# THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: INTERROGATING THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA

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**ABSTRACT**
*The Syrian crisis which began in 2011 has left in its trail series of humanitarian catastrophe that has begged for solution. The crisis has decimated the country's population since it started in 2011, provoking serious humanitarian crisis. The United Nations Charter gives responsibility to international community to use appropriate diplomatic and other peaceful measure in accordance with Chapter VI and VIII of the Charter to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crime against humanity. In the same vein, the responsibility to protect populations from genocide and other gross forms of human rights abuse emerged in 2005 as an important global principle during the UN World Summit Outcome Document. This article examines the UN Charter and the responsibility to protect principle and x-rayed how it has impacted the Syrian crisis vis-à-vis humanitarian crisis. The paper questioned why the case of Syria is different despite having been implemented in Libya before. The paper concludes that the case of Syria is different because she is backed by a superpower, Russia and the fact that politics thrive on interest, the other superpower stand to gain nothing from Syria.*

## Introduction

Violent conflict in the Middle East have taken a massive humanitarian toll on countries like Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Palestine and Yemen in the past and in recent times and have disrupted the political, economic and social order of this already tumultuous region. The Arab Spring of 2010 and what followed in terms of bloody clashes, directly or indirectly in most Arab states and state weakening (as in the case of Syria), demonstrate fragility of many of the individual regime in the Arab world as well as the importance of the collective orders of the region.

The endemic conflicting situation in the Middle East and other Arab nations is taking its toll on Syria. The fact that this was once a very peaceful nation, at least after the last Arab-Israel war in 1973, calls for serious concern. Despite the fact that the Arab Spring which began in Tunisia in 2010, swept through countries like Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Syria and Yemen; and in all these countries except the last two, the tempo has died down, it calls to question the multifarious causes to the crisis. Not only has the conflict refused to subside, it has also defied diplomatic initiatives and overtures to end it(Haynes,2013:170-188).

At its formation in 1945, the United Nations made humanitarianism one of its core purposes, and this was codified with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the UN General Assembly. This declaration made states the primary guarantors of individual rights, protection and safety from harm. Article 51 of the United Charter mandated the UN Security Council to meet and take necessary measures to safeguard the lives of citizens of members' countries. The organization channeled the responsibility for humanitarian assistance to its agencies such as – International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) etc. (Basu,2004:26-28,191-200).

In the same vein, humanitarian intervention has been given due recognition by the international law. The law specifically mandated nations to treat its citizens with outmost decency within its domestic jurisdiction. According to Umozurike, (2005:198), failure to protect its subjects by domestic government can lead to external intervention. Thus, the right for humanitarian intervention has been recognized and acknowledged by international law. Since its recognition, there have been attempted cases of interventions. Therefore, the responsibility to protect was aimed at reinvigorating this and applied to the latter.

### The Cause(s) of the Syrian Crisis

While the Arab spring was seen as the immediate cause of the crisis, other factors listed below can be factored as the remote causes of the Syrian crisis.

### Discredited Ideology

Syria's Baath party is regarded as the founder of "Arab socialism", an ideological current that merged state-led economy with Pan Arab capitalism. However, by 2000, the party ideology was reduced to an empty shell, discredited by lost wars with Israel and a crippled economy. Upon taking over, he tried to modernize the regime, invoking the Chinese model of economic reform, but times and other factors were running against him. He lacked the vision to understand that certain aspects of the Chinese reforms could not be applied in Syria because of regional and cultural context (Manfreda, 2020).

### Drought

Drought was one of the major reasons behind the crippled economy. Persistent drought had devastated farm lands in the north eastern Syria, affecting more than a million people in 2008. According to the United Nations, about 75% of the Syria's farms failed, and 86% of the livestock died between 2006-2011. These impoverished farmers flocked into the rapidly expanding urban slums. The anger at the lack of government help, coupled with the new pretentious wealth of the rich increased the feeling of marginalization and powerlessness.

### Population Growth

Syria's rapidly growing young population was always going to be a demographic time bomb waiting to explode. The country had one of the highest growing populations in the world, and was ranked ninth by the UN as one of the fastest-growing counties in the world between 2005 and 2010. Rapid growing population meant that there were fewer jobs, less food and more were left unemployed thereby leading to resentment amongst the people (Manfreda, 2020).

