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**What is the Biggest  
Danger That We Face?  
International Relations**

Key Stage 4  
Citizenship Studies  
Resource 4

2019



# Resource Four Overview



Topic	Issues in International Relations- 'The Responsibility to Protect' And Modern Conflicts
GCSE Modules	Rights and responsibilities.
Objectives	<p>After completing this Resource, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Be able to provide a definition of what the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is</li><li>✓ Be able to identify main principles of the Responsibility to Protect</li><li>✓ Be able to provide an example of a case where the Responsibility to Protect has been applied</li><li>✓ Be able to identify issues or debates regarding the Responsibility to Protect</li><li>✓ Be able to discuss key details regarding the Syrian War</li><li>✓ Be able to identify key impacts of the Syrian War</li></ul>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read the data source</li><li>2. Complete the activities</li><li>3. Explore the further reading</li></ol>
Context	<p>This Resource is concerned with an important issue in international relations- 'The Responsibility to Protect' and modern conflicts.</p> <p>The Resource will begin by looking at what The Responsibility to Protect is about and main principles in this. We will then examine an important event in international relations- when NATO intervened in Kosovo in 1999 to protect Kosovar Albanians against Serbian forces.</p> <p>The Resource will end with a case study about a current conflict in international relations- the Syrian War and ask if the Responsibility to Protect applies.</p>

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## Data Source



### Section A

What is 'The Responsibility to Protect' about?

'2008 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations New York, 20-21 November, Background document: Session 1- About the Responsibility to Protect'

<http://archive.ipu.org/splz-e/unga08/s1.pdf>

This source is about a presentation given to leaders at the United Nations. The United Nations is an international organisation based in New York where lots of discussions about conflict and protecting people takes place. The presentation provides details about what the Responsibility to Protect is about and why it is important:

'The Responsibility to Protect is a principle which seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to act in the face of **genocide** and other **gross** forms of human rights abuse. "R2P," as it is commonly abbreviated, was adopted by heads of state and government at the World Summit in 2005 sitting as the United Nations General Assembly.

The principle **stipulates**, first, that states have an **obligation** to protect their citizens from mass **atrocities**; second, that the international community should assist them in doing so; and, third, that, if the state in question fails to act appropriately, the responsibility to do so falls to that larger community of states. R2P should be understood as a **solemn** promise made by leaders of every country to all men and women endangered by mass **atrocities**.

At the very heart of this new norm is the principle that states, with the aid of the international community, must act to prevent mass **atrocities**. Also important is the idea that concerned outsiders should help states prevent these gross abuses through what the United Nations document characterizes as "diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means." This could include strengthening state **capacity** through economic assistance, rule-of-law **reform**, the building of political institutions, and the like; or, when violence has begun or seems imminent, through direct acts of **mediation**. The intense diplomatic engagement following the

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disputed election in Kenya, or the work of neighbours and of the UN to support the government of Burundi, both demonstrate the **imperative** of cooperative efforts to prevent **atrocities**.

Only when such means have been unsuccessful should the international community, acting through the Security Council at the United Nations, turn to more **coercive** measures. These could include economic **sanctions** or the threat of sanctions, arms **embargoes**, or the threat to refer perpetrators to international criminal prosecution. Should peaceful means be **inadequate** and the state is failing to protect its population, then—and only then— would the Security Council consider the use of military force.

A timely intervention could have stopped, if not prevented, the **genocide** horror in Rwanda (a state in Africa), and perhaps also in Cambodia (a state in Asia) and elsewhere. But in many other cases where the level of abuse reaches the R2P **threshold**, the most effective response is far less clear. Five criteria has been put forward to help guide such decisions: the violence in question must include large-scale actual or threatened loss of life or **ethnic cleansing**; the purpose of the intervention must be to prevent or halt suffering; military force must be the last resort; the means must be **commensurate** with the ends sought; and the intervention must have a reasonable prospect of success.

Crises that threaten large-scale loss of life are bound to continue to arise, and with them debates over issues such as the most appropriate response to the killing of civilians in Darfur (Sudan) for example, and to the violence surrounding the elections in Zimbabwe. The international community of states will encounter extremely difficult and painful questions about the **applicability** of R2P, which only demonstrates the need for **clarity** over the reach and limits of this new principle.

