

The Responsibility to Protect and the 66th Opening of the General Assembly

Day One: 21 September 2011

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The below quotes made by government heads of state are from the opening of the general assembly and are relevant to the responsibility to protect (R2P).

1. Direct Reference to R2P

UN Secretary-General

“A second great opportunity: prevention.

This year, the UN peacekeeping budget will total \$8 billion.

Consider the savings if we act before conflicts erupt — by deploying political mediation missions, for example, rather than troops.

We know how to do this. Our record proves it — in Guinea, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan.

To prevent violations of human rights, we must work for the rule of law and stand against impunity. We have carved out new dimension for *the Responsibility to Protect*. We will continue.”

Brazil

“We vehemently repudiate the brutal repression of civilian populations. Yet we remain convinced that for the international community, the use of force must always be a last resort.

The quest for peace and security in the world cannot be limited to interventions in extreme situations.

We support the Secretary-General in his efforts to engage the United Nations in conflict prevention through the tireless practice of diplomacy and the promotion of development.

“The world suffers today from the painful consequences of interventions that aggravated existing conflicts. They allowed terrorism to penetrate into places where it previously did not exist, gave rise to new cycles of violence and multiplied the number of civilian victims.

Much is said about the *responsibility to protect*; yet we hear little about responsibility in protecting. These are concepts that we must develop together.

For that, the role of the Security Council is vital - and the more legitimate its decisions are, the better it will be able to play its role.”

Estonia

“Once again ongoing events underline the need for us to focus on the protection of civilians from atrocities. Even in the democratic part of my continent, the political project we today call the European Union was a reaction to mass murder and war. The very history of Europe motivates us to take preventive steps to avoid any repetition of such crimes. Therefore it is vital that we develop common practices and the capacity to implement the *principle of R2P, better known as responsibility to protect*. Protecting civilians from atrocities is not just about “protection”. It also means bringing perpetrators of crimes and atrocities against civilians to justice. International law, and in particular the International Criminal Court, and the understanding that justice will be done, no matter how long it takes, are the tools we possess to prevent the worst human rights violations. Rule of law and respect for international law are what will help ravaged and victimized societies regain their dignity and rebuild their communities. The common efforts of the international community, the ICC and its state parties remain a priority for Estonia.”

Paraguay

“No podemos dejar de manifestar ante esta Asamblea General nuestra preocupacion por el desarrollo de las acciones en el casa de Libia, en el marco de la Resoluci3n 1973 deI Consejo de Seguridad y deI concepto de *"responsabilidad de proteger"*. Consideramos que el uso de la fuerza debe ser siempre la 3ltima opci3n,”

“We cannot avoid to address to this General Assembly our concern for the development of actions in Libya that under the framework of Security Council Resolution 1973 and the concept of the *“responsibility to protect”* has taken place. We think that the use of force should be exerted always as a last resort.” (GCR2P translation)

2. Indirect Reference to R2P

Qatar

“We know that our choices of principle are stable and strong. We also know that our subsequent response to the prevailing situations stems from urgency, and that it is a situation that needs to be settled on the basis of the rules and charters that govern international relations in modern times; a situation that should shift from the responsibility of individually-acting States to the responsibility of an international community acting in accordance with its charters.”

3. Humanitarian Intervention

Equatorial Guinea

“Africa, Continente cuyos Países y Pueblos han sido explotados durante siglos por potencias extranjeras, se enfrenta actualmente a una nueva version neocolonialista de intervencion de fuerzas por razones y principios humanitarios y de libertades democraticas.

Al respecto, Africa debe hacer gala de su personalidad polttica internacional para que se respete la Entidad de la Union Africana, obviando las divisiones internas por caUSas de intereses inconfesados.

La intervencion de la fuerza, tanto interna como externa, nunca ha dado una solucion definitiva a los conflictos desde la creacion de las Naciones Unidas, como se puede observar de los diferentes conflictos habidos en los ultimos 50 anos.”

“Intervention of powers for reasons of humanitarian principles and democratic freedoms is a form of Neocolonialism. Forced intervention force, internal and external, has never provided lasting solution to conflicts over the last 50 years. Unfortunately the UN is being used in a fraudulent manner under the pretext of humanitarian intervention- which further violates human rights- use of force in conflict is divisive and destructive.” (UNwebcast transcription)

4. Use of Force as a Last Resort

Brazil

“We vehemently repudiate the brutal repression of civilian populations. Yet we remain convinced that for the international community, the use of force must always be a last resort.

The quest for peace and security in the world cannot be limited to interventions in extreme situations.”

