The Responsibility to Protect: The First Decade

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Abstract

It is early for definitive assessments of RtoP's future as a policy instrument. Like a maturing child, we know more about its talents and aptitudes than about how they will be nurtured or stunted in the years ahead. The generally positive dialogue in the General Assembly in July 2011 suggests that the Member States understand the difference between a principle and the tactics to implement it. Building on conceptual and political progress, the United Nations is applying RtoP perspectives to a growing number of situations. In five of these, it appears to have helped save lives. Big challenges and uncertainties lie ahead, however. Perceptions of RtoP's political clout are proving to be a mixed blessing, while questions of selectivity, sovereignty, and possible misuse remain. Five near-term priorities are identified.

Keywords

responsibility to protect, atrocity crimes, Security Council, General Assembly, UN Secretary-General, prevention, response, Libya, Syria

What's in a decade? Ten years is not a long period in the life of a standard, norm, or principle. The lifespan of successful ones are measured in centuries, not decades. These are the ones that become embedded in the values, laws, and institutions that shape the character of societies and the policies of governments. Getting to the long-term, however, is not always easy. The first decade may be the hardest, especially for those principles, like the responsibility to protect (RtoP), that were the product of sharp give and take among contending perspectives. Ten years after the far-sighted International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) first pronounced the concept is a fitting time to reflect both on how far the responsibility to protect has come toward fulfilling its promise and on the obstacles that it has and will continue to confront along the way.

At the same time, to be useful such an assessment should be sober, candid, careful, and balanced. We should be wary of facile claims and false lessons based on limited experience. To that end, this author would suggest four

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caveats before turning to an admittedly subjective assessment of how this enterprise is progressing and of some of the challenges ahead.[1]

Caveats

First, it would be premature to draw definitive conclusions about RtoP's potential as a policy tool at this point. The United Nations, for instance, has only made a sustained effort to implement the responsibility to protect in specific situations since mid-2010. For most regional organizations and Member States, the implementation effort has barely begun. Not unlike a maturing child, the early years undoubtedly tell us more about inherent talents and aptitudes than about how they will be nurtured or stunted in the years ahead.

Second, it is to be expected, even welcomed, that some of the operational aspects of the responsibility to protect are still being debated by the Member States. The clause in paragraph 139 of the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit on the General Assembly's continuing consideration of the responsibility to protect offers an ongoing opportunity to refine the Secretary-General's implementation strategy, to test the political waters, and to keep the attention of capitals and UN missions alike focused on the road ahead.[2]

Frankly, this author would be more concerned if RtoP ceased to be a somewhat contested issue, as that might suggest a lack of interest or an assumption that the principle is either too weak to make a difference or too anodyne to

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[1] The author has served as United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Special Adviser for the Responsibility to Protect since early 2008, charged with its conceptual, political, and institutional/operational development. The views expressed in these pages, therefore, are likely to reflect that global and institutional perspective, though many partners have contributed to the development of RtoP: civil society, academia, governments, and regional and sub-regional arrangements among them. The views expressed here are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.

[2] See the three Reports of the Secretary-General in this series to date: *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, A/63/677 (12 January 2009), *Early Warning, Assessment, and the Responsibility to Protect*, A/64/864 (14 July 2010), and *The Role of Regional and Subregional Arrangements in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, A/65/877-S/2011/393 (28 June 2011). The most recent report was submitted to both the General Assembly and the Security Council, given the Council's role on matters under Chapter VIII of the Charter. As of this writing, the Council has yet to address the contents of the report directly. Useful summaries of and commentaries on the General Assembly debates and dialogues have been prepared by the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and by the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect. They can be accessed on their respective web sites.

take up space on the world body's crowded agenda. Now that the General Assembly has just completed its third annual informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect, there is ample reason to believe both that Member State support and interest remain high and that the more coercive dimensions of the response pillar of the Secretary-General's implementation strategy will need continuing discussion and refinement. Indeed, all but one delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's proposal that his 2012 report and the subsequent Assembly dialogue assess 'efforts to date to utilize all of the tools of Chapters VI, VII, and VIII [of the Charter] in implementing the third pillar of my strategy.'[3]

