

**In this issue: General Assembly Debate on RtoP (Day 1 and 2); government statements; featured news**      **I. ICRtoP Media Release: Civil Society groups welcome governments' commitment to prevent and end mass atrocities**

## **II. General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect and Informal Interactive Dialogue**

1. INFORMAL INTERACTIVE THEMATIC DEBATE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT
2. GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

## **III. Featured News**

1. IPS: HOW FAR SHOULD U.N. GO TO PROTECT CIVILIANS?
2. NYT: WHEN TO STEP IN TO STOP WAR CRIMES CAUSES FISSURES
3. THE ECONOMIST: AN IDEA WHOS TIME HAS COME – AND GONE?
4. UN: PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

---

**I. Civil Society groups welcome governments' commitment to prevent and end mass atrocities**      Media Release International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect Monday, July 27, 2009

The long-awaited General Assembly plenary debate on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) confirmed overwhelming government support for the historic norm approved at the September 2005 UN Summit. Government after government committed to improving international efforts to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

“Predictions by the General Assembly President and international media that the debate would reopen and weaken the Responsibility to Protect have proved inaccurate. The new peace tool is

likely to be strengthened by the General Assembly's deliberation," said William Pace, Executive Director of WFM-Institute for Global Policy, host of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP).

Sixty governments addressed the General Assembly on Thursday, July 23 and Friday, July 24, reacting to a report by the Secretary-General that clarified the meaning of governments' commitment to the Responsibility to Protect at the World Summit in 2005 and recommended next steps to implement this commitment to preventing and halting mass atrocities. Almost twice as many governments as expected signed up to make statements, prompting the UN to extend the debate. The debate is expected to finish tomorrow, Tuesday July 28, 2009.

Strong supporting statements were heard from governments in every region, including Guatemala, Costa Rica, South Korea, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda, the European Union, France, Norway, Hungary, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Ireland, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many voiced support for the "three pillars, four crimes" formation articulated in the Secretary General's report as well as the need to focus on prevention and early warning measures.

Despite the efforts of General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto and a few government detractors, such as Cuba, Pakistan and Venezuela, to derail the debate, the exchange between governments is viewed by observers as an important step in building greater support for implementing RtoP. The opponents' attempt to equate the Responsibility to Protect with the discredited concept of humanitarian intervention was soundly rejected, as was the idea that RtoP is an imperialist concept only supported by the West.

Many governments linked their support for RtoP to the need for significant improvements in the Security Council, and in strengthening states and the UN's capacities for prevention mass atrocity crimes. Even countries who have expressed concerns in the past, such as Indonesia, Brazil, India, Algeria, China, Ecuador and the Philippines, delivered constructive statements during the debate.

Several states raised legitimate concerns about the application of the norm, including that the norm may be used selectively by powerful states, that it should be restricted to the four crimes and violations (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing), and that the Permanent Five Members of the Security Council should refrain from using the veto. Many statements also included practical examples of how governments are already working at the national and regional levels to ensure for the protection of populations from the four crimes and violations and a desire to improve upon such mechanisms.

The International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect welcomes this overwhelmingly

positive response to the Secretary-General's report entitled "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect". On Friday 24 July 2009, Ms. Thelma Ekiyor, Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute and Chair of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, said "The focus of government statements in this debate is a great success for many civil society groups who have been working to ensure that we move forward and not backward on turning the Responsibility to Protect from words to deeds".

## **II. General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect and Informal Interactive Dialogue**

On 23 July 2009, the General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect was preceded by an Informal interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. Following the statement by the President of the General Assembly and the statement by the representative of the Secretary-General, Edward Luck, Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect, the Panel discussion began. Professor Gareth Evans, Prof Noam Chomsky presented their statements and answered a round of questions from member states before Prof Jean Bricmont and Prof. Ngugi wa Thiong'o shared their views. It was followed by another round of questions from member states.

The General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect began at 3pm in the General Assembly Chamber on the same day. The debate continued into Friday. Below are statements made at the debate.

An estimated 30 governments remain to speak. The debate will resume on Tuesday 28 July.

