

Eighth Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians: 11 November 2009 The Eighth Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians was held on 11 November 2009. Reiterating its commitment to prevent the victimization of civilians in armed conflict and putting an end to the continued violence against civilians, the Security Council unanimously adopted

[Resolution 1894](#)

, which makes specific reference to RtoP and paragraph 138-139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

RtoP principles were significantly featured during the debate by fourteen States. In fact, Italy called RtoP a “cardinal achievement of the UN” while Ireland called it “an important vehicle” for advancing the Protection of Civilians agenda. Of the fifty-six States who participated in the debate, many mentioned the primary responsibility of each State to protect populations from mass atrocities, and the role of the international community to assist States in fulfilling their protection obligations. Some States, mainly European, also welcomed the

[July 2009 GA debate](#)

on RtoP and the consequent GA

[Resolution](#)

on RtoP. Only Sudan and Sri Lanka, while recognizing the responsibilities of each State towards the protection of populations, called on the international community to respect the principle of sovereignty.

Echoing the July GA debate on implementing RtoP, the POC debate discussed three important themes related to the norm, namely a focus on the prevention of mass atrocities and on the need to strengthen UN early warning mechanisms. A majority of States mentioned the need to fight impunity by addressing violations of international humanitarian law and holding individuals accountable for mass atrocities, through national mechanisms or international ones such as the ICC. States called on the Security Council to act without selectivity to protect civilians from mass atrocities, emphasizing on the context of the crisis in Gaza.

Other themes in the debate included the need to provide peacekeeping operations with more effective protection mandates, training and resources and the need to obtain access and security for humanitarian groups in nations experiencing armed conflict, as expressed in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/277). View the official transcripts from the

[morning](#)

and

[afternoon](#)

sessions of the debate, and the

excerpted statements

of Member States on RtoP.