states, as suggested to be the core of any R2P effort, an aspect of the topic which proved to be very important in future UN discussions and the eventual consolidation

of the R2P principles as a broader topic in the UN General Assembly [UN General Assembly Resolution 75/277][13].

However, concerns regarding the nature of the R2P may linger, as major standards have still not been specifically defined, such as to what extent intervention can happen and under what premise(s), how human rights, international law and sovereignty shall be respected in the process, as well as the question as to if and when the Responsibility to Protect will become a legal obligation for all Member States of the UN. While such unanswered concerns remain, an international consensus regarding the proper implementation of R2P principles cannot be reached, resulting in a never ending cycle of states basing debates off of hypotheticals, as the full potential of a proper R2P-standard intervention has never been showcased.

Impact to the International Community

To the international community, the codification of the R2P offers various benefits, such as the improvement of early-warning systems, good practices frameworks on intervention, as well as the switch from the "right to intervene" to the Responsibility to Protect. However, if the R2P becomes a legal standard, may result in various negative effects as well, including the formation of a new era of veto politics, where vetoes may directly influence the assistance a state receives in times of crises, as well as the formation of an increased number of new forced alliances between states which require protection and states which vow to provide it, and, lastly, potential selectivity in the field of assisting neighbouring states while utilising R2P principles, in an attempt by some countries to make the R2P into a modern "right to intervene", eliminating its well-meant purpose.

The codification of the R2P remains uncertain because of the above reasons, as they are reasonable concerns and they cannot be eliminated. However, as the international community moves forward with discussing the R2P and new concessions are made, it seems ever more likely that a consensus will eventually be reached by the UN General Assembly, which continues debating the matter among its Member States.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Canada

In 2000, when Canada established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty and the Commission released its subsequent report, redefining what was known about intervention at the time and introducing the standards of the Responsibility to

[13] UN General Assembly. *Resolution 75/277*. 21 Jan. 2021, https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/75/277. Accessed 3 Sept. 2026.

Protect for the first time, Canada truly seemed to be a pioneer on the field of R2P. However, more than 25 years later, the Canadian government has almost halted all discussions regarding official commitment to the R2P principle [Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect][14], rendering the former R2P pioneer a state without any policies or even an official stand on the matter. Pressure for Canada to recognise the concept of R2P is expected to keep increasing as the government keeps avoiding the topic, showcasing the international community's will to not allow the pioneer of R2P forsake it.

People's Republic of China

China is one of the main countries which carry concerns regarding the R2P, stating that its first two pillars, regarding state responsibility and international assistance respectively, are significant to the proper operation of the international community, while raising concerns about the third pillar, regarding a timely and decisive response against threats. This stand reflects a common standing of the PRC in favour of Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) and/or geographically small states, suggesting that international interventionist policy may eventually infringe upon their sovereignty. Within the Security Council, China's stance is most likely to advocate for the existence of consent in R2P operations, that being given from the country intervened upon to the one intervening, ensuring that such procedures are transparent and beneficial to both actors

Russian Federation

Having observed the implementation of R2P principles in Libya and deemed the process ineffective, the Russian Federation disagrees with the further expansion of R2P initiatives and deems preventative measures alone sufficient. Russia's stance comes in contrast with the complete set of pillars of the R2P, presenting a position similar to China's on the matter and only embracing the first two pillars while having sovereignty regarding the implementation of the third. Russia is acting as such for the same reason as China, believing that in the current R2P framework, consent cannot be secured and the sovereignty of LEDCs and small states will be infringed upon eventually. The Russian Federation is fully supportive of measures to prevent atrocities against vulnerable populations, yet stands against coercive action, as a result of R2P.

[14] Kikoler, Naomi. "Time for Canada to Recommit to R2P - Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect." *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*, 23 Nov. 2022, https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/time-for-canada-to-recommit-to-r2p/. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

South Africa

In the African continent, interventionism from the political West, and especially Europe, is quite common due to past colonialism and South Africa is determined to not let the phenomenon further exacerbate while also securing its own and its neighbours' safety. South Africa's stance is rather simple: "non-indifference" instead of "non-interference", meaning that foreign states should not act as oblivious to conflict and/or crises which may plague Africa but they should also not forcefully intervene on the matter. In that way, South Africa secures that itself and other African states can operate without any international intervention, while also having the privilege to call upon international assistance and potential intervention whenever they deem it to be required.

