

City of Chicago Adopts Responsibility to Protect Resolution

Chicago, IL (September 13, 2006)

- Recognized One-Year Anniversary of Passage of UN Doctrine on Responsibility to Protect
- First Local Government to Endorse the Responsibility to Protect and Support the Abolishment of Atrocity Crimes

The City Council of Chicago today passed a resolution ([view original](#)) that endorses the principle of the responsibility to protect, thereby taking a strong stand in favor of the abolishment of atrocity crimes. Its action, believed to be the first such action by a local governmental body, marks the one-year anniversary of the adoption of this revolutionary doctrine by the United Nations. In the resolution, the City Council called on the President and the U.S. Congress to work for effective implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome declaration on the responsibility to protect.

On September 16, 2005 at the World Summit Outcome of the United Nations General Assembly, the United States and all the other members of the United Nations embraced the principle of the responsibility to protect. This principle asserts that each individual state has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity — so called “atrocity crimes”;

“In Chicago, we lead by example and this resolution demonstrates our commitment to protecting people and promoting tolerance and respect for humankind,” said Mayor Richard M. Daley. “People in Chicago and around the world deserve to be treated fairly regardless of age, income, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic group or religious background.”

Richard Cooper is the convener of the R2P Coalition, a not-for-profit, nonpartisan grassroots organization, headed by a group of internationally recognized leaders in global affairs, whose mission is to convince the American people and its leadership to embrace the responsibility to protect and thus put an end to atrocity crimes. As a result, the Coalition is working with political, human rights, religious and academic leaders locally, regionally and nationally to further the national discussion on this issue, including through the adoption of resolutions in support of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

“I am delighted that Chicago’s City Council has taken this action. Slavery was abolished two hundred years ago, and I believe that the time has come for atrocity crimes to also be ended. Chicago has always played a major role in human rights issues and the adoption of this resolution continues that long tradition. We Americans need to reclaim our moral authority within the world by taking leadership on the responsibility to protect and making it reality,” said Mr. Cooper.

The resolution specifically calls for the President and Congress to effectively implement the World Summit Outcome declaration on the responsibility to protect, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 16, 2005 and reaffirmed by the UN Security Council on April 28, 2006. This “responsibility to protect” principle states that “each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.” The resolution adopted by the General Assembly, and reaffirmed by the Security Council, further says that if leaders are not protecting their citizens, then the international community has the responsibility to step in and stop atrocity crimes from being committed. “This truly is a doctrine that states that we are all each others’ keepers,” said Cooper.

In the city’s resolution (full text), the Council resolved that it would:

- Strongly urge the President and Congress to commit the leadership of the United States government to effective implementation of the World Summit Outcome declaration on the responsibility to protect and to do so in part through strengthening of the preventive early warning capabilities of the federal government and to develop strategies and policies as outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (U.N. Document A/RES/60/1) and in the Security

Council Resolution 1674 (2006) to ensure that the responsibility to protect populations has both credible meaning and effect, and that the United States is in the forefront of its domestic and global application;

- That the President should initiate discussions with the permanent and non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the members of the United Nations General Assembly and in separate forums with the governments of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Union, the African Union, the Organization of American States, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations respectively, to develop coordinated strategies for regional efforts to implement the responsibility to protect, and that Congress should express its full support for these discussions by joint resolution; and

- That copies of this resolution be sent to the President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the mayor or each city member of the United States Conference of Mayors, each member of the Illinois congressional delegation, the President and Vice President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of State, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, and the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Here is the full text of the City Council resolution at the R2P Coalition website.