

NGOs send open Letter to Governments in advance of General Assembly debate

On July 20th, 42 NGOs sent the [attached letter](#) calling for governments to be aware of the Secretary General's report, understand civil society's support for the norm, and be active and vocal during the debate.

As a follow-up to Paragraph 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document, where Members stressed “the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications...”, **the United Nations General Assembly will hold a debate on the Responsibility to Protect on 23 July 2009.** The Secretary General will present his report on July 21 to the General Assembly and the formal plenary debate will start on July 23. On July 23, we understand that a morning panel of experts will take place prior to government statements. The debate will likely run into July 24.

The debate comes in the wake of Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon 12 January 2009 report entitled [Implementing the Responsibility to Protect](#) . The report clarifies how to understand RtoP and outlines measures and actors involved in rendering the norm operational. Based on paragraph 138-139 of the World Summit, the Secretary-General suggested a ‘three-pillar approach’ namely 1) the protection responsibilities of the state, 2) international assistance and capacity building, and 3) timely and decisive response to prevent and halt genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Secretary-General recommended that the General Assembly meet to consider, based on this report, how Member States will take the 2005 World Summit commitment forward.

See the letter in [French](#) , [Spanish](#) and [German](#) .