



GA3: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

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Issue: Securing the rightful use of Responsibility to Protect

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I. Introduction

Humanity has seen countless mass atrocities in its past, including horrendous crimes such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity that the international community has vowed to prevent. Even the formation of the United Nations (UN) was for this purpose: to sustain peace and ensure that no such atrocities ever happen again. Over the years there have been many successes and failures of the international community to fulfill its promise and initially, its promise was not as broad-reaching. However, as the world evolved and became more interdependent, the UN evolved with it. The responsibility to protect (R2P) which brought on the idea of “sovereignty as a responsibility” is a perfect example of this evolution.

In a speech in 1948 urging the passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt said: *“The realization that the flagrant violation of human rights by Nazi and Fascist countries sowed the seeds of the last world war has supplied the impetus for the work which brings us to the moment of achievement here today. . .”* (United Nations). Having witnessed the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime the United Nations General Assembly vowed to never again have such horrific events happen. However, in the 1990s, the international community once again failed to adequately protect innocent civilians in the Rwandan Genocide and the Srebrenica Massacre. These atrocities served as a wake-up call for the international community who realized that they had come short of their ideals. In response to that and an increasingly interdependent world, the responsibility to protect doctrine was adopted by nations around the world in 2005. This meant that if a state did not protect its own citizens, other nations of the world had a responsibility to protect them.

Since its adoption, the concept of sovereignty, interstate and intrastate relations, and the understanding of what it means to be a state have completely changed. Thus, not only did the foreign affairs of sovereign nations change, the international community's expectation of how a state must treat its own citizens also completely evolved. Currently, the responsibility to protect is a key concept within the United Nations and is encoded into international law. However, when and where the doctrine must be implemented still remains a highly debated issue. Additionally, since its creation, there have been both successful and unsuccessful case studies all around the world. It is the responsibility of the international community to



decide what constitutes a rightful use of the responsibility to protect and what is an infringement of the sovereignty of member states, in order to fulfill the aims of the UN and sustain international peace.

Particularly for the case of the Americas, there have been many actors such as the United States and Canada who have been particularly relevant in this issue. There is also a question as to what sorts of measures require nations to adopt the responsibility to protect doctrine. The increasing instability and rampant corruption in Central and Latin America could certainly prompt the doctrine to be used. Yet, on the other hand, the question remains of whether this would be an infringement on state sovereignty. Keeping this issue within the global agenda and ensuring that there is rightful use of the doctrine is essential to building resilience in times of uncertainty.

II. Involved Countries and Organizations

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS)

The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) is an ad hoc commission of participants set up by the Government of Canada to settle debates arising from the conflict between the concepts of sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. In 1999, prior to the commission's formation, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan released his annual report to the UN General Assembly that challenged the Member States to “find common ground in upholding the principles of the Charter and acting in defense of common humanity” (United Nations). Kofi Annan also brought up the vital question: “if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica, to the gross and systematic violation of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” (United Nations). The work of the ICISS aimed to directly answer the concerns of the international community and come up with a novel perspective on global affairs.

In 2001, one year after the commission's formation, the ICISS released a report entitled the “Responsibility to Protect”. The report defined the responsibility to protect and in so doing redefined the concept of sovereignty. While in the Westphalian understanding of sovereignty no other sovereign nation could interfere with a state's internal affairs, the adoption of the responsibility to protect meant states were able to intervene in situations where the wellbeing of the citizens of host countries was greatly disregarded. This meant that if a state did not protect its own citizens, foreign actors could rightly intervene. It took several years for the concept to be widely adopted in the UN; however, the work of the ICISS is still essential to understand this issue. It is also important to mention that “there are differences between the ICISS and World Summit versions of R2P, while there is consensus between states in terms of protecting ‘populations



from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” (Glover) Thus, the R2P defined in the ICISS report should not always be taken verbatim as international law itself.

While the report has been incredibly important in shaping international relations, there is some criticism of it, particularly when it comes to the use of military intervention. As mentioned in the report, for some members of the ICISS the principles for military intervention are too broad, and, according to others, it is too narrow. This means that while creating the report there was not absolute consensus on the rightful use of military intervention by its members which means that even though the report does include important principles for military intervention, within the committee and across the globe this is still a widely debated topic, making it difficult to adopt.

While the role of the ICISS in this issue is vital, It is important to mention that after launching the report on the Responsibility to Protect, the ICISS finished its mandate and no longer serves as an ad hoc commission. Thus, it cannot be referred to directly in any call to action.

Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the main organ of the UN that has the authority to enforce coercive action such as military intervention or sanctions. As the UNSC is the only organ that can “force” Member States to take certain actions, the Council is seen as responsible for enacting the responsibility to protect doctrine. It is important to point out that five countries in the UNSC have veto power. These countries, the United States, China, Russia, France, and the UK are known as the Permanent 5 (P5) and can oppose any resolution they choose to. Even if the rest of the Council votes in favor of a resolution, even one member of the P5 using their veto power is enough for the resolution as a whole to fail.

Many criticize the way the Security Council functions by saying that it gives an unproportionate amount of power to only five countries. It also undermines the responsibility to protect doctrine at times since P5 countries can oppose certain actions if it will be politically unfavorable for them.

For example, some argue that the inaction of the UNSC is the reason why the Syrian Civil War has lasted so long. Zeid Ra’ad al-Husseini, the human rights’ chief of the United Nations said that “The Security Council has not lived up to the sacrifice of these heroes throughout Syria. It has not taken decisive action to defend human rights and prevent further loss of life” (Campos). The chief also criticized the use of veto powers in the council to shield “perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria and elsewhere” from justice(Campos.) Some point in particular to the The Russian Federation who vetoed 16 resolutions including resolution [S/2018/321](#) and [S/2017/884](#) and China who vetoed 8. The other P5 members have not used their veto power on this issue, but it could be argued that “the transfer of an estimated \$1 billion in arms, ammunition, and training to Syrian rebel groups in hopes of influencing a



negotiated end to the war” (Dick) by the US also may have been an example of how P5 members have not used the responsibility to protect doctrine appropriately. Additionally, “Human Rights Watch found that the Syrian government was responsible for the majority of 85 confirmed chemical attacks” in Syria, meaning that while it has failed to meet its end of the responsibility to protect doctrine, Bashar al-Assad still remains in power. (Charbonneau) Thus, the UNSC may be seen as responsible for not taking righteous action in accordance with the R2P. This case shows how the responsibility to prevent, the responsibility to react, and the responsibility to rebuild have not been used appropriately by the UNSC (see The Main Pillars of the Responsibility to Protect).

The UNSC has a key role in this issue. As can be seen above it is criticized by many on both fundamental and practical levels. However, as stated by the ICISS report, it must be noted that “there is no better or more appropriate body than the United Nations Security Council to authorize military intervention for human protection purposes. The task is not to find alternatives to the Security Council as a source of authority, but to make the Security Council work better than it has” (G. J. Evans et al). Thus, it is important for delegates to think about the role of the UNSC and how their solution ideas will relate to this role.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

“The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where allowed, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression” (International Criminal Court). Thus, the role of the ICC in this issue is incredibly important, particularly with regard to accountability. Even if preventative actions do not work out, it is the responsibility of the international community to keep those who do commit crimes against humanity accountable. This accountability sends a message that these actions will not be permitted and thus means that the probability of them happening will be lowered.

The ICC is criticized for being too slow in prosecuting war criminals and for not keeping all criminals accountable. Additionally, since countries like Myanmar, India or China have not signed the Rome Statute, the ICC’s powers are limited since, unless a state is a party to, and has signed the Rome Statute, the ICC has no jurisdiction to prosecute those who commit crimes against humanity in that region. Therefore, the court’s abilities can be questioned and there is a need for further action to be taken to make it much more effective.



Nicaragua

Currently, Nicaragua is facing a humanitarian crisis. More than 100,000 Nicaraguans have been forced to flee their country since 2018 due to the ongoing repression by the government forces (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The UNHCR reports that violence by the government began following protests against the government on social security policies. The protests were met by backlash from the government which resulted in 30 deaths. The protests over political and social issues have continued over the years which caused the government to implement even harsher restrictions. The Covid 19 pandemic has also worsened the situation. Both the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and The Organization of American States (OAS) have continuously raised concern about the “high degree of repression” in the country.

Additionally, a report by the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts has also affirmed that the Nicaraguan government has in fact committed crimes against humanity. It is also clear that in certain respects Nicaragua has failed to achieve the first pillar of the responsibility to protect which encompasses the responsibility of a state to protect its own citizens. It is up to the international community to determine what should be done in Nicaragua and whether or not the responsibility to protect doctrine should be invoked.

Venezuela

Another country for concern in the Americas is Venezuela. Since 2014, Venezuelan security and intelligence forces have been accused of widespread torture, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances in an attempt to silence political rivals (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect). The democratic institutions within Venezuela are under attack and the economy has completely plummeted. Crime in the streets and crime perpetrated by the government has increased drastically. While many Venezuelans want President Nicolas Maduro to step down from office, the President is holding onto power. There is also fierce opposition to any protesters in the country, resulting in widespread displacement.

The international community has taken action against the Venezuelan government on several fronts. Firstly, many states have enforced sanctions that target the government specifically. Also, certain American nations have sent a request to the ICC to investigate alleged war crimes within the state. Despite such action, the government fails to adhere to the first pillar of the responsibility to protect. Therefore, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect proclaims that states need to “actively support calls for renewed dialogue between the government and opposition and lift all measures that limit the population’s access to basic goods and services”. Venezuela should work together with Colombia (who has taken in thousands of



Venezuelan refugees) to protect marginalized populations, and legal action should be taken under international humanitarian law in order to ensure the rightful use of the responsibility to protect doctrine.

III. Focused Overview of the Issue

To understand the significance of the responsibility to protect doctrine it is vital to have an understanding of what the concept of sovereignty and statehood meant prior to its adoption. It is believed that modern international politics began with The Peace of Westphalia which was a document signed following the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648. With the document, statehood was defined and it was based on two principles:

- States enjoy sovereign jurisdiction, in the sense that they have independent control over what happens within their territory (all other institutions and groups, spiritual and temporal, are therefore subordinate to the state).
- Relations between and among states are structured by the acceptance of the sovereign independence of all states (thus implying that states are legally equal) (Heywood).

This understanding of statehood meant that states that had authority could do whatever they wanted within their own states' borders. Therefore, the state can treat their own citizens and institutions as they wish and other states can not interfere in their domestic affairs.

Even though it was created hundreds of years ago, the Westphalian understanding of sovereignty prevailed for a really long time. Its principles are inscribed in the United Nations Charter and form the backbone of the organization. Article 2.1 of the charter states: *"The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members"* (United Nations). Thus, as sovereign nations, all members are equals simply because they have authority. Additionally, article 2.7 of the Charter states *"Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter"* the principle of non-intervention was adopted. This enforced Westphalian sovereignty by once again declaring that states had the right to exercise exclusive and total jurisdiction within their territorial borders. As evidence, the function of the General Assembly can be put forth. In the General Assembly, the sovereign rights of member states prevent any coercive actions from being taken. Thus, the suggestions made by members of the Assembly remain as mere suggestions due to the norm of non-intervention and the Westphalian understanding of sovereignty.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, globalization and universal understandings of human rights began to raise questions about what sovereignty should and does mean. In 1999, the then



Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan addressed these concerns in his letter to the General Assembly. Mr. Annan's words were inevitably influenced by the tragic events that took place in the 1990s: firstly with the Rwandan Genocide and secondly with the Srebrenica Massacre. In both of these instances, the international community failed to come to the aid of innocent civilians who were being massacred. According to BBC News, during the Rwandan Genocide, approximately 800000 people belonging to the Tutsi minority were slaughtered. Even though the UN Security Council had set up The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) its efforts were delayed and inadequate. The inaction of the international community led to the death of thousands. The Srebrenica massacre, also known as the Bosnian genocide, was another instance where the international community had knowledge of war crimes but did not intervene adequately. This resulted in around 8000 young Muslim men being slaughtered by the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska (VRS). While following both these instances there were courts held to keep those who committed war crimes accountable, it was still seen as a huge failure of the international community to not have been able to prevent such crimes.

1. Creation of the "Responsibility to Protect"

During that time, with the leadership of the UN, members of the international community began to reassess their role in the global arena. In 2001, The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) published a report that set up the "responsibility to protect" doctrine. It was later unanimously accepted at the UN World Summit in 2005. Article 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document stated that *"The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."* This article caused the concept of "external sovereignty" to change as now the international community had a *responsibility* to protect other states' citizens.

Article 138 of the document also changed the understanding of internal sovereignty (the jurisdiction states have on their own citizens) drastically, by stating that *"Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."*

2. The Main Pillars of the Responsibility to Protect

The doctrine can be summed up with these three pillars:

1. Pillar One: Every state has the Responsibility to Protect its populations from four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.
2. Pillar Two: The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility.



3. Pillar Three: If a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect).

These three pillars essentially mean that each state firstly has a responsibility to protect its own citizens. If this need is not met, then the international community has a responsibility to try to persuade and help the state to adhere. Finally, if they do not obey, the international community has a responsibility to intervene. This position is very different from the Westphalian point of view. In Westphalian sovereignty, no other state can intervene in the domestic affairs of a given state no matter how they treat their own citizens. It is believed that the state has the total and ultimate authority over its citizens. Yet, with the responsibility to protect, states are firstly meant to protect their citizens and if they do not fulfill their duties their legitimacy may be challenged by foreign powers.

Additionally there are three elements of the responsibility to protect. The prevention aspect of the R2P is the most important aspect of it. Whereas the responsibility to react, particularly with military intervention must be used in extreme cases:

1. The responsibility to prevent: to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk.
2. The responsibility to react: to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention.
3. The responsibility to rebuild: to provide, particularly after a military intervention, full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert (G. Evans et al.)

3. The Principles for Military Intervention within the Responsibility to Protect

It is important to understand that under the R2P doctrine Military intervention is mandated under certain exceptional circumstances. For military Intervention to be righteous the “just cause threshold should be met” meaning that there must be serious violation of human rights including large scale loss of life or large scale “ethnic cleansing” for just military intervention to take place. Some criticize “the just cause threshold” since “large scale” is not defined in the clause, making it difficult to implement.

Additionally, these precautionary principles must be met:



A. Right intention: The primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to stop or lessen human suffering. For this understanding to be met, multilateral operations that are supported by locals are encouraged.

B. Last resort: Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored. Additionally, there must be a reason to believe that any other action would not be adequate.

C. Proportional means: The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the protection of citizens.

D. Reasonable prospects: There must be a reasonable chance of success in stopping or lessening the suffering which has justified the intervention. Additionally, the consequences of action should not be worse than the consequences of not taking action. (G. J. Evans et al.)

As mentioned previously, the sole authority of the adoption of the R2P doctrine, particularly when it comes to military intervention, is given to the UNSC. Thus, this authority should always be respected.

Therefore, these principles should all be met for the Responsibility to Protect doctrine to justify military intervention. However, as can be easily deduced some of these principles can be misinterpreted or they can be exploited which is where the issues surrounding this topic occur.

4. The Successes of the Responsibility to Protect

Following its creation, the responsibility to protect has been invoked many times. Definitively separating all of these cases into successes and failures is quite difficult since what constitutes success is hard to determine. However, it is important to try to understand the issues of the past to be able to look at a better future and to secure the rightful use of this doctrine.

One success story of the responsibility to protect is the case of the 2007 Kenyan election. Following the elections, violence was inflicted upon a group of people based on ethnic and political differences. The turmoil caused the killing of thousands of Kenyans yet it is believed that the actions of the international community prevented further violence. A 41 day, African Union (AU)-led mediation process that was supported by the UN was instigated immediately after the violence took place. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General, also helped mediate a lot of the tension in the region. In the end, the perpetrators of the crime were tried in the International Criminal Court and two of them were found guilty of crimes against humanity. This was the first instance where the international community took collective action by invoking



the responsibility to protect doctrine. It is believed that a bigger massacre was prevented as a result of global cooperation.

5. The Failures of the Responsibility to Protect

a. The Inaction Argument

On the other hand, the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in Myanmar is seen as a failure of the international community to prevent crimes against humanity. While it is unknown how many Rohingya Muslims died at the hands of the Myanmar Army, according to the 2018 address of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the UN General Assembly 1,100,000 people have been forced to leave their homes because of the violence. (“General Assembly Seventy-Third Session”) There are countless reports of shootings, rapes, and burnings incited by the Myanmar government. Timely and decisive action was not taken in this instance. The only formal response by the UN Security Council (UNSC) to the genocide against the Rohingya was the adoption of a Presidential Statement on 6 November 2017 that stressed the “primary responsibility of the Myanmar government to protect its population” (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect). Myanmar was taken to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by the Gambia. ICC proceedings have also begun against the perpetrators of the crimes however once again, decisive and coercive action has not been taken by any of the courts of the UN in general in this case. Thus, the situation in Myanmar is seen largely as a failure to adhere to the responsibility to protect doctrine due to inaction by the international community.

b. The Exploitation Argument

Another failure of the R2P can be seen with the exploitation of the doctrine. Some say that certain states may intervene in another state’s internal affairs for their own political gains while using the R2P doctrine as justification. One example that critics often give is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) intervention in Libya. Whether the intervention was rightful under the R2P doctrine is widely debated and does not have a single answer. From the American perspective all peaceful

In 2011, following uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, in what is now referred to as the Arab Spring, there were also protests that occurred in Libya. Within one week of protests, Libyan President Gaddafi swore to hunt those who protested his rule ‘inch by inch, room by room. Home by home, alleyway by alleyway, person by person’ (Green) Following this, the



UN asked the international community to invoke the R2P doctrine and intervene in the region. With the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, a military intervention took place that overthrew the Gaddafi regime.

“Scholars such as Pattison state that the actions of the Gaddafi government met the International Commission on Intervention and State sovereignty test, thereby justifying a NATO intervention”(Green). In his book “A Promised Land” former US President Barack Obama also explained how he tried to negotiate with Gaddafi, but he did not back off. Thus, under the ‘responsibility to help to protect populations’ the NATO led operation had to take place. While it does seem that to some extent the military intervention in Libya was justified “it is also important to consider the legitimacy of human rights abuse claims that NATO had initially justified the intervention upon” (Green). Many scholars point to the fact that the reports of human rights abuses were seen to be mostly exaggerated and that even though Gaddafi’s position on the protests were made clear by his words, he may not have committed the actions he had mentioned. The intervention of the US may have had some ulterior motive, such as using the resources in Libya for their own benefit.

Thus, the situation in Libya may have been an example of how member states can exploit the R2P doctrine for their own good. Once again while there is no consensus on whether or not this was actually the case, the possibility that the R2P can be exploited by states should also be considered by delegates.

6. The Situation in the Americas

Central and South America have seen a huge change in its political landscape from the 1980s and onward. Once a war-ridden area is now mostly viewed as a “zone of peace” by diplomats (Adams). The authoritarian regimes of the past have mostly been replaced with democracies. In Argentina, Chile and Colombia there are important efforts to create legal systems that embody the message of human rights and thus, implement the responsibility to protect. These efforts are incredibly valuable in establishing the first pillar of the responsibility to protect by building resilient societies centered around the value of human rights.

However, alongside progress, there are still certain concerns about the situation in the Americas. For instance, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro mentioned that he was in favor of the use of torture of the past dictatorship regime(Greenwald.) Currently, there is no concrete proof that President Bolsonaro has put his words into practice, nonetheless, this should stand as a warning to the international community that such actions may take place. Additionally, there are two countries in the Americas that stand out when it comes



to the responsibility to protect doctrine: Venezuela and Nicaragua (for further information check out the II. Involved Countries and Organizations section).

Two countries are also vital to the rightful use of the responsibility to protect doctrine: the United States and Canada. Since the United States is one of the most powerful nations in the world, they have the means to adopt the responsibility to protect doctrine. Being a member of the P5, the United States has veto power within the UN Security Council, making them a fundamental player in implementing the responsibility to protect. For the longest time, the US has also taken this power very seriously and had led many humanitarian missions such as the intervention in Libya. However, former President Trump's decision to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council was concerning. In February 2021, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken stated that "the United States will engage with the Council as an observer" (Blinken). Yet, the Biden Administration seemingly is more engaged in issues regarding humanitarian intervention and human rights.

Canada has also been a big enforcer of the responsibility to protect doctrine. The ICISS was even set up under the guidance of the Canadian government. They have funded countless humanitarian missions such as sending hygiene products to displaced people in Iraq, sending food, household items and protection in DR Congo, providing food and livelihood support for those affected by flooding and landslides in Nepal (Global Affairs Canada.) Even though they are not a permanent member of the Security Council, Canada is an important political actor for the enforcement of the responsibility to protect.

IV. Key Vocabulary

Responsibility to Protect: The responsibility to protect embodies a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution. It seeks to narrow the gap between Member States' pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (United Nations).

Sovereignty: There are many definitions of sovereignty based perspectives below you can find several definitions of sovereignty:

1. Sovereignty is the principle of supreme and unquestionable authority, reflected in the claim by the state to be the sole author of laws within its territory (Heywood).
2. **State Sovereignty (Westphalian):** a system of states or international society comprising sovereign state entities possessing the monopoly of force within their mutually recognized territories (Mclean and Mcmillan).



3. **Responsible Sovereignty:** Responsible sovereignty is defined as a principle that requires states to protect not only their own people but to cooperate across borders to protect global resources and address transnational threats (Wedgwood).
4. **External Sovereignty:** The absolute and unlimited authority of the state as an actor on the world stage, implying the absence of any higher authority in external affairs (Heywood).
5. **Internal Sovereignty:** refers to the location of power or authority within a state, and has been crucial to the development of state structures and systems of rule (Heywood).

Humanitarian Intervention: Humanitarian intervention is a means to prevent or stop a gross violation of human rights in a state, where such a state is either incapable or unwilling to protect its own people, or is actively persecuting them (Jayakumar).

V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
24 October 1648	The Peace of Westphalia is signed
26 June 1945	UN Charter is Established
9 December 1948	Establishment of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
Apr 7, 1994 – Jul 15, 1994	Rwandan Genocide
11 July 1995 – 22 July 1995	Srebrenica Massacre
1999	Kofi Annan's Annual Report to the General Assembly
2001	ICISS Report
14 - 16 September 2005	2005 World Summit
December 27, 2007 – February 28, 2008	Kenyan election crisis

VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

All of the documents on the Responsibility to Protect doctrine can be found in the link below however a few others that have been explicitly mentioned in the report will also be linked below:

[A comprehensive list of all of the UN Documents on this issue](#)

- [2005 World Summit Outcome Document, A/RES/60/1, paragraphs 138-140](#)
- [The Responsibility to Protect \(A/RES/63/308\)](#)



- [2001 Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty on The Responsibility to Protect](#)
- [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, resolution 260 A \(III\)](#)

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

There are many reasons why the Member States have failed to ensure the rightful use of the responsibility to protect doctrine. Firstly, there are certain fundamental issues with the doctrine itself. Many mention that the criteria to invoke the doctrine is too vague. Since it is difficult to determine what constitutes a “rightful use” and what is an infringement of sovereignty, the doctrine becomes difficult to implement.

The vagueness also allows for states, particularly those in the P5, to “pick and choose” when to intervene. This means that instead of intervening when the responsibility to protect doctrine is needed, member states choose to intervene when it is convenient to them or when it is advantageous for them politically. Thus, the understanding of universality, which is a fundamental aspect of the responsibility to protect doctrine and human rights, is undermined.

Additionally, the failure of the UNSC to come to a consensus on the basic prerequisites for military intervention makes the rightful use of the responsibility to protect hard to implement. The excessive use of the veto power by P5 members also means that issues that are meant to be solved on the basis of universal human rights are instead delayed or never get solved due to political opposition. A key example of this is the situation in Syria (See the “Security Council” section for elaboration).

On the judicial part of the issue, the main reason why war criminals are not persecuted is that the International Criminal Court does not work as efficiently or as effectively as it set out to. There are many bureaucratic hurdles that hold the ICC back that can potentially be changed.

Finally, a big challenge to the responsibility to protect doctrine is media blockages and lack of information reaching the international community. If the scale of or even the existence of a humanitarian crisis is not known, then member states can not take action where necessary. As many oppressive regimes are aware of this, they do their best to keep information from reaching the international community by putting immense amounts of pressure on non-governmental organizations, news publications, civil society organizations, protesters, and much more.

VIII. Possible Solutions



While coming up with possible solutions it is vital to understand that the responsibility to protect always requires preventative action to be taken before any form of intervention. Particularly, the military intervention must only be used as a last resort.

With that being said, the most important preventative action to be taken is building strong and fair human rights institutions locally and internationally. This must include human rights reporting mechanisms and comprehensive legal systems. Thus, any action meant to increase the implementation of human rights is essential for the implementation of the responsibility to protect.

As for the second pillar of the doctrine, creating open spaces for international dialogue is vital since this is how states will be able to encourage and assist individual states in meeting their internal responsibilities. Therefore, institutions such as the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations need to be strengthened and continuously improved.

For the last pillar, the role of the UNSC is undeniable. However, it is important to recognize that the council also has several flaws. While changing the whole permanent 5 system may be quite difficult, asking P5 members to voluntarily abstain from using their veto powers may be viable. Additionally, to avoid further confusion, the prerequisites for invoking the responsibility to protect may need to be cleared up. Potentially a new commission can be set up to take on this role. Lastly, along with the UNSC other international institutions that can take coercive action such as the ICC need to be strengthened, made more equitable and effective.

IX. Useful Links

[The UN on the Responsibility to Protect](#): It is important for delegates to understand the UN's viewpoint on the responsibility to protect to be able to integrate the principles into their own policies.

[The UN Charter](#): Since this issue deals greatly with some foundational concepts within the UN it is vital that delegates have an understanding of the UN Charter particularly the articles referring to sovereignty and statehood.

[The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect Website](#): an amazing resource to understand the responsibility to protect that includes case studies from many countries.

[The ICISS Report](#): The initial report in which the responsibility to protect doctrine was first established. While it is referred to many times throughout this report all delegates should at least read the "Synopsis" section of the report from page XI to XIII. (see Involved Countries and Organizations)



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