

**Jürgen Trittin**

**Why the concept of R2P is on the verge of  
being discredited**

***Input by Jürgen Trittin MP to the  
Parliamentarian Discussion on Pillar II of the  
Responsibility to Protect***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I have to apologize that I had to rush  
in here, after the discussion already began.

Thank you very much for the invitation.

## **1      An imbalanced assessment of R2P**

Today, I would like to outline a few aspects with regard to the UN Secretary General's report on pillar II of the R2P. From a point of view of a member of a party in opposition, I would like to explain what the implementation of the R2P concept is lacking on international level and on the same hand on the national level and what should be done reconfigure the implementation of the concept.

Let me start with kind of a harsh assumption:

**The concept of R2P is on the verge of being discredited.**

Why so?

The Secretary General points out in his report that the international community continues to systematically *underinvest in prevention and reacts only at the brink of crises*.<sup>1</sup>

It further states that “...*there is still too little will to operationalize prevention*.”<sup>2</sup>

Don't get me wrong. There are a lot of excellent examples and lessons learned in the report that outline a number of functioning measures in assisting states to **prevent** atrocity crimes.

But from my point of view, the implementation of R2P is lacking **two indispensable aspects**:

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<sup>1</sup> UNSG report on pillar II of the R2P, page 5.

<sup>2</sup> UNSG report on pillar II of the R2P, page 18.

↳ The discussion about R2P is most of the time **reduced to pillar III** and, even worse, **to the question of military force**. This is, what many engaged supporters of R2P have in common with those, who see this principle as assault to state sovereignty and a new instrument of interventions for *the west*. But pillar III is correctly outlined in the report as “*a matter of last resort*”.<sup>3</sup> **Preventive measures** that are part of the core priorities of pillar II of the R2P (encouragement, capacity-building and assisting States to protect populations) are too often **seen as principles of moralism and political correctness**. Yet, this is a

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<sup>3</sup> UNSG report on pillar II of the R2P, page 20.

dangerous assessment. I will come to this later.

↳ The concept of R2P is **running the risk of losing its legitimization**. By **overstretching a UN mandate** that clearly refers to the R2P as a legitimate reason for engaging in an ongoing conflict, we **run the risk of losing the legitimization for further common actions and further UN Security Council resolutions**. We saw this in the engagement in **Libya**. There, the R2P was used to **justify a regime change**. But there was no idea, no concept for a political solution after the successful military intervention and the overthrow of the Gadhafi-regime. The consequences of a failed state Libya can be monitored in Mali, in the Central Afri-

can Republic.

After this experience it is **very unlikely** that in the near future there will be another **UN Security Council resolutions for military action based on R2P**. And this is not only, because China or Russia will block it. Also democratic states like Brazil, South Africa share their view on pillar III of R2P.

The danger is: **R2P is losing its legitimization** in the world public. If it turns out, that most cases of military engagement not only failed, but also produced instable states, civil wars and rising terroristic groups– **then R2P will become a synonym for war not for preventing atrocities**.

**That is, why we have to strengthen pillar II of R2P.**

We have to take on more **Responsibility for Peace.**

## **2      2 Conflict prevention – in our own best interest**

If we look at the current crises and conflicts the world is facing right now – Ukraine, Libya, Mali, The Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, The Middle East Conflict, Ebola – we have to admit: **The world has come apart at the seams.**

**All of these crises have in common that they cannot be solved by military force. At the end, there always has to be a political solution.**

This is a lesson we learned from decades of military interventions. Therefore, **we have to adapt our policies consistently to conflict prevention and civil conflict resolution.**

I understand the UN Secretary General's report as a **call for strengthening pillar I and II** in the implementation of R2P. This means **strengthening conflict prevention measures**. We have to assist states under stress **before crises and conflicts break out**. This is indeed *“a wise and long-term investment, given the much greater cost of acting once a crisis occurs and the social and economic devastation facing countries that ex-*



*perience atrocity crimes.” as written in the report.<sup>4</sup>*

### **3 Global risks and failing states**

All of these crises I mentioned were caused by the same risks that lead to state failure and violent conflicts.