*Statements in order of presentation*

### **1. Informal Interactive Thematic Dialogue**

#### [Opening Statement](#)

by the President of the General Assembly

Remarks by the

[Edward C. Luck](#)

, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General

Statement by

[The Hon. Gareth Evans](#)

, President Emeritus, International Crisis Group and Co-Chair, International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty

Statement by Noam Chomsky: Institute Professor and Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Statement by Jean Bricmont is a Belgian theoretical physicist, philosopher of science and a professor at the Université catholique de Louvain.

Remarks by

[Prof. Ngugi wa Thiong'o](#)

## 2. General Assembly Debate on the Responsibility to Protect

97

th

– 100

th

plenary meeting, General Assembly Hall, 23 July 2009 – 28 July 2009

*Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields; and Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit: report of the Secretary-General (A/63/677)*

[Opening Statement: President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockman at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)      Government Statements [1. Sweden, on behalf of the European Union \(EU\) -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to](#)

[Protect](#)

[2.](#)

[Egypt, on the behalf of Non Aligned Movement \(NAM\) --Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

3. [United Kingdom -- Statement of the General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect \(to be updated\)](#)

[4. Indonesia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[5. France -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[6. The Phillipines -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[7. Brazil -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[8. Guatemala -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[Guatemala -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

[9. Bosnia-Herzegovina -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[10. USA -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[11. Belgium -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[12. South Korea -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[13. Australia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[14. Liechtenstein -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[15. Costa Rica -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[Costa Rica -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

[16. New Zealand -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[17. The Netherlands -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[18. Italy -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[19. Austria -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[20. Pakistan -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[21. Switzerland -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH AND FRENCH\)](#)

22. Algeria -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[23. Singapore -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[24. Ecuador -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

[25. Chile -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH AND SPANISH\)](#)

26. Morocco -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[27. Colombia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[Colombia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

28. Israel -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[29. South Africa -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[30. Uruguay -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

[31. Ghana -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[32. Japan -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[33. Czech Republic -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

34. China -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

35. Mali -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

36. Canada -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[37. Nigeria -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

38. Vietnam -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

39. Guinea-Bissau -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[40. Ireland -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

41. Venezuela -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

42.

[Norway -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[43. Germany -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

44. Bolivia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

45. Romania -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[46. Slovenia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[47. Monaco -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

48. Qatar -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated) 49. Solomon Islands -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

50. Croatia -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[51. Jordan -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ARABIC\)](#)

[52. Luxembourg -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(ENGLISH AND FRENCH\)](#)

[53. Mexico -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(SPANISH\)](#)

54. Rwanda -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

[55. Turkey -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[56. Cuba -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[57. Hungary -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[58. India -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect](#)

[59. Andorra -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect \(FRENCH\)](#)

60. San Marino -- Statement at the GA debate on the Responsibility to Protect (to be updated)

Separately issued:

[UN High commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay's statement on RtoP](#)

Link to UN's summary of the debate:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/ga10849.doc.htm>

### **Featured News**

1. How Far Should U.N. Go to Protect Civilians? Inter Press Service News Agency 24 July 2009

In what one U.N. official characterized as "a historical development", the General Assembly spent much of this week debating the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which calls for the international community to intervene with diplomatic and, if necessary, military action, in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Earlier this week, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon presented a report offering a concrete structure for the implementation of R2P, which has proved politically contentious in the four years since its introduction.

Ban introduced the report, entitled "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect", to the General Assembly saying, "We can save lives. We can uphold the principles on which this house is built. We can demonstrate that sovereignty and responsibility are mutually reinforcing principles, and we can assert the moral authority of this institution."

(...)The secretary-general also addressed the likelihood that the debate could move away from



the implementation of R2P and towards the validity of the already accepted principle.

He asked member states to "resist those who try to change the subject or turn our common effort to curb the worst atrocities in human history into a struggle over ideology, geography or economics."

This could be an allusion to the General Assembly president, Miguel D'Escoto, who has stated that he has "strong views" when it comes to the principle. D'Escoto also assembled a panel of four experts to address the General Assembly before the debate, three of whom were characterised by Jim Traub of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, as presenting a "broad polemical critique".

The panel was made up of well-known leftist intellectual Noam Chomsky; Belgian academic Jean Bricmont; Gareth Evans, former president of the International Crisis Group; and Kenyan author and professor Ngugi wa Thiong'o, all of whom, with the exception of Evans, were critical of the principle and its implementation.

