

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

12th October 2018

Doctrine

A guiding UN principle, R2P ensures that:

- The life and safety of the individual is safeguarded through government accountability.
- The prevention of genocide, war crimes ethnic cleansing is upheld as a collective responsibility of the international community.
- The international community is equipped and ready to intervene if a government fails to protect its citizens.



Background

- Adopted in response to the atrocities committed in the 1990s in the Balkans and Rwanda, and the NATO military intervention in Kosovo.
- Born out of the 2001 report '**Responsibility to Protect**', which described the state's role as not just being one of protecting its civilians from external threats, but also to be responsible for positively promoting the welfare of its citizens.
- Subsequent report entitled '*A more secure world: our shared responsibility*' in 2005 endorsed the principle that the international community has a mandate to step in and protect a population if a state fails to do so itself.
- UN member-states committed to the principle at the **UN World Summit Meeting** in 2005.



R2P in action since 2005

Libya 2011

- The first case where the Security Council authorised a military intervention through R2P.
- Resolution 1970 was adopted authorising member-states to take "all necessary action".

Syria

- 16 Resolutions have been passed in response to the atrocities caused by the Syrian government.
- Russia and China have vetoed US attempts to justify military intervention in the civil war.

Controversies

- R2P does not endorse the use of force unless authorised by the Security Council, after all diplomatic and humanitarian efforts to protect a population have been exhausted.
 - Situations must be judged on a case-by-case basis which can slow down the pace at which intervention is authorised.