United Kingdom (UK)

The United Kingdom is one of the most major supporters of the R2P principle within the Security Council, a most important ally which carries the veto power and significant influence within the Council. The UK was also a participant on the mission to stabilise Libya in 2011, after the fall of former dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, one of the first instances of the proper implementation of R2P principles since 2005, when the principle was first analysed and presented to the international community after the 2005 UN World Summit on the matter. Having engaged in such significant support, the UK remains firmly in favour of R2P initiatives within the international community, especially when they are related to the restoration of post-conflict states.

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect is the leading NGO in affairs regarding the R2P principle, offering individualised country assessments and atrocity risk assessments in order to assist experts, governments and international organisations in consolidating the values of R2P. Its main goals are providing material in favour of R2P initiatives, capacity-building in states that are unable to engage with R2P and having a general advisory role in R2P-related processes. Although the Centre is not a widely recognised international organisation able to issue binding decisions and coercive action, its advisory role alone is sufficient to enforce efforts in properly implementing the R2P within the international community.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO is simultaneously the most progressive and yet most controversial organisation in the history of modern R2P initiatives. Shortly after the recognition of R2P principles by the UN in the 2005 UN World Summit, stabilisation was required in Libya, a remarkable opportunity to assess how the R2P would function in a real-life scenario. Hence, in 2011, with direct orders from Resolution 1973 of the UN Security Council [UN Security Council

Resolution 1973][15], NATO assumed control of the operation and criticism and controversies began transpiring from that point. Many states suggested that although the operation was initially launched as a civilian protection initiative, it was later evolved into an effort toward regime change, potentially because the UN Security Council also authorised the use of "any means necessary" [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][16] to protect the Libyan people. Regardless of the controversies in Libya, NATO's efforts must be recognised as the first successful, to an extent, R2P intervention since the concept's establishment.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

These are countries which have clearly stated firm support for the principle of R2P, compromising on almost none of the three pillars and recognising the concept in its entirety. The solutions they propose within the debate must reflect this absolutely positive stance and aim to convince other Member States that R2P must become the norm. Countries in this bloc include the United Kingdom and France, who both have a long history of supporting the R2P principle, as well as Colombia, which has, in a statement to the UN General Assembly, praised the concept of R2P [Statement by H.E. Claudia Blum, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, to the 63rd session of the General Assembly][17].

Bloc B

These are countries which still carry concerns regarding R2P, primarily because of "reckless intervention", lack of universal implementation and sovereignty concerns. They are expected to scrutinise resolutions and ensure that every measure proposed is transparent and supports the sovereignty and self-determination of all states involved, while also preferring attempts such as capacity-building over more directly interventionist. Countries in this bloc include the Russian Federation and China, who both have raised sovereignty concerns regarding the implementation of the third pillar of R2P in the past, as well as Pakistan, which has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the non-universal implementation of the R2P principle [Arab News][18].

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[15] UN Security Council. "Resolution 1973." *Un.Org*, 17 Mar. 2011, https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1973%20(2011). Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[16] UN Meetings and Press Releases Editorial. "Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" Over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour With 5 Abstentions | UN Press." *Press.Un.Org*, 17 Mar. 2011, https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm#Resolution. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

[17] Blum, Claudia. *COLOMBIA Intervenci6n De*. 23 July 2009, https://www.globalr2p.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2009-R2PDebate-Colombia.pdf. Accessed 3 Sept. 2026.

[18] Iqbal Khawaja, Usama. "Pakistan Urges UN to Uphold Global Pledge Against Genocide Without "Selectivity."" *Arabnewspk*, 7 July 2026,

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
24th October 1945	The UN Charter enters into force. Various articles within it call for non-intervention and promote state sovereignty, as well as peaceful resolution of conflict.
12th August 1949	The Geneva Conventions are established. They provide an important example of unified regulatory remarks regarding the responsibility to protect civilians during wartime.
12th January 1951	The Genocide Convention enters into force. It relates to understanding and punishing genocide, an early document promoting accountability regarding genocides in the international community.
April-July 1994	Lack of political will and a weak mandate for the UN Assisted Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) result in the Rwandan massacre, during which approximately 800.000 lose their lives [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][19].
12-16th July 1995	Formerly declared a "safe-zone" the town of Srebrenica is breached by Bosnian Serb forces due to a lack of oversight by UN forces, resulting in more than 8000 deaths and missing persons [UN International Residual

https://www.arabnews.pk/pakistan/pakistan-urges-un-to-uphold-global-pledge-against-genocide-without-selectivity-2649938. Accessed 3 Sept. 2026.

