

□ The Responsibility to Protect: An introduction

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Dr. Greppi is a Professor of International Rights at the University of Torino.□ This article discusses RtoP as defined by the ICISS report, and includes explanations of the underlying concept of sovereignty as a responsibility and the responsibilities to prevent, react, and rebuild. Dr. Greppi also discusses the developments of RtoP through the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and through regional activity.□ Finally, Dr. Greppi discusses the implementation of RtoP and how to move forward by better defining the scope and actions addressed in RtoP concepts.□

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At the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1999 and in 2000, Secretary-General Kofi Annan strongly asked the international community to address a key issue:

“...if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?” (...)

In response to this challenge, the Government of Canada, together with a group of foundations, announced at the UN General Assembly in September 2000 the establishment of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), an independent body of distinguished personalities chaired by Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun.(...)

R2P

should be accepted for what it is: a defying concept being translated into a policy, a real stimulating challenge to the international community to develop international law. (...)

On the other hand, it is a dangerous concept, as it is perceived by Third World countries as a new means for neocolonialism and imperialism, and it may give rise to a number of abuses, in particular in situations in which States act unilaterally because the UN has proved inactive and inefficient. (...)

Furthermore, international law needs time to consolidate principles and rules. A new approach - although fascinating – is not enough to reshape a traditional pillar like that of sovereignty, still standing as a rock, a real cornerstone, in the international community.

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