

The Failure of R2P and POC in the Case of the Genocide of the Palestinian People by Israel in the Period 2023-2025

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ABSTRACT

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Protection of Civilians (POC) are policies formulated by the United Nations (UN), particularly by the UN Security Council, aimed at preventing and addressing severe crimes against humanity, including genocide, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, these two mechanisms were not effectively applied in the instance of genocide faced by the Palestinian people at the hands of Israel during the years 2023 to 2025. This article seeks to explore the reasons behind the unsuccessful implementation of R2P and POC in this scenario. Employing the Causal Process Tracing methodology, researchers will investigate the underlying causes of this failure, ranging from the conceptual dimensions of R2P and POC to the political factors involving the geopolitics of various significant actors. The findings of the study reveal that this failure was significantly shaped by the political supremacy of the permanent members of the Security Council, especially the exercise of veto power by the United States in favor of Israel, which obstructed the formation of an international consensus regarding R2P and POC. These results suggest that the UN, as an international body, lacks the complete authority to enforce R2P and POC, as it remains profoundly affected by political agendas, thereby resulting in a persistent imbalance in the protection of victims of crimes against humanity in Palestine that has endured for many years.

Keywords: Responsibility to Protect, Protection of the Civilian, Genocide, Palestine, Israel

INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict stands as one of the most enduring humanitarian crises in contemporary history. Following the surge of violence in October 2023, the Gaza Strip has experienced significant civilian losses and

widespread destruction. Despite the establishment of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Protection of Civilians (POC) principles as international frameworks intended to address such atrocities, both have demonstrated ineffectiveness in this particular situation.

The significance of this research is rooted in the disparity between the normative authority of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the Protection of Civilians (POC) as global obligations, contrasted with the shortcomings in their practical application. Current literature (Moses, 2024; Awan & Malik, 2024; Hornung & Austrheim, 2025) underscores the ethical and political aspects of R2P in Gaza; however, it frequently fails to delve into the particular causal mechanisms that contribute to institutional failure. In addition, Yussef (2024) points out that the UN's response has been obstructed by geopolitical factors, notably the veto power exercised by the United States.

The theoretical foundation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the Protection of Civilians (POC) lies in the evolution of international humanitarian and human rights norms that redefine state sovereignty not merely as a right, but as a responsibility. R2P, formally endorsed at the 2005 World Summit, establishes that the state holds the primary duty to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. When a state fails or is unwilling to do so, this responsibility shifts to the international community through diplomatic, humanitarian, and, in extreme cases, coercive measures authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNGA, 2005). Meanwhile, POC is embedded within international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly the Geneva Conventions and subsequent Security Council resolutions, emphasizing the obligation of all conflict parties to safeguard non-combatants and ensure humanitarian access (UNSC Res. 1265, 1999; Res. 1674, 2006). Together, R2P and POC constitute complementary mechanisms within the UN system aimed at preventing atrocities and alleviating human suffering in armed conflicts. However, their practical implementation often reveals systemic

inconsistencies—particularly in cases where geopolitical interests impede collective action, as witnessed in the prolonged failure to protect Palestinian civilians in the Israel–Palestine conflict.

This article intends to examine the elements contributing to the unsuccessful application of R2P and POC during the Palestinian genocide from 2023 to 2025. By employing the Causal Process Tracing methodology, this research aims to reveal the interplay between institutional regulations, geopolitical motivations, and international reactions that led to this failure. The distinctiveness of this investigation resides in its integration of both frameworks—R2P and POC—within a unified analytical framework, thereby providing a thorough insight into the UN's constraints in addressing mass atrocities in Palestine.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach utilizing the Causal Process Tracing (CPT) framework to examine the sequence of events and institutional mechanisms that contributed to the failure of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Protection of Civilians (POC) frameworks in the 2023–2025 Palestine–Israel conflict. CPT is employed to uncover the causal linkages between geopolitical interests, institutional procedures, and decision-making inertia within the United Nations system.

Data were collected from secondary sources, including United Nations documents, Security Council resolutions, humanitarian organization reports, academic journals, and verified international media covering the period 2013–2025. The analysis followed three key stages: (1) Normative mapping, which identified the legal and institutional basis of R2P and POC; (2) Event sequencing, which traced key decisions, vetoes, and resolutions affecting UN responses; and (3) Causal mechanism analysis, which connected political dynamics and institutional limitations to the observed failures.

