THE COALITION’S COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF RtoP

As NGOs, we endorse the Responsibility to Protect as a new international security and human rights norm to address the international community’s failure to prevent and stop genocides, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

We agree to support and uphold the following RtoP principles: The Responsibility to Protect expresses the world’s responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The Coalition commits to support the essential elements of the Responsibility to Protect norm agreed to in Paragraphs 138-139 of the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document.

1. States have the primary obligation to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. This responsibility also includes prevention of these crimes, including incitement.

2. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility.

3. The international community should support the UN in establishing an early warning capability.

4. The international community also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means under Chapter VI and VIII of the UN Charter to help protect populations threatened by these crimes.

5. When a state “manifestly fails” in its protection responsibilities, and peaceful means are inadequate, the international community must take stronger measures including Chapter VII measures under the UN Charter, including but not limited to the collective use of force authorized by the Security Council.

In addition,

The Coalition supports a full spectrum of responsibility: from the responsibility to prevent, to react, and to rebuild.

The Coalition believes the Responsibility to Protect requires the international community to recognize that conflict affects women and men differently. This is an essential first step in developing gendered responses to conflict, empowering women in the prevention and ending of conflicts, and the rebuilding of communities after conflict.
Based on this common understanding of RtoP, Coalition Members and NGO Supporters agree to:

1. Promote these RtoP principles among NGOs, governments, policy-makers and the public.
2. Ensure that RtoP is restricted to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as articulated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.
3. Defend against RtoP being interpreted as a new version of military humanitarian intervention.
4. Guard against the abuse of the norm by governments, regional organizations or international organizations.

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