The Responsibility to Protect – A Way Forward Omar Halim Centre for Non-Traditional
Security Studies   July 2010   Thi
s Insight investigates the origins and evolution of international intervention from the foundation
of the United Nations in 1945 up to and beyond the inclusion of the
Responsibility to Protect
in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. It focuses on the role of United Nations
peacekeeping forces and the internal and external bids and influences on their establishment.
This Insight argues that the international community cannot stand by while mass atrocities occur
but needs to recognise the reasons behind the reluctance to endorse the
Responsibility to Protect
in developing states. It evaluates under what conditions the
Responsibility to Protect
is able to operate and suggests ways forward (…)

A Way Forward

Under the present circumstances, there is no doubt that our globalised world cannot watch idly
as events in Somalia; Darfur, Sudan; Myanmar or Zimbabwe unfold. It should be noted that
there is a significant difference between Somalia on the one hand, and Myanmar, Zimbabwe,
and perhaps Sudan on the other. In Somalia, there is no functioning government that is capable
of controlling the whole country. The country is essentially carved into areas that are each
controlled by various clans and sub-clans. The difference these days, compared to two decades
ago, is the emergence of Islamist groups such as Al Shahab. Therefore, there is no institution in
Somalia that can exercise authority throughout the whole country and is capable of protecting
the whole population. Somalia is a failed state.

In Myanmar and Zimbabwe, on the other hand, the government is capable of exercising
physical control over the whole country. The government is however antagonistic to certain
groups within their own populations, for various reasons. In this case, the government is
capable of protecting the sovereignty of the nation state vis-à-vis outsiders, yet there could be a
significant number of its people who suffer or are made to suffer. The case of Darfur in Sudan is
probably somewhere in between these two cases, where the government seems to be in control
of significant amounts of its territory, but either undertakes or allows ethnic cleansing and
crimes against humanity to take place in its Darfur region (…)

Click
 here
to read full issue