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The attempt to create political agreement in any given case will depend in part on reaching agreement over exactly what it was that the states agreed to do when they adopted R2P in 2005. But it will depend as well on an evolution of public opinion or feeling.

Leaders will take real risks only if citizens demand it; and publics have only recently begun to demand that their leaders confront the issue of human rights **violations** abroad. As demands for protection grow, so will the likelihood of action.

### Section B

Calls for responsibility in International Relations'

image accessed  
<http://www.global2p.org/regions/syria>

WE ALL SHARE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO  
MASS ATROCITIES CANNOT BE UNIVERSALLY IGNORED  
AND SOVEREIGNTY IS NOT A LICENSE TO KILL.  
GARETH EVANS

WHATEVER WE CAN TO HELP  
PREVENT AND PROTECT  
ONE ANOTHER FROM SUCH  
VIOLENCE.  
DESMOND TUTU

\* Note 'sovereignty' is the authority which each state has in its own territory and over its own actions.

### Section C

The Responsibility to Protect and military intervention in Kosovo

This section provides background details on NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1998.

Kosovo lies in southern Serbia (a state in Europe) and has a mixed population of which the majority are ethnic Albanians (Kosovar Albanians). Until 1989, the region enjoyed a high degree of autonomy until Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic altered the status of the region, removing its **autonomy** and bringing it under the direct control of Belgrade, the Serbian capital. The Kosovar Albanians opposed the move.

During 1998, open conflict between Serbian military and police forces and Kosovar Albanian forces resulted in the

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deaths of over 1,500 Kosovar Albanians and forced 400,000 people from their homes. The international community became increasingly concerned about the escalating (growing) conflict, its humanitarian consequences, and the risk of it spreading to other countries. President Milosevic's **disregard** for **diplomatic** efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the crisis and the **destabilising** role of militant Kosovar Albanian forces was also of concern.



NATO is 'The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.' It is an international alliance where 29 states from North America and Europe are members. On 28 May 1998, the North Atlantic Council set out NATO's two major objectives with respect to the crisis in Kosovo:

- to help to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis by contributing to the response of the international community;
- to promote stability and security in neighbouring countries.

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On 12 June 1998, the North Atlantic Council asked for an assessment of possible further measures that NATO might take with regard to the developing Kosovo Crisis. This led to consideration of a large number of possible military options.

On 13 October 1998, following a [deterioration](#) of the situation, the NATO Council authorised Activation Orders for air strikes. This move was designed to support [diplomatic](#) efforts to make the Milosevic regime withdraw forces from Kosovo, cooperate in bringing an end to the violence and [facilitate](#) the return of refugees to their homes. At the last moment, following further diplomatic [initiatives](#), President Milosevic agreed to [comply](#) and the air strikes were called off.

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1199, among other things, expressed deep concern about the [excessive](#) use of force by Serbian security forces and the Yugoslav army, and called for a [ceasefire](#) by both parties to the conflict. It was agreed, in addition, that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) would send people to observe if the [ceasefire](#) (known as the Kosovo Verification Mission- the KVM) was being followed on the ground and that NATO would establish an [aerial surveillance](#) mission.

In support of the OSCE, the NATO Alliance established a special military task force to assist with the emergency evacuation of members of people who were monitoring the [ceasefire](#) (the Kosovo Verification Mission- the KVM), if renewed conflict should put them at risk.

Despite these steps, the situation in Kosovo flared up again at the beginning of 1999, following a number of acts of provocation on both sides and the use of [excessive](#) and [disproportionate](#) force by the Serbian Army and Special Police. Some of these incidents were resolved through the [mediation](#) efforts of the OSCE but in mid-January, the situation [deteriorated](#) further after the Serbian offensive against Kosovar Albanian increased.

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New international efforts were made to give political support to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. It was agreed to begin urgent [negotiations](#) between the parties to the conflict, under international [mediation](#).

NATO supported these efforts by agreeing on 30 January to use air strikes if required, and by issuing a warning to both sides in the conflict. Initial [negotiations](#) began near Paris, from 6 to 23 February, followed by a second round in Paris, from 15 to 18 March. At the end of the second round of talks, the Kosovar Albanian delegation (side) signed the proposed peace agreement, but the talks broke up without a signature (agreement) from the Serbian delegation (side).