### Corruption

The phrase that Syria is "seething with corruption" is an understatement of sorts. Whether it was a license to open small shop or a car registration, well placed payment was the

way to go in Syria. For those without the money and good contacts, it was grievances against the state. Ironically, the system was so corrupt to the extent that even anti-Assad rebels bought weapons from government forces, and families bribed the authorities to release relatives that were detained during the uprising. Those close to the regime took advantage of the widespread corruption to further their businesses. Illegal businesses such as drug cartel and smuggling rings became the norm and the regime kept quiet (Manfreda, 2020).

**Increase in State Repression**

Syria's vast intelligence services, the famous Mukhabarat, penetrated all spheres of society. The fear of the state was one of the reasons why many Syrians simply took the regime as a fact of life. But the outrage over the brutal response of the security forces to the outbreak of peaceful protest in the spring of 2011, documented and spread all across, through social media, helped generate ill feeling against the government.

**Minority Rule**

Syria is a majority Sunni Muslim country but the top positions in the security apparatus and government were in the hands of the Alawite, a Shite Muslim minority which Asaad family belong. A significant part of the Sunni still resent the fact that so much power is monopolized by a handful of Alawite families. While these sectarian differences may not directly be the driving force behind the uprising, the combination of a majority Sunni protest movement and an Alawite dominated military added to the tension in religiously mixed areas such as the city of Homs. (Manfreda, 2020).

**Tunisia Effect**

Maybe the wall of fear in Syria would not have been broken had it not been Mohammed Bouazzi, a Tunisian street vendor whose self-immolation in December; 2010 triggered a wave of anti-government uprising across the Arab world. Watching the fall of Tunisian and Egyptian regimes in early 2011, made millions in Syria aware that change was possible for the first time in decades (Ghanem, 2016: 39-64).

**Actors and Players in the Syrian Crisis**

Internally, the crisis proved a magnate for militant Islamists, including Al-Queda and this made the opposition to remain fractured both militarily and politically. This affected or hindered foreign support and efforts to end the crisis. Among the rebel groups in the Syrian crisis were – Syria Revolutionary and opposition force formed in 2012, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Shem, Supreme Military Council, Free Syrian Army and Islamic State etc. The polarization of the opposition hampered quick resolution of the crisis (Laub, 2014).

At the regional level, Assad was supported by Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon – politically, logistically and militarily. At the regional level, the rebels were getting support from Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia because these countries supported the removal of Assad. They supplied arms and ammunitions and military training to the rebels. (Phillips, 2016: 80-82).

Internationally, Syrian government was majorly backed by Russia and China. Before the conflict, Russia was Syria's primary sponsor for decades and even during his father, Hafez reign as Syrian leader. Together, Russia and China provided aid and ammunitions to Syria, and also train its personnel. On the other hand, Syrian opposition receives support from the United States and European Union. The United States interest in the crisis was tied to the post-Cold War still evolving mission of "maintaining peace and freedom around the world as well as its role as the world superpower" (Phillips, 2016: 82-84).

## Conceptual Clarification

**Responsibility to Protect**

This can be defined as the responsibility of states as well as international community to protect civilians from human right violations. It emerged from the human security framework which places the protection of human right at the centre of international peace and security norms and practice and was meant as a preventive tool. The onus was placed on the international community to assist states in fulfilling their responsibility to protect their citizens. If a state fails, or is failing, then the responsibility falls on international community. Since R2P was agreed to by the international community at the 2005 World Summit, the UN and its member states have sought to identify the precipitating factors that leads to violence, conflict and atrocities, and develop tools to address them before the situation reaches crisis point (Annan,2005).

The R2P developed out of the needs for a clear and coherent framework to respond to intrastate mass atrocity crimes. The inconsistent

and uncoordinated manner in which the UN and international community have exercised the contestable right of humanitarian intervention led to failed, apathetic, or incompetent responses to humanitarian catastrophes in many countries of the world. The inability of the world to reach a consensus on the appropriate response to humanitarian crisis before the loss of enormous amount of life has highlighted the need for a well-defined internationally acceptable and coherent set of parameters to guide the effective international responses to imminent or occurring mass atrocity (Ban Ki-Moon,2012).