Chomsky and Bricmont in particular, suggested that the force driving R2P, humanitarian intervention, could be tied to colonialist ventures and inequality in international affairs.

Chomsky began by stating, "The discussions about R2P, or its cousin, humanitarian aid, are regularly disturbed by a skeleton in the closet, history" He then listed imperialist genocides committed under the guise of humanitarian aid throughout history, dating back to the 17th century.

Bricmont stated that, "The main obstacle to the implementation of a genuine and acceptable R2P, are precisely the policies and the attitudes of the countries that are most enthusiastic for R2P, namely the western countries and in particular the United States."

Both Chomsky and Bricmont, however, received criticism from a number of delegates, most notably the ambassador of Germany who, in response to Chomsky said, "You have enumerated a long list of examples about the cousin and about the skeleton, we have heard not heard anything about R2P as it is clearly defined in the report."

Supporters of the principle have argued that R2P is not a western norm, but rather one that originated in Africa.

As Thelma Ekyior, the executive director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute, mentioned in a press briefing on Wednesday, "Prior to the 2005 World Summit here at the U.N., African governments were already thinking about how to address the atrocities".

Ekyior cited the African Union's Constitutive Act of 2000 which "uses R2P language" and the 2008 Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) Conflict Prevention Framework which "uses R2P lingo verbatim, in talking about the responsibility to prevent, to react, and to rebuild".

On Thursday, the formal debates began with the juxtaposition of the European Union's (EU) beaming support of the secretary-general's report with the Non-Aligned Movement's tentative concerns.

Representing the EU was Sweden's Anders Linden who spoke confidently about the secretary-general's proposal, saying the report "brings the concept down to the level of practical implications and forms a platform on which to build concrete measures".

Also among the proponents of the report were a number of South American and Asian countries, notably Chile and Indonesia.

Ambassador Maged A. Abdelaziz of Egypt however, expressed the Non-Aligned Movement's uncertainty over the implementation of R2P stating, "In the meantime, mixed feelings and thoughts on implementing R2P still persist. There are concerns about the possible abuse of R2P."

Abdelaziz also expressed the Non-Aligned Movement's concern for the Security Council's frequent inability to act due to disagreement among its five veto-wielding members, particularly "instances wherein the Security Council fails to address cases involving genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes."

So far, it's unclear what the actual outcome of the debate will be. However, supporters of R2P appear to be confident that any discussion regarding the principle's implementation is positive.

Traub told IPS that he found the first day of debates "very encouraging" and believed that "the feeling is that it's not necessary to have a specific outcome... the outcome is these countries standing up and saying 'we need to do something'."

The secretary general and supporters of R2P consistently cite the genocide in Rwanda as an example where the international community should have responded but did not in the name of state sovereignty. Gareth Evans said that it was "Rwanda, Srebrenica, and Kosovo" which pushed the international community towards accepting R2P in 2005.

In his remarks to the General Assembly, Lord Mark Malloch Brown, Britain's minister of the state for Africa, Asia, and the United Nations, said that what he hoped would emerge from the debates was "a culture of prevention".

Regardless of what cultural change may occur, ultimately, it will be the future actions of the international community that will determine whether or not it has learnt from the past.

Link:

<http://www.ipsnews.net/print.asp?idnews=47785>

2. When to Step In to Stop War Crimes Causes Fissures New York Times Memo From the United Nations  
y Neil MacMarquhar B

July 22, 2009

On the face of it, a commitment by all United Nations member states to reach an understanding on how the world body should intervene to stop genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing would not seem like a major stretch.

But the debate scheduled in the General Assembly for Thursday over the concept, known as "the responsibility to protect," is producing rancor before it even begins. So much, in fact, that instead of figuring out how to enforce the doctrine, the General Assembly could end up debating the policy's validity all over again, even though about 150 world leaders already endorsed it in 2005.

Ban Ki-moon, the secretary general, tried to set the tone with a speech on Tuesday. Citing his visits to the memorials for 800,000 dead in Rwanda, Mr. Ban said the United Nations had the unique ability to save lives by intervening to stop mass civilian deaths.

"It is high time to turn the promise of the responsibility to protect into practice," Mr. Ban said, warning against those seeking to reopen the entire debate. "Resist those who try to change the subject or turn our common effort to curb the worst atrocities in human history into a struggle over ideology, geography or economics," Mr. Ban added. "What do they offer to the victims of

mass violence? Rancor instead of substance, rhetoric instead of policy, despair instead of hope.”

