

# SAIMUN 2017 Research Report

**Committee:** General Assembly 4

**Issue:** The question of stabilizing conflict zones via military intervention

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## 1. Description of Issue

When there is a crisis, such as a genocide, what can be done to stop it? Is it effective for foreign powers to send in their own troops, through the United Nations Security Council, to sort out such problems? And with what motivation? How will the United Nations be sure that the countries send troops to protect civilians rather than to take advantage of a critical situation to increase its own power? Furthermore, do these intentions really matter if the military intervention is effective in stabilizing conflict zones? These are the questions we must ask before coming to a consensus on the ethics and suitability of stabilizing conflict zones through military intervention. Military intervention, in these situations, is also known as ‘humanitarian intervention’. When is it *humanitarian* intervention and when is it simply a global power seizing its opportunity through the chaos?

Even with all of this controversy, it cannot be denied that military intervention worked in places like Somalia and Kosovo in the 1990s. On the other hand, it is as equally hard to deny that military intervention can also make matters worse than what they would have been without it in cases such as the genocide in Rwanda. In these cases, one may wonder: what can be determining factors on whether an intervention will succeed or fail? Most interventions usually share one goal, and that is to end the crisis (at least in short term). Using Kosovo as an example, military intervention helped end humanitarian disasters that were caused due to the more authoritative side abusing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights against its weaker adversaries.

So what has the United Nations done so far on this topic? In December of 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) introduced a concept of a common “responsibility to protect” in crises such as genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes, as well as ethnic cleansing. In September of 2005, heads of states gathered at the United Nations headquarters for the Millennium+5 Summit and approved the outcome document. The document does not only encourage peaceful means to protect populations, it also accepts that when the need arises, member states should “take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate”. 12 January, 2009 marked the implementation of the

Responsibility to Protect. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon summarizes the three-pillar proposal to implement the R2P:

- *Pillar one: every state has the responsibility to protect its populations from four mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.*
- *Pillar two: the wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility.*
- *Pillar three: if a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action, in a timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Charter.*

While all states and governments have adopted the doctrine at the 2005 World Summit, the need to keep states from misusing the doctrine was heavily emphasised in the linked document. He furthermore proposed a strategy that focuses on prevention through education, saving lives through “timely and decisive action” rather than on “arbitrary, sequential or graduated policy”. On 25 July, 2012, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon released a report that focuses on Responsibility to Protect’s (R2P) third pillar and the use of force.

In conclusion, the question of the use of military intervention in order to stabilize conflict zones is one that is highly controversial but vital in maintaining the peace and security of our nations. It is essential that we come to a consensus on who, when and how military intervention can be utilised in such situations of crisis - or if it should be utilised at all.

## 2. Definition of Key Terms

### **Military/humanitarian intervention**

Military intervention, or armed humanitarian intervention, is the use of military force to address people who are extraordinarily suffering (in cases such as genocide, or similar large-scale violations of human rights) that have resulting from either their government’s own actions or its failure to act. This intervention is most often conducted without the consent of the nation that is in violation.

### **Conflict zones**

An area in which conflict and/or war is being waged.

### **Just War Theory**

A doctrine (or tradition) of military ethics with the purpose of ensuring a ‘morally justifiable’ war through pre-set criteria that must be met for a war to be considered ‘just’. This theory also supports the idea that although war is a terrible thing, it is not always the worst option available. The criteria is split into two categories, and within the two categories are the criteria that must be met for a just war:

Jus ad bellum (in latin, meaning ‘the right to go to war’):

- Just cause: war can only be waged for a just cause (to correct a public evil or violation of human rights of huge populations, to protect large numbers of innocent lives, etc.)
- Comparative justice: the suffering that is experienced by one party of the war must ‘significantly outweigh’ that experienced by the other
- Competent authority: “A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice. Dictatorships (e.g. Hitler’s REgime) or deceptive military actions (e.g. the 1968 US bombing of Cambodia) are typically considered as violations of this criterion. The importance of this condition is key. Plainly, we cannot have a genuine process of judging a just war within a system that represses the processes of genuine justice. A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice” ([source](#)).
- Right intention: force can only be used if it is done so with the right intention (similar to the just cause). For example, maintaining economies or material gains are not right intentions.
- Probability of success: force cannot be used in an obviously futile cause.
- Proportionality: the benefits of waging the war must be proportionate to the expected harms.

