

**STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**TOPIC: STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE TIGRAY CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA**

**BY**

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fulfillment for the requirement of the degree of Bachelor of International Studies of  
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## Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree or any other award in any other university.

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For Prezzy.



## Abstract

The goal of this study was to examine the connections between the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and the State Sovereignty (SS) principle in the context of the Tigray conflict, which lasted from 3 November 2020 to 3 November 2022. The study's three main goals were to discuss how state sovereignty affects responsibility to protect, what circumstances should have spurred R2P in the Tigray conflict case, and who is the best agent to implement R2P measures in Africa, a discussion between the AU and the UN in this study. The two theoretical frameworks that were used were liberal institutionalism, which emphasizes the function of international organizations like the African Union or the United Nations in addressing humanitarian crises through collective action and cooperation, and classical realist theory, which advocates for strict adherence to and respect of a state's autonomous privilege to determine itself within the international system without interference from any external actors. The study used a descriptive research methodology, which combined qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis methods to produce the research's findings. In-person interviews with two key informants and an online questionnaire with 12 respondents were used to gather the data. The main conclusions of the study were that respondents believed that SS directly affected R2P, that the humanitarian crisis that followed the conflict should have prompted R2P, and that it is the responsibility of the entire international community to address humanitarian crises regardless of which organization is tasked with doing so. The main takeaways are that states should put their citizens' interests first by making sure that their human rights are respected, and that the international community should continue to be strongly committed to protecting those who are victims of humanitarian crises by strengthening R2P and making it more robust to effectively and efficiently be accepted by states as a solution to solving humanitarian crises and not as a threat to their sovereignty.

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## List of Abbreviations

A.C.L.E.D.	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
A.U.	African Union
A.S. F	Amhara Special Forces
C.E.W.S.	Continental Early Warning System
E.D.F.	Eritrean Defence Forces
E.N.D.F.	Ethiopian National Defence Forces
E.H.R.C	Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
O.A.U.	Organization of African Unity
I.C.I.S. S	International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
O.H.C.H.R	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
O.C.H.A.	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
P.S.C.	Peace and Security Council
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
S.S.	State Sovereignty
T.P.L.F.	Tigray Peoples Liberation Front
T.S.F.	Tigray Special Forces
U.N.	United Nations
U.N. G.A.	United Nations General Assembly
U.N.S.C.	United Nations Security Council

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

States have responsibilities mandated to them by their populations that are to protect and safeguard their interests. When an internal crisis arises, such as conflict, a state's government is obligated to minimize it, end it, or lessen casualties, as well as to help rebuild the broken state of peace. The international community has a shared responsibility for each other, to assist one another to attain shared goals of peace and prosperity, (Keohane, 1986). The nature of international society is one of co-dependence. As a result, negative effects arising from one state may also affect the other if not promptly dealt with.

When a humanitarian crisis occurs, it is imperative for the state in question to respond promptly. Responding to the plight of victims is a government's prime mandate and the shared responsibility the international community holds. The appreciation of Responsibility to Protect as a measure for humanitarian intervention as the shared mandate the international community holds, describes how the international community is able to activate its mandate globally.

In the case of the Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia, we question the applicability of R2P in the alleviation of the humanitarian crisis caused and worsened by the armed struggle. The civil war has led to so much harm, pain and chaos, especially for the civilians in the northern region of Ethiopia who are directly caught in the crossfire for the armed conflict. The victims in Tigray and its environs deserve to have their rights respected and maintained by the federal government, however the conflict with their rivals the TPLF has led to the people inhabiting the Tigray region marginalized and indirectly targeted by the federal government forces, (ICG, 2021).

The international community recognizes the need for the Ethiopian government to not only bring an end to the conflict but to also carry out actions to protect civilians and assist victims

who have suffered from impacts of the conflict. The international community expects the Ethiopian government to take stronger actions to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being experienced by the people in the Tigray. Similarly, the international community is mandated to act in safeguarding the human rights of victims being faced by the humanitarian crisis, specifically through R2P. The application of R2P is unclear in the case of the Tigray conflict. When a state is not able to guarantee the protection of its citizens, the international community may have grounds to intervene, (Koh, 2017). This intervention is aimed to alleviate the suffering of the affected population. It is not a straight line to just intervene, there are steps and protocols to observe. The most important one is to respect the state in question's sovereignty. This is a norm that establishes the new world order in the observance of peace and security. It is important to describe that a state establishes itself through the sovereign power it holds (Harrison & Boyd, 2018). This allows it to determine itself, its policies, and its decisions. It acts for the whole nation, aiming to safeguard the people's rights and protect them from harm. The exercise of a state's power largely derives from the sovereign status it holds, to formulate policy, to accept external assistance and to participate with other states in the international system. The United Nations Charter enshrines the principle of sovereignty under Article 2.1. Sovereignty is a mutually accepted status that states accord one another and whose infringement quantifies a violent response, (Wallach, 2018).

States have every right to uphold their sovereignty as enshrined in the United Nations Charter Article 2.7, that guarantees the principle of non-Intervention protecting a state's sovereignty. Intervention of any kind is deemed necessary from the need to the means and objectives, (Heraclides & Dialla, 2015). When should intervention occur and how should it be done? More so, should there be any intervention in the first place? As illustrated by former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika during the 29th United Nations General Assembly round table discussions, he discussed the importance of understanding legitimate intervention that respects

sovereignty. He insisted that ensuring legitimate intervention would guarantee a state's sovereignty. As such he remained adamant towards intervention especially prompted by Western powers since he believed that the target of such intervention, especially if they were towards developing states, would not have their interests upheld but the intervening parties would focus on their own interests. The colonial history in Africa serves as a strong remembrance of the negative impacts of western influence on underdeveloped regions of the world.

It is important to discuss, what should the international community do to curb the suffering caused by manmade catastrophes in the case of non-international armed conflict? The inadequate response during the Rwandan Genocide would illustrate consequences of a lack of a forward approach to intervene to protect a threatened community. The aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide called for a strong reflection on what the international community actually stands for, in the face of an internal armed conflict, which may cause untold human suffering and what actions should they endeavor to do, (Scheffer, 2004). The slow response by the international community was characterized by the lack of an appropriate mechanism to handle such a case that led to poor execution of any applied intervention which led to the inability of the community of states to prevent the horrors that ensued.

The international community is faced with a challenge of how to respect a state's sovereignty and still aim to alleviate and protect the population in question amidst a humanitarian crisis. R2P provides for respect for a state's sovereign status, as well as reinforcing the shared responsibility the international community is obligated to provide, to eliminate suffering and not just stand by and watch as a humanitarian crisis worsens, (Evans & Pape, 2013).