R2P sets out the broader responsibility that states have toward their own citizens and the responsibilities states have as members of the international community and the responsibilities that institutions such as the UN Security Council have in preventing, responding to, and rebuilding after mass atrocity crimes(Evans,2012). Even though the prevention of mass atrocity crimes is the most important aspect of R2P, it does not reconcile the tensions that exist among parties in dispute. The case of Libya which is still enmeshed in violence conflict after the application R2P readily to comes to mind. R2P seeks to track the international responses to humanitarian and developing crisis within countries. The preventative tool delves into the action of key regional actors/organizations, the UN and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The R2P tool has three active pillars-

**Pillar 1**: Every state has the responsibility to protect its populations from the four mass atrocity crimes

**Pillar 2:** The wider international community has the responsibility to encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility

**Pillar 3**: If a state is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take appropriate collective action in the timely and decisive manner and in accordance with the UN Charter (Welsh, 2019: 53-72)

**United Nation Charter**

The UN Charter is the basic norm governing international relations and also the cornerstone for maintaining international order in the world. Chapter 1 of the Charter lay out the principles of the United Nations. The essence of the principles is to bring about settlement of dispute by peaceful means, to take collective measures for the suppression of acts of aggression, and to remove threats to peace. Article 4 in Chapter 11 warn against member states using force or interfering in the internal matter of sister nation. Article 7 of Chapter 11warn the UN of interfering in a member state's matter, but should rather bring the state and the matter to the UN for settlement. But chapter VII states that States cannot intervene in a member state matter except the UN determine the existence of threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42 to maintain or restore international peace and security(Xingo,2012).

Following from the above, the UN Charter does not give the Security Council power to push for regime change as it was done in Libya, where Resolution 1973, which authorized a no-fly-zone in order to protect civilian was abused by US and NATO to effect regime change in Libya. That was a gross abuse of the doctrine of the R2P.

**UN Legal Status of Responsibility to Protect**

R2P is often perceived from the angle of humanitarian intervention through the use of the military. In doing this, they overlook the broader goals of the doctrine-first state responsibility and second the responsibility of the international community to assist states to fulfill this responsibility. While some activists may be attracted to R2P as a legal tool, the consequence of doing so involve redefining sovereignty and expanding the scope of potential intervention and these options are not tenable in most of the states. More than a legal framework, R2P is conceived as a framework for the prevention and containment of massive human right violations(Halt,2012). The architects of the 2001 commission document which established the R2P incorporated legal, political and moral language in order to define a vast and persuasive set of responsibilities to appeal to all levels of the international community.

This far-reaching framework cannot be said to accurately constitute a norm of international law, not only because it developed outside the normative vacuum but also within an existing and comprehensive legal framework. It comprised of UN Charter and customary legal documents such as the Genocide Convention and the statute of the International Criminal Court of Justice. Even though R2P cannot be said to lack legal character having conform to the

document of international law as contend in the Article 38 of the International Court of Justice, it is a political commitment towards existing, but contested legal responsibilities best articulated in its current (Bellamy and Raikes,2010).

**Humanitarian Crisis**

This can be defined as a singular event or series of events that threatened the health, safety or wellbeing of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large area. In the above situation, local, national and international responses are necessary to tackle it. Each humanitarian crisis is caused by different factors and as such humanitarian crisis requires a unique response targeted towards the specific sector affected. Humanitarian crisis can either be natural disaster, man-made disasters or complex emergencies. In such cases, complex emergences occur as a result of several factors or events that prevents a large group of people from accessing their fundamental needs, such as food, clean water or safe shelter (www.globalhealthciences.ucf.edu).

Examples of humanitarian crisis include armed conflicts, epidemics, famine, natural disasters and other major emergencies. There is no simple categorization of humanitarian crisis, rather different people or communities and even agencies tend to define it depending on the situation that confronts them.(www.ifre.org).

**Refugee Crisis**

This can be referred to as difficulties and dangerous situations in the reception of large groups of forcibly displaced people. This can happen as a result of incidents in their country of origin, or other displacement or problems while on the move. It can also result from the problems in the host country after arrival due to large groups of displaced persons, asylum seekers in that country. Among the common causes of refugee crisis are civil war, human rights abuses, environmental disaster and climatic changes. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, as of January, 2020, 79. 5 million (41.3 million internally, 25.9 million registered; 20.4 million of these under UNHCR, 5.5 million under United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 3.5 million asylum seekers had been displaced worldwide (www.unher.org).

