

## The Status of the “Responsibility to Protect (RtoP)” Doctrine in Light of the Conflicts in Libya and Syria

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### **Abstract**

In 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty introduced a new doctrine of the “Responsibility to Protect (RtoP)”, which signified an obligation of each state to protect its population from mass atrocities occurring in that state, as well as an obligation on the part of international community to offer such protection if the state in question fails to fulfill its duty. The doctrine of RtoP was subsequently endorsed by states in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, though it was formulated more restrictively in comparison to the 2001 Report. In 2011 a conflict broke out in Libya between its ruler Muammar Gaddafi and the protesters against his rule. Government forces were brutal in their attempt to quell the protests and it was not long before different international bodies started to report mass violations of human rights. Surprisingly, the UN Security Council was not deadlocked by veto and passed the Resolution 1973, which invoked the RtoP principle and authorized the use of force. Supporters of RtoP hailed such an application of the principle and believed that the case of Libya was just a beginning of a successful bringing RtoP to life. Such predictions turned out to be premature. Not long after the Libyan conflict, the one in Syria began. Although Syrian people was faced with the same humanitarian disaster as Libyan did, the Security Council could not agree on passing of the resolution which would authorize the use of force to halt human rights violations. Two crises are being analyzed, as well as reasons behind such a disparate reaction of the Security Council in very similar circumstances.

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