The international community serves a purpose, a role it plays as established through the common norms they mutually exercise and adhere to. The shared values they identify with such as the Treaty of Westphalia, established key principles for modern statehood such as

sovereignty. The shared goals of promoting human rights, justify humanitarian intervention as prime reasons why States and the international community give grounds for intervention. The United Nations, the largest intergovernmental organization, posits that the goal of its members is to promote and safeguard the human rights and dignity of all. The principle of R2P arises from the mission that the international community strives to prevent mass atrocities crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, (Bellamy, 2009).

According to realist perspectives, states repel international intervention since they perceive that the states are willing to help only if they are able to pursue their own interests. The whole idea for humanitarian intervention is perceived as a form of neo-colonialism especially from African perspectives. This is why SS and independence is upheld strongly, to protect against ill motives that states use when calling for intervention internationally especially in underdeveloped regions with untapped resources, (Heraclides & Dialla, 2015).

The epitome of human solidarity and compassion drive motives for humanitarian intervention. To save state populations from humanitarian, gross systemic human rights violations and mass human suffering embodies the seventh United Nations Secretary General's, the late Kofi Annan, call to action during his address to the UN General Assembly, (UNGA) in September 1999, (Welsh, et Al., 2002). Failures of a state to prevent or protect its communities from ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity calls to the international community to take responsibility to assist and protect the affected population, a notion brought forth by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS).

Through the context of the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia, this research project tries to investigate the relationship between State Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect. The Ethiopian Federal Government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (T.P.L.F.), have been engaged in a civil war that began in November 2020. The government's repeated postponements of the general elections scheduled for August 2020

because of concerns about the coronavirus epidemic are considered to be one of the triggers of this conflict. The already deepened rift between the Tigray and the ruling party was widened, transforming the tension into armed conflict, (Gavin, 2021).

Reports from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, illustrate that the Tigray Special Forces (TSF) attacked the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) Northern Command on November 3, 2020, seizing the base and its weaponry. The federal government declared a military operation against the TPLF and its fighters on November 4, 2020. According to the same report, the ENDF is backed by the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) and Amhara Special Forces (ASF), and they began a military campaign against the TSF, (ACLED, 2020).

The violent conflict has resulted in numerous violations of international human rights law, humanitarian law, and laws pertaining to refugees, according to the joint report by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Major violations and abuses have resulted from the conflict, including attacks on civilians and civilian-related items that have killed and injured men, women, and children. Attacks were made indiscriminately on civilian targets, including hospitals, schools, places of worship, and homes, which are given special protection under international humanitarian law. The sides to the war did not take enough measures to safeguard civilians and civilian property (EHRC & OHCHR, 2021).

According to the joint report, there have reportedly been extrajudicial executions and unlawful killings that have violated Ethiopian law, the country's constitution, and both international and humanitarian law. TPLF troops killed over 100 people in Maikadra on November 9, 2020, the EDF killed over 100 people in Axum on November 28, 2020, and the ENDF killed at least 70 men in various districts of the Tigray region on January 8 and 9, 2021, killing over 200 Amhara civilians on the basis of ethnicity. According to reports, all parties to the conflict have been

implicated in torturing civilians and captured combatants in a number of different places around Tigray, including military camps, detention centers, and unidentified locations (Gavin, 2021). According to reports, all sides to the disputes are accused of having engaged in various forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as physical assault against civilians. As a result of the widespread and unlawful acts that have been conducted on a large scale, hundreds of thousands of civilians have fled their homes in the Amhara and Tigray areas. The tensions between the Tigrayans and Amharans increased as a result of this. Due to these tensions, internally displaced individuals are not able to access proper food, nutrition, water, healthcare, sanitation, and cleanliness, which resulted in many children, mothers, and injured people dying as a result (EHRC & OHCHR, 2021).

Humanitarian aid obstructions or delays were attributed to ongoing hostilities and a lack of effective local administrative authorities for coordination. Due to the fighting, Ethiopia's citizens have been suffering from a severe humanitarian catastrophe, which could have regional repercussions and lead to instability (Gavin, 2021).

The Joint Investigative Report by the OHCHR and the EHRC acknowledges the necessity for more investigation into alleged violations linked to the denial of access to humanitarian relief and the murder of humanitarian workers, (EHRC & OHCHR, 2021). Human Rights Watch claims that some of the tactics the federal government has employed include preventing access to humanitarian aid in Ethiopia's northern region. Unfortunately, there is still a serious communications blackout in many areas of the region, jeopardizing the accuracy of information and reports from the ground. It is also acknowledged that the region's bureaucratic obstacles and pervasive insecurity prevent journalists and international relief organizations from carrying out their missions (Gavin, 2021).

According to the International Crisis Group, (2021), civilians in Ethiopia within the Tigray region have been bearing the brunt of the brutal conflict between the two warring parties that

has been marred by atrocities against civilians. An estimated 2.1 million people have been displaced by the crisis. As of September 2021, the United Nations Refugee Agency, reported that 48,500 refugees had arrived in Eastern Sudan from Tigray. The United Nations report that over three million Tigrayans are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. They are faced with a dire food, water and health crisis that are estimated to worsen because of upcoming reports of a prolonged famine that is historically resonant in Ethiopia.

Reports from various news outlets such as BBC, (2021) describe a tug of war between the TPLF and the Ethiopian Federal Government. With the government denying a humanitarian blockade blaming the TPLF forces for the rampant cases of insecurity preventing aid from reaching the affected regions and the TPLF blaming the government for disrupting the aid process. According to the World Food Programme in Ethiopia, aid is slowly reaching the affected areas, and that the major challenge is inadequate resources such as relief food, water, and fuel.

So far, the international community continues to call for the warring parties to cease hostilities without exerting any pressure to stop the ongoing war. For the African Union to effectively mitigate the issue, The African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo was sent to the region to attempt to kickstart a peace process in light of the humanitarian crisis that continued to worsen. He was also able to update the assembly on the situation during the emergency meeting of heads of states on the Tigray conflict situation, (AU, 2021). It is unclear if the Ethiopian government called for AU support, however we note an emergency assembly meeting in November 2021 where the H.E. Obasanjo reiterated the importance of the assembly through the PSC to respond to the humanitarian crisis that arose because of the conflict. After months of on and off fighting the warring parties agreed to a cease fire to embark on a peace process.

In November 2022, an Agreement for lasting peace through a permanent cessation of hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front was signed. Though both parties were able to recognize the destructive outcome the conflict has had on the lives and livelihoods of the Ethiopians, the warring parties agreed to the ceasefire. One of the important principles underpinning the agreement is the guaranteed access of unhindered humanitarian relief to the affected population and the use of humanitarian aid exclusively for humanitarian assistance, (Agreement for Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, 2022).

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite there being international consensus affirmed by the African Union Constitutive Act of 2001, for all international actors to respect state sovereignty, the same international community is mandated to protect the human rights of all citizens regardless of their state of origin. The responsibility of a state to respond to humanitarian crises facing its people is also shared with the international community who are also mandated to respond to such crises to assist the victims. Similarly, the international community has a responsibility to respect another states sovereignty and not just intervene. As such a debate arises, which should take precedence and how do these important principles interlink during the creation of appropriate humanitarian response strategies to alleviate the human suffering being experienced by victims and civilians caused by an internal armed conflict.