To ensure validity, data triangulation was applied by cross-referencing multiple independent sources. This method provides a rigorous and transparent analytical foundation for understanding how power asymmetry and institutional constraints shaped the ineffective implementation of R2P and POC in Palestine.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Responsibility to Protect

The notion of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) represents a worldwide commitment to elevate human rights above state sovereignty, even if it necessitates military intervention (Yussef, 2024). Subsequently, the R2P concept was articulated in a document that delineates the principles and operationalization of this notion. The principles of R2P were established by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in the year 2000. This commission was created in reaction to the discourse surrounding humanitarian intervention by the global community and the conventional narrative of state sovereignty. Ultimately, the commission formulated the framework of the R2P principle: states must not exploit the rights and powers inherent in their sovereignty, but rather embrace the obligation to safeguard the individuals residing within their territories. This responsibility includes, when necessary, seeking assistance from the international community to ensure the state's survival. The R2P concept was further developed during the 2005 UN International Summit, which identified three fundamental pillars.

The three fundamental principles of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) are as follows: First, it is the duty of states to safeguard their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, as well as from any actions that may precipitate these atrocities. Second, there exists a commitment from the international community to support states in their efforts to uphold their obligation to protect their

citizens. Third, every member state of the United Nations has a collective responsibility to act swiftly, decisively, and in unison when a state neglects to ensure the safety of its own people.

In addition to the three primary pillars, the 2005 UN International Summit also articulated the R2P concept into three key responsibilities, specifically:

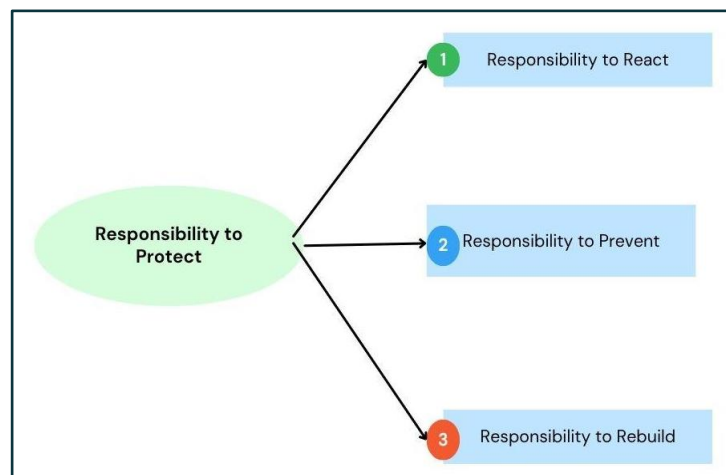


Figure 1. Main Aspect of Responsibility to Protect

1. Duty to avert: the obligation to tackle both the fundamental and immediate factors contributing to internal conflicts and human-induced crises that threaten the populace.
2. Duty to respond: the obligation to take action in situations necessitating suitable humanitarian measures, which may encompass coercive actions like sanctions and international legal proceedings, and in severe circumstances, military intervention.
3. Duty to restore: the obligation to support the rebuilding and reconciliation efforts that follow a military intervention.

The more developed notion of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) signifies a transformation in the manner in which the global community ought to address humanitarian emergencies. In practical terms, the concept of 'Responsibility to Protect' asserts that each nation bears the primary

obligation to safeguard its citizens, with this duty transferring to the international community when a state is either incapable or unwilling to fulfill it. Throughout the subsequent decade, this principle has continued to receive endorsement from numerous partner nations and organizations that share analogous objectives. In 2007, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights passed a resolution aimed at reinforcing the R2P principle within Africa. Additional organizations that align with these interests comprise: The Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, located at the University of Queensland, Australia; The International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), based in New York, USA; and The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, also situated in New York.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework serves as the most effective substitute for humanitarian intervention aimed at safeguarding humanity from atrocities like genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. In the context of internal conflicts, it is the duty of the international community to engage in preventive measures and, when necessary, military intervention. Furthermore, the R2P framework holds significance within international humanitarian law as it establishes a definitive structure for the protection of human rights and the prevention of large-scale crimes, especially those associated with the application of military force (Mardiyanto & Hidayatulloh, 2023).

