

ICRtoP and GCR2P Host Panel Discussion on July GA Debate

RtoP Listserv

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Reflections on the UN General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect

On 26 October, the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P) hosted a panel discussion on the 23-28 July 2009 General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect.

Having followed closely the three-day discussions at the UN, the ICRtoP and GCR2P organized this event to share the outcomes of the debate with Member States, UN departments and civil society groups. The panelists included the following:

- H.E. Gert Rosenthal, the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN
- Ms. Thelma Ekiyor, Executive Director of West Africa Civil Society Institute and Chair of the ICRtoP
- Dr. Monica Serrano, Executive Director of the GCR2P
- Mr. Juan Mendez, former UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide was the discussant at the event.

The panelists shared their assessments on areas of consensus and concerns that emerged from the debate, the resolution on RtoP as an outcome of the debate, and ideas for next steps in implementing the RtoP at international, national, and regional levels. **A positive and constructive debate**

Dr. Monica Serrano

made clear that the efforts of a few States and of the President of the General Assembly to reopen negotiations about the value of the norm and to discuss related issues such as UN Reform, had failed. She explained how the debate showed a clear support for norm and consensus for taking it forward. Positive statements from both Northern and Southern States also dispelled the myth that RtoP was a principle driven by the North. This forward-looking debate successfully identified issues and concrete proposals that should be further discussed and implemented in order to make R2P a reality.

Ambassador Rosenthal

also reflected on the positive attitude of States regarding their 2005 commitment on RtoP, the

Secretary-General's report, and the need for the GA to continue its consideration of RtoP. He spoke in depth about the Resolution on RtoP which followed the debate, and why Argentina had led the effort of bringing it forward. The resolution not only provided a basis for future debates on RtoP but also expressed that a small minority of states should not be able to impose its view on the rest of the international community.

Ms. Thelma Ekiyor

looked at the debate from the point of view of civil society. She identified that while the debate showed that there was still a need for further clarification on the norm, it was a start to the conversation. She explained that there was an encouraging coalition of supporters, from governments to civil society, who endorsed the norm and believed that now is the time to continue the discussion and implement RtoP at the international, regional and national levels.

Mr. Juan Mendez

said that the norm is close to being crystallized. He identified key immediate challenges including how to mainstream RtoP within the UN Secretariat and to develop early-warning capability with a focus on preventing mass atrocities. These, he argued, would contribute to shaping political will, one of the most important challenges in preventing and responding to these crimes.

Please read the [full account](#) of each presentation.

[Member States showed that they were conscientiously considering the proposals in the Secretariat](#)
[here](#)