**Syrian Peace Process**

This is the initiatives and plans that has been put in place to resolve the Syrian civil war. These peace processes have been moderated by Arab league, the United Nations special envoys on Syria, Russia, Friends of Syria and Western powers. The parties in the conflict negotiations are the government of Syria and the opposition groups in the war.

**Arab League and Russian Initiatives**

The first attempt to find a lasting solution to the impasse and bring stability to the Middle East nation began in 2011, when the Arab League launched two initiatives in 2011 and 2012, without much success. Russia also in 2012 and 2013 held talks in Moscow, which the opposition refuse to attend, vowing never to discuss with Assad government.

**Geneva 1 Conference**

The Geneva 1 conference on Syria or the "Action Group Conference" was held in June, 2012 in Geneva. It was initiated by the former UN Secretary General, Koffi Annan. Kofi Annan later withdrew from the negotiation, sighting insubordination from the parties in the conflict. (Orazgaliveva,2015).

**The Geneva 11 Convention**

The Geneva 11 Convention was a UN backed initiative in 2014, aimed at bringing peace to Syria. Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN peace envoy to Syria after the resignation of Koffi Annan tried to incorporate powerful nations like United States, Russia, Britain and France into the peace process, but at the end no agreement was reached.

**Astana Opposition Conference1**

There was also the Astana opposition conference of 2015 in which the opposition agreed for an election in 2016 but Assad led government rejected it. The conference was mediated by Kazakhstan, Deputy Foreign Minister, Askar Mussinov and the Director of the French Centre for Political and Foreign Affairs, Fabien without success Baussart (Cengiz, 2020).

**Vienna Peace Initiatives 1 and 11**

In 2015, there was the Vienna Initiative put forward by the Foreign Ministers of US, Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia to find a lasting peace in Syria. The first round of the talk in October, 2015, comprised all the big five in the UN Security Council and other 15 countries. The second round of the Vienna talk held in November, 2015, harped on the need for Syrian

government and opposition to meet for formal ceasefire and resolution of the conflict.A day after, Syrian government released a statement that she can't negotiate with foreign terrorists.

**Geneva 111 and 1V Syrian Peace Conventions**

After the failure of the Vienna peace talk, the UN peace conference started again in Geneva, in what can be said to be Geneva III,in January, 2016. At this conference, the government and opposition refused to sit on the same table for discussion and again in 2017, the Geneva IV, February-March, 2017, was convened for talks between Syrian opposition and government under the auspices of the United Nations but ended in dead-lock (Ziadeh, 2017).

**The Astana 11 Peace Talk**

Meanwhile, by January, 2017, the Astana peace talk was organized and it ran through to September, 2018, as Russia, Iran and Turkey tried hard to broker peace deal between the government and the oppositions in Syria to no avail. The Sochi National Dialogue on Syria convened by the Russia government which had over 1,500 delegates from both sides failed to unlock the deadlock. The ninth round of the Astana Peace process took place in March, 2018. As at December 2019, attempts to reconcile Syrians was on going. (Cengiz, 2020).

## Methodology

Before the outbreak of the violence in 2011, there was tension everywhere in Syria because of Bashar Assad repressive policies The study adopts the narrative and descriptive method of data analysis in the unfolding events in Syria. Using content analysis, humanitarian efforts, conflict resolution conventions, reports was complimented, using relevant books and journals articles. The articles utilized and analyzed the failure of R2P experiment in Libya and how it has frustrated its implementation in Syria.

## Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts liberalism theory to explain humanitarian intervention in Syria. The theory emphasized the need for the well-being citizens and their rights, protections of civilians from human right violation such as genocide and crime against humanity. However, it emphasized that such intervention should not be undertaken unilaterally, but rather multilaterally with the authorization of the UN Security Council. This is because liberal internationalists believed that multilaterism prevents great powers from pursuing 'national interest' rather than humanitarian objectives in intervention, which is the hallmark of liberalism (Charvet and Kaczynska,2008:3).

**Politics and Interest in the Application of Responsibility to Protect**

As pointed out by Paris (2014), R2P intervention is mostly motivated by self-interest. The political commitment to accomplish the objectives is fueled by interest and politics among the powerful nations in the UN Security Council. Also, Nurazzaman (2014), points to the flaws in the concept and application of the doctrine of the R2P.According to him, it has undemocratic and unsustainable premises since it discriminates between the powerful and weak nations in its application, e.g., Russia in Crimea, China in Taiwan, US and allies in Libya. This shows that the R2P can only be exercised by powerful nations against the weak states.