[19] Carlsson, Ingvar. "CHAIRMAN of INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO UNITED NATIONS ACTIONS DURING 1994 RWANDA GENOCIDE PRESENTS REPORT to SECURITY COUNCIL | UN Press." Press.Un.Org, 14 Apr. 2000, https://press.un.org/en/2000/20000414.sc6843.doc.html. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

	Mechanism for International Tribunals][20].
24th March 1999	NATO intervenes militarily in Kosovo in the form of strikes in the region, without, however, appropriate UNSC authorisation, a major controversy which damaged UN efforts in the region.
30th August 2001	The UN Security Council, through Resolution 1366, urges the Secretary General to provide information regarding serious violations of human rights and conflict risks, which would later be used to create early-warning systems.
December 2001	The ICISS publishes its "Responsibility to Protect" report, introducing the concept of R2P to the international community for the first time.
2nd December 2004	The High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change presents a modern approach to collective defense, based on the fundamentals of R2P.
14-16th September 2005	During the UN World Summit of 2025, representatives from different Member States reach a consensus on the fundamentals of R2P
24th October 2005	The 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document is ratified, the first UN attempt to regulate around the concept
12th January 2009	The Secretary General formally sets three pillars regarding the R2P, those

[20] International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. "Srebrenica: Timeline of Genocide." Www.Irmct.Org, https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica/timeline/en/. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

	being centered around responsibility, cooperation and responsiveness.
7th October 2009	First major debate regarding the implementation of the R2P as an obligation or a legal principle concludes to no final decision.
17th March 2011	UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorises Member States to use "any means necessary" to protect Libyan civilians [UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases][21]. A NATO-led strike would later ease tensions in the first instance of proper R2P practise.
18th May 2021	The General Assembly decides to set the R2P as a recurring topic within its debates, dubbing it "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity".
25th June 2025	For the 20th anniversary of the 2005 UN World Summit, the Secretary General publishes a special report and addresses the GA in regards to R2P.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

World Summit Outcome Document (UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1, 2005)

The UN World Summit of 2025 was specifically conducted in order to assess the role of the R2P principle in the context of the United Nations. The outcome document of the session included provisions regarding various matters, including the fundamental values and principles that define the Responsibility to Protect, but also various provisions regarding financing, implementation and cooperation. The document was significantly important

[21] UN Meetings and Press Releases Editorial. "Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" Over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in Favour With 5 Abstentions | UN Press." Press.Un.Org, 17 Mar. 2011, https://press.un.org/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm#Resolution. Accessed 27 Aug. 2026.

because it was, and still is considered, the greatest point of reference regarding the R2P, one that was deliberated and agreed upon by Member States of the UN and, therefore, having the approval of a majority of the international community. Later, during the 60th session of the UN General Assembly, the document was also adopted as a resolution, solidifying the pledge of states to follow its provisions and responsibly integrate the R2P into their own national doctrines.

Report of the Secretary General On Implementing the Responsibility to Protect (2009)

As Secretary General Ban Ki-moon observed progress on the matter of R2P, he decided to also contribute to defining its fundamental principles as well as its structure. Therefore, within a special report on the matter, the Secretary General outlined three pillars which define the Responsibility to Protect principle, those being Pillar One: The protection responsibilities of the State (as defined in section II), Pillar Two: International assistance and capacity-building (as defined in section III) and Pillar Three: Timely and decisive response (as defined in section IV) [Report of the Secretary General on Implementing the Responsibility to Protect][22]. This report was deemed significant at the time, as it solidified the concept of R2P in the perspective of the UN, being recognised by the Secretary General and having its general structure determined by the UN's actions. This distinction would go on to be used in debates about the effectiveness and applications of the R2P, as many states would eventually raise concerns regarding the third pillar and the implications that a "timely and decisive response" may carry.

UN General Assembly Resolution 75/277 (2021)

With resolution 75/277, the UN General Assembly introduced the Responsibility to Protect principle as a recurring topic of its agenda, under the greater theme of "The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" [UN General Assembly Resolution 75/277][23]. This consolidation of the R2P as a UNGA topic ensures that the topic will remain relevant in international affairs for as long as is required for countries to assess its benefits and disadvantages.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) Report

The Canada-led International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty redefined international perception of the Responsibility to Protect principle in 2001 with its innovative report on the matter. Until then, the concept of the "right to intervene" governed

[22] Ki-moon, Ban. "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect: Report of the Secretary-General." 12 Jan. 2009.
[23] UN General Assembly. *Resolution 75/277*. 21 Jan. 2021, https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/75/277. Accessed 3 Sept. 2026.