Although the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle does not constitute a legal framework, it holds considerable importance and is acknowledged as a developing norm, or an obligation that carries legal implications. The majority of the member states of the United Nations have consented to and embraced R2P through various UN General Assembly Resolutions. R2P assigns the duty to the international community to aid parties in safeguarding populations against the atrocity of genocide. In essence, R2P aims to motivate states to meet their legal duties and commitments, enhance their capacity to protect populations, and offer

support to states during crises (Widagdo & Kurniaty, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, efforts to implement R2P can be found in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which explicitly stipulates the government's responsibility to protect all individuals and participate in realizing world peace. Furthermore, the implementation of the first pillar of R2P can be found in Law Number 7 of 2012 concerning Social Conflict Management (PMKS), which was then followed by Government Regulation Number 2 of 2015 concerning the Implementation of the Law on PMKS (Sefriani, 2020).

Protection of Civilization (POC)

The origins of the Protection of Civilization (POC) initiative are rooted in the desire to reduce the number of casualties in warfare and to safeguard civilians from military assaults (Shivo, 2013). Various international treaties, including the 1949 Geneva Convention and the 1977 Additional Protocol, along with the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), indicate that the POC framework is applicable solely to situations of armed conflict.

Shivo (2013) in "The Responsibility to Protect and Protection of Civilians: Enhancing the Protection Capacity through Interaction" elaborates on the ongoing evolution of the definition and regulations surrounding the implementation of the Protection of Civilians (POC). This evolution underscores that the core of citizen safety during wartime hinges on the imperative to uphold humanity's essence. Consequently, the POC concept has been embraced by numerous international organizations under the UN's guidance, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the World Food Programme (WFP). Beyond international bodies, regional organizations such

as NATO, the African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU) have also adopted the POC framework. This indicates that the POC concept has evolved into a collective obligation under international law to safeguard civilians in nations embroiled in war or armed conflict. The ongoing Palestinian conflict, characterized by the actions of Hamas and Israel, exemplifies such an armed conflict. The intensification of hostilities between these two nations has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians due to aerial bombardments and missile strikes from Israel. Therefore, when assessing the criteria for the implementation of POC, it is evident that Palestine has more than adequately met these requirements.

Civilization represents a fundamental idea, and colonialism has played a crucial role in shaping the international legal framework over the course of the regime's development. The Eurocentric notion of civilization has, until now, been an overlooked driving force in the establishment of international cultural heritage standards. In this context, various nations and entities utilize cultural heritage law and its intrinsic connection to the idea of civilization for diverse objectives. Furthermore, the international legal framework governing cultural heritage continues to exhibit remnants of its colonial origins. The persistent discourse surrounding restitution stems from this complex legal situation (Spitra, 2020).

This ambiguous mention of civilization standards has become outdated; however, during the first half of the 20th century, these principles served as a foundational element of international law. In this regard, it is essential to explore the concept further, examining its influence on international relations and its subsequent exclusion from the normative structure of international law. Article 38 (1) (a) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice specifies that the general principles of law acknowledged by civilized nations constitute one of the sources utilized by the Court (Hoffmann, 2024).

Escalation of the Palestine-Israel Conflict 2023-2025

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict spanning from 2023 to 2025 was characterized by Hamas's assaults on Israeli settlements on October 7, 2023. In response, Israel executed a significantly more forceful retaliation against the Gazans (Moses, 2024). The potential for reconciliation—defined as the reestablishment of relations to facilitate dialogue aimed at healing the divide—is explored. The enduring impact of the Holocaust is recognized as a persistent cultural vulnerability affecting both communities. Nevertheless, it is concluded that the extensive history of cooperation and partnership between Jews and Palestinians offers a robust framework that can underpin sustainable peacebuilding, thus providing a vital source of hope (Komesaroff, 2024).

There are at least four potential scenarios regarding the future of the occupation. First, we have the scenario titled "Revisionist Zionism becomes reality," which entails a swift expansion of Israeli annexation that encounters only minimal Palestinian resistance. Second, there is the scenario known as "Gaza on the Jordan River," characterized by a similarly rapid expansion of the occupation but met with significant Palestinian opposition. Third, we consider the scenario of "colonial-style suffering," which reflects a return to the methods and practices of the occupation that were prevalent prior to October 7, 2023. Lastly, the "squid game" scenario presents a situation where a gradual occupation faces robust Palestinian resistance. Regardless of which of these scenarios may unfold, the sequence provides a conceptual framework that can inspire diplomatic efforts aimed at fostering change among them. Although all these scenarios are disheartening, they remain open to the possibility of international intervention (Veen, 2025).