The Tigray conflict in Ethiopia has been reported to have caused widespread suffering and destruction experienced in the Tigray region and the neighbouring Afar and Amhara areas. It is illustrated that over 2.1 million civilians have been displaced in the mentioned areas and over 500 thousand have been killed because of the prolonged famine, drought and war related crimes. To further exacerbate this issue, the warring parties, the TPLF and the ENDF forces,

are accused of being perpetrators of humanitarian violations such as sexual and gender-based violence, unlawful detention and torture as well as accusation of preventing humanitarian aid from effectively reaching victims in dire need of them.

The international community in Africa is faced with a dilemma, of fulfilling its mandate according to Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act of 2001 by responding to the plight of victims of said internal conflict while also maintaining respect to SS according to article 4(a) of the AU Constitutive Act. This study aimed to reflect on appropriate intervention strategies under R2P while maintaining respect to fundamental international norms and principles of sovereignty.

### 1.3 Objectives

The general objective of this study was to investigate the interplay between sovereignty and the emerging norm of responsibility to protect, through the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia.

The specific objectives this research study aims to discuss are as follows.

1. To determine the elements of State Sovereignty that affect the application of Responsibility to Protect.
2. To examine the factors that could trigger the application of Responsibility to Protect.
3. To discuss the most responsible institution for triggering Responsibility to Protect measures.

### 1.4 Justification

The purpose of this research project was to discuss the interplay between SS and humanitarian intervention under R2P in assisting a state faced with a humanitarian crisis. It would provide a perspective on a state that is currently faced with a civil conflict and the international

community's position on how to promote a legal and ethical intervention strategy in order to lessen the humanitarian crisis.

The paper will contribute to the study and application of international humanitarian intervention by providing a focus on Responsibility to Protect as an avenue for effective and efficient international humanitarian intervention while strongly defending and maintaining state sovereignty. This appreciation would lead to its readers understanding the responsibility sovereignty has in serving its citizens and how responsibility to protect emerges to guarantee that citizens facing a humanitarian crisis may be assisted while maintaining international rules and norms that are the pillars to international administration.

### 1.5 Scope

This study will focus on the Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia that has been ongoing since 2020, until 2022. The level of intervention we shall discuss is to relate to the African Union as the appropriate agency to guide the R2P process.

### 1.6: Limitations

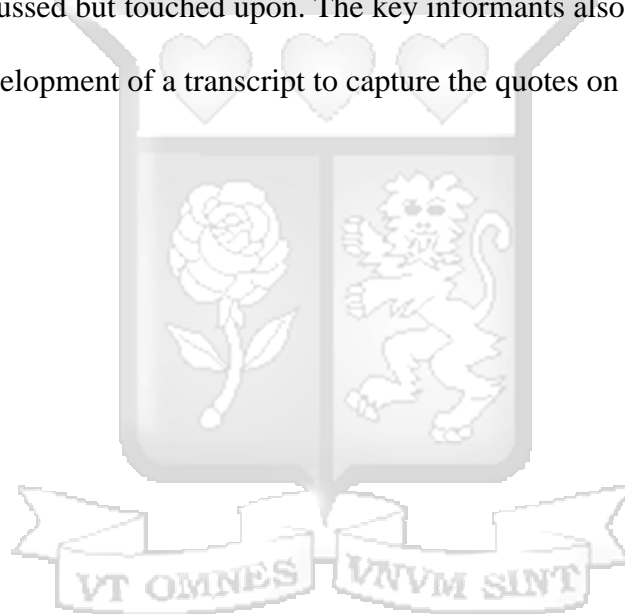
The challenges encountered during this study were as follows. Not all of the targeted respondents responded. Only 14 respondents were acquired. This comprised of 2 key informants and 12 participants on the online survey. This was due to time constraints and willingness of the respondents to participate. The questionnaire was delivered through online means, and this was to get as many respondents as possible to participate at their own convenience.

The targeted key informants proved difficult to secure. There were 5 targeted key informants from various sectors such as the Ethiopian embassy in Kenya, Amnesty International, International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, Human Rights Watch, Life

and Peace Institute and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation. Only the International Crisis Group respondent through a researcher involved in the research on the Tigray conflict.

The other limitation faced was time and resources that proved to limit the reach of the study to a wider array of respondents who would have provided better insights on the subject. Similarly, the lack of Ethiopians voice in the respondents proves that there was a challenge to reaching individuals directly involved in the conflict.

The key informants also limited the effectiveness of this study as during the interviews they were short of time pressing for an unstructured interview. This led to elements being researched on not accurately discussed but touched upon. The key informants also declined to recordings thus hindering the development of a transcript to capture the quotes on the research questions.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The study's literature analysis is presented in this chapter. Included in this is the body of academic study on State Sovereignty and Responsibility to Protect. The format of the chapter is as follows:

### 2.2 Theoretical framework

#### 2.2.1 Introduction

Realism and liberal theories served as the foundation for this study. It is significant to highlight that these two theories inform the SS and R2P views respectively, which will be covered in this study. Realism suggests the arguments for States to maintain their sovereignty, whilst liberalism suggests the Responsibility to Protect.

#### 2.2.2 Liberalist theory

Liberalism theory advocates for the maintenance of human rights. Liberals believe that progress in human history can be measured by the elimination of global conflict and the adoption of principles of legitimacy that have evolved in domestic political orders. Numerous authors have covered liberalism in-depth and from a variety of angles. Francis Fukuyama, a prominent liberal thinker, argues that liberal democracies are capable of preventing deadly conflicts that may lead to humanitarian crises. One of the greatest thinkers of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, asserts that republican governments that respect fundamental shared rules such as respect for human rights and share economic missions together are more likely to adopt peaceful behaviour, (Kant, 1991). The goal of liberalism is to establish a cooperative framework for peaceful interaction amongst global actors. However, Kant also

suggests that refraining from interfering in the internal problems of other countries would strengthen the circumstances for a more peaceful international environment.

Liberal peace tends to follow two main themes. Liberal culture that demonstrates the capacity democratic nations have to resolve issues via dialogue and compromise, and liberal institutionalism, which urges democratic states to maintain a system of checks and balances through international institutions to deter conflicts. Liberal thinker John M. Owen sees that, liberal governments trust other liberal democracies and find no cause to resist them, (Owen, 1994).

According to Doyle, another well-known liberal theorist, discusses that liberal states oppose the idea of deploying force against other democracies. However, Doyle thinks that because, not all liberal nations are more peaceful than non-liberal states, (Doyle, 2005). By promoting democratic systems that uphold the universal protection of human rights and the growth of civil society, we are led to believe that fostering liberal institutionalism will result in the achievement of long-term security and peace. Liberal democratic ideas have dominated UN peace programs under liberal institutionalism, where more emphasis is given to human rights than state rights in the international realm.

