

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Remarks to Denver's Korbel School Annual Dinner

UN news 24 August 2011 (...) In 2005, world leaders agreed to step up global efforts against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, or their incitement.

We call it the **responsibility to protect**.

Over the past year, the

responsibility to protect

has become an operational reality. Both the Security Council and the Human Rights Council have invoked the principle in recent months.

When the leader of Côte d'Ivoire refused to leave after he lost the presidential election, the United Nations stood firm for democracy. The justly elected leader was finally inaugurated in May.

In Sudan, we acted decisively to keep the peace – first in Darfur, where we deployed peacekeepers early in my first term, and more recently in helping North and South Sudan to amicably separate. In the new capital of Juba, last month, I was proud to witness the new country of South Sudan peacefully mark its first day of independence.

(...)

We do not yet know how the international effort in Libya will end. Certainly, we recognize the potential dangers and enormous challenges ahead.

But we do know -- and we have all seen – that the people of Libya have shown tremendous courage and determination to seek a free and democratic future.

Our responsibility, as an international community, is to help them realize those aspirations.

That is why, for the past several months, the United Nations has been working intensively to ensure that we can do our part for post-conflict assistance. We stand ready to provide assistance in all key areas, including economic recovery, elections, human rights, transitional justice and the drafting of a new constitution.

For my part, I have been in touch over the past few days with the leader of the National Transitional Council. He assured me that extreme care would be taken to protect people and maintain law and order. I have also talked to other main actors, including the League of Arab States, the African Union and the European Union.

The goal is clear: no further bloodshed; no retribution; and an orderly transition – one responds

to the Libyan people's long-held hopes for freedom and opportunity.

The same yearnings are on display throughout Syria.

I have repeatedly urged President Assad to end the excessive and lethal use of force by his security forces against the Syrian people, and to engage in meaningful reforms. Yet while he pledged to do so, he has not upheld that commitment. The violent repression against civilians, including mass arrests, continues.

At my urging, a United Nations team is on the ground as we speak with the aim of better appreciating the needs of the population most affected by the violence. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has filed a deeply disturbing report on the widespread and systematic violations of human rights since March, and has recommended that the Security Council refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

The international community must respond to the legitimate aspirations of the people for change. We must do our part to protect people threatened with extreme violence for exercising basic rights.

(...)

See
[full speech](#)