Jus in bello (in latin, meaning ‘right conduct within war’):

- Distinction: there must be a distinction between enemy combatants and noncombatants (innocent civilians) that are caught up in such situations that they did not create. For example, the bombing of civilian areas that do not have legitimate military targets is prohibited.
- Proportionality: harm that may be caused to civilians or their property must not be larger than the expected military advantage.
- Military necessity: attacks must be intended to defeat the enemy, with legitimate military objective.
- Fair treatment of prisoners of war.
- Malum in se (in Latin, meaning ‘evil in itself’): cannot use means that are considered evil, such as mass rape or using weapons whose effects cannot be controlled (nuclear weapons, for example).

### **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)**

A global political commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. There are three pillars:

1. *The State carries the primary responsibility for protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and their incitement;*<sup>[1]</sup>
2. *The international community has a responsibility to encourage and assist States in fulfilling this responsibility;*<sup>[2]</sup>
3. *The international community has a responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic humanitarian and other means to protect populations from these crimes. If a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take collective action to protect populations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.*<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Genocide**

The intentional act of destroying a group of people (ethnic, national, racial, or political) entirely or partly.

### **War crimes**

An act that is in violation of the law of war and accounts to individual criminal responsibility. Examples may include: intentional killing of civilians, torture, hostage taking, rape, the use of child soldiers, etc.

### **Ethnic cleansing**

The systematic forced removal of ethnic and/or religious groups from an area by a much more powerful ethnic group through ways such as forced migration, deportation, intimidation, or even mass murder.

### **Crimes against humanity**

Certain acts that are committed against certain civilian groups. The acts of crimes are similar to those listed as war crimes, but crimes against humanity can be committed during any period of time.

## **3. Timeline of Key Events**

Below are only some examples of foreign military intervention (or lack thereof). Many of these military operations have been by the United States of America.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of event</b>
1950 - 1953	[Korea] North Korea invades South Korea, supported by the People's Republic of China. United Nations forces, mainly American troops, are sent to protect South Korea.
1961	[Cuba] The United States carries out the Bay of Pigs invasion in attempts to overthrow Fidel Castro.
1961 - 1973	[Vietnam] The United States supports South Vietnam in 1961, but withdraws its troops in 1973 in attempts to stop North Vietnam's attempts to impose communism.
April 6, 1994	[Rwanda] Rwandan President Habyarimana and the Burundian President killed, reportedly the catalyst of the Rwandan genocide.
April 8, 1994	[Rwanda] Canadian General Romeo Dallaire (also head of the United Nations peacekeeping), requested the doubling of his force.
April 9 - 11, 1994	[Rwanda] France and Belgium send troops to rescue their own citizens.

	American civilians airlifted out. No Rwandans rescued.
April 15, 1994	[Rwanda] After ten of its soldiers are reportedly tortured and murdered, Belgium withdraws its troops from the United Nations force.
April 19, 1994	[Rwanda] The United Nations Security Council votes to withdraw ninety percent of its peacekeepers in Rwanda. The Human Rights Watch calls on the UN to use the word 'genocide'. If the situation was labelled a 'genocide', it would have legally obliged the UN to act.
April 21, 1994	[Rwanda] The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) is reduced to 270 soldiers.
May 5, 1994	[Rwanda] The estimated death toll goes up to 232,000
May 17, 1994	[Rwanda] In less than two weeks, the estimated death toll goes up to 328,000. The United Nations finally asks the United States of America to provide fifty armoured personnel carriers. They debate for weeks who would pay for them, and the carriers do not arrive in Rwanda until July.
June 22, 1994	[Rwanda] The UNSC approves a 2-month French mission.
July 17, 1994	[Rwanda] The genocide is over, with an estimated death toll of 800,000 after approximately 100 days.
November, 1994	[Rwanda] The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is set up in Tanzania after being approved by the UNSC.
October, 2001	[Afghanistan] US-led bombing of Afghanistan begins after September 11 attacks
December, 2009	[Afghanistan] US President Barack Obama unveils new strategy, boosts US troop numbers by 30,000 (total of 100,000) and says that the US will begin to withdraw its forces by 2011
January - July, 2011	[Syria] The Arab Spring in Syria - protests, civil uprising, defections