Keohane (1989) asserts that institutions like the UN should be able to redefine state functions, mediate between states in conflict, and help lessen human suffering experienced by any population around the world. As a result, he goes on to say that although these institutions cannot end the current state of anarchy, they can change the nature of the international environment by changing State conduct. As a result, many neo-liberal institutionalists contend that in order to advance the common interest in global stability, international players should encourage institutionalization.

Neo liberal institutionalism views institutions as a collection of norms, rules, and routines rather than as a formal structure. This does not imply that institutions must alter the preferences

and actions of actors, but that they have the ability to do so by emphasizing the key role of ideology, rules, and norms in determining a state actor's logic of appropriateness. According to neo-liberals, cooperation and integration might help to mitigate dangers that could result in humanitarian crises (Steele, 2007).

Neoliberals contend that although if anarchy limits states' capacity for cooperation, they can still do so, especially with the support of international organizations (Greico, 1993). They adopt a more state-centric perspective on international affairs as a result and think that States are logical actors in an anarchic world. States have an incentive to work together in order to maximize absolute rewards, particularly those that come from maintaining peace and preventing violence. Because of this, collaboration is more likely to occur than not. Institutions allow states to address issues through collective action.

Neo liberal institutionalists contend that states that engage continuously do so because they recognize that they will do so in the future with the same parties. In order to establish international institutions that, in turn, regulate state behaviour and facilitate transparency of all actions, governments are primarily motivated by this reason. These international organizations function as hubs for cooperation and help states create reputations for compliance by laying out expectations clearly (Karns et Al, 2015).

The role that international organizations like the African Union and United Nations play in implementing humanitarian intervention measures in states facing humanitarian crises emerging from internal armed conflicts makes this theory relevant to our research. The premise that liberal democratic governments are able to collaborate because they follow the shared standards that direct them is illustrated by liberal ideas by Fukuyama and Kant. Their acts are driven by a desire to achieve common goals and to uphold the peace and respect for human rights.

Responsibility to Protect, samples liberal ideas where it promotes international cooperation to attain the common good of peace and the security of human rights. It brings states together to an understanding of their responsibility to address challenges the international community strives to resolve. When intervention is posed to a democratic state, liberal theories suggest that a positive output to a humanitarian crisis would be observed based on the state's reaction to it.

### 2.2.3 Realist theory

Realist scholars argue that a leader's flawed human nature or the impending unpleasantness imposed by an anarchic international system are what motivate state behaviour. The majority of realists regard international relations with pessimism and caution. International relations are described by realists in terms of power, wherein power determines the progress of state interests and ensures survival. The idea of domination serves as the cornerstone of realism. They assert that the decisions made by nations acting as autonomous agents rationally pursuing their own interests in an international system of sovereign states lacking a central authority to obtain or assert dominance, explain international relations (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2014).

Numerous arguments are put up by various realist academics. Hans Morgenthau (1985), a scholar, claims that national interests that are defined in terms of power control international politics. Realist scholars contend that while not always the best option, armed force could be utilized when it is deemed essential. The first strand of realism analyses classical realism, which contends that nations are perpetually involved in a struggle to ascertain themselves and their own interests since the desire for power is founded in humanity's flaws (Elman & Jensen, 2013). State tactics are believed to have been chosen logically after weighing the advantages and disadvantages of several alternative courses of action.

Neo-Realism theories offered by Kenneth Waltz (1979) elaborate that the absence of a central authority in the design of the international system causes anarchy that forces States to employ

the principles of self-help through strategic choices that are made in their favour. Defensive realism expands on the ideas of the neo-realists by explaining how nations seek security in an international system that is anarchic and where the major danger to their security comes from other states. The main distinction between the two is that while defensive realism only considers rational choice, neorealism accepts numerous micro foundations to explain State behaviour. Waltz also maintains that governments establish alliances to defend themselves against anarchy; the strength of these alliances is based on the perceived threats and the influence of others.

Realist viewpoints are clearly demonstrated by the prudent choice made by the Ethiopian federal government in the early phases of the conflict by upholding the idea of sovereignty therefore opposing international intervention. African States have had a painful past that has fuelled a powerful desire to assert their sovereignty and impose their own choice to decide for themselves.

During the 1999 UN General Assembly, former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika discussed the responsibility that African States have to defend their sovereignty. He puts out realist notions that are pessimistic in their belief that foreign actors cannot be trusted and that their primary objective is to further their own interests, (UN, 1999). This casts a shadow on international intervention strategies, particularly those put out by developed countries for use in developing countries. This mistrust supports realist theories that States do not trust one another because of the anarchic nature of the international system, leading them to prioritize their own interests over those of other states.

Most emerging nations, especially those in Africa, share the Bouteflika school of thought. He calls on states to continue adhering to the realists' pessimistic view of international support in his strong assertion that SS should not be undermined under any false pretence. Activities of states are guided by realist principles, and for emerging states, these actions may produce a

zero-sum game. Behind the scenes, SS is violated, which greatly increases mistrust in an already stressful anarchic system.

The international community upholds the neo-realist idea of respecting state sovereignty as a shared standard and guideline. This defence of sovereignty is a response to the dangers that the principles of dominance pose to weaker states. Foreign policy of more powerful states entails influencing weaker states as they expand. The need of maintaining national sovereignty is emphasized by the sovereignty principle. The right to protect one's interests is essential since a State needs to work to consolidate its power in order to ensure its survival and security.

## 2.3 Review of literature

### 2.3.1 Describing R2P as an Emerging Norm in International Relations

The idea of R2P addresses the problem of how to appropriately react when sovereign states are unable to protect their citizens from humanitarian crises. Governments in Africa have occasionally murdered their own citizens or helped militias carry out targeted atrocities against particular groups. Consider the two million or so Darfur residents who were forcibly removed from their homes by the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia, resulting in at least 250,000 fatalities. Another might be the genocide in Rwanda, where more than a million people were killed in just 100 days. We are forced to consider whether these states should renounce their sovereign rights and allow for legal humanitarian intervention in light of these atrocities, (Bellamy, 2013).

As a result, the issue of humanitarian intervention became a crucial one in international relations. During the UN General Assembly in 1999 and again in 2000, Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary General, "made compelling pleas to the international community to try and find, finally, a new consensus on how to approach these issues, to "forge unity" around the basic

questions of principle and process involved" in humanitarian intervention. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was established to explore the issue of the right to humanitarian intervention, and it was by means of this Commission that the phrase "responsibility to protect" was first used in the context of international relations (Thakur, 2002).

R2P encompasses three distinct responsibilities: the responsibility to prevent, which addresses the root causes and immediate triggers of internal conflict and other man-made crises that put populations at risk; the responsibility to react, which entails acting in response to situations and using coercive measures such as sanctions, international retaliation, and military intervention where necessary; and finally, the responsibility to rebuild, which entails aiding with recovery (MacFarlane, et Al., 2002).