Immediately afterwards, Serbian military and police forces stepped up the intensity of their operations against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, moving extra troops and modern tanks into the region, in a clear breach of agreements. Tens of thousands of people began to flee their homes in the face of this [systematic](#) offensive.

On 20 March, the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission was withdrawn from the region, having faced obstruction from Serbian forces to the extent that they could no longer continue to fulfil their task. US Ambassador Holbrooke then flew to Serbia, in a final attempt to persuade President Milosevic to stop attacks on the Kosovar Albanians or face [imminent](#) NATO air strikes. Milosevic refused to [comply](#), and on 23 March the order was given to begin air strikes. This was called Operation Allied Force.

On 10 June 1999, after an air campaign lasting seventy-seven days, this was suspended.

(In its aftermath, NATO has been criticised by some for its aggression).



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On 10 June the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed a resolution (UNSCR 1244) welcoming principles on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, including an immediate end to violence and a rapid withdrawal of its military, police and paramilitary forces. The Resolution announced the Security Council's decision to send international civil and security forces in Kosovo, under the United Nations leadership.

The principles included, among others, an immediate end to violence and [repression](#) in Kosovo; the withdrawal of the military, police and paramilitary forces of the Federal Republic; sending an effective international and security presence to Kosovo, with large NATO participation; establishment of a new temporary leadership in Kosovo; the safe and free return of all refugees; a new political process for Kosovo to govern itself, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) handing in its weapons; and strong focus on economic development for the region.

Of particular concern to NATO countries and to the international community as a whole, from the beginning of the crisis, was the situation of the Kosovar Albanians remaining in Kosovo, whose situation was described by refugees leaving the province. All indications pointed to organised [persecution](#) involving mass executions; exploitation as human shields; rape; mass expulsions; burning and [looting](#) of homes and villages; destruction of crops and livestock; [suppression](#) of identity, origins and property ownership by confiscation of documents; hunger, starvation and exhaustion; and many other abuses of human rights.

Image of refugees leaving Kosovo



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## Data Source



### Key Facts from the Conflict

- Between March 1998 and March 1999, before NATO governments decided upon military action, over 2000 people were killed as a result of the Serb government's policies in Kosovo.
- During the summer of 1998, a quarter of a million Kosovar Albanians were forced from their homes as their houses, villages and crops were destroyed.
- In January 1999, evidence was discovered, by a United Nations humanitarian team, of the massacre of over 40 people in the village of Racak.
- By the beginning of April 1999, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimated that the campaign of [ethnic cleansing](#) had resulted in 226,000 refugees in Albania, 125,000 in Macedonia, and 33,000 in Montenegro (those were neighbouring countries of Kosovo).
- Assistance given by NATO forces to help the refugee situation included providing equipment and building camps to house 50,000 refugees in Albania; assistance in expanding camps in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; providing medical support and undertaking emergency surgery on the victims of shootings by Serb forces; transporting refugees to safety; and providing transport for humanitarian aid and supplies.
- By the end of May 1999, over 230,000 refugees had arrived in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, over 430,000 in Albania and some 64,000 in Montenegro. Approximately 21,500 had reached Bosnia and over 61,000 had been evacuated to other countries. Within Kosovo itself, an estimated 580,000 people had been rendered homeless.
- It is estimated that by the end of May, 1.5 million people, i.e. 90% of the population of Kosovo, had been expelled from their homes. Some 225,000 Kosovar men were believed to be missing. At least 5000 Kosovars had been executed.
- NATO forces have flown in many thousands of tons of food and equipment into the area. By the end of May 1999, over 4666 tons of food and water, 4325 tons of other goods, 2624 tons of tents and nearly 1600 tons of medical supplies had been transported to the area.

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### Section D

Protests in Syria  
demanding freedom  
and peace

Photo accessed

<https://news.sky.com/video/square-idlib-protest-001-mp4-11492776>



### Section E

Syria: key events of the  
conflict written in 2016

BBC News, 'Syria: The  
story of the conflict', 11th  
March 2016,

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

Syria is a state in the Middle East. In 2011, Syrian men, women and children began to protest against the ruler of Syria (President Bashar al- Assad) demanding more freedom and rights. This turned into a deadly conflict with so much destruction and violence. The conflict continues today. The source presents key background and details of this conflict:

More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-a-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before **escalating** into a full-scale civil war. More than 11 million others have been forced from their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad (the President of Syria) and those opposed to his rule battle each other - as well as militants from so-called Islamic State.

