

Fourth Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians: 20 November 2007 The fourth debate on the protection of civilians took place on 20 November 2007. RtoP was one of its central themes, as touched on by Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon in his opening remarks to the Security Council. The Secretary-General started the debate by saying that UN member states need to move the RtoP concept from word to deed. He also called for a working group on the protection of civilians in conflict, the goal of which is to make the consideration of protection of civilians more systematic and timely, by giving members a special forum for in depth examination and discussion of protection issues facing the international community. The Secretary-General hopes this will lead to more decisive action by the UNSC and which will lead to practical improvements on the ground.

After that opening statement, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes presented the report of the Secretary-General, which highlighted the problems that still remain for the protection of civilians. Almost every member of the UNSC made a statement mentioning RtoP, and a large portion of non-SC members also referenced RtoP in their statements. Most of these statements were positive, echoing the Secretary-General's ideas, although some states cautioned that the RtoP still needed to be discussed, in the capacity of the UNGA, however, and not the UNSC. Member states also embraced the idea of a new working group on the protection of civilians, and vowed their commitment to the establishment of such a group.

For excerpted government statements referencing RtoP at the fourth Open Debate [click here](#)

For the full Security Council transcript of the fourth Open Debate see here: [morning](#) or [afternoon resumption](#)

For further analysis of the debate, visit the

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