The UNGA endorsed the idea of a responsibility to protect as a part of future international relations in an Outcome Document that was published in September 2005. (UN, 2005). Similar to this, at the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government vowed to uphold the Responsibility to Protect principle.

R2P is based on three important pillars. These duties include the government's responsibility to protect its citizens against acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity, as well as from the encouragement of such crimes. In accordance with the second pillar, the international community must assist the state in performing its responsibility to safeguard. Last but not least, the UN Charter's Chapters VI and VIII, which specify peaceful measures, enforcement measures, and regional arrangements, require the international community to act immediately and firmly when a state has blatantly failed to protect its population from mass atrocities. These actions should be done through peaceful diplomatic, and humanitarian means if those fail, (UN GA, 2005).

According to the UNs' "A More Secure World" report from 2005, they posit that the main emphasis for intervention should focus on assisting in the cessation of violence through mediation and other tools, and by protecting people through actions such as dispatching of humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping missions. The UN Security Council reiterated R2P in its resolutions 1674 from 2006 and 1894 from 2009, both of which declared that the council was prepared to respond to mass atrocities. The UN Secretary General established the Joint Office for the Prevention of Genocide and R2P, which would provide the international organization with early warning guidelines, reaction plans, capacity-building, awareness-raising, and R2P implementation advancements, (Muvumba & Scanlon, 2005).

R2P was posited as a solution to prevent 'another Rwanda' as explained by Kofi Annan that focused on a new consensus on a plan of action for responding to human tragedies. The large-scale loss of life in April 1994 was a moment for the international community to reflect on what constituted the threshold for intervention. The lack of appropriate threat assessment and the poor execution of any action led to Rwanda's genocide posing heavy consequences on the lack of appropriate measures the international community should have, (Palmieri,2019).

The quantification of what constitutes an extreme humanitarian emergency would guide on when a sovereign state had lost capacity to protect its citizens. However, the ICISS would not be able to quantify the appropriate threshold indicating that major disagreements to interpretation may arise as explained in the case of Kosovo in 1999 where for some countries the threshold had been met while for others, they believed that they had not crossed the threshold, (MacFarlane, et Al., 2002). Despite the UNSC holding the mandate to authorize intervention, we are met at the challenge posed by the Veto power votes that may affect and alter the fundamental issues at the core of R2P.

One folly that troubles the principle of responsibility to protect is that it rests on a moral rather than legal foundation. The ethical and logical perspectives collide during the consideration of

the R2P framework. The notion purported is that no one should be harmed by violence that could be reasonably prevented. This moral approach does not appeal to logic as the legal ramifications of interventions that turn out unjust as well as the legal provisions to guide the intervention process require strong governance questions to be tackled.

### 2.3.2 Elements of State Sovereignty and their effects on Responsibility to Protect

SS, as was previously stated, refers to a government's control over its own territory. This provision prohibits states from meddling in the internal affairs of other states. This idea, which is a fundamental component of international law, is reflected in the UN Charter, which declares that all nations have the right to "juridical equality" and that "the territory of a state is inviolable." A drawback is that states frequently point out instances of human rights abuses in situations where they assert their sovereignty and treat their citizens anyway, they choose. As was already established, the UN first stated the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle in 2005. It is based on the premise that states have an obligation to guard their citizens against massive atrocities like genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity (Tesfaye, 2012).

The ability of the international community to uphold this ideal, however, can be impacted by a number of aspects of state sovereignty. The principle of non-interference, which maintains that states have the right to conduct their own affairs without outside influence, is one of the fundamental components of state sovereignty, (Byers, 2003). The international community may find it challenging to interfere in a state's internal affairs as a result, even when there is proof that mass atrocities are occurring. R2P debates that the international community has a duty to intervene to protect civilians if a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own population.

Under international law, states are regarded as sovereign entities and are exempt from legal action in other countries. Due to this, it may be challenging for the international community to hold states accountable for their deeds, even when there is proof of widespread crimes, (Bellamy, 2006). This fundamental tenet of SS asserts a state's authority to rule over a particular territory as it sees fit. The international world may find it challenging to interfere in a state's internal affairs as a result, even when there is proof that mass atrocities are occurring.

According to the concept of national sovereignty, states are entitled to conduct their own internal affairs free from outside influence. The principles of R2P would show that the main distinction between state sovereignty and R2P is that state sovereignty emphasizes the rights of states to govern themselves, while R2P emphasizes the protection of individuals from mass atrocities. This can make it challenging for the international community to interfere in a state's internal affairs, even when there is evidence that mass atrocities are taking place, (Ayoob, 2004).

Overall, state sovereignty factors can have an impact on the R2P principle by making it more challenging for the international community to get involved in a state's internal affairs and hold governments responsible for their deeds. This can make it difficult to defend populations against widespread atrocities. R2P is the idea that states have a responsibility to protect their populations from mass atrocities, and if a state is unable or unwilling to do so, the international community has a responsibility to intervene to protect civilians. State sovereignty is the idea that a state has the right to govern itself without interference from outside parties.

### 2.3.3 Factors that could trigger the application of Responsibility to Protect.

There are a few factors that would need to be considered from the Tigray conflict before R2P could begin. These could include a study of the scope and type of human rights breaches occurring that cause R2P. Cases relating to mass atrocities including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity are investigated and reported, (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2012). Given the scope and severity of the purported human rights abuses, there would need to be proof of widespread and serious violations of human rights occurring in Tigray that would call for an international response. In order for the international community to act to defend people in Tigray, this is vital.

A further example would be the Ethiopian government's incapacity or unwillingness to defend its own citizens. According to MacFarlane et al. (2002), R2P is activated when a state is incapable or unwilling to protect its own citizens, therefore there would need to be proof that the Ethiopian government is not doing enough to safeguard the people of Tigray. R2P is often considered to be most effective when it is utilized early, before the situation spirals out of control, when it is anticipated that the possibility of the crisis escalating and atrocities continuing. It is crucial to take into account the possibility that the unrest in Tigray could worsen and that more crimes will be committed.

The viability and efficacy of various forms of interventions should be taken into account in order to implement the proper tactics and ensure the success of a humanitarian intervention program. A variety of diplomatic, humanitarian, and other methods could be used to implement R2P, (Sahnoun & Evans, 2001). It would be crucial to take into account the viability and efficiency of various intervention kinds in the Tigray environment. The goal of this is to get the opinions of the impacted populace. They are the core of R2P. safeguarding individuals is the basis for R2P. Therefore, it would be crucial to take into account the opinions of the affected community in Tigray and communicate with them regarding the best sort of intervention.

Another element to consider would be the degree of intervention. There are options for an international response that include diplomatic engagement, economic sanctions, and the use of military force, (Muvumba & Scanlon, 2005). Where each option has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, and the decision on which option to use should be based on a careful consideration of the specific circumstances of the conflict and the degree to which the intervention should be.

