

NCC affirms R2P

New York, NY (September 24, 2007) The governing board of the National Council of Churches, USA, today endorsed the principle of the Responsibility to Protect. It called upon the US Government to work with the international community to implement the obligations of the Responsibility to Protect set out in the World Summit Outcome declaration adopted by the UN Security Council on April 28, 2006; and affirmed by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago.

Contact NCC News Service: 212-870-2252 | E-mail news@nccusa.org | [Most Recent Stories](#) | [NCC Home](#)

NCC Governing Board affirms

responsibility to protect the weak
Resolution on the Responsibility to Protect
Adopted by the Governing Board of the

National Council of Churches USA
September 24, 2007

On September 16, 2005, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, the United States and all other member states adopted the World Summit Outcome declaration that included the responsibility to protect (see appended text). On April 28, 2006, this commitment was reaffirmed by the UN Security Council.

The principle underlying this commitment affirms the responsibility of each individual state to protect its peoples from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. It also asserts that, should individual states not prevent such atrocity crimes within their borders, the international community has the obligation to intervene in order to protect that state's peoples.

The Christian community has always affirmed that, in response to the question "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9), we are indeed the protectors of one another. This affirmation is grounded in the prophetic call to protect the other — the strangers, the weak and the dispossessed. It was further exemplified by Jesus, who took the call for the well being of all to the level of the nations, whose people he said would be judged by whether or not they fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, took care of the sick, and visited the prisoners (Matthew 25:31-46).

The Christian community also believes that God hears the cry of the oppressed, and indeed the cry of the very blood that it spilled through injustice (Genesis 4:10). It is therefore a person's responsibility individually to protect the other. The responsibility to protect as outlined by the United Nations correlates as to our responsibility collectively as nations. As Christians, we urge our nation to take up this responsibility in our name.

Whereas:

The nations of the world committed themselves to the principle of the responsibility to protect in September 2005, and thus affirmed the related principle that the peace and security of people are not trumped by claims of national sovereignty;

The first test of this commitment is in ending the genocide in Darfur, for which the National Council of Churches USA has worked diligently to this day as a matter of conscience, through among other things advocacy efforts directed toward the US and the international community (Resolution on the Continuing Crisis in Sudan, May 18, 2004);

The National Council of Churches USA invoked the responsibility to protect in calling for US actions to urge the Philippine Government to bring an end to the extrajudicial killings that are plaguing that country (Resolution on Human Rights Violations in the Philippines, February 26, 2007);

The National Council of Churches USA recognizes the importance of consulting and working with our partner organizations and member communions' partner denominations in countries where the situation appears to warrant the application of the principle of the responsibility to protect;

The National Council of Churches USA affirms the identification of the responsibility to protect as a moral issue as stated by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, who were among the earliest supporters of this principle; and,

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Coalition has called on the people of the US and its leaders to embrace the norm of the responsibility to protect as a foreign policy priority;

Therefore:

The National Council of Churches USA endorses the Responsibility to Protect and, recognizing that war is always a failure to find peaceful resolution to conflict, encourages the US Government and the international community always to first seek non-violent means of intervention, and exhaust all opportunities for peaceful resolution, as a means of protecting those threatened by genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity;

The National Council of Churches USA calls upon the US Government to effectively implement the obligations of the R2P, in ways that reflect the international consensus on the criteria for action, and to take leadership within the

international community to meet these obligations;

The National Council of Churches USA calls upon the US Government to work with the international community in ensuring that their common commitment to the responsibility to protect is met, especially through the strengthening of early warning capabilities so that such atrocity crimes might be prevented in the future;

The National Council of Churches USA calls upon its member churches to affirm the principle of the responsibility to protect, to support efforts that lead to the implementation of the international commitment to this principle, to join together with other Americans in efforts, such as those of the R2P Coalition, to promote a US government commitment to uphold the responsibility to protect both domestically and globally, and to educate our collective constituencies on the religious and moral imperatives inherent in this principle.

Policy Base:

“Pillars of Peace for the 21st Century,” November 11, 1999.

“The United Nations and World Community,” May 4, 1977.

“Imperatives of Peace and Responsibilities of Power,” February 21, 1968.

“Toward a Family of Nations Under God – Agenda of Action for Peace,” June 2, 1960.

Appended Text:

Excerpt from UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/1

“Each and individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.

The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out” (para. 138 and 139).

NCC News contact: Dan Webster, 212.870.2252, NCCnews@nccusa.org