

A Short Review About The Concept of Responsibility to Protect

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ABSTRACT

Review Article

With the help of the irresistible speed of globalization, even though the states tend to focus more on the health and environmental problems brought by our age and show the necessary seriousness to these issues instead of the deep-rooted issues such as sovereignty, terrorism and military technologies, the notion of "Responsibility to Protect" still maintains its importance. With the frequent emergence of humanitarian crises in the late twentieth century, states have found themselves in heated debates about the legitimacy of humanitarian interventions within the framework of the responsibility to protect. Recent conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, in particular, have shown that under what conditions, who or by whom the notion of responsibility to protect should be the key point of these discussions. Even though a good answer has been tried to be given with the concept of protection responsibility in the international arena against serious violations of rights that a state has applied to the people living in its own state, it will be seen that this goal has not been achieved.

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Introduction

The history of the modern state, on the one hand, reflects a well-organized structure aiming to protect its citizens in the endless fights between different communities, on the other hand, it poses the greatest danger to the welfare and life of its members (Tomuschat, 2014). Having been founded after the 2nd World War in order to build international relations and prevent possible inter-state wars and conflicts, the United Nations (UN) banned the use of force by states and grounded mostly on international conflicts for this regulation. Internal conflicts replaced international conflicts; violence against civilians, all-out slaughters and serious violation of human rights were witnessed in “Failed States” which were formed with the end of Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and which suffered from internal conflicts and government failures (Ulusoy, 2013, p.270).

According to Evans and Sahnoun (2001, p.99), there are still continuing debates about whether the international committee has the right to intervene in a state in order to prevent serious violation of human rights and protect the victims of this violation by compelling the states in the presence of such violation and when, how and under whose authority it should do this if it has the right.

All states are equal and have their own sovereignty, according to the UN Charter, which means that all states have the right to rule within their own land. Furthermore, all states must refrain from using force or threatening to use force in their relations with other states. In the light of this information, humanitarian intervention can be considered to violate the UN Charter's primary principles of sovereignty and prohibition of the use of force, and it is a highly contentious concept that has sparked much debate regarding its legitimacy and morality (Erdur, 2016, p.68).

Human life is important. Being able to live in a way worthy of being human is the most fundamental right of every human being and this has been clearly demonstrated by international conventions. The Syrian civil war has been going on for more than 10 years and people living in Syria are still facing serious human right violations. Despite the ban on the use of force, the concept of humanitarian intervention is still a burning issue and still pushes states to think about this humanitarian intervention concept to stop these violations.

In the light of this information, this article benefiting from law journals, books, book chapters, resolutions of international organizations etc. and which is a theoretical work, will deal with the meaning of “humanitarian intervention” and “responsibility to protect” (R2P), the development of the concept of R2P, whether it contradicts the principle of state sovereignty and how the international committee has implemented this concept in the recent history by giving examples. The article will also discuss whether the concept of R2P will become a legal principle in the future and it is thought that it will make a significant contribution to the literature.

The Emergence of R2P

The notion of humanitarian intervention

Although the notion of humanitarian intervention is not so rooted in international law, its source dates back to ancient times. In ancient times, governors tried to find valid reasons for wars. These reasons were put forth as states’ interests, states’ insecure feeling or religious reasons. The most contradictive reason in today’s world is “humanitarian intervention” (Telli, 2012, p.208). In terms of this issue, it is fundamental to grant the definition of compassionate mediation to begin with. Helpful intercession is characterized by Holzgrefe (2003, p.1) to avoid or end systematic and serious violations of the fundamental human rights of individuals without the permission of the state within whose territory the force of force is exercised as a threat or use of force across state borders by a state or states. Another author Keskin (2009, p.70) defines

this notion as “the intervention in the third states by using armed forces in order to protect people that faces serious and continuous violation of human rights”. The number of “failed states” which could not protect the most fundamental human rights of their own citizens increased with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Violence against civilians, all-out slaughters and violation of human rights intensified in these states which could not fulfill the most fundamental conditions and obligations that a sovereign state was supposed to (Eldem, 2015, p.4-5).