It should also be considered that the conflict may have ripple effects that generate consequences for the region in which the conflict occurs, (Palmieri, 2019). The need to take into account the views and concerns of other states, particularly those in the region, recognizes the fact that The Tigray conflict has the potential to destabilize the entire region. It is important to consider the views and concerns of other states in the region before taking any action.

The decision to invoke R2P in recent reports has been seen to be politically motivated. It is only permitted by the UN and its member states' approval. More importantly with the consent of the government in question. In this case, the federal government of Ethiopia must give its consent. From determination through accurate reporting and analysis, that the government is unwilling or unable to protect its population and therefore, intervention is then necessary, (Bellamy, 2013). This describes the mandate the United Nations Security Council bearers to execute humanitarian assistance missions through the R2P principle. Ultimately, this means that any international action to protect civilians in Tigray would need to be authorized by the United Nations Security Council. It's worth mentioning that these factors are not meant to be a definitive list of all that need to be considered in R2P's application, and the complexity of the Tigray conflict, which has multiple actors and has been ongoing for a long time, would require a more thorough and nuanced assessment.

#### 2.3.4 Institutional framework for triggering Responsibility to Protect measures in Africa

The R2P principle is an idea in international law that nations have a responsibility to protect their citizens against mass atrocities such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. In 2005, the UN endorsed the idea. The AU has also established mechanisms to address humanitarian crises on the continent and has supported the R2P principle, through the AU constitutive Act, 2000, (AU, 2000). The AU has pledged to give up the idea of non-interference in order to confront human rights issues more effectively in order to restore peace and security.

Applying R2P strategies in Africa requires the involvement of both the UN and the AU. According to the UN Charter, the UN has the power to authorize and effectively intervene on behalf of the international community, but the AU is primarily instrumental in resolving conflicts on the continent. Although both the AU and the UN are capable of supervising R2P operations in Africa, there are some significant distinctions between the two organizations that may make one more acceptable than the other in specific circumstances, (Murithi, 2012).

The fact that the AU is composed of African governments implies that it has a deeper understanding of the political, cultural, and social backdrop of the continent, which is one of its benefits, (Hanson, 2008). This can be useful for creating and executing R2P missions that are catered to the region's particular needs. The shared prosperity and history is key for establishing better understanding and cordiality. Additionally, the AU is charged with advancing security and peace across the continent, which is consistent with R2P's objectives and their goal of giving African citizens the protection they need from humanitarian crises.

However, the AU also has some limitations when it comes to R2P missions. The organization lacks the resources and capacity of the UN, which can make it difficult for the AU to effectively implement R2P missions on its own. Additionally, the AU's decision-making process can be slow and ineffective, which can be a disadvantage in crisis situations where quick action is

needed. The UN, on the other hand, has a wide range of resources and capabilities at its disposal, including a large peacekeeping force and the ability to impose sanctions and authorize the use of force. This makes the UN well-suited to handle large-scale R2P missions that require significant military or economic resources. Additionally, the UN has a more efficient decision-making process, which allows it to respond quickly to crisis situations, (Bellamy, 2011).

However, one of the main concerns with UN involvement in a R2P mission in Africa is that it could be seen as a form of neo-colonialism. Most African states are skeptical about powerful countries intervening in their internal affairs no matter how praiseworthy their motivations. The UN's historical role in Africa, and its interventions, have been criticized as overstepping the principle of state sovereignty, which has caused considerable controversy. This could make it difficult for the UN to build trust and cooperation with African states and organizations tasked to execute R2P measures, (Tesfaye, 2012).

The UN and AU frequently collaborate in practice to address Humanitarian crises in Africa. In an effort to bring about a state of peace, the UN may support AU-led humanitarian assistance missions or approve the use of a peacekeeping force through a UN SC resolution. In order to stop a humanitarian catastrophe from getting worse, the AU may also ask the UN for assistance through the aforementioned channels. The best agent to implement R2P measures in Africa will ultimately depend on the situation's unique conditions.

In conclusion, when it comes to managing R2P operations in Africa, both the AU and the UN have their unique strengths and shortcomings. The AU has a mandate to advance peace and security and a greater awareness of the regional context, but it lacks the UN's capacity and financial resources. The UN has a vast range of resources and competencies, but because it may be perceived as neo-colonialism, it might be challenging to foster confidence and cooperation. In actuality, cooperation between the AU and UN would be the ideal course of

action, with the AU taking the initiative in coordinating regional efforts and the UN offering technical and financial support.



## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the procedure that was be used to answer the research questions. It includes the research design, sampling techniques and instrumentation, data analysis techniques that will be used to investigate the relationship between SS and R2P in the context of the Tigray conflict. The research explored the tension between the principle of state sovereignty and the responsibility to protect, which is considered as one of the most challenging issues in international law and politics.

### 3.2. Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed to report the findings. The research aims to understand opinions from the respondents on the issue, (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). It employed a fact-finding mission to gather the respondent's views on R2P, its relation to SS and its reflection through the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia. The study aimed to adopt a mixed approach through collecting both quantitative and qualitative data on the subject through primary and secondary data collection.

### 3.3. Target Population

The target population consisted of individuals who are knowledgeable on international relations affairs and subjects are based in Kenya, specifically international relations students from Strathmore University and referral contacts to other individuals within the region knowledgeable in international relations affairs such as international organizations officials, government officials, experts in the field of humanitarian action and journalists that covered the conflict in the region. The population estimated was 50 - 100, this is because there existed no record of a defined population in regard to this study.

### 3.4. Sampling Frame

The sample focused on the accessibility of the target sample weighing factors such as time, ease of accessibility and convenience of data collection. The estimated population was : final year international studies students and lecturers from Strathmore University. The frame names, final year international studies students.

Similarly local and international journalists who have covered stories on the Tigray conflict like Reuters, who are based in the region, more specifically in Kenya through email and social media platforms to reach them, diplomats from the Ethiopian Embassy, peace envoys and peace and security experts from Kenya who understand the issue. The priority was to target individuals knowledgeable on the concept of R2P, sovereignty and the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia.

### 3.5. Sample Size

For qualitative research, a sample size of 30-40 participants was considered adequate for providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This sample size is considered sufficient to provide rich and in-depth data that can be analyzed to uncover patterns and themes. The risk that was expected to be encountered will be the inability to access key informants such as diplomats and journalists who may have overly busy schedules. Similarly risk with Ethiopian international studies university students susceptibility to respond to the surveys.

### 3.6. Data Collection Method and Instruments

The data collection method will be used to gather specific information aimed at understanding the respondents opinions on the issue. The major sources of data will be both primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be collected from respondents. This will be through the questionnaire and the interviews. The secondary data will be collected from published material

and information from desk research. The data collection method will be collected through two important instruments, (Orodho, 2003).

### 3.6.1. Research Instruments

The research instrument used to collect data, was the use of questionnaires for a qualitative survey where the questions were open ended and unstructured qualitative interviews to gather opinions from the respondents. The questionnaire was administered through a Google survey tool.

