

PROPOSER

Standing Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns

ENDORSED BYSPONSORED BYPAGE NUMBER(S) FOR REFERENCE

Blue Book: p. 101; Constitution &amp; Canons: p. N/A

HOUSE OF INITIAL ACTION / LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

HD / National and International Concerns

CURRENT FILING STATUS

Filed

REVIEW STATUS (PB&F, CONSTITUTION, CANONS)

None required

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 77th General Convention  
 2 affirms that our Lord's commandment to love thy neighbor implies a binding  
 3 moral responsibility on sovereign states to protect their populations from mass  
 4 atrocities, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against  
 5 humanity, as defined by international law; and be it further  
 6 *Resolved*, That the General Convention welcomes the United Nations'  
 7 establishment of the responsibility to protect as an international norm, and its  
 8 efforts to uphold it through collective action when individual states fail to do so;  
 9 and be it further  
 10 *Resolved*, That the General Convention commends the President of the United  
 11 States for adopting the responsibility to protect as a principle of United States  
 12 foreign policy; and be it further  
 13 *Resolved*, That the General Convention most strongly discourages the abuse of  
 14 this norm to rationalize military actions in sovereign states for political ends; and  
 15 be it further  
 16 *Resolved*, That the General Convention encourages the Presiding Bishop through  
 17 the Office of Government Relations to join the International Coalition for the  
 18 Responsibility to Protect so as to shape the continued development of  
 19 precautionary principles for this norm and promote its faithful implementation;  
 20 and be it further  
 21 *Resolved*, That the General Convention urges all Episcopalians to understand and  
 22 reflect upon the principle of the responsibility to protect, and to advocate for its  
 23 adherence by their respective governmental leaders.

EXPLANATION

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a moral response to the tragic persistence of mass atrocities such as genocide in the world today. The development of this international norm over the past decade bears witness to the historic genocides committed against Native Americans during the period of European colonization, against the Jewish people and other persecuted minorities during the Holocaust, and against innocent victims in Rwanda, Bosnia, Congo and Darfur, among other regions in conflict.

In 2005, heads of state and government established R2P as an international norm at the United Nations World Summit, to be understood as a solemn promise made by leaders of every country to all persons endangered by mass atrocities. The United Nations Security Council subsequently reaffirmed R2P. President Barack Obama

adopted R2P as a principle of United States foreign policy in his 2010 National Security Strategy. To ensure the norm's proper application, and to prevent its abuse, several precautionary principles governing R2P have been discussed, although they have yet to be explicitly endorsed by the United Nations. These precautionary principles would include: mass atrocities must include large-scale actual or threatened loss of life; the purpose of the intervention must be to prevent or halt suffering; military force must be the last resort; the means must be commensurate with the ends sought; and the intervention must have a reasonable prospect of success.

The formal adoption of the basic principles for faithful implementation of R2P is a task that faces the International Coalition, in which the resolution encourages the Presiding Bishop to participate. When these basic principles as adopted are not observed, it is the responsibility of the International Coalition and other moral voices to object.