In furtherance of its politics, the pro R2P western countries have insisted that the UN Charter was formulated more than 60 years ago, but the international situation has undergone tremendous changes since then. With globalization, military conflicts happening in one country imposes threats on regional and even international peace and security. The argument by these western powers has made them to ignore the stated norms as enshrined in ICISS 2001 document, UN Secretary General Endorsement report of 2005, UN General Assembly Report in 2005 and Ban Ki-Mon Report in 2009, which abhor regime change in its implementation. (Nurazzaman, 2014).

Looking at the reports and the R2P modus operandi so far, the controversy has been very obvious since its formulation. Many countries fear that the doctrine may become a tool in the hand of the powerful nations to interfere in the affairs of the weak nations, or that it may be applied selectively. Alluding to this fact, Weiss (2013), explained that the legal prospect of humanitarian intervention has been completely eroded by the US and NATO mission in Iraq, and that taking actions irrespective of principles has led to irresponsible and selective use of interventions, thereby weakening the legitimacy of the practice. The 2001 report states clearly that armed intervention can only come as a last resort after every non-military channel such as mediation, arbitration and sanctions has failed.

Considering the huge humanitarian disaster in Syria, why has R2P not been implemented in Syria? Why has it not been implemented in Bahrain and Yemen?

**The Syrian Situation**

After the R2P experiment in Libya, pundits had thought that Syria would be next, considering the fact that over 593,000 people have been killed, and over 12.2 million are in dire needs of humanitarian assistance since the beginning of the conflict in 2011. With over 7.6 million internally displaced persons (IDP's), the worst and largest number in any conflict in the world ever, nothing has been done and even when nuclear weapon was used in 2013 in what President Obama said was crossing the 'red line' yet nothing was done. A lot of factors may have hampered the implementation of the R2P in Syria despite these grave crimes against humanity

Among the factors that has prevented the implementation of the R2P are politics and interest in the UN Security Council, regional politics, situation in Syria and the location or logistic in its implementation etc. Proponent of the R2P pointed to unethical postures and actions by Russia and China, the two non-Western powers that used their veto power to torpedo UN Security Council resolutions on Syria. Critics, on the contrary opined that R2P heavily hinges on moral advocacy, but is susceptible to the unfolding nature of politics of the five permanent members of the UNSecurity Council which has its acute reflection on Syria. It is of note that NATO operation in Libya did not promote the R2P norms and Britain, France and the US would not intervene in Syria; where the costs of intervention outweigh its strategic benefits (Halliyade, 2016: 215-247).

Logistically, Libya stands within the easy military reach of European powers and US military bases located all around. The absence of these strategic advantages has made intervention in Syria a really difficult job. There is a high risk that intervention in Syria would draw in Russia and Iran with the potential to ignite a wider regional and possible global war. The regional powers and organizations in the region have been divided in the case of Syria because of R2P misuse and abuse in Libya. In Syria the cost of implementing R2P would outweigh the interest due to its location (Carment and Landry,2014).

Activities of group like ISIS, al-Nusra (an affiliate of al-Qaeda) and other militant groups in Syria has made the western countries to worry that a post intervention Syria might fall into the hands of Islamic extremists, thereby making Syria the hub of terrorism and militancy like Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Lastly, as strategic partners, Russia and China have made sure that R2P intervention is not implemented in Syria. This shows clearly how divergent the US and Russia interests in Syria are and why intervention was not an option for the US. And it's very unlikely that international consensus on future R2P action can be recreated when great powers interests are directly at stake.

**Humanitarian Assistance and Response to Syria Crisis**

The US is leading other countries in providing humanitarian assistance and aid to Syrians. The US has provided nearly $108 million in additional life-saving assistance for those affected by the war in Syria in March,2020. This new funding brings the total U.S. humanitarian assistance in response to this conflict to over $10.6 billion since the start of the crisis. The funding supports the operations of the United Nations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other international and non-governmental organizations. It will provide shelter, water, medical care, food, protection, and other necessities to millions of people suffering inside Syria and nearly four million refugees from Syria in the region. It also helps mitigate the impact of the crisis on governments and communities throughout the region that are straining to cope with the mass influx of refugees from Syria(Otagus,2020).