The questionnaires were sent to a public audience such as international relations students, specifically based in Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya. Another target subset were academics and practitioners in the field of international relations and humanitarian fields like Amnesty International and Crisis Group.

The questionnaire aimed to be used as a substitute to the inability of carrying interviews with another range of stakeholders such as, a range of stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and experts on the conflict.

The questionnaire used a structured format to ensure that reliable information is acquired and to gain a complete and detailed understanding of the issue from the respondents, (Orodho, 2005). A semi - structured format was applied in order to intensely investigate the topic in order to gain a complete and detailed understanding of their perspectives.

### 3.7. Data analysis

A descriptive analysis strategy was used to examine the data obtained by the questionnaire. In order to evaluate the implications of the primary themes and patterns that emerged from the data regarding the relationship between state sovereignty and R2P in relation to the Tigray conflict, (Tuchman, 1985).

### 3.8. Ethical considerations

The study focused strongly on an ethical code of conduct in data collection. This was guaranteed by ensuring that the data collected is purposefully for the study. The research maintained the highest level of confidentiality at all times requesting for consent from respondents and the key informants.



## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

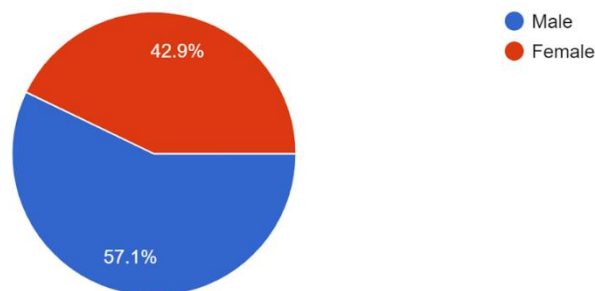
### 4.1: Introduction

The results and analysis of the data gathered from the respondents are presented in this chapter. It consists of the respondents bio data and their opinions on the research questions. Primary and secondary data was collected. The respondents consisted of key informants, one of which is a researcher from the International Crisis Group (Key Informant A), based in Nairobi, Kenya, who undertook extensive research on the Tigray crisis and an international relations expert, (Key Informant B) who heads various peace, security, and civil society programs in Kenya. The other respondents were 10 final year international studies students from Strathmore University and 2 lecturers from the same university, based in Nairobi, Kenya. This brought a total of 14 respondents.

### 4.2: Bio Data

#### 4.2.1: Gender

State your gender  
7 responses

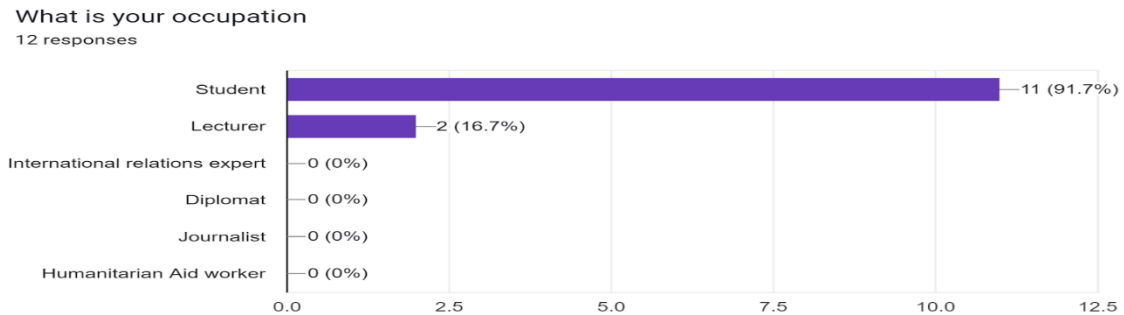


**Fig 4.1.** *Gender of the respondents*

Male respondents made up about 57% (N=4) of the sample, while female respondents made up about 43%, (N=3). The figure above demonstrates that.

Both key informants were males.

#### 4.2.2: Occupation of Respondents



**Fig 4.2.** Occupation of the respondents

From the above table, students took up the majority of the respondents of the questionnaires with about 92% while Lecturers took nearly 17% of the respondents.

The key informant A is a researcher from the International Crisis Group and key informant B is an international affairs consultant. Both based in Nairobi, Kenya

#### 4.3: Findings

##### 4.3.1: Findings on Objective 1: Elements of State Sovereignty which affect Responsibility to Protect

Here, the study aimed to get views from respondents on their knowledge of SS, R2P and to provide an analysis of what elements of SS affect the execution of R2P.

The study asked respondents various their understanding of SS and they said the following.

*“The ability for a state to make its own decision without any external interference by other actors of international relations.”*

[Respondent 12: 28/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

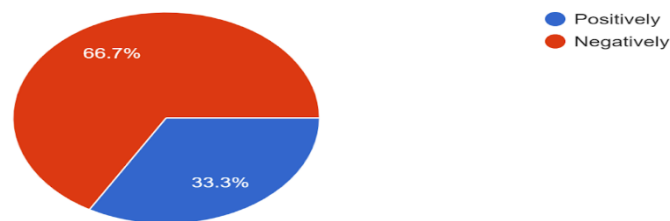
*“It is when the state has the right to exercise sovereignty and jurisdiction over an established territory that is recognized by international mandate.*

[Respondent 3: 5/02/2003 – Online questionnaire]

All the respondents consistently described SS as the pillar that guarantees a country's self determination towards itself and in the international sphere without being influenced by external actors. This definition agrees with the general definitions of SS according to Burchill and Linklater, (2001) that describes SS as the supreme authority a state has over its internal affairs to protect their autonomy and independence and is mutually respected in the international system.

The opinions of respondents regarding how the SS principle affects the capacity of international organizations to intercede in domestic disputes were represented in the pie graphs below. 33.3%, (N=4) of respondents thought a positive result was possible, while 66.7% (N=8) thought a negative outcome was likely.

How does the principle of state sovereignty affect the ability of international organizations to intervene in domestic conflicts?  
12 responses



**Fig 4.3:** Degree of effect SS has on international organizations in domestic conflict intervention.

A positive outcome suggests that a state would be more than able to open its borders willingly to allow a quick response to the humanitarian crisis, hence international organizations would be able to intervene in domestic conflicts, while a negative outcome

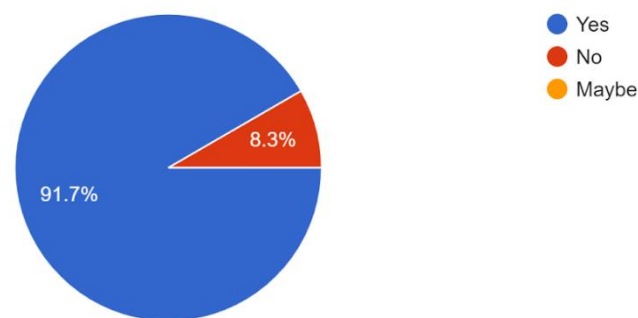
illustrates that SS strongly impedes on international organization’s ability to execute their mandates in responding to domestic conflicts.

