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# UN Recognizes Papal Proposal

## Takes Benedict XVI's Thesis Into Debate

NEW YORK, JULY 24, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The working document to foster U.N. dialogue on the "responsibility to protect" includes a paragraph dedicated to the discourse Benedict XVI gave there last year.

For this debate on conflict victims and the states' responsibility to protect its citizens, the assembly took into account the Pope's thesis that the international community needs to protect rights.

When the Holy Father addressed the United Nations, he affirmed: "Every state has the primary duty to protect its own population from grave and sustained violations of human rights, as well as from the consequences of humanitarian crises, whether natural or man-made. If states are unable to guarantee such protection, the international community must intervene with the juridical means provided in the United Nations Charter and in other international instruments."

Taking charge

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, spoke with Vatican Radio on Thursday about the debate.

Despite international commitments to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, these tragedies still occur, he noted, pointing to situations like those in Georgia, Congo and Sri Lanka.

These situations, the archbishop said, show that "precise norms of international conduct" are lacking, to oblige states to protect their populations.

The Holy See representative echoed the Holy Father's idea that each state has the duty to protect its citizens from atrocities, but that "when a determined state does not show the will or the capacity to ensure such protection, the international community should take charge in a subsidiary way, paying recourse to a peaceful way of acting as foreseen in international law."

"In extreme cases," he continued, "it could avail of the use of force through the norms and dictates of Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter."

A use of force, the archbishop clarified, should never be considered "outside the primary necessity of governments to ensure the protection of all their citizens."

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On the Net:

Pope's 2008 address to the United Nations: [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20080418\\_un-visit\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080418_un-visit_en.html)

U.N. Secretary-General presentation of report: [www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=3982](http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=3982)

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