Third, it is essential, in that regard, to distinguish RtoP as a standard or principle from RtoP as a policy or guide to tactical choices. In the end, of course, both are needed. Neither would make an enormous difference without the other. But progress on the former will inevitably come more quickly and surely than on the latter. If the principle itself is contested, then progress on implementation, especially in the multilateral arena, will be uncertain, uneven, and of little consequence. The good news is that little or no opposition to the principle remains among the Member States. This was demonstrated at the July 2011 General Assembly dialogue on the role of regional and sub-regional arrangements in implementing the responsibility to protect, where support for the principle was repeatedly voiced despite the misgivings of some delegations about the way in which the air campaign to enforce Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) on Libya was being carried out. The critics' focus was on tactics, not on principles or strategies.

Some implementation tools, most pointedly those that are more coercive or intrusive, are bound to be more controversial than others. Some situations, likewise, will stir more debate than others. That is to be expected both in capitals and in inter-governmental bodies, as the decision to apply coercive measures is necessarily a political one.[4] As this author emphasized at the most recent General Assembly dialogue, however, the Secretary-General and the UN secretariat should be held to a higher standard in terms of the consistency

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[3] *The Role of Regional and Subregional Arrangements*, para. 42, p. 12.

[4] It was decided at the UN's founding conference in San Francisco in 1945 that the Security Council was to be a political body whose decisions would not be determined by any preordained set of guidelines beyond the purposes and principles of the Charter. See Article 24 (2) of the Charter and Edward C. Luck, 'A Council for All Seasons: The Creation of the Security Council and Its Relevance Today,' in Vaughan Lowe, Adam Roberts, Jennifer Welsh, and Dominik Zaum (eds.), *The UN Security Council and War: The Evolution of Thought and Practice Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 62-85.

with which we invoke Chapter VI measures, such as quiet diplomacy, good offices, fact-finding, or public appeals.[5]

Fourth, assessments of how RtoP is faring should include a comparative element whenever possible. How does its progress to date compare with that of other principles and norms at this stage of their development? What sorts of enforcement or compliance measures were contemplated or invoked in order to encourage their implementation? Did the last decade prove to be a particularly auspicious or inauspicious period for the development and implementation of other norms, standards, and principles? Did earlier ones have to make their way in more or less propitious times? The natural comparators would be the human rights and humanitarian norms that largely preceded the responsibility to protect and, in substantial ways, helped to carve a normative and political path for it.[6]

By any standard, the responsibility to protect has developed relatively rapidly.[7] 2011 may be a decade after the ICISS report, but it is only six years after the World Summit outcome. Six years or even ten years after the Universal Declaration and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide--1954 or 1958--the future of human rights looked uncertain at best in a world divided by ideology and the all-consuming politics of the Cold War. Implementation measures were decidedly underdeveloped and few governments put human rights at the centre of their foreign policy concerns. At that point, how many pundits foresaw how instrumental human rights principles eventually would be in reshaping the geo-political map of the world? So, in drawing lessons from RtoP's early years, one should avoid the kind of straight-line projections employed by those experts who once assumed a limited future for human rights based on their contentious past. Times change and values change. That is the power of norms, and the enduring and continuing lesson of the human rights movement.

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[5] For this and other secretariat statements at the 2011 dialogue, see the web site for the joint office of the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, www.un.org/preventgenocide/adviser.

[6] The notion of sovereignty as responsibility, developed by Francis Deng and colleagues at the Brookings Institution in the mid-1990s, contributed importantly to the intellectual groundwork for the responsibility to protect. The broader and less operational concept of human security helped less directly by encouraging policy makers and analysts alike to turn their attention to non-state-centric conceptions of security.

[7] This has also been true of other human protection principles and norms, such as those on sexual and gender-based violence, children and armed conflict, and civilian protection in peacekeeping missions, over the past decade. The idea of conceptually clustering these and related principles under the banner of human protection was first voiced by the Secretary-General in his Cyril Foster Lecture at Oxford on 2 February 2011. See SG/SM/13385, 2 February 2011.

An Upside Assessment

The early years have provided several reasons for at least guarded optimism that the notion of the responsibility to protect is both sustainable and has the potential to make a difference in terms of forwarding the prevention and protection agenda. In terms of sustainability, there have been tangible conceptual and political advances in recent years. The text agreed at the 2005 World Summit represented both a refinement and, at least in this author's view, a strengthening of the initial conception of RtoP articulated in the 2001 ICISS report.[8] The changes made by the Member States produced a version of RtoP that was more focused and more amenable to policy implementation. In his 2009 report, the Secretary-General turned this into a much more articulated and nuanced strategy, in the process reviving sagging Member State support. His three pillars have stood up well to the sometimes intense scrutiny of the Member States, while providing a framework for UN system-wide collaboration, particularly on advancing the first two pillars.

The Secretary-General's plan to establish a joint office for the two Special Advisers--on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect--has gained wide Member State support, as evidenced in the prolonged but ultimately successful debate on some of the required budgetary and human resource steps in the Assembly's Fifth Committee in December 2010.[9] Operationally, their partnership is working well. Efforts to mainstream or integrate RtoP in the broader work of the UN system are still at an early stage, but the institutional resistance that was so pervasive at the outset has largely disappeared. It has been replaced by a general willingness to explore how an atrocity-prevention perspective could help inform a wide range of UN operational activities. The demand by Member State capitals, as well as from the UN secretariat and civil society, for training programmes on atrocity prevention from the joint office is brisk, including from several places that have experienced inter-communal violence. The joint office regularly monitors a large number of situations, prepares internal advisory notes on many of them, and participates actively in inter-departmental policy discussions, including those of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee, the closest thing to a UN

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[8] Edward C. Luck, 'Building a Norm: The Responsibility to Protect Experience,' in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *Mass Atrocity Crimes: Preventing Future Outrages* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), pp. 108-127.

[9] The Assembly, however, has not yet been asked to make the post of Special Adviser for the Responsibility to Protect into a regular budget post. Until that step is undertaken successfully, the effort to regularize RtoP in the work of the Organization will remain incomplete.

cabinet. Over the last fifteen months, the two Special Advisers have issued eight public statements on situations of particular concern.[10] More significantly, the Secretary-General has invoked the responsibility to protect with even greater frequency. The High Commissioner for Human Rights has also referred to RtoP on a number of occasions, while the Human Rights Council employed it in the Libyan and Syrian situations, pre-empting the Security Council both times.

The political sustainability of the responsibility to protect at the world body is not a given, but the active engagement of three principal organs-- the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Secretariat--in its development is undoubtedly a good omen. The Secretary-General's determination to advance the principle has been unwavering. He has identified it as one of the top priorities for his second term. The General Assembly is gaining a sense of ownership, due in part to the continuing cycle of reports and dialogues noted above, as well as the innumerable informal consultations the Special Advisers and their civil society partners undertake over the course of the year. The Security Council referred to RtoP in its initial resolutions on Libya (1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011)), apparently without significant dissent among its members and in an appropriate context, in this author's view. The fact that there has been subsequent expressions of buyer's remorse by some members, which contend that the way force has been employed in Libya goes beyond their understanding of the mandate contained in resolution 1973, does not obviate the fact that in these two resolutions the Council employed RtoP for the first time in a Chapter VII context. Whatever their misgivings about the way resolution 1973 was implemented, Council members unanimously approved resolution 1996 (2011) on South Sudan, with an operational reference to RtoP, only months later. That act and the largely positive tone of the 12 July 2011 General Assembly dialogue suggest that the Member States are perfectly capable of making a distinction between a principle and the tactics chosen to advance it in a particular situation. They have been careful, in other words, not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

The ultimate test, of course, is whether the responsibility to protect has made a difference in terms of preventing atrocity crimes and protecting populations. Here, the jury is still out. Scholars can make an important contribution by undertaking sober, balanced, and reflective assessments and case studies. In the process, they can help define a methodology of assessment that

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[10] http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/statements.shtml, date accessed 1 September 2011.

could be helpful to academics and policy makers alike. In these early stages of the operational life of RtoP, such scrutiny could be helpful in determining how to improve systems of anticipation and response. This author's unscientific feeling is that the responsibility to protect has saved lives by helping to discourage further violence against populations in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Libya. It is too early for definitive conclusions, however, as the final chapter has not been written in any of these cases.

