

# ICRtoP



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Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP  
Secretary Of State  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
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10 March 2015

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf of the United Nations Association – UK (UNA-UK) and the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), we are writing to urge the British Government to fully support the UN General Assembly (GA) draft resolution on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and do all it can to ensure the resolution is passed unanimously by the GA.

UNA-UK and ICRtoP have been glad to follow the UK's positive engagement with R2P over the past 10 years. It is encouraging to see the UK present itself as an example to other nations in putting R2P into practice, particularly given the reference to R2P in the UK's 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.

We were particularly pleased to note the UK's recent statement on R2P, made at an event organised by the President of the GA on 25 February 2016, which referred to plans to strengthen the Government's approach to the prevention of mass atrocities and its analysis of risk situations in the context of the NSS/SDSR. We look forward to hearing more and urge the UK to continue to improve its capacity to prevent atrocity crimes through concrete policies and tools.

The UK should also encourage greater and more effective international coordination in situations that relate to potential or ongoing mass atrocities. As such, we urge the UK to support vigorously the draft GA resolution on R2P put forward by a cross-regional group of UN Member States. The draft resolution:

- Reaffirms states' commitment to R2P (OP1);
- Emphasises that R2P is a norm founded on the *prevention* of atrocity crimes (OP3), whose implementation must be exercised in accordance with the UN Charter (OP14);

- Encourages states to develop national strategies to implement R2P (OP4);
- Acknowledges the interlinkages between the prevention of atrocities and other conflict prevention strategies (OP8);
- Requests the Secretary-General to include R2P in the provisional agenda for the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly (OP15).

The last point is especially pertinent. While the GA was the UN body that adopted the R2P principle at the 2005 World Summit, it has lagged far behind other parts of the UN system – notably the Security Council and Human Rights Council – in terms of discussion and implementation. The GA's informal annual dialogues, which are limited to just one day, are insufficient for discussing a norm with such far-reaching implications. All states are affected by the crimes R2P seeks to prevent and all have a duty to participate in discussions about how to strengthen the principles implantation and make it more effective and less costly.

UNA-UK and the ICRtoP hope that the British Government will use this opportunity to show the same courage and optimism we saw ten years ago at the World Summit by supporting a resolution and recommitting to the norm. We also hope that it will use its influence to foster unanimous support for the resolution.

Ten years after the adoption of RtoP, we have seen significant progress in realising the protection of populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, the atrocity crimes perpetrated around the globe are a daily reminder of the high cost failure to fulfill this collective responsibility. The GA's discussions about how this life-saving norm can be better implemented need to be raised from the abstract and procedural to the level of urgent action.

Sincerely,



Sir Jeremy Greenstock  
Chair  
UNA-UK



Don Deya  
Chair  
ICRtoP