I would like to outline four main risks:

↳ **Climate change**

↳ **Competition on resources**

↳ **Poverty**

↳ **Proliferation**

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<sup>4</sup> UNSG report on pillar II of the R2P, page 18.

In their effects, these risks **amplify each other**: Climate change caused by rich countries hits in particular the poorest – and the increasing competition over resources is boosting the arms race.

Combined effects of such risks and the increased loss of governance may lead to threats for broad regions and sometimes for the whole world.

**Global risks promote the failing of whole nations.**

Only if we face the global risks of climate change, competition on resources, poverty and proliferation, we can prevent conflicts and wars from threatening global peace.

## 4      **Germany's responsibility in the world**

Recently, there is an ongoing discussion about Germany's role in the world. I am convinced that Germany could – on a national and European level – contribute much more to global peace by addressing climate change and poverty. The EU has the *soft power* to do so. That's why Germany has a responsibility to promote measures that fight climate change by boosting renewable energies and, thus, reduce poverty.

However, Germany's current approach to address ongoing conflicts is on a dangerous track – the outsourcing of interventions. The *Merkel approach* says: **We send weapons instead of soldiers.**

Given the fact that proliferation – and especially the proliferation of light weapons – is one main risk that causes state failure and trigger violent conflicts, **this approach is irresponsible.**

From some failed interventions in the past we had to learn three things:

- ↳ The enemy of your enemy is not your friend
- ↳ Yesterday's enemies are today's partners (Iran and PKK)
- ↳ Yesterday's friends are today's problem (Saudi-Arabia, Katar)

That's why we need a restrictive law against arms export on the national and a stricter regime on the European level.

## 5      **What Germany has to do**

If we take the challenges and recommendations of the Secretary General's report seriously, Germany has to reinforce its policies on conflict preventions. I would like to outline some concrete measures:

1. Germany has to be on top of a **broad coalition against climate change** again. It finally has to stop to prevent necessary measures and has to promote binding goals for climate protection and a law for climate protection.
2. German Foreign Policy is only strong as **European Foreign Policy**. The EU is the right partner for civil-military operations that can face ongoing conflicts.

3. Germany has to **send more and well-trained police officers** for missions abroad. A functioning security sector is the key to post-war-society.  
At the moment 192 German police officers are participating in international missions. In 2000 the German government promised contingent within the European Union of 910 men and woman. What an embarrassing difference.
4. We need a **restrictive law on arms export, especially for light weapons.**
5. All military interventions need a **clear legitimization** according to international law. Not for moral reasons, but **to be successful**. We are still waiting for an effective

## **UN Security Council resolution on the fight against ISIS...**

6. Germany **has to contribute more to UN peacekeeping missions**. This doesn't mean more German boots on the ground. It's more about intelligence, logistics and medical assistance. And it's more about civil forces. Germany is fourth biggest provider of funds for UN-peacekeeping missions. But it only holds the 48th place in terms of contributing civil experts.
7. Last but not least: Germany has obligated itself to **spend 0.7 per cent of its GDP for development cooperation until 2015**. To-day, in 2014 it's about **half of it**. We have to meet this goal if we want to be credible and if we take the measures for conflict

prevention seriously. The 10 billion Euros that are lacking to achieve this goal is the amount Germany wants to spend on armament.

## 6 Holistic approach to R2P

I hope I could show you, why rather than focusing simply on military interventions **we need a holistic approach** to the crisis we encounter at the moment.

Europe's responsibility to meet the recommendations of the Secretary General's report **on pillar II of the R2P lies mainly in fighting climate change and poverty**. Only by addressing these risks successfully, we might prevent failing states from becoming a failing world.

Thank you.