international affairs, an idea inspired by Cold War doctrine and suggested that states are allowed to intervene in the international affairs, most commonly conflict, of another state, simply because they believed that their interests and/or regional stability were threatened. By introducing the R2P principle, the ICISS managed to persuade many states to only intervene if a country has been deemed to be unable to handle majorly concerning situations, such as conflict and/or violations of human rights/laws. While this was considered a valiant attempt at redefining the system under which the R2P operates, it suffered from major challenges, such as its non-binding nature, the fact that the document was a simple report and not a treaty, as well as the fact that the ICISS's only purpose was that single publication, after which it was disbanded. One of the most major actions which could have potentially improved this attempt would be the ICISS having a long-term role on the matter, the involvement of the UN and willing Member States, as well as the more specific definition of some of the report's grounds of debate, such as what is truly serious harm that calls for intervention.

International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICR2P)

The ICR2P is a community of commitment established by the Global Centre on the Responsibility to Protect, with the combined efforts of civil society and NGOs. The ICR2P is an initiative that seeks to provide governments, organisations and communities with the necessary resources and connections to properly understand and implement the R2P, an important step toward universalising R2P principles and ensuring that they can also be implemented in different contexts. Unfortunately, although initiatives and communities such as the ICR2P have noble causes, their impact is limited to the amount of governments and organisations that they can reach while they also cannot produce any binding agreements and/or decisions, rendering their actions mere advocacy. Possible methods to combat this include securing more significant partnerships, such as with organisations on the level and capacity of the UN, while also providing more specific material on the R2P in the form of standards, draft treaties and model legislation, in order to boost actual impact.

Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security

In 1999, before the rise of the R2P principle and its support from the international community, the African states of the ECOWAS gathered to discuss the establishment of one of the most ground-breaking intervention mechanisms that had existed until then. Said African states agreed to create a modern mechanism which would be controlled by a Secretariat, as well as managed and enforced by other bodies within the ECOWAS, including the newly-established Mediation and Security Council, an intricate system which would ensure that all states would be able to control and properly manage interventionist efforts and based on concrete standards for application, such as serious regional threat and active conflict. Although it was one of the most ambitious attempts to implement R2P in history,

not all states had the appropriate resources and infrastructure to support it, while human rights and international law implications were also not discussed extensively enough. The introduction of human rights standards, funding by the ECOWAS as a whole, as well as intervention of specified extent, mindful of international law and primarily for the protection of citizens, are additions which could have potentially assisted in the proper implementation of this attempt.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Codifying Prevention

Codifying prevention is one of the least controversial measures that can be produced on the matter of R2P, as they mostly relate to R2P pillars one and two, those which the international community agrees should be introduced as international standards, considering that they offer virtually no disadvantages. The measures proposed will most include advanced capacity-building for threat recognition, such as regional early-warning systems with data available to the states of said region and monitoring centers for surveillance, both of which exist as measures in some regions and can be easily established by the UN, and providing states with modern legislation to recognise threats to international peace and security and then proceed to inform affected states and/or fortify themselves. This will be a first, and most important, step toward the codification of intervention under R2P principles as well, integrating the complete doctrine at a more appropriate time.

Targeted Capacity-Buidling

Following capacity-building measures in the aforementioned solution, it is important that capacity building is specifically targeted to other Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) or countries in regions where conflict is happening, such as, currently, the Middle East. Such states should receive funding to develop the infrastructure for fast and secure communication lines, as they may face rapidly escalating conflict and require immediate assistance from regional actors and/or willing states. Furthermore, More Economically Developed Countries in such regions should receive model treaties and legislation in order to be encouraged and incentivised to introduce R2P principles into their national doctrines, in order to be able to support neighbouring LEDCs and conflict-ridden areas. An initial disadvantage will be perceived in such arrangements but will soon be eliminated due to the strong international will that will be created to decisively resolve the R2P debate.

Providing Specific Guidelines regarding Intervention

For states who already support the concept of R2P, improvements can still be made in the form of aforementioned model legislation and standards for proper implementation. Among states who may be willing to intervene if a neighbouring country is facing threats to

its livelihood, the most important aspect to introduce is consent; states must provide intervening states with consent before they enter the country and intervene on matters of any concern level, in order to avoid potential international law violations through undermining the sovereignty of the states involved. Additionally, the second most important standard that must be introduced is extent of intervention, as intervention may reach grounds in which, although well-meant, infringes upon the rights of the citizens or the responsibilities of the government of the state which is being intervened upon. Such matters should be discussed in a case-by-case manner, introduced to states which fully accept all the provisions of R2P, in order to avoid prolonged multilateral debate on the matter, which will be introduced later, in a more lenient international political scene.

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