#### *Uprising Turns Violent*

Pro-democracy protests began in March 2011 in the southern city of Deraa in Syria after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets.

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The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force encouraged more people to protest against abuses. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country.

Opposition supporters eventually began to take up arms, first to defend themselves and later to [expel](#) security forces from their local areas.

### *This Turns into a Civil War*

Violence [escalated](#) and the country developed into civil war as rebel groups were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and large Syrian city of Aleppo in 2012.

By June 2013, the United Nations (UN) said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict. By August 2015, that figure had climbed to 250,000, according to activists and the UN.

The conflict is now more than just a battle between those who support or those who were against Mr Assad. It also divided the country's Sunni majority (one Muslim group) against the Shia Alawite group (another Muslim group) which President Assad is a member of, and regional and world powers (states and groups) have also become involved in the conflict. The rise of the militant group Islamic State (IS) has added a further dimension.

### *War Crimes*

A UN commission of inquiry has evidence that all parties to the conflict have committed war crimes - including murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances (taking people against their will). They have also been accused of using civilian suffering - such as blocking access to food, water and health services through sieges - as a method of war.

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The UN Security Council has demanded all parties end the [indiscriminate](#) use of weapons in populated areas, but civilians continue to die in their thousands. Many have been killed by barrel bombs dropped by government aircraft on gatherings in rebel-held areas – attacks which the UN says may constitute massacres.

IS has also been accused by the UN of waging a campaign of terror. The group has carried out hundreds of public executions and amputations. Its fighters have also carried out mass killings of rival armed groups, members of the security forces and religious minorities, and beheaded hostages, including several Westerners.

### *Chemical Weapons*

Hundreds of people were killed in August 2013 after rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin were fired at several areas around Damascus. Western powers said it could only have been carried out by Syria's government, but the government blamed rebel forces.

Facing the prospect of US military intervention, President Assad agreed to the complete removal and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. The operation was completed the following year, but the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has continued to document the use of toxic chemicals in the conflict. Investigators found chlorine was used "systematically and repeatedly" in deadly attacks on rebel-held areas between April and July 2014.

IS has also been accused of using homemade chemical weapons, including sulphur mustard. The OPCW said the blister agent was used in an attack on the northern town of Marea in August 2015 that killed a baby.

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### *Humanitarian Crisis*

More than 4.5 million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, most of them women and children. The neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have struggled to cope with one of the largest [refugee exodus](#) in recent history. About 10% of Syrian refugees have sought safety in Europe, sowing political divisions as countries argue over who should offer the refugees protection.

A further 6.5 million people are [internally displaced](#) inside Syria, 1.2 million were driven from their homes in 2015 alone.

The UN says it will need \$3.2 billion to help the 13.5 million people, including 6 million children, who will require some form of humanitarian assistance inside Syria in 2016. About 70% of the population is without access to adequate drinking water, one in three people are unable to meet their basic food needs, and more than 2 million children are out of school, and four out of five people live in poverty.

The warring parties have [compounded](#) the problems by refusing humanitarian agencies access to civilians in need. Up to 4.5 million people in Syria live in hard-to-reach areas, including nearly 400,000 people in 15 [besieged](#) locations who do not have access to life-saving aid.

### *Peace Efforts*

With neither side able to inflict (cause) a decisive defeat on the other, the international community long ago concluded that only a political solution could end the conflict in Syria. The UN Security Council has called for the 2012 Geneva Communique to be applied, which wants a new governing body in Syria to be "formed on the basis of [mutual consent](#)".

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Talks in early 2014, broke down after only two rounds, with then-UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi blaming the Syrian government's refusal to discuss opposition demands.

Mr Brahimi's successor, Staffan de Mistura, focused on establishing a series of local ceasefires. His plan for a "freeze zone" in Aleppo was rejected, but a three-year siege of the Homs suburb of al-Wair (a town in Syria) was successfully brought to an end in December 2015.