The responsibility to protect is, in many ways, a political project. It will make a difference to the extent that it reflects--and is perceived to reflect--popular sentiments and values, across societies, borders, and regions. Gareth Evans, this author, and other advocates have long contended that being against RtoP was to put oneself on the wrong side of history. As the Secretary-General put it in his 2009 report on implementing RtoP, 'Across the globe, attitudes have changed in important ways since Cambodia, Rwanda and Srebrenica, raising the political costs, domestically and internationally, for anyone seen to be blocking an effective international response to an unfolding genocide or other high-visibility crime relating to the responsibility to protect.'[11] Libya arguably was such a case. It was posed that way in the Council and no member chose to vote against either of the two Chapter VII resolutions. Other factors were at play, of course. The pressure mounted by regional groups and countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East on the Council to act was probably a more decisive factor. The subsequent inability of the Council to agree on a more timely condemnation of the violence in Syria suggests so.[12] But surely the arguments about the wrong side of history and about popular sentiment were also significant.

So the bottom line in any assessment of how RtoP is faring comes down to perceptions, as well as the reality, of public interest in and commitment to this common project. The political and policy expression of popular attitudes will be largely filtered through those NGOs, academics, and commentators whose

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[11] *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, para. 61, p. 27.

[12] In early August 2011, the Security Council issued its first condemnation of the military crackdown on protesters in Syria that had begun that April. The Presidential Statement made no reference to the responsibility to protect or to the four crimes it addresses. See SC/10352 of 3 August 2011. By that point, the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the two Special Advisers had issued a series of strong statements on the events in Syria. Several of these referred to the Government's responsibility to protect its population and the second statement by the Special Advisers during this period was the first by the United Nations to raise the possibility that crimes against humanity may have been committed there. The Special Advisers' statements of 2 June and 22 July are available on the web sites of the Joint Office and various NGOs.

views reach the policy-making and diplomatic communities in capitals, regional organizations, and the United Nations. On that score, interest in the responsibility to protect appears to be holding up quite well. That perception, in turn, is helping to fuel the momentum that RtoP is maintaining at the UN and presumably elsewhere.

A Downside Assessment

For all of the progress that has been made in sustaining interest in and gaining support for the responsibility to protect, there remain significant downside risks, as well as a number of unanswered questions about its ultimate effectiveness in protecting populations. The very prominence that RtoP has achieved raises the risks of relevance. It is one thing to be a compelling but largely theoretical concept and quite another to be tested in a most public way in some of the toughest life and death crises of the day. Whatever progress is being made in terms of structural and operational prevention, the headlines will focus on whether the invocation of the responsibility to protect and the application of related policy measures can, in all cases, stop those national leaders who are determined to be at war with their own people. That is a tall order, and it would be unfair to expect RtoP to offer a miracle cure for all forms of repression and inhumanity.

Advocates need to show, however, that the responsibility to protect can pass two tests. It needs to make a difference 1) in preventing future atrocities of the scale of Rwanda or Cambodia and 2) in spurring a timely and decisive response when national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations across the range of crimes specified under RtoP in the 2005 Outcome Document. This author's sense is that there has been substantial progress on the first test: preventing the most massive and visible crimes, those of truly historic proportions. The international community, this author believes, would not again look the other way if another genocide of Rwandan or Cambodian proportions was clearly underway. It is less evident that the second test is being met: generating an early and effective response to the whole range of crimes against humanity. The Security Council's persistent efforts to address sexual violence, the protection of civilians, and children in armed conflict speak to changing values and views of the nature of threats to international peace and security. They also raise, however, the ageless challenges of too few tools, too little time, and too little will spread over too many crises. For all of the effort to close it, the gap between pronouncements in New York and performance in the field remains distressingly wide in some places. Certainly the Council is far more attuned to these issues today than it was in the last century, but there are

no guarantees that it would be prepared to act in a timely and decisive manner if another massacre of the scale of Srebrenica, rather than of Cambodia or Rwanda, was imminent, especially if it was unfolding in a politically sensitive place.

RtoP needs to do more than appeal to morality and the better human instincts. Though its political clout stems from moral angst, channelling moral rectitude into effective policy remedies is a formidable challenge. The larger human rights and humanitarian communities, which have long addressed such questions, have developed a raft of useful machinery, techniques, and processes. Now RtoP advocates need to demonstrate added value by finding more effective ways of dealing with the most severe and massive violations on the human rights agenda. The translation of moral indignation into multilateral policy instruments is well underway, but its integration into notions of national interests and hierarchies of national security priorities is bound to be a much slower and less certain process that will need to unfold capital by capital. Here, the movement to nominate national focal points is an encouraging step, though it is still in its infancy.

At times, the generic and unyielding quality of moral rectitude is a considerable strength. At others, however, it clashes with the need to adapt strategies to the distinct characteristics of each situation. The attempt to apply moral principles in a nuanced and selective way is bound to create some unattractive and potentially dysfunctional ambiguities. Policy makers nevertheless need to weigh a range of objectives and values in determining a course of action in each situation. RtoP is never the only concern, nor should it be. At a minimum, however, the responsibility to protect has to be taken into account in those determinations. Its advocates need to be at the table. This is happening at the UN and in some important capitals, but no doubt less in others.

The widespread perception that the responsibility to protect is a politically potent principle has its downside as well. Some members of the Security Council have said that they will be cautious about citing RtoP in future resolutions, contending that its employment in the two Libyan resolutions justified a particularly robust military response.[13] To some delegations, its very power makes it a tool to be used rarely and only when coercive measures are

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[13] However, the unanimous support for resolution 1996 (2011) on South Sudan, while the NATO bombing campaign in Libya was still underway, suggests that Council members will continue to weigh how and when to cite RtoP on a case-by-case basis. The reference in 1996 (2011) is in an operational paragraph elaborating a Chapter VII mandate for the new UNMISS peacekeeping operation in terms of 'advising and assisting' the new government 'in fulfilling its responsibility to protect civilians.' This is very much in line with the security assistance aspects of the second pillar of the Secretary-General's RtoP implementation strategy.

on the table. Such a stance would be inconsistent with the emphasis in the Secretary-General's strategy on prevention and early and flexible response. Following his lead, on the secretariat side we have been invoking the responsibility to protect in a range of situations in a preventive manner (see above). Reminding national authorities of their RtoP responsibilities has often been an essential part of diplomatic messaging before things get out of hand and options become few and costly. It would be helpful, in that regard, if the Security Council would also consider employing RtoP language in Chapter VI and VIII resolutions, as part of its efforts at preventive diplomacy and crisis management. Through case-by-case practice, it has become increasingly evident that conflict prevention and atrocity prevention are related but distinct concepts. Though they are generally reinforcing concepts, each has its own perspectives and values, as became tragically clear in the international response to events in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994.

The possible misuse of RtoP remains a concern. We need to guard against powerful countries, or even not such powerful ones, trying to justify actions taken for starkly different reasons by appeals to their responsibility to protect certain populations in other countries. The most effective answers to this danger have been the insistence on multilateral responses under the provisions and arrangements laid out in the UN Charter, the willingness to point out incidents of its misapplication, and the repeated articulation and refinement of the Secretary-General's strategy. It is conceivable, as well, that groups within a country could try to gain international support for their political agendas through appeals to the international community's responsibilities under paragraph 139 of the 2005 Outcome Document. So far, this has not been a problem. If the international community applies the same answers or safeguards in such cases that it has for the misuse of RtoP by governments, then it should be possible to avoid such problems. However, this is something that advocacy groups should bear in mind as well. As long as people perceive RtoP to be a principle with some political clout, some may well want to misappropriate it for their own ends.