In contrast to traditional methods, peacebuilding should take precedence over peacekeeping and peacemaking. Nevertheless, this also necessitates a robust international intervention, the probability of which is presently minimal. At this moment, the survival and resistance of

Palestinians hinge on their steadfastness and resilience. For international intervention to be effective, it must encompass four primary components, as outlined in the analysis presented in this book: (1) exerting pressure on Israel to increase the costs associated with its occupation and annexation policies. Non-state social and economic entities appear to be the most suitable for this task; (2) fostering long-term dialogue, activism, and media engagement regarding the framing of the conflict, shared grievances, and potential solutions; (3) connecting Arab-Israeli normalization and Iran-Gulf rapprochement to the cessation of the occupation; (4) revitalizing Palestinian leadership, for instance, by rejuvenating and empowering the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (Dweik, 2025).



Figure 2. The Importance of International Intervention

The 2023 Israeli-Palestinian War exposed many people to prolonged fear and uncertainty, contributing to significant psychological and behavioral consequences. Fear of war has been shown to exacerbate negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, aggression, and suicidal ideation, as well as reduce overall well-being. Intolerance of uncertainty, a trait characterized by difficulty coping with ambiguous situations, is

considered a potential mediator in the relationship between fear of war and these outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of intolerance of uncertainty between fear of war and mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, aggression, suicidal ideation, and well-being, in adults during the 2023 Israeli-Palestinian War (Najem et al., 2025).

While certain nations in the Middle East are perceived to possess conservative traits, there are others that embrace inclusivity, valuing a diversity of beliefs, faiths, and cultures. This is exemplified by the hosting of a global event that was organized for the first time by Muslim and Arab countries (Mustafa et al., 2024). Consequently, an approach to political relations should also focus on more localized strategies. Civil society and politics are deeply interconnected. Given the uneven distribution of wealth amidst economic advancement, development policymakers acknowledge that mere economic growth is inadequate. Development, akin to economic development, ought to be perceived as an institutional and organizational process. The impact of civil society interest groups on the state must be balanced. If it becomes excessive, it may result in stalemate, paralysis, and a rigidification of democratic processes. This is not characteristic of a prosperous and vibrant democratic government (Mustapa, 2024).

Implementation of R2P and POC in the Case of the Palestinian Genocide

Traditional concepts of security emphasize the state's role in safeguarding civilians (Spitka, 2023). Nevertheless, the realities of conflict frequently render states incapable of ensuring the safety of their citizens, as illustrated by the situation in the Palestinian state. Following Israeli assaults that devastated nearly all infrastructure and human resources, the Palestinian government found itself unable to protect its populace and turned to the international community for support, seeking help from both foreign nations and global organizations. Within the framework of

international aid, the principles of R2P and POC are incorporated into the strategies of international bodies, particularly the UN Security Council, to address the assistance requested by the Palestinian people.

The Role of the United Nations Security Council in the Gaza Conflict

Gaza has suffered extensive destruction due to the actions of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), necessitating ongoing and long-term efforts for reconstruction and rehabilitation. The initial phase of reconstruction will prioritize the restoration of physical infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on essential services such as water and energy. Additionally, to mitigate the potential loss of Palestinian youth, the education sector is deemed a critical area of focus. Schools that were suspected of sheltering Hamas militants have been attacked and significantly damaged. The IDF also contends that hospitals in Gaza are providing refuge for militants, leading to these medical facilities being targeted as well. The restoration of primary care services is another crucial priority. The needs of Gaza are interrelated; for instance, the provision of health care is contingent upon a reliable water supply, which is currently insufficient. Gaza is already dependent on external donors for food and water resources. The destruction wrought by the conflict has intensified these needs, further entrenching the reliance on donor assistance.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is essential in addressing the varied requirements of Palestinians residing in Gaza. Nevertheless, the Israeli government contends that UNRWA was involved in the attack on October 7, 2023, and has mandated the closure of its offices and the cessation of its operations. There is an urgent necessity for Gaza to implement a rapid impact plan aimed at alleviating the consequences of the ongoing conflict. The foremost priority is to remove the debris to facilitate the commencement of reconstruction efforts, as well as to provide immediate shelter to ensure that residents have a roof over their heads. Additionally,

reconstruction efforts must tackle the issues of electricity shortages and enhance water supply systems. Given the immense needs and the bureaucratic nature of the UN system, it is imperative for the international community to establish an effective process for identifying projects and securing funding to assist those who are most in need (Phillips, 2025).

Rather than relying on donor conferences—which require significant time for organization, pledge collection, and activity implementation—the Gulf states possess the capability to initiate the process, allowing Palestinians to witness tangible advancements. Quick-impact initiatives will not serve as substitutes for long-term development efforts or donor conferences; instead, they will enhance international endeavors focused on reconstruction and rehabilitation. The rebuilding of Gaza will span several decades. It is essential that recovery commences promptly following the establishment of a sustainable peace.

