

## Today's UN Security Council Resolution on the Prevention of Genocide

Twenty years ago the UN Security Council was largely indifferent as the fastest genocide in history consumed the lives of over 800,000 Rwandans in just 100 days. The shame of the UN's failure to confront this carefully planned and ruthlessly implemented genocide continues to haunt the organization today.

By adopting the Responsibility to Protect at the UN World Summit in 2005, the international community pledged to prevent future mass atrocity crimes. Today's UN Security Council resolution calls upon states to reaffirm "the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document on the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleaning and crimes against humanity."

Former Australian Foreign Minister the Hon. **Gareth Evans**, who led the International Commission that first developed the Responsibility to Protect concept, commented, "Today's vote illustrates how far the UN has come since 1994. Yet as we reflect upon the tragedy of Rwanda we must work to close the gap between words and deeds. Protecting civilians from mass atrocities is a global commitment that must be honored with meaningful action wherever and whenever these crimes threaten."

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect welcomes today's resolution. Dr. **Simon Adams**, Executive Director, noted, "In 1994 the Security Council systematically ignored early warning of an impending genocide in Rwanda. It turned its back on the people of Rwanda as the *genocidaires* were sharpening their machetes. The best way for the Security Council to honor the victims and survivors of the Rwandan genocide is to work together to prevent further mass atrocities in Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria, Burma and elsewhere."

The Hon. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) **Roméo Dallaire**, former UN Force Commander in Rwanda and a Patron of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, remarked, "On this darkest of occasions twenty years on from the genocide in Rwanda, we must pay our most solemn of respects to the hundreds of thousands of victims, including all those who perished as well as the many survivors who live on bearing significant scars. And as innocent civilians remain under imminent threat today in numerous countries, we must also never forget the depths to which humanity can fall when the international community decides that some humans are not as significant, or as human, as others and ignores our responsibility to protect."