5. Libya

United States

“And when they were threatened by the kind of mass atrocity that often went unchallenged in the last century, the United Nations lived up to its charter. The Security Council authorized all necessary measures to prevent a massacre. The Arab League called for this effort; Arab nations joined a NATO-led coalition that halted Qaddafi’s forces in their tracks.”

Qatar

“We were among those who have made their choice. On the one hand we have always had a clear policy with regard to the rules governing our Arab, regional and international relations; rules that are based on understanding, reconciliation and harmony among peoples and nations. On the other, we, as well as others, have been unable to turn a deaf ear or a blind eye to the calls of the wounded seeking help from near and far, against an entrenched oppression.

For our part, we have exhausted each and every means until the only option left for us was to hear and sympathize, to see and help. We knew that was not a solution, but rather an emergency...”

Mongolia

“Colonel Gaddafi called his fellow countrymen "rats" and to brutally hunt them down and exterminate. Now, he himself is being hunted as a rat from hole to hole, from trench to trench. And this is the fate which awaits anyone who suppresses the people's love for freedom and desire to live in dignity.”

South Africa

“With regard to the situation in Libya, the AU played a crucial role in seeking a peaceful solution to the crisis, in line with its mandate of working for peace and stability in the continent.

However, it is a matter of record now that the AU efforts were never given a chance. Military actions were preferred over peaceful means.”...

“During this period of working towards normalcy in Libya, we call for a cessation of hostilities and an end to the NATO aerial bombardment.

We also call for the lifting of the No Fly Zone, which was necessitated by the need for the protection of civilians.”

Latvia

“We welcome the timely reaction of the UN to the events in Libya, such as the decisions of the UN Security Council to provide humanitarian and security assistance, as well as the referral of the case to the International Criminal Court.”

Mozambique

“We call upon all relevant actors to engage in constructive dialogue and to work for peaceful solutions to ensure peace and stability. From these developments we learnt the lesson that the use of internal dialogue, regional cooperation, fairness in the interventions of the United Nations should be privileged.”

6. Syria/Yemen

United States

“As we meet here today, men and women and children are being tortured, detained and murdered by the Syrian regime. Thousands have been killed, many during the holy time of Ramadan. Thousands more have poured across Syria’s borders. The Syrian people have shown dignity and courage in their pursuit of justice -- protesting peacefully, standing silently in the streets, dying for the same values that this institution is supposed to stand for. And the question for us is clear: Will we stand with the Syrian people, or with their oppressors? Already, the United States has imposed strong sanctions on Syria’s leaders. We supported a transfer of power that is responsive to the Syrian people. And many of our allies have joined in this effort. But for the sake of Syria -- and the peace and security of the world -- we must speak with one voice. There's no excuse for inaction. Now is the time for the United Nations Security Council to sanction the Syrian regime, and to stand with the Syrian people.”

Republic of Korea

“Right now, even at this very moment, the people of Syria and Yemen are undertaking great risks to hold aloft the torch of freedom and democracy.”

Bosnia

“We appeal once again to stop violence and create the peace in these societies.”

Mongolia

“The international community should not shy away from condemning the regime of Syria's Bashar al-Asad, who has inhumanly and brutally chosen bloodshed to crack down on freedom and justice craving peaceful protesters by using combat vehicles, snipers and military force. Let us unanimously demand that he ends his atrocities. We must make the necessary decision to that effect without delay and help the courageous people of Syria who are craving freedom and justice, and are losing dozens of their brave sons and daughters every day. The love for freedom is the greatest force in this world. No tyranny, no cruelest regime can resist it forever. I would like to say these words to the authorities of Yemen and dictators seeking to suppress their citizens' fight for freedom.”

Latvia

“We support the UN Security Council presidential statement regarding the events in Syria and the Human Rights Council decision to dispatch urgently a special mission to Syria. The message is clear – violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians is totally unacceptable and strongly condemned by the international community. We look forward to an appropriate follow-up on this issue in the Security Council.”

7. Côte D'Ivoire

United States

“One year ago, the people of Côte D'Ivoire approached a landmark election. And when the incumbent lost, and refused to respect the results, the world refused to look the other way. U.N. peacekeepers were harassed, but they did not leave their posts. The Security Council, led by the United States and Nigeria and France, came together to support the will of the people.”

Nigeria

“The resolution of the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire is a case in point. I consider the inauguration of President Ouatarra not just a success for Cote d'Ivoire but also for the international community, which spoke with one voice and acted in concert in support of the Ivorian people.”

8. Impartiality of the UN

South Africa

“The UN should never take sides in any conflict but should always maintain its impartiality.

The UN must not allow itself to be used by any country regardless of its history or size. All citizens of the world should feel confident and secure, in the knowledge that the UN is above ail interests and only serves those of the global citizenry.”