A comprehensive global framework does not shield Israeli militarism from criticism, nor does it simplify the political landscape into an ambiguous or predetermined notion of 'global capitalism.' Instead, placing Israel's conflict in Gaza within the context of 'globalizing forces' 'expands the political domain itself' by 'prompting inquiries regarding the politics of the territories and our obligations towards them.' By investigating the links between the violence perpetrated against Palestinians in Gaza and international entities, opportunities for critique and action emerge for security hardware firms, policymakers, and national governments whose complicity enables Israeli aggression. These represent significant global trends; the challenge lies in preventing them from being relegated to simplistic or indistinct geopolitical classifications (El-Shewy et al., 2025).

Efforts to reconstruct the devastated systems in Gaza must confront the structural inequalities and systemic injustices that existed prior to the current conflict. Effective recovery necessitates more than mere physical rebuilding; it requires a dedication to justice, dignity, and safeguarding the

rights of the Palestinian population. The enduring conflict in Gaza, characterized by the cumulative effects of environmental degradation, social disintegration, and economic stagnation, has significantly undermined Gaza's ability to meet the fundamental Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving sustainable recovery is unattainable without the cessation of the blockade, ensuring accountability for breaches of international law, and acknowledging the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and fair development. The situation in Gaza underscores the broader failure of the international community to fulfill its obligation to protect civilians and foster a just developmental trajectory. By investing in resilient infrastructure, empowering local institutions, and promoting inclusive governance, the international community can play a pivotal role in creating a future for Gaza and the Palestinian people that is rooted in sustainable peace, justice, and prosperity (Hassoun et al., 2025).

The Veto Power within the UN Security Council. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as articulated in Article 24, is perceived by scholars to have fallen short due to elements such as the exercise of veto power and influence from the United States (at present, there are 10 non-permanent members alongside 5 permanent members who possess veto authority; the United States is among them). There is a prevailing skepticism that without reforming the UN, particularly the UNSC, it will be unfeasible to address conflicts like those in Palestine and Iraq (Mamoona Bashir, 2024).

The global institutions created by the victorious powers of World War II were designed to enable hegemonic states, especially the United States, to exert control. These frameworks have frequently demonstrated their inadequacy in tackling worldwide challenges and disputes, particularly because of the veto authority possessed by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. In light of the recent Palestinian-Israeli conflict in Gaza, it becomes evident how the international community has been compelled to remain a passive observer to this humanitarian disaster. This

catastrophe has uprooted thousands from their residences and led to the loss of many lives, including those of innocent children and women.

Numerous reform initiatives, including those at the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council, have proven inadequate in effectively addressing persistent global challenges. Nevertheless, with the advent of a new post-pandemic global order, characterized by the increased influence of nations such as China, Russia, India, and Japan, the execution of comparable reforms appears to be increasingly unavoidable. This transformation is further supported by the rising international public sentiment, especially under the guidance of regional powers like Turkey, Italy, Brazil, and South Africa. In this framework, the suggested model envisions a system that fosters peace by curtailing the veto authority of permanent members of the UNSC and ensuring enhanced representation of nations through regional representation on the council. Additionally, a Commission on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding would be established under this council, charged with the responsibilities of monitoring potential conflicts, implementing preventive strategies, intervening militarily when deemed necessary, and overseeing post-conflict reconstruction efforts in at-risk regions (Semercioğlu, 2024).

In the aftermath of the attacks on Gaza City and numerous Palestinian refugee camps on October 7, 2023, which were entirely obliterated by Israeli missiles under the justification of targeting Hamas hideouts (Moses, 2024), the situation remains dire. Despite the staggering number of Palestinian casualties, which should be a significant concern, the UN Security Council finds itself impotent due to the US veto against the deployment of UN troops under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) or Protection of Civilians (POC) frameworks. The most substantial response from the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P) and the European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (ECR2P) has been to issue an open call for a ceasefire (Moses, 2023).

One of the primary reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Protection of Civilians (POC) in the Palestinian conflict is the exercise of veto power by the United States, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, owing to its alignment with Israel (Yussef, 2024). Initiatives aimed at conducting rescue operations for the Palestinian populace via R2P or POC frameworks are frequently obstructed by American political agendas that manifest in the UN context through the use of vetoes.