On the other hand, some have claimed that humanitarian interventions breach the UN Charter's standard of non-intervention (Hehir, 2012). Beneath the standard of non-intervention, when the genocide started in Rwanda in 1994, the UN concurred not to intercede, causing thousands of Rwandans to be murdered inside three months. The UN, in specific the five lasting individuals of the Security Committee (SC), was thus faulted for not responding insensibly and aloofly to such genocide against humankind (Hehir, 2012). In expansion, the UN change got to be the universal society agreement and the sacred rights allowed to majestic states were challenged, concern almost human rights and requests for doing something to reply moreover expanded (Hehir, 2012, p.33).

It should be discussed in such cases whether intervention in another state for humanitarian purposes is necessary. Indeed, the interventions in Somalia in 1993, in Rwanda in 1994 and in Bosnia in 1995 were performed too late and indifferently whereas there were no discussions on the Liberian interference in 1990, in Northern Iraq in 1991, in Haiti in 1994, in Sierra Leone in 1997 and in East Timor in 1999. Furthermore, NATO intervened in Kosovo without any approval of the UN, which created difference of opinions and led to doubts about such interventions (Evans and Sahnoun, 2001, p.100). According to Telli (2012, p.210), the first element of humanitarian intervention which has contradictive legal grounds and legitimacy, is that it is performed by an international organization or a state against another state. Humanitarian intervention requires the presence of acts of violence which violate comprehensive human rights. Intervention should aim to end these acts of violence from which citizens suffer. The most criticized point of humanitarian intervention is that it does not have objective criteria to allow for an intervention and what states abstain from the most is the principle of “equality of states” stated in the article 2/1 of the UN Charter (Ulusoy, 2013, p.272). States assume the responsibility to not intervene in the domestic affairs of each other with this article. Therefore, states are plenipotentiary in their own territory (Telli, 2012, p.209). However, interventions which started in 1991 with Iraq’s being forced to leave Kuwait and ended in 2003 with Iraq invasion, showed that state sovereignty could be limited if an emergency was in question in terms of protection of human life. Moreover, the SC was the first to ground the domestic dynamics of a state on the principle of “international peace and protection of security” (Rice and Loomis, 2007, p.65-66).

The debate above shows that the key issue about humanitarian intervention is the conflict between sovereignty and human rights. As Hehir (2012, p.30) claims not only does the puzzle of humanitarian intervention include how to deter states from abusing military action, but there is also a lack of laws and guidelines to regulate such interventions (Western and Goldstein, 2011).

Historical background of R2P

Kofi Annan, The Secretary General the UN, criticized the SC for its incoherent resolutions and demanded the UN General Assembly to clarify the matter of humanitarian intervention (Evans and Sahnoun, 2012, p.100). Canadian government reacted to this demand and called the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty – ICISS’ to a meeting (Arsava, 2011, p.105). According to the report of this commission, the principle of “state sovereignty” obliges a state to protect its citizens. Regional and international

communities were stated to respectively take the responsibility providing that a state could not or was reluctant to protect the human rights of its citizens from the atrocity (Eldem, 2015, p.9). Peltonen (2011, p.60) describes this mentioned responsibility as “internal” responsibility and underlines that it also has an “external” aspect and states should respect the right of independence of other states. The notion of R2P, the foundations of which were laid by the ICISS and which has 3 dimensions in the international arena called “prevention”, “reaction” and “reconstruction”, indicates that resorting to military intervention is only legitimate when certain conditions are fulfilled. These conditions are as such: Just Cause, Right Intention, Last Resort, Proportional Means, Reasonable Prospects and Right Authority (Eldem, 2015, p.9-10). There is no doubt that the right authority is the SC. ICISS report does not search for an alternative to the SC and encourages the Council to operate more efficiently. That is to say, in cases where the SC cannot decide, it is possible that the UN General Assembly can decide in order to maintain peace and restore world peace as it did in 1950 in Korea, in 1956 in Egypt and in 1960 in Congo. Regional organizations may be authorized even when this is not possible (Evans and Sahnoun, 2012, p.106-107). I also agree with Evans and Sahnoun and think that losses of life should not be stood by because the SC cannot decide due to the disagreements among its members.

Numerous nations, particularly the United States of America (US), Russia and China, have opposed the requirements because they seem possibly hurt their interface. For the US, such prerequisites would restrict its utilization of veto and international strategy, and it might urge it to partake in issues that are not explicitly connected to its public advantages. (Bellamy, 2008, p.625-626). As a nation, whose history is full of ethnic and boundary clashes, in spite of the fact that it has claimed it bolsters to secure human rights, Russia stresses the sway of the state and the non-intervention guidelines, demanding that Under the SC specialist, all the use of constraints should be, so it is concerned that such requirements can undermine its power and be used by outside on-screen characters to interfere with their household problems, particularly in Chechnya. It opposes any proposals within the SC that would weaken its rejection. (Snetkov and Lanteigne, 2014; Macfarlane et al., 2004). As for China, which includes a few commons with Russia, it stresses that magnificent forces will monitor and mistreat such requirements to interfere with their inner problems and to raise separatism in Tibet and Urumqi. In addition, with its economy expanding and worldwide status progressing, the budgetary and critical interface of China relies more on the soundness of both family and world society, so it slants toward to light accommodating crises by implies of political inferences interior the UN institution rather than by means of military interventions. It isn't astounding such criteria cannot be acknowledged by world pioneers and R2P would fall flat without a few imperative revisions.

The concept of R2P was discussed on the panel called High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in December 2004 after the ICISS report was published. It was accepted that the international committee had R2P with the authorization of the SC in case of massacre and serious losses of life, but it was not indicated what would happen if the SC did not give authorization (Keskin, 2009, p.76-77). Kofi Annan, The Secretary General the UN, later prepared a report in 2005 and called the international arena to act against violation of human rights. That is why the UN World Summit was organized in the same year and it referred to the concept of R2P in the articles 138 and 139 of the summit report (Massingham, 2009, p.809). The concept of R2P was also accepted unanimously by the states participating in the summit (Eldem, 2015, p.10). It was indicated in the summit report that diplomatic and pacifist means would be first resorted to with the aim of protecting people from massacre, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and military intervention in states would be possible with the authorization of the SC if these means were insufficient (Keskin, 2009, p.77). Eldem (2015, p.11) considers it as a milestone that the notion of R2P was unanimously accepted at the UN Summit and according to the author, the norm of R2P was adopted by states and gained

wide currency. The reason for this was that the notion of intervention was limited to 4 specific crimes in the summit report; a military intervention was not possible without the resolution of the SC; the ICISS report did not mention the 6 criteria necessary to legitimize military intervention mentioned in the report and responsibility to reconstruct was not included. From my point of view, the summit report is way behind the ICISS report. That is, the notion of humanitarian intervention already allowed for an intervention in another state providing that the conditions stated in the UN Charter were seen. This notion was abandoned and a search for a new concept started since there was a need for the prevention of the international arena to perform different approaches to similar events and the ability to decide in other ways when the SC could not decide. However, the report repeated the notion of humanitarian intervention and did not bring about a great innovation.

In fact, Eldem (2015, p.11) also supports that the Summit adopted the notion of R2P by weakening its meaning. She also indicates that the ICISS report was published following the non-functionality of the SC in Rwanda and Kosovo crises and that the permanent members of the Council kept human values in the background and acted depending on the global conjuncture. Another author Stahn (2007, p.102) states that the ICISS aimed to solve the legal problems with the notion of humanitarian intervention and tried to overcome the obstacles before the humanitarian intervention by not perceiving the notion of sovereignty as supervision but as responsibility. According to him, the ICISS distorted the matter to R2P and divided this responsibility between states and international arena. The 2005 summit report underlined the missing points of the notion of R2P and emphasized that this notion should be developed (Stahn, 2007, p.108-110). The UN SC announced a resolution no. 1674 in 2006. It made a commitment to act in order to protect civilians in armed conflicts in this resolution and confirmed the resolutions made at the 2005 UN World Summit and stated in the articles 138 and 139. According to this, the SC is prepared to act for a solution in case of mass violation of human rights such as massacre, ethnic cleansing (Telli, 2012, p.213-214). Ban Ki-Moon demanded a detailed report on the development and implementation of the concept of R2P created in the 2005 World Summit and indicated in the articles 138 and 139. The report was completed in 2009 and caused intense debates in the General Assembly of the UN. Some states suggested that this was an excuse for western states to intervene in other countries while others defined it as a renovated form of colonialism. The report was ratified by 67 states at the General Assembly and was shown in the resolution 63/308. According to the resolution, the notion of R2P has 3 bases:

- Each state is responsible to protect its own citizens from massacre, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing at first degree.
- International community is responsible to support and help states fulfill this responsibility.
- International community is responsible to timely and determinedly use all the sanctions entitled by international law including use of armed forces providing those states do not or cannot fulfil this responsibility (Eldem, 2015, p.12-13).

Another author, Weiss (2014, p.15) defined the notion of R2P adopted in the General Assembly of the UN as “R2P Lite” which redresses the balance between states which support this doctrine and those who object to it. I agree with the author in determining the concept of R2P as a subsidiary responsibility. Indeed, it was emphasized that it was the essential responsibility of a state to protect its citizens and that international community would intervene and assume this responsibility if the state does not or cannot fulfil it. The responsibility of a state is essential; but the responsibility of international community is at second degree. Indeed, Ulusoy (2013, p.274-275) agrees and defines the notion of responsibility as a complementary responsibility.

When it comes to closer to present, after the speech of Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff at the UN General Assembly in 2011, tendencies to reshape the concept of R2P increased. Rousseff emphasized that the current structure of the responsibility to protect is insufficient and that the international community should develop it together (Benner, 2013, p.1).

This new trend, which started with the initiative of Brazil, is called "Responsibility While Protecting (RWP)". According to this new concept, responsibilities of intervention forces should be increased. It emphasized that intervention to another state was subject to the SC and the new concept should not be used in order to change state regimes (Benner, 2013, p.2-3).

Brazil's use of the tried-and-true discussion on R2P for this effort reflects Foreign Minister Antonio de Aguiar Patriota's intentions for Brazil to become a global participant. The RWP program is based on the R2P idea, which was accepted by member states in 2005 the UN World Summit. According to this RWP idea;

- All three R2P pillars must follow a tight line of political subordination and chronological sequencing.
- Before considering the use of force, all peaceful options must be exhausted; a thorough and judicious review of the potential repercussions of military action must be conducted.
- Only the Security Council in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter or under extraordinary circumstances, the General Assembly in accordance with its Resolution 377 can authorize the use of force.
- The legal, operational, and temporal parts of the authorization for the use of force must be limited, and the enforcement must adhere to the express mandate's "word and spirit."
- Enhanced Security Council processes are needed to ensure adequate monitoring and assessment of the interpretation and implementation of the RWP. The SC also ensure the accountability of those to whom power to use force is granted (Benner, 2013, p.2).

The concept was not accepted and criticized by western countries. Furthermore, it is not expected to be a norm of international law in the near future. However, according to Benner (2013), this is a significant development for two reasons: first, the author (Brazil, a vital emerging power), and second, the timing (right after the Libya controversy).

The Implementation of R2P in Libya

Considering the R2P in the light of Libya intervention, a civil war which caused many deaths occurred against Kaddafi on 17th February 2011 (Selcen, 2013, p.59-60). Then the UN released the resolution 1970. With this resolution, arms embargo was laid and travel ban was imposed on Libya and it was decided to freeze the assets of the country abroad, suspend the membership of the UN and bring the regime to the trial at the ICC. However, the UN announced the resolution 1793 and decided on a military intervention depending on the R2P for the first time since the conflicts did not end. NATO started to launch airstrikes; the operation was completed in such a short time as 6 months and Kaddafi government fell (Eldem, 2015, p.15-17). Zifcak (2012, p.11) indicates that this operation was launched in time and the international arena took lessons from the past since there was no time loss but early intervention in the incidents. Williams (2011, p.249) defines this intervention as a first in the history of the UN. The SC turned a new page with its policy of "entering the war against regimes in order to protect civilians". Nevertheless, NATO's intervention was criticized since the UN went beyond the purpose of protecting civilians, led to a regime shift in Libya and violated the arms embargo by

providing weapons to rebels (Thakur, 2013, p.69-70). For me, NATO's intervention in Libya is not legal since the resolution no 1973 aims to protect civilians. NATO supported the rebels and led to regime shift with its attitude during the intervention. The UN should be impartial towards states as its purpose of establishment requires. However, NATO which represented the UN lost its impartiality and went beyond the purpose of the resolution no 1973 by leading to a regime shift. Eldem (2015, p.18) states that the international community acts with suspicion towards the notion of R2P due to NATO's mistakes during the intervention.

Conclusion and Discussion

The concept of R2P emerged with the 2001 ICISS report, adopted by the General Assembly of the UN and ratified by the SC. It was adopted by the UN and several international organizations in such a short time as 15 years, which shows that it was accepted as an international norm (Eldem, 2015, p.28).

The concept of R2P is essentially no different from humanitarian intervention. Briefly, humanitarian intervention can also be defined as the use and threat of force to protect a state's citizens from widespread human rights abuses by that state. Humanitarian intervention has been seen as contrary to international law and has been criticized as unlawful, since it violates the UN Charter's prohibitions on use of force and intervening in the internal affairs of states. The use or threat of force is a general prohibition, and its exceptions are enumerated in the UN Charter without interpretation. These exceptions do not include humanitarian intervention or R2P (Ertuğrul, 2016, s. 443-444).

Human rights violations in R2P are limited only to genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes and do not include other rights such as economic rights and political freedoms specified in previous human rights treaties. Because of this reason, as in Iraq, interventions based on bringing democracy to the states and the war against terrorism cannot be called R2P, nor will the international community be responsible for them (Bannon, 2005, p.1163).

On the other hand, it has not gone unnoticed by the world that the SC was used by the US in the Gulf and by the Western powers in Yugoslavia and applied double standards (Freudenschuss, 1994). Some authors indicated that the concept of R2P could not attain its aim especially in the Syrian matter, could not complete its mission, prioritized the national interests of great powers instead of human values and thus was far apart from becoming an international principle (Ulusoy, 2013, p.290).

Consequently, all aforementioned issues taking into consideration, I believe that the concept of R2P set forth in good faith but lost this good faith over time. It is praiseworthy that the ICISS tried to protect human rights by finding innovative ways such as authorization of the General Assembly or at least the regional organizations in case the SC could not decide. Indeed, if it is necessary to give an example of this situation, it can be cited that as the SC was blocked by the vetoes of Russia and China, the humanitarian crisis in Korea, which was getting more and more serious, could not be intervened. This situation was overcome with the "uniting for peace" resolution of the UN General Assembly in 1950. Humanitarian intervention performed in Korea was legitimized by the General Assembly instead of the SC. However, these innovative ways were abandoned in the Resolution of the General Assembly, and everything turned back to the past. Indeed, one of the main issues with humanitarian intervention is that powerful states might distort the concept in order to further their own objectives. Similar incident in Libya and Syria, the intervention in Libya but the non-interference in Syria strengthens the thesis that great powers act depending on their national interests and destroys the consistency of the international arena.

When the concept of R2P is considered from scope of international organizations, the only organization where the right to intervene is legally defined is the African Union. The founding treaty of the African Union regulates the right to intervene. The Union's intervention to the other member states is only possible when war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide are committed (Reçber, 2018, p. 163).

It can be clearly said that an objective notion is necessary which prioritizes human purposes and does not protect states' interests. The deficiency of the notion of R2P should be remedied in this sense. Otherwise, it will not be an international principle and it is certain that great power will use it as an excuse for their interests in order to intervene in other states.

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