Finally, though the Secretary-General's approach to RtoP has greatly eased Member State concerns about the implications of RtoP for state sovereignty, it is essential to continue to be sensitive to such concerns. Big powers have been wary of general obligations to employ their assets, especially military ones, in such situations.[14] It is telling, in that regard, that the responsibilities

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[14] The vocal concerns of former United States Permanent Representative to the UN John Bolton in this regard are highlighted in Edward C. Luck, 'Sovereignty, Choice, and the Responsibility to Protect,' *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 1/1: 10-21 (2009).

of the State in paragraph 138 of the 2005 Outcome Document are stated with far less nuance and ambiguity than those of the international community in paragraph 139. Making generous use of Francis Deng's concept of sovereignty as responsibility, the Special Advisers have worked hard to overcome the concerns of some States that RtoP represents a license to infringe their territorial sovereignty. We have been able to document RtoP's African roots and to counter the false narrative that this should be treated as a North-South issue. From the beginning, we have cautioned the Member States that an emphasis on prevention is not meant to finesse the sovereignty question, because some aspects of structural prevention could be quite intrusive, just as are international development and peacebuilding programmes. So what is needed is a sovereignty-sensitive approach to the responsibility to protect, not one that pretends that this is not an ongoing and legitimate issue.

The Road Ahead

This balance sheet highlights a number of the challenges still before us. There is no room for complacency despite recent advances on the conceptual and political fronts. The progress to date is not irreversible. The responsibility to protect still has to prove itself in the field, not just in the classroom or the debating halls of the United Nations. Now that the principle is beginning to take on an institutional and operational identity, it will be tested as never before. Among other near-term tasks, we will need to:

- Engage the Security Council in a sustained conversation about its role in implementing the responsibility to protect. The General Assembly's continuing consideration of the principle will remain central to refining the concept and building political understanding and support for it. Providing an institutional home for RtoP and putting the first two pillars of the Secretary-General's strategy into practice will continue to depend on the oversight role of the General Assembly. At times, the Assembly could play a critical role in generating preventive action or even an effective response under the third pillar. Whether and how the Security Council addresses its responsibilities under paragraph 139 of the 2005 Outcome Document, however, could well decide the fate of the responsibility to protect. Unlike the General Assembly, it has yet to address the issue in a systematic way.
- Build stronger and wider relationships among global, regional, and subregional organizations. The topic of this year's informal interactive dialogue

in the General Assembly, these relationships need nurturing if effective partnerships in the practice of RtoP are to be sustained. As one would expect, at this early stage these collaborations have been scattered and of uneven quality.

- Multiply efforts by NGOs, independent experts, and parliamentarians to raise awareness of RtoP matters in national capitals. Much of the attention to date has focused on the United Nations. This has produced results, reinvigorating the critical normative deliberations in the General Assembly and the secretariat. Now that operational issues are coming to the forefront, however, national policymakers and parliamentarians will need to confront the costs, risks, and policy trade-offs that will inevitably arise in the implementation of robust RtoP strategies.

- Give substantive content to the second pillar—on international assistance to help the State succeed—of the Secretary-General's strategy. This will require a more concerted effort to integrate and mainstream RtoP concerns in the widespread and diverse work of the UN system. The will now exists, but how to make these connections work for populations on the ground where they are needed most will require both innovative thinking and concentrated effort. International financial institutions, regional arrangements, bilateral assistance programmes, civil society, and the private sector will all need to be brought into this exploration.

- Identify better ways of convincing armed groups and non-state actors that the principle of the responsibility to protect applies to them as well as to States. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's first RtoP report introduced this conceptual innovation and it has been received well by the Member States. Nevertheless, the Lord's Resistance Army, for one, continues to make the commission of atrocity crimes its calling card. This is another area begging for more focused thought and action.

Many more challenges could be added to this suggestive list. With a few exceptions, the process of internalization of RtoP principles within national societies, institutions, and governments is not far advanced. The dilemmas associated with the need to be both consistent and adaptable to local circumstances are just coming into view as the number of cases ~~to~~ which the UN has invoked the responsibility to protect grows. With the proliferation of cases has come the tension between trying to be perceived as special and exceptional on the one hand and routine and non-threatening on the other.

It is the mark of how far RtoP has come that it has such challenges and dilemmas. They come with the transition from a compelling theory to a practical component of policy and practice. Perhaps the responsibility to protect

has reached its adolescence, with all the doubts and pains that come with it. If so, it is indeed a precocious concept, one compelled by circumstance to start working at a young age. There is no choice but to learn on the job, treating our mistakes as invaluable instructional opportunities. This milestone and this journal are good places to start.