Due to this veto, the UN Security Council is unable to achieve its fundamental objective of safeguarding communities impacted by humanitarian crises. This veto also hinders the implementation of the R2P policy, despite Palestine satisfying all criteria for a rescue operation. While R2P and human security are integral to contemporary discussions and have evolved into recognized international standards, they have yet to be put into practice (Spitka, 2023).

Not to mention the establishment of a protective force for the Palestinian populace under the frameworks of R2P or POC, the United Nations has struggled to make significant progress in alleviating Israel's two-month blockade on humanitarian assistance, resorting only to issuing appeals (Global Conflict Tracker, 2025). The inadequacy of other global institutions is exemplified by the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, which, despite having issued arrest warrants for President Netanyahu due to his involvement in crimes against humanity directed at the Palestinian people, have yet to take action as of the publication of this article. Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu continues to have the authority to command military operations against Palestine, bolstered by the backing of US President Donald Trump.

Palestine's pursuit of full membership in the United Nations has continually encountered diplomatic hurdles, chiefly due to the United States' frequent exercise of its veto power within the Security Council, as evidenced

in 2011 and once more in 2024. This ongoing challenge underscores the constraints of the existing global framework, wherein the ambitions of a nation can be obstructed by the political agendas of a solitary permanent member. The recurrent application of the veto power illustrates a significant disparity in the decision-making process, hindering the international community from achieving a consensus on the matter. Consequently, a viable legal and procedural remedy would be to submit the issue to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. Such a judgment could elucidate the legal differentiation between the recommendations and resolutions put forth by the Security Council.

By clarifying that the process of admitting new members to the United Nations is categorized as recommendations instead of resolutions, the International Court of Justice could establish a legal framework that circumvents the veto power. This would create a more equitable avenue for the consideration of Palestine's membership. Ultimately, this strategy underscores the necessity for reform in global decision-making processes, especially regarding critical matters such as state sovereignty and self-determination. Pursuing an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice may facilitate future dialogues that emphasize adherence to international law over political tactics, thereby ensuring that Palestine's bid for full membership is assessed based on legal criteria, rather than being hindered by ongoing political stalemate (Afia & Ikram, 2025).

Nonetheless, the application of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) through non-military approaches, including humanitarian missions, arms embargoes, and diplomatic pressure, remains an essential strategy for mitigating conflict and safeguarding civilians. To improve the efficacy of the R2P principle in tackling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is imperative to undertake strategic measures, such as reforming the international system and enhancing legal accountability. R2P advocates for all nations to adhere to international law and United Nations resolutions. In the context of the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the application of R2P can foster adherence to international humanitarian law and human rights, while promoting a resolution of the conflict through legitimate avenues. The United Nations' execution of R2P principles can enable more effective mediation and diplomacy, as well as encourage constructive dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. This approach can lay the groundwork for a long-lasting, sustainable, and equitable solution for both parties.

CONCLUSION

The inability of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the Protection of Civilians (POC) frameworks to effectively address the genocide occurring in Palestine from 2023 to 2025 underscores the persistent shortcomings of international humanitarian standards when confronted with entrenched geopolitical hierarchies. Although Palestine meets all the necessary criteria for international protection, no substantial intervention has materialized due to the consistent exercise of the United States veto and the structural deficiencies within the United Nations system. The findings indicate that humanitarian protection grounded in R2P and POC remains more aspirational than operational, particularly in conflicts involving powerful state allies. The veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council—most notably the United States—demonstrates that international mechanisms are still dominated by superpower interests rather than by the principles of justice and human security.

From a critical theoretical perspective, this case reveals that R2P and POC are not merely humanitarian doctrines but instruments deeply embedded in the political architecture of global governance. Their selective application exposes the tension between normative universality and political realism, reflecting what critical international relations scholars describe as the “hierarchy of suffering” within the international system. The Palestinian case therefore challenges the moral legitimacy of global humanitarian

governance and calls for a redefinition of sovereignty and intervention—one that transcends the dominance of power politics and re-centers the protection of human life as the true foundation of international order.

For the future, the failure of R2P and POC in Palestine highlights the urgent need for institutional and normative reform within the United Nations. Reforms should prioritize the restriction or regulation of the veto power in cases of mass atrocities, strengthen the accountability mechanisms of the Security Council, and establish clearer operational criteria for humanitarian intervention. The credibility of humanitarian governance—and the moral authority of international law—depends on transforming these principles from instruments of selective justice into universal guarantees of protection for all victims of mass atrocity.

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