

Statement Presented to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at the 46th Ordinary Session by Voke Ighorodje, Consultant for the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect.

Your Excellency, Ag. Chairperson,
Members of the ACHPR
Distinguish delegates of State Parties,

On behalf of the International Coalition for Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), I congratulate you and members of the Commission on this 46th Ordinary Session for the journey so far in your quest for the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa.

You will recall that in September 2005 at the United Nations Millennium Summit, UN member states adopted the Responsibility to Protect norm, where states expressed their commitment to the protection of civilians from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing; and in November 2007, this distinguished Commission, at its 42nd Ordinary Session in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo, adopted a resolution (Res.117 of 07) on 'Strengthening the Responsibility to Protect in Africa'.

Your Excellency, on 21 July 2009, the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon presented his report 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect' (A/63/677) to the General Assembly. His presentation marked the beginning of one of the largest plenary debates of the General Assembly's 63rd session: 94 speakers took the floor, in total representing 180 member states and two observer missions from all regions. Your Excellency, in a period of three days—and this includes 16 statements from sub-Saharan African member states—governments demonstrated not only intense interest in the debate, but made a strong show of support for implementing their 2005 consensus commitment. In all, what emerged was a clear direction from the vast majority of member states to commit to efforts to prevent and halt atrocity crimes and to make a reality of "Rwanda, NEVER AGAIN".

Your Excellency, Res 117 of 07 was a positive move as it contributed to promoting and strengthening the Responsibility to Protect. We urge the ACHPR to continue in this fine tradition of setting precedents and to adopt a resolution demonstrating the commitment African governments have to implementing the Responsibility to Protect in Africa. We believe that this resolution will support efforts to enhance international justice, assist AU member states in developing national frameworks for implementing the Responsibility to Protect and strengthen the decision making capacity of the ACHPR in playing its statutory role for the African Union.

I thank you.