

Open Letter to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Kyrgyzstan

23 June 2010

On behalf of the undersigned civil society organizations, **we urge Members of the Security Council to take immediate measures to address the ongoing crisis in Kyrgyzstan, as they have committed to do under the Responsibility to Protect.**

We believe that the Responsibility to Protect is clearly applicable to the situation in Kyrgyzstan. The Responsibility to Protect, a norm endorsed unanimously by all Member States, is intended to ensure the protection of populations from the worst crimes and violations known to humankind, namely genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. In recent statements, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed shock at the “scale of inter-ethnic violence”, making special mention of “indiscriminate killings, including of children, and rapes” occurring on the basis of ethnicity.

Moreover, the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect issued a statement characterising the violence as “targeted” and resulting in “the mass displacement of Uzbeks from South Kyrgyzstan”, which “could amount to ethnic cleansing”. This is the first time these two senior officials have made a public call for the “international community to operationalize its ‘responsibility to protect’ by providing coordinated and timely assistance to stop the violence and its incitement.” As of 18 June, the UN has reported over 400,000 displaced, more than 200 fatalities to as much as ten times more as accounted by the Kyrgyz government and estimates of around 1,800 injured. The interim government of Kyrgyzstan acknowledged its inability to protect its population from ethnic violence in the early days of this crisis, and it remains in need of significant support to exercise its responsibilities and respond to the continuing crisis.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, all UN Member States have recognized the responsibility of each State to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing and the international community’s important role in assisting states to exercise that responsibility and to helping states under stress to prevent crisis from occurring. States also committed themselves to helping protect populations from such crimes through both peaceful means and, when necessary, through collective action should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their own populations. These obligations were reaffirmed in Security Council Resolution 1674 on the Protection of Civilian in Armed Conflict and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/63/308,

With regard to Kyrgyzstan, the international community should urgently fulfill its obligations under the Responsibility to Protect. We appeal for the Security Council to take immediate measures under the UN Charter, in cooperation with relevant regional organizations, to halt the violence and

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preserve international peace and security. We call for the Security Council to assist the interim government in addressing the ongoing crisis and in preventing further escalation of violence, in particular by providing an international stabilization mission with a policing mandate to secure humanitarian access, provide security for displaced persons to return home, and build confidence. We also urge Security Council members to refer to the Responsibility to Protect in any subsequent resolutions or statements on the situation in Kyrgyzstan.

Your actions can save the lives of thousands of men, women and children in Kyrgyzstan. You can make a difference by operationalizing the Responsibility to Protect.

Sincerely,

Citizens for Global Solutions (Washington, USA)
East Africa Law Society (Arusha, Tanzania)
Genocide Alert (Köln, Germany)
Global Action to Prevent War (New York, USA)
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (New York, USA)
Henry Jackson Society (London, United Kingdom)
Human Rights Watch (New York, USA)
International Crisis Group (Brussels, Belgium)
International Refugees Rights Initiative (Kampala, Uganda; New York, USA)
Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)
Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (Montreal, Canada)
OMUNGA (Lobito, Angola)
Pan African Lawyers' Union (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
Society for threatened Peoples International (Göttingen, Germany)
United Nations Association of Sweden (Stockholm, Sweden)
United Nations Association of the United Kingdom (London, United Kingdom)
West Africa Civil Society Institute (Accra, Ghana)
World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (New York and The Hague)
World Federation of United Nations Associations (New York and Geneva)
Zentrum für Politische Schönheit (Berlin, Germany)

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