



Republic of Rwanda



Permanent Mission of Italy
to the United Nations



GLOBAL CENTRE
FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT

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**Joint Press Release: 9th Annual Ministerial Roundtable Discussion on R2P
“The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and the Responsibility to Protect”**

On 21 September, the Republic of Rwanda, Italy and the Kingdom of the Netherlands co-hosted the 9th Annual Ministerial Roundtable Discussion on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), “*The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and the Responsibility to Protect*,” in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

A cross-regional group of ministers representing seven governments contributed to the discussion. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E. Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, H.E. Mr. Vincenzo Amendola, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Bert Koenders, and the Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Dr. Simon Adams, opened the meeting before an interactive discussion among participants.

The event served as a platform for participants to reaffirm their support for the Kigali Principles, to announce and encourage new endorsements, and to discuss how the application of the Kigali Principles in current mass atrocity situations can help improve the response to populations at risk.

H.E. Mr. Bert Koenders, emphasized the importance of the Kigali Principles, noting, “*The increase in civilian casualties, displacement, and human suffering we see in today’s conflicts cannot become the new normal. We need to take action to improve UN peacekeeping. The Kigali Principles bring together political commitment to protect civilians from atrocities including the use of force, accountable and well-prepared military and civilian leadership, well-trained and disciplined troops, and a zero tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.*”

H.E. Louise Mushikiwabo, noting the difficult decisions that were made regarding sending troops into situations experiencing ongoing mass atrocity crimes, including Darfur, South Sudan and Central African Republic, asserted that “*we decided to act so we could make a difference*” and commended the Kigali Principles as providing “*practical and prudent ways to protect civilians today.*”

H.E. Mr. Vincenzo Amendola discussed the significance of R2P in addressing the causes of the refugee crisis in Italy’s region, noting, “*Italy has supported since its initial formulation the principle that Governments in the first place must answer to a Responsibility to Protect their own civilian population, that the international community must commit to internationally mandated efforts to supplant Governments when they are unable or unwilling to step in. This is what Italy is doing on a daily basis in the Mediterranean. Since the beginning of 2016, we have rescued over 60.000 desperate women, children and men from near-certain death as they were fleeing from war and truly unfathomable suffering and desperation.*”

Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, remarked: “*Peacekeepers are often at the frontlines of protecting civilians and stabilizing conflicts in the world today, sometimes paying the greatest sacrifice as they do so. However, despite the presence of sizeable peacekeeping operations, the UN continues to struggle to protect civilians from mass atrocity crimes in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan.*”

The main objective of the discussion was for UN Member States to identify concrete ways of implementing the Kigali Principles, both individually and jointly, and to exchange best practices and identify challenges in improving Protection of Civilians by UN peacekeeping missions. Participants were also encouraged to examine the role of the Kigali Principles in effectively upholding the responsibility of the international community to protect populations from mass atrocity crimes.

The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, and the President of International Crisis Group also participated in the discussion.

Background on the Kigali Principles:

The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians are a set of eighteen pledges for the effective implementation of the protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping. The principles emanated from the High-level International Conference on the Protection of Civilians held in Rwanda on 28 and 29 May 2015. The Kigali Principles address the most relevant aspects of peacekeeping, including assessment and planning, force generation, training and equipping personnel, performance and accountability. While they are framed around the protection of civilians, the principles address broader deficiencies that undermine the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations conducted in volatile situations, including peacekeeper abuse.