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THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT:
RHETORIC AND REALITY IN THE INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the normative development of the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) from its initial conception, formulated by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, to its final endorsement in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. The evolution of R2P has precipitated the debate on the responsibilities of both individual states and the international community to protect populations against genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The notion of R2P has been accepted as an umbrella term that is not limited to military intervention alone but includes a responsibility to prevent, react and rebuild.

The military intervention in Libya has shown that the rhetoric of R2P when put into practice, has had to face the controversies surrounding the reality of the use of force as a legal and legitimate instrument of protection. The implementation of the R2P principle sought to avoid the challenges posed by the problematic legacy of humanitarian interventionism. However, these issues persist and must be constantly debated if the commitment to strengthen the legitimacy and the authority of the international community to end atrocity crimes is to be translated into effective protection of civilians.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU  African Union
CAAT  Campaign Against Arms Trade
EU  European Union
GAOR  General Assembly Official Records
GCR2P  Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
HLP  High-Level Panel
HRC  Human Rights Council
ICC  International Criminal Court
ICG  International Crisis Group
ICISS  International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ICJ  International Court of Justice
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRtoP  International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect
IHL  International Humanitarian Law
LAS  League of Arab States
MS  Member States
NATO  North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs  Non Governmental Organisations
OIC  Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation
R2P  Responsibility to Protect
TNC  Transitional National Council
UN  United Nations
UNGA  United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR  United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC  United Nations Security Council
US  United States
WMD  Weapons of Mass Destruction
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