The analysis from the table above shows that respondents believe that SS negatively affects international organizations from executing their mandate to intervene in domestic conflicts.

The respondents were asked on their familiarity with the concept of R2P and here is the graph describing their responses.

Are you familiar with the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle?

12 responses



**Fig 4.4:** Degree of familiarity with the concept R2P

The study asked respondents their understanding of R2P, and they said the following.

*“This is when a sovereign state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from atrocities such as genocide and war crimes but when it is being untrue about the humanitarian condition within its boundaries when there is a conflict the international community has a responsibility to intervene in order to restore peace and stability. This responsibility is usually given to the U.N when the countries involved are signatories.”*

[Respondent 3 : 5/02/2023 – Online questionnaire)

*“It's when actors can intervene in a state in the case where the rights of its citizens are threatened by the state itself.”*

[Key informant B : 23/02/2023 –In person interview]

*“Under article 138 of the UN Charter, R2P, is a principle whereby a state is obliged to protect its citizens from any harm in form of things like genocide war or crimes against humanity”.*

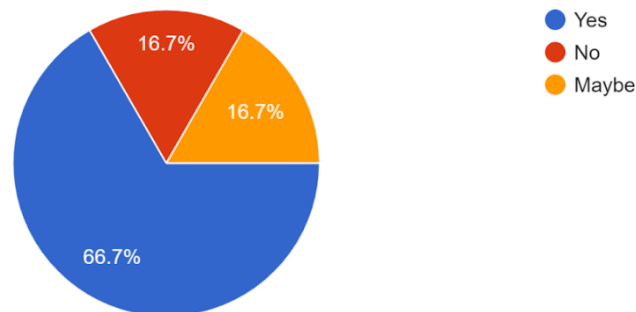
[Respondent 4: 5/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

Majority of the respondents expressed the same line of thought dominantly describing the responsibility of the international community to assist a population faced with a crisis and applicable where a population is not receiving sufficient protection especially in meeting the human rights standards of its people. This thinking is in alignment with the definition of R2P established during the 2005 World Summit, that embodies an international political commitment to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, (2005).

From the table below, when asked if R2P offered a sound strategy for addressing mass atrocities and human rights violations, 8 of the respondents said yes. The remaining respondents, however, all expressed the same 16.7% level of scepticism about the idea, along with the others who were not aware of it. R2P does establish a precedent for dealing with mass atrocities and human rights violations, the interviewees also concurred.

Do you think R2P provides a valid framework for addressing mass atrocities and human rights violations?

12 responses



**Fig 4.5:** *Thoughts on whether R2P provides a valid framework for addressing mass atrocities and human rights violations.*

The respondents were asked to describe conditions where SS could be overridden, and they said the following.

*“The state can have limited capacity to actually protect its citizens hence sovereignty can be overridden to protect its people to a larger capacity.”*

[Respondent 2: 4/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“In cases where there is a threat to the well being of its citizens, whose responsibility it is to protect, the country is instead pursuing a trajectory that puts its citizens in danger especially of human rights violations and crimes against humanity.”*

[Respondent 5: 8/02/2023 – Online Questionnaire]

The respondents noted that SS should be overridden only if a state has not been able to protect the human rights of its people and if they perpetrate crimes against the citizens that are mandated to protect. This is expressed as Sovereignty as responsibility, described by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), who insist that the

human rights of an affected population come first and should be dealt with promptly, (Welsh et Al, 2002).

*“State sovereignty should only be overridden if only in the context of a failed state. Sovereignty should not be overridden because it means that you have no control over your territory, and you cannot protect your citizens”*

[Respondent 7: 15/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

Here one respondent describes that SS is obsolete and should not be tampered with as would cause an extreme imbalance in the international system. This could be explained when states justify their right to intervene in another state affecting the status quo of international governance, (Nolte, 2005). This goes against the norms that govern international relations.

The respondents were asked to describe the elements of SS that affect R2P, and they said the following;

*“Territorial integrity has an impact on R2P implementation because it restricts the international community's ability to act in instances of mass atrocities taking place within a state's boundaries.”*

[Respondent 5; 8/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“The application of R2P is incompatible with the non-intervention principle because it forbids the international community from interfering in a states affair”*

[Key informant A: 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

*“State sovereignty has an impact on R2P implementation because it can limit the international community's ability to intercede when a state may be involved in the commission of*

[Key informant B: 23/02/2023 – In person interview]

In conclusion the main aspects of state sovereignty were mentioned by respondents as having an impact on R2P implementation. They varied from political will to continue to maintain SS to protect the state’s sovereignty, inadequacies under international legal norms that both doctrines collide over such as the non-intervention principles and the limiting factor SS has over international involvement by international organizations.

While some of these components, like consent and non-intervention, may pose major obstacles to R2P's implementation, others, like the idea of responsibility, may work to support and improve it. The international community's biggest challenge moving forward will be striking the right balance between the need to protect vulnerable populations from mass atrocities and respect for state sovereignty.

#### 4.3.2: Findings in objective 2: What factors could trigger the application of Responsibility to Protect.

This area of study sought to question the respondents on what they believed should have prompted R2P in the case of the Tigray conflict. Here the study aimed to answer questions such as what should have prompted R2P, were the thresholds met, what was the position of the Ethiopian government, the respondents knowledge of the humanitarian violations. The first part of the findings will be the Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and responses from the participants on the online questionnaire and from the Key informants.

According to the chair of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, they reported critical evidence since November 2020, that the parties to the conflict in Ethiopia had violated and abused international human rights and humanitarian law. It discovered solid evidence that many of these actions qualified as war crimes. The report found reasonable grounds to believe that the Federal Government and its allies had committed crimes against humanity in Tigray region. (OHCHR, 2022)

Findings from the Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) / Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

The report describes; The ENDF, EDF, and TSF carried out attacks on civilians, resulting in the deaths of and injuries to men, women, boys, and girls. They also recorded attacks on civilians and civilian structures. Health care institutions, schools, houses of worship, and other civilian targets that are given extra protection under international humanitarian law were indiscriminately attacked.

The ENDF, EDF, Fano (a group connected to the Amhara militia), TSF and affiliated militia, the Samri (local Tigrayan youth group), and other parties were also reported to have carried out unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions that constitute violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law as well as the Ethiopian Constitution and laws.

They report that the Tigray armed conflict led to a terrible humanitarian scenario. Since the conflict started in early November 2020, more than 50,000 people sought refuge in Sudan while more than 1.7 million have been internally displaced in Tigray by August 2021. In addition, the war increased the number of people in need of humanitarian aid from 1.5 million to an estimated 5.7 million.

They found that the ENDF, EDF, TSF and affiliated militia, Fano (a group affiliated with the Amhara militia), and Samri (local Tigrayan youth group) engaