

# The Routledge Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect

## : The Responsibility to Protect in Theory and Practice

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. It was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, and has since become a widely accepted norm of international law. The R2P principle is based on the idea that every state has a responsibility to protect its own population from mass atrocities, and that the international community has a responsibility to assist states in fulfilling this responsibility.

The R2P principle is a significant departure from the traditional understanding of sovereignty, which has long been interpreted as giving states the right to do whatever they want within their own borders. The R2P principle recognizes that sovereignty is not absolute, and that states have a responsibility to protect their citizens from harm.



## The Routledge Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect (Routledge Handbooks) by Gilbert G. Gonzalez

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 881 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 309 pages



The R2P principle has been applied in a number of cases around the world, including in Libya, Syria, and South Sudan. In each of these cases, the international community has taken action to protect civilians from mass atrocities. The R2P principle has also been used to justify the creation of new international institutions, such as the International Criminal Court, which is tasked with prosecuting individuals who commit mass atrocities.

### **The R2P Principle in International Law**

The R2P principle is based on a number of existing principles of international law, including the prohibition on genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The R2P principle also draws on the idea of state responsibility, which is the principle that states are responsible for the actions of their officials and agents.

The R2P principle was first articulated in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which was chaired by former Canadian Prime Minister Gareth Evans. The commission argued that the international community has a responsibility to intervene to prevent mass atrocities, even if this means violating the sovereignty of a state.

The R2P principle was subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 in the form of a resolution titled "The Responsibility to Protect." The resolution reaffirmed the principle of state responsibility, and called on the international community to take collective action to prevent mass atrocities.

## **The Application of the R2P Principle**

The R2P principle has been applied in a number of cases around the world, including in Libya, Syria, and South Sudan. In each of these cases, the international community has taken action to protect civilians from mass atrocities.

In Libya, the international community authorized the use of force to protect civilians from the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. In Syria, the international community has provided humanitarian assistance to civilians and has supported the efforts of the opposition to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. In South Sudan, the international community has deployed peacekeeping forces to protect civilians from violence.

The R2P principle has also been used to justify the creation of new international institutions, such as the International Criminal Court, which is tasked with prosecuting individuals who commit mass atrocities.

## **Criticisms of the R2P Principle**

The R2P principle has been criticized by some for being too vague and for giving the international community too much power to intervene in the affairs of sovereign states. Critics argue that the R2P principle could be used to justify interventions that are not in the best interests of the people they are intended to protect.

Others argue that the R2P principle is too narrow and does not address the root causes of mass atrocities. These critics argue that the international community should focus on preventing mass atrocities by promoting human rights, democracy, and economic development.

The R2P principle is a significant development in international law. It represents a new understanding of state sovereignty and the responsibility of the international community to protect civilians from mass atrocities. The R2P principle has been applied in a number of cases around the world, and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the prevention of mass atrocities.

## References

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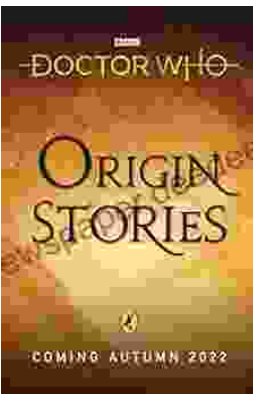
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