At the same time, the conflict with IS created more motivation to the search for a political solution in Syria. The US and Russia led efforts to get representatives of the government and the opposition to attend talks in Geneva (in Switzerland) in January 2016 to discuss a Security Council-endorsed road map for peace, including a ceasefire and a new political process ending with elections.

### *Involvement of Other States and Groups*

Different regional and world powers have been involved in the Syria war.

Iran and Russia have supported the government of President Assad and gradually increased their support. Iran is believed to be spending billions of dollars a year to support Mr Assad, providing military advisers and weapons, as well as money and oil transfers. Russia has meanwhile launched an air campaign against Mr Assad's opponents. The Syrian government has also enjoyed the support of Lebanon's Shia Hezbollah movement, whose fighters have provided important battlefield support since 2013.

Opposition groups to President Assad have attracted varying degrees of support from international states- Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan, along with the US, UK and France.

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Until late 2015, rebel appeals for anti-aircraft weapons to stop devastating government air strikes were rejected by the US and its allies, amid concern that they might end up in the hands of militants. A US programme to train and arm 5,000 rebels to take the fight to IS on the ground also suffered a series of setbacks before being abandoned.

\*\* note that this conflict is still happening today and many more people have been killed, injured and displaced. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (a UK-based monitoring group with a network of sources on the ground), had documented the deaths of 364,371 people by August 2018, including 110,613 civilians.

The figure did not include 56,900 people who it said were missing and presumed dead. The group also estimated 100,000 deaths had not been documented.

### Section F

Aftermath of a bombing  
in the Syrian city of  
Aleppo

Photo accessed  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/11/deaths-reported-syrian-bombing-aleppo-20141118172421972644.html>





# Resource Four Activities



## Activities

1) What is the main principle of the Responsibility to Protect?

2) Fill in the missing X's from the list to complete the correct principles regarding the R2P:

X            have an X            to X            their citizens  
from X ;  
The X            should X            them in doing so;  
If the X            fails to X            , the X            to  
do so falls to that larger community of states.

Options: *responsibility; obligation; international community; act appropriately; states; protect; assist; mass atrocities; state*

3) Provide an example of a 'diplomatic, humanitarian and peaceful means' which may prevent a state from carrying out large abuses. Why may this prevent a state from carrying out large abuses?

4) Provide an example of a 'coercive measure' which may prevent a state from carrying out large abuses. Why may this prevent a state from carrying out large abuses?

5) Elaborate in what ways Source B connects to principles in 'The Responsibility to Protect' (Source A). What are the connections? For your answer, aim to write 3-4 sentences. Following the blurbs in Source B, create your own blurb or phrase which reflects what The Responsibility to Protect is about.

6) Look carefully at the five criteria which have been put forward to help guide decisions about 'The Responsibility to Protect.' Select one of these and explain why it is important for considerations regarding The Responsibility to Protect. Aim to write 3-4 sentences. As an extension exercise, explain how each of these criteria are important for considerations regarding The Responsibility to Protect.



7) Read Source C. Identify one of the abuses which Kosovar Albanians faced. What does this tell us about the situation in Kosovo? Aim to write 3-4 sentences.

# Resource Four Activities



## Activities

8) Read the case-study in Source C about NATO's intervention in Kosovo. Was NATO's role military? Explain your answer and use information from the source to support this. Aim to write at least 2 paragraphs.

9) Read the case-study in Source C about what was happening in Kosovo. Using data from the source, write a letter to NATO to justify why NATO should intervene in Kosovo and why the Responsibility to Protect applies. Try to write 2 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research about the Kosovo intervention and extend your answer to a short essay of 5-6 paragraphs.

10) Examine Source E. Identify one of the abuses which Syrian people have faced and what this tells us about the Syrian conflict. Aim to write 2-3 sentences for your answer.

11) Examine Sources D, E and F. Should The Responsibility to Protect apply in Syria? Use information and assessment of the conflict to support your viewpoint. Try to write 3 paragraphs or more. If you want to challenge yourself, do some independent research about the Syrian conflict and extend your answer to a short essay of 5-6 paragraphs.

# Resource Four Further Reading



**Explore** [Video explaining what the Responsibility to Protect?](#)

[Documentaty about how the Syrian War began](#)





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