Despite these efforts, the UN appeals for humanitarian aid to address the crisis in Syria are only 38% funded, resulting in cutbacks to food and other essential services. The United States has been committed to assisting those affected by this terrible war and strongly urges all governments, organizations, and individuals concerned about the situation to support life-saving aid efforts of UN and other partners. In the same vein, other countries who have complimented US effort concerning Syrian situation are Britain, France, Canada, Germany, European Union, Australia, China etc.

**The Challenges in R2P Implementation in Syria**

Firstly, the UN Security Council is divided along the West and the Eastern bloc (the United States and its allies and Russia and China on the other side). This division in the UN Security Council has made Russia and China to veto all the resolutions that could have led to the implementation of R2P in Syria. Syria is an ally to Russia, with a lot of Russia's investments in Syria, and also China where she has made Syria its ready market for arms and infrastructural development in return for raw materials. This has made the two countries to always rely on the UN Charter of non-interference in other countries sovereignty in blocking all attempts of intervention in Syria. Even when chemical weapon was used in the war, Russia sponsored Resolution 2118 on the destruction of the chemical weapon with strict adherence to UN Charter standard. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution 22/24, calling for quick intervention in Syria in the face of deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in Syria – with forty in favour and six against. Yet the then U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry and Russia Foreign Minister opted for a peaceful destruction of the chemical weapon. (www.securitycouncilreport.org).

Another notable challenge in humanitarian intervention in Syria is the politics of interest. According to Wendt (1996:334), interdependence among nations contributes to shaping the collective identity of states, asserting that nations define their national interest according to their own conditions and norms, including systemic and internal factors. The US and NATO was quick to intervene in Libya so as to protect its multinational oil companies in Libya and also gain access to the Petro-dollar in that country. From the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the United States had said that she has no direct interest in Syria, except to protect and enhance democracy globally. Because of the politics of interest in the UN Security Council, in all diplomatic attempts or initiatives since the beginning of the Syrian war they never mentioned the use of force to save the dying population. All the resolutions never mentioned R2P intervention which should include force on the home government.

The strategic logic of this type of mission leaves much to be desired and how the use of force can prevent mass atrocities and to uphold the principle of R2P (Doyle,2011:72). This quagmire has not been answered in depth. The Libya operation, therefore represents an experiment, it posed a lot of challenges. As it turned out, the result wasn't encouraging for the future R2P. It can be argued that the Libya operation and its aftermath exposed deep tension and resentment in the strategic logic of preventive humanitarian intervention in the heart of R2P (Welsh,2011:261).

The lack of a 'Libya-like' international military response to the Syrian emergency also reflected the Western allied reservations about the feasibility and possible repercussions of intervening in Syria. In the early 2012, US military reportedly warned the White House that intervening in Syria would be a daunting and protracted operation, with the potential of killing a vast number of civilians and plunging the country into civil war.Senior British military officials also conveyed the same message to their government later that year and also some independent analysts also reached the same conclusions(Bemuiller,2012; Lynch, 2013). In the light of the above, there appeared to be prudential reasons not to intervene in Syria, including the danger of causing even more harm.

## Conclusion

There is no denying the fact that R2P has and will continue to raise argument among members of the international community about its implementations. The R2P framework has not helped forged consensus in the uses of full range of diplomatic, political, humanitarian, and as a last resort military measures, in conformity with the UN Charter and other established principles of international law for citizens' protection. Therefore, international community should be rigorous in its efforts of exhausting all peaceful means available in protecting civilian population under the threat of violence and should conduct a comprehensive and judicious analysis of the possible consequences of military action using the R2P principle, as in the case of Syria. The use of force should be limited in its legal, operational and temporal elements and the scope of military action must abide by the letter and spirit of the mandate conferred by the UN Security Council or General Assembly. The UN Security Council should monitor and assess the manner in which resolutions are interpreted and implemented to ensure responsibility while protecting. The level of humanitarian crisis in Syria is such that has never been experienced since the forced migration during the Second World War. Therefore, there are needs on the part of the United Nations, Arab League, International Community, Friends of Syria and Syrian

International Support Group, to help displaced people and refugees return to their homes and countries, especially in Syria.

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