Mr. Ban may not have singled anyone out, but it seemed a not-so-subtle reference to the Rev. Miguel D’Escoto Brockmann, the Nicaraguan president of the General Assembly and a Catholic priest, who issued a position paper last week that created an uproar.

His “Concept Note” suggested that responsibility to protect was redecorated colonialism, and that the true means to eliminate genocide and similar scourges included world financial reform, Security Council reform and drawing a lesson from Jesus.

“Jesus’ emphasis on redistribution of wealth to the poor and on nonviolence reinforces the right perspective on responsibility to protect,” his note said.

Father D’Escoto scheduled a panel discussion before the General Assembly debate featuring speakers like Noam Chomsky, the American academic whose critique of “humanitarian imperialism” discussed the doctrine. (...)

While Father D’Escoto has supporters, many delegations reacted with the usual combination of outrage and derision that Father D’Escoto, a former Sandinista foreign minister, has a habit of provoking. The ambassador of one Latin American state said it was shocking that a priest was putting ideological and political visions ahead of human suffering. Peter Maurer, the Swiss ambassador, put it more bluntly, saying, “A priest should know that certain things are better kept to your heart.”(...)

Even without the General Assembly president, the topic — shortened in United Nations-speak to “R2P” — was a hard-fought one. Many developing countries harbor suspicions that the doctrine is merely a Trojan horse for foreign meddling in their domestic affairs. Attempts to slap the label on various crises only deepened those suspicions (...)

Edward C. Luck, whom Mr. Ban appointed his special adviser on the topic but the General Assembly refused to pay, wrote a report this year that divided the concept into three pillars: that all states must protect their populations from atrocities; that the United Nations and other institutions can help countries failing in this duty; and that the international community must react in a series of steps when a large number of civilians are at risk, with military intervention the final response. The fight swirls around that last point, when military intervention might be justified and whether that can be codified into law. “The problem with all of this is the one-dimensional perception that R2P is only about military coercion,” said Gareth Evans, a former Australian foreign minister.

Delegates from African organizations have come to argue that R2P is not just a Western tool. Other proponents hope the debate will inch the discussion toward practical steps on how R2P can be made operational. But some worry that the more it is debated, the less consensus will emerge.

The Bush administration disliked the doctrine on the ground that it might tie American hands in foreign policy decisions, but President Obama basically supports it.

Susan Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations, often speaks about how the failure to intercede in Rwanda while she was a top Clinton administration official in Africa is a low point in American foreign policy and her personal career. In a speech last month in Vienna, Ms. Rice acknowledged that the doctrine had been abused in conflicts like Iraq, but argued for the responsibility “to respond to the worst outrages.”(...)

Link:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/23/world/23nation.html?\\_r=2&em](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/23/world/23nation.html?_r=2&em)

3. An idea whose time has come—and gone?

The Economist (print edition)

Jul 23rd 2009 | NEW YORK

*An idealistic effort to establish a new humanitarian principle is coming under attack at the United Nations*

GARETH EVANS, a former Australian foreign minister and roving global troubleshooter, makes a bold but passionate claim on behalf of a three-word expression which (in quite large part thanks to his efforts) now belongs to the language of diplomacy: the “responsibility to protect”. In a recent book, he says there are “not many ideas that have the potential to matter more for good, not only in theory but in practice.”

(...) Whatever their motive, people of that cast of mind took heart from the moment in 2005

when the biggest-ever gathering of world leaders accepted the principle that they have a general “responsibility to protect” human beings from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. In a delicate formula which Mr Evans worked hard to craft, it was agreed that this concept, now known as R2P, referred mainly to the responsibility of states for their own people. Only in certain extreme circumstances, when states could not or would not protect their own citizens, or were actively harming them, might others step in. The concept was carefully modified so as to avoid giving prickly sovereign states the idea that they were about to be invaded at will by moralising outsiders.

(...)The apparent campaign to sabotage R2P is taking place in defiance of Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, who earlier this year drew up a report that presents the concept in the most cautious and reassuring of tones. As he argued, there were several benign and uncontroversial ways in which R2P could be made more real. For example, by helping decent states protect their people; or by having an effective early-warning system to trigger constructive action when things start to go wrong (or in plainer terms, when states start to collapse). He says action, military or otherwise, by external powers is a last resort.

