

31 October 2012

Our reference: MIN/39245/2012

Phil Mulligan
Executive Director
UN Association of the UK
3 Whitehall Court
London
SW1A 2EL



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
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Dear Mr Mulligan

Thank you for your joint letter of 4 September, to the Foreign Secretary about the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). I am replying as Minister responsible for Conflict Issues.

Regrettably, your letter was received by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office after the UN General Assembly Interactive Dialogue on R2P that took place on 5 September. However, as you may already be aware, the UK took that opportunity, as it does every year, to reaffirm its support for R2P and to emphasise the importance of the preventive aspects of R2P. The UK's full intervention, which touched on several of the points in your letter, is available online at www.ukun.fco.gov.uk/en/news/?view=PressS&id=807108582. The UK had discussed the UN Secretary-General's report on R2P with a number of other States ahead of the debate and we were delighted at the number of countries that chose to reiterate their support for R2P this year.

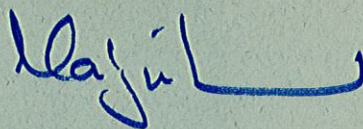
In line with the UK's commitment to R2P, we continue to work bilaterally, as well as through multilateral organisations that we are members of, including the UN and EU, to ensure States meet their primary responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing; to encourage and assist States, including through capacity-building, to meet that responsibility; and to ensure that the 2005 UN World Summit agreement on R2P is translated into a willingness to act speedily and appropriately in specific cases.

The UK believes that preventing R2P crimes requires taking a holistic approach across the conflict spectrum to embed a culture of prevention through work on conflict prevention and resolution, stabilisation, development, human rights, governance and security. The Government's annual Human Rights Command Paper outlines how the UK's support for R2P is translated into action in different ways and in different circumstances. The 2011 Command Paper was laid before Parliament on 30 April 2012 and is available online at www.centralcontent.fco.gov.uk/pdf/pdf1/hrd-report-2011.

The UK's Focal Point for R2P, Mr Vijay Rangarajan, FCO Director for Multilateral Policy, is responsible for the development and implementation of the UK's approach to R2P. We believe that the R2P Focal Points network can support the implementation of R2P in new ways, for example, through Members sharing ideas and best practice on the prevention of R2P crimes. We are supporting the efforts of the Global Centre for R2P to encourage more States to join the network.

I am also sending the same response to Minority Rights Group and The Aegis Trust.

Yours Sincerely



MARK SIMMONDS MP
Minister for Africa, the Overseas Territories, Caribbean and International Energy