April - May, 2012	[Syria] Ceasefire attempt, failed to repeated vetoes from Russia and China
August, 2012	[Afghanistan] US hands over Bagram high-security jail to the Afghan government
June, 2013	[Afghanistan] Afghanistan's army is given, by NATO forces, command of all military and security operations
June, 2014	[Syria] The start of the United States' airstrikes
December, 2014	[Afghanistan] NATO formally ends its 13-year combat mission in Afghanistan
March, 2015	[Afghanistan] US President Barack Obama says the US will delay its troop withdrawals
September, 2015	[Syria] The start of Russian airstrikes
August, 2016	[Syria] The start of Turkish military intervention
October, 2016	[Afghanistan] the Islamic State of the Levant (ISIL) emerges as a growing security threat
December, 2016	[Syria] The start of Russian and Turkish backed ceasefire

#### 4. Positions of Key Member Nations and Other Bodies on the Issue

##### **United States of America**

The United States of America is one of the most militarily involved nations in the world. The Global Policy Forum has reported that, since the 1800s, there has been over 150 US military and clandestine operations in foreign countries. Furthermore, the United States of America has been a particularly avid supporter of R2P with David Dunn, a General Assembly US representative, described R2P as “a goal that is fundamental to achieving international peace and security”, which emphasises the United States of America's position towards the policy. It is clear that the USA is a strong advocate of military intervention, but whether the nation decides to provide humanitarian aid or not is heavily dependent on its leadership. For example, during the Rwandan genocide, US military intervention was very delayed and was only carried out after heated debates with the United Nations. It is important to note that the USA is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, meaning that once the USA (or any P5 nation) member says no to (or vetoes) a resolution, then it is not carried out even with the majority of the

house's votes.

### **United Nations Security Council**

The Security Council is the UN body with “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security”. With 5 permanent members (the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, the French Republic, and the United Kingdom) as well as 10 other rotating members, the UNSC creates resolutions that are (typically) enforced by UN peacekeepers. Most of the time, during crises, nations come together at the UNSC in order to come up with a resolution to the issue. Further, the resolutions typically request foreign military aid.

### **Humans Rights Watch**

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an international non-governmental organization whose headquarters are in New York City, with office locations in Amsterdam, Beirut, Berlin, Brussels, Chicago, Geneva, Johannesburg, London, Los Angeles, Moscow, Nairobi, Paris, San Francisco, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Washington D.C., and Zurich. The HRW conducts research on and advocates for human rights. NGOs such as the HRW can provide detailed reports and suggest solutions to international crises without bias or ulterior motives.

### **Amnesty International**

Amnesty International (or more commonly known as Amnesty) is also a non-governmental organisation that focuses on human rights. The organisation’s objective is “to conduct research and generate action to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights, and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated”. Amnesty can mobilise public opinion in order to place pressure on governments that it deems are letting abuse take place. Amnesty, much like the HRW, can work towards punishing those who have been guilty of human rights abuse without ulterior motives.

## **5. Suggested Solutions**

### **Criterion**

One solution could be to create a criterion that would assist countries in assessing whether it would be best to stabilise conflict zones through military intervention or to just take a step back (or to build upon the previously mentioned Just War Theory). While some countries already do have such criterion in place, whether it decides to provide humanitarian aid heavily depends on its leadership and their opinion. Furthermore, an issue with a simple criterion would be the fact that no war, no crisis is the same. It will be impossible to use the same criterion for every single situation. If there is a criterion, it should be easily adaptable to different situations and always changing to keep up with geopolitical realities.

### **Reform of the United Nations Security Council**

Another, perhaps a more long-term, solution would be the reorganisation of the United Nations Security Council - more specifically, a reconsideration of veto powers. Oftentimes, the execution of solutions is delayed because of a permanent member’s veto. With different or no veto powers, it is likely that the United Nations Security Council would work more efficiently, saving precious time during crises. However, this reform and its consequences must be carefully considered and debated upon before its

implementation.

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