

**Ban urges implementation of ‘responsibility to protect’ – by force if needed**

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Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said today the United Nations must perform its duty to protect peoples from man-made or natural calamities more effectively, stressing that when sovereign States fail in the task the international community must step in, with force if needed.

“The founders of the United Nations understood that sovereignty confers responsibility, a responsibility to ensure protection of human beings from want, from war, and from repression,” he declared in the Cyril Foster lecture at Oxford University, as prepared for delivery. “When that responsibility is not discharged, the international community is morally obliged to consider its duty to act in the service of human protection.” (...)

(...) Turning to prevention, he noted that in 2010 alone, the UN supported 34 different mediation, facilitation and dialogue efforts, including easing the crisis in Kyrgyzstan and keeping the transition to democracy on track in Guinea. On the third issue – an end to impunity – Mr. Ban cited the UN courts trying perpetrators for gross human rights violations in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, and stressed that “it is essential that we stand firm in support” of the tribunal set up to try suspects in the 2005 murders of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others.(...)

(...)“We must ask ourselves: Have our strategies and our operational practice on the ground kept pace with the ever-increasing demand for human protection?” Mr. Ban said in conclusion. “We must concede that our words are ahead of our deeds. But I am convinced this is a challenge we can meet. Momentum is on our side.

“What is required is shared responsibility between Member States and the leadership of the UN. Together, we can answer the cry of that child at the beginning of my lecture, somewhere caught in the crossfire and wondering: Can the world hear my call? Who will help me and my family?”

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