

Ban supports RtoP at Geneva Convention anniversary

1. Honouring Geneva Conventions, Secretary-General Says Debate 'No Longer between Peace and Justice but between Peace and What Kind of Justice'

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The following are Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the ministerial working session hosted by the Government of Switzerland in New York on 26 September 2009 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. □□□□

(...) "We continue to face grave challenges in ensuring respect for this body of law," Mr. Ban told a ministerial event, hosted by the Swiss Government, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Conventions.

The Secretary-General noted that throughout the world, ordinary men, women and children are being killed, maimed, raped, starved, imprisoned and forced from their homes. At times over the years, such acts have been committed on a massive scale, with "chilling efficiency and intent. (...)

"Victims suffer, not because of gaps in the law, but because international humanitarian law is not respected or enforced," he said. Mr. Ban pointed out that primary responsibility for implementing international humanitarian law lies with the parties to conflict, but added that all States have an important role to play. (...)

Mr. Ban highlighted in particular the Assembly's recent adoption, by consensus, of its first resolution on the **responsibility to protect** - a major advance as the international community seeks to strengthen its efforts to protect the world's peoples from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. (...)

"Our challenge, as ever," he added, "is to translate those principles into real-time protection."

Read Ban Ki-moon's full remarks at <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/857F5A937A9F5F808525763F005C2A9C>.