

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT
A Guiding Principle ... ?



Prepared by the United Nations Youth Association of Australia Inc.

Statement of Policy

We, the United Nations Youth Association of Australia, having consulted with the youth of Australia and explored the issue in depth, do adopt the following principles and purposes as the official policy of UNYA (Australia) Inc.

1. That the Responsibility to Protect, a definition of which is contained herein, shall be the guiding principle of the United Nations in responding to grievous and widespread abuses of human rights.
2. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall adopt the Responsibility to Protect as our guiding principle in determining policy stances on relevant human rights issues.
3. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall lobby Governments and International Organisations to adopt the principle of the Responsibility to Protect in their dealings with such human rights abuses.
4. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall seek to educate young people and the wider community, on the importance of the Responsibility to Protect in protecting human rights across the globe.
5. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall recommend the Responsibility to Protect in our dealings with Government on issues of human rights, and furthermore, shall include in its submissions to Government, recommendations outlining how the Responsibility to Protect may be applied in relevant circumstances.
6. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall lobby the Australian Government to include in its bid for a Security Council seat in the 2012 rotation, a commitment to uphold the Responsibility to Protect, and to use the principle as a guide in its deliberations on matters before the Security Council.
7. That we, UNYA (Australia), shall remain actively seized of the matter.

The Responsibility to Protect

An Introduction

The 20th Century brought about a marked change in the nature of conflict across the globe. Throughout history, issues of security had been grounded in the notion that conflict primarily took place *between* States. However, throughout the latter half of the 20th Century it became increasingly evident that a new paradigm of international peace and security was upon us. Rather than conflicts *between* States, conflicts *within* States increasingly became the norm. Internal conflict had replaced inter-State conflicts, resulting in a massive increase in civilian casualties as a result. Genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia; as well as crimes against humanity in Kosovo, Darfur and the Central African Republic demonstrated the inability of the international community to satisfactorily prevent mass crimes against civilians. It became evident that a new principle was needed to guide the decisions of the international community when faced with the most horrific crimes.

The term “responsibility to protect” was first presented in the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in December 2001 - a report bearing the principles name. The concept was developed as a means of bridging the gap between supporters of a “right of humanitarian intervention” and those who argued that state sovereignty, as presented in the UN Charter, precluded uninvited intervention. Australia’s Former Foreign Minister, Mr. Gareth Evans co-chaired ICISS and has been instrumental in its promotion on the world stage. He described the Responsibility to Protect as “*the responsibility of states, and where they fail the international community, to protect civilians from mass atrocity crimes.*”

“The Responsibility of States, and where they fail the international community, to protect civilians from mass atrocity crimes”

- The Hon. Gareth Evans QC

- THE HON. GARETH EVANS QC



“Because we said ‘Never Again’”



A Peacekeeper with UNMIS



The UNHCR in the Sudan