Such assurances have failed to convince critics of R2P, who are adamant that the whole idea is just a cover to legitimise armed interference by rich Western powers in the affairs of poor countries. One person who takes that view is Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, a Nicaraguan diplomat (and Sandinista priest-politician), who is now president of the General Assembly.

In a calculated snub to the idealists who tried to make the R2P idea nuanced and hence palatable, he says a more accurate name for the concept would be the “right to intervene” or R2I. Quite a number of countries might be persuaded to support a resolution diluting the commitment to R2P that was made by over 150 states at the UN summit in 2005. Possible backers include large and middle-sized powers of various ideological stripes—including India, Pakistan, Cuba, Sudan, Venezuela and Egypt. Some of these may try to induce smaller states in their neighbourhood to follow their sceptical line.

Supporters of R2P are complaining of a “surprise attack”. They say Mr d’Escoto brought the debate forward by several weeks—to a snoozy period in late July. Conveniently enough, Mr Ban will not be around. On July 21st, before he left New York, Mr Ban made a short plea in R2P’s defence, urging states to “resist those who try to change the subject or turn our common effort to curb the worst atrocities in human history into a struggle over ideology, geography or economics.”

Meanwhile Mr d’Escoto scheduled an eve-of-debate discussion by a four-member panel in which Mr Evans was the only supporter of R2P—pitted against three sceptics, including Noam Chomsky, a linguist and veteran critic of American foreign policy. Ed Luck, who is Mr Ban’s adviser on R2P, was allowed to make a statement, but only the panel members could take

questions from member states.(...)

One of the first international bodies to endorse the concept, or a version of it, was the African Union, which emerged from the discredited Organisation of African Unity. The AU's Constitutive Act included a provision for "the right of the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity." It cited a new principle of "non-indifference" to large-scale crimes.

One of R2P's keenest sponsors was Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian who preceded Mr Ban as secretary-general. Mr Annan has agonised in public about the UN's failure in Rwanda, when he was head of UN peacekeeping, and has argued that his success as a peace-broker in Kenya last year owed something to the existence of R2P as a moral instrument.

Meanwhile, America, far from dreaming up R2P as a crafty way of justifying imperialist adventures, was initially rather sceptical. Under the Bush administration, both the Pentagon and the State Department were intensely wary of signing up to anything that might bind them to take draconian action in the name of humanity.

Indeed, R2P was a part of a much broader 2005 reform of the United Nations that George Bush first sought to weaken, then only reluctantly accepted. And to this day, there are voices on America's political right that remain profoundly sceptical about the idea of costly pledges to wage wars in the name of protecting people from inhumanity.

Barack Obama's administration, with its internationalist instincts, is clearly a lot more comfortable with notions like R2P. The President, during the Group of Eight summit in Italy in July, made some supportive noises; and his UN ambassador, Susan Rice, made a more impassioned speech in defence of R2P last month, soon after visiting Rwanda.

But if R2P is no Western plot, it may not be the perfect way to ward off dreadful acts of mass murder either. Perhaps its greatest drawback is also one of its touted merits: that it is so carefully crafted to conform with the current UN charter, which makes the Security Council the most important arbiter of war and peace.

All attempts to reform the membership of the council, which gives America, Russia, China, France and Britain the privilege of permanent seats and vetoes, have failed. So critics of R2P may well use the argument that five victors of the second world war should not have the crucial say as to when coercion may be used.

An angry, inconclusive General Assembly debate will not doom R2P. But it risks reinforcing the rift between an assembly that is perceived as representing poor, small and weak countries, and a council on which powerful, or once-powerful, countries have a disproportionate say.

And that would be seen in many quarters as sad and ironic, because, in the words of one R2P supporter, it is the "South that needs R2P the most."

Link:

[http://www.economist.com/world/international/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story\\_id=14087788](http://www.economist.com/world/international/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=14087788)

#### 4. Press conference on informal interactive dialogue on responsibility to protect

United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)

22 July 2009

The responsibility to protect was focused on non-indifference and making it everyone's responsibility to ensure that no one would ever again have to look back with the mixture of emotions that had greeted the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur, asking, "How did we let this happen?", Gareth Evans, Co-Chair of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, said at a Headquarters press conference today.

Noting that consensus had been elusive on several items at the 2005 World Summit, Mr. Evans said there had been a very widely-shared sense that "for God's sake, at least we can get this one right". The mood had shifted to the extent that Member States no longer felt comfortable opposing that consensus, he added.

Joining Mr. Evans, a former Foreign Minister of Australia and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group, were Jacqueline Murekatete, a human rights activist and survivor of the Rwanda genocide; and Thelma Ekiyor, Executive Director of the West Africa Civil Society Institute. (...)

By the end of the 1990s, Mr. Evans explained, more people were looking back at past atrocities with a mixture of incomprehension, anger and shame while asking how to avoid that in future. The result of that examination was an extraordinary shift in international norms. People were prepared to sign up to the notion that the wider international community had a responsibility in a "purely internal situation", including in the toughest possible way, if circumstances demanded it. "There's a legion of sceptics out there, but that's what this debate is all about," he added, referring to the General Assembly's special session on the responsibility to protect, opening



tomorrow.

In that vein, the debate was about looking forward and not backwards, he said, adding that the Secretary-General's report was an excellent foundation (document A/63/677). The debate was not about recasting or renegotiating the 2005 consensus, but about building on it and exploring ways to put the responsibility to protect into practice. It was important this week to re-articulate some of the fundamentals about the concept.(...)

He said this week's debate was an opportunity to ensure that the conceptual misunderstandings about the scope and limit of the concept were swept away, once and for all, and to clarify which were and which were not responsibility to protect cases; to explore in detail the range of policy options available to States and international organizations, and the institutional and resource challenges; and to build the foundations for political will, which was the ultimate ingredient. In the end, the responsibility to protect was not about competing national interests and ideologies, but about common humanity, about the obligation not to stand by as fellow human beings suffered unthinkable horrors.

"As a victim and a survivor of the '94 genocide, I believe very strongly in R2P," said Ms. Murekatete. Everyone was well aware of the international community's past and present failures to prevent those crimes which R2P sought to address, she added, describing her experience of six years ago. When the genocide had begun, the people had been betrayed on many levels: by their own Government, which had encouraged neighbours to burn neighbours' homes and pick up machetes and other murderous instruments; and by the international community, which had been well aware of the nature of the crimes being committed from April to July 1994. Because of that "virtual abandonment", more than a million people had been murdered.

She said she had been nine years old when the genocide had began. Forced to flee her home, she had heard the calls of her own Government for her family's extermination and watched men, women and children hacked to death in an environment where, for 100 days, women were raped and mutilated en masse, as infants and toddlers were smashed alive against brick walls and thrown into latrines — simply because of their ethnicity. During 100 days of killing, Rwandans had hoped that if their own Government did not come to its senses, surely the international community would. But that hope had been dashed because, at the end of the day, the international community had remained largely indifferent and inactive.

Ms. Ekiyor said that prior to the 2005 World Summit, African Governments had already given thought to addressing such atrocities. The African Union constitutive act of 2000 had been a significant shift from its previous adherence to non-interference to what the act called "non-indifference" in the face of mass atrocities. That trend had permeated thinking throughout the continent, and at a recent Great Lakes conference, a protocol on non-aggression had used R2P language and talked about setting sovereignty aside in situations of genocide. In January

2008, the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had adopted a conflict-prevention framework, which "used R2P lingo verbatim".

R2P was about Member States "supra-nationally" intervening in the affairs of other States in the face of mass atrocities, she said, adding that African Governments had shown a willingness to deploy troops when needed. Liberia was a case in point. Africans wanted to "put boots on the ground" in other African States, if needed, to prevent mass killings. The ECOWAS Council of the Wise had intervened in several West African situations, and the hope was now for the African Union's Panel of the Wise similarly to enable continent-wide intervention. However, the concept of responsibility to protect was often characterized as a Western norm, to be used in the case of weaker States. That idea must be refocused. Everything else had been globalized; now it was time to "globalize" the responsibility to protect. It was up to world leaders to promote non-indifference.(...)

Responding to questions aimed at further fleshing out the concept, Mr. Evans said many policy options were available other than "sending in the Marines", and the Secretary-General's report very clearly spelled them out. For example, there was economic, policy and security support. Even in cases where there was no enthusiastic commitment by the State in question, and when it became a question of exerting pressure on it, there were still policy options. (...)