

Georgia-Russia Crisis and RtoP (August 2008) References to RtoP and humanitarian intervention were expressed in the context of the August 2008 Russian – Georgia crisis, raising concern as to whether the [RtoP norm as codified in the World Summit Outcome Document](#) was applicable to Georgia, and whether the degree of threat to Russians in Georgia represented actual or imminent mass atrocities to the scale pertinent to the RtoP norm.

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov's invoked the Responsibility to Protect as one of the justifications for Russia's military intervention to protect Russian citizens in South Ossetia. In addition, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin described Georgia's actions against populations in South Ossetia as "genocide".

Russia's invocation of RtoP was misapplied because Russia has a responsibility to protect its populations within its own borders. In cases of mass atrocities outside its borders, the responsibility to protect falls upon the international community, strictly as a collective response through the United Nations. It is unclear whether the degree of threat to Russians in Georgia represented actual or imminent mass atrocities to the scale pertinent to the R2P norm and also whether military force was the appropriate response.

For more analysis of the misapplication of R2P in the Russia-Georgia crisis, please refer to the analysis produced by the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect entitled

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[e Georgia-Russia Crisis and the Responsibility to Protect: Background Note](#)

For more analysis of articles, statements and reports from civil society on the Russia-Georgia crisis and RtoP, please see our

[5 September 2008 News Update](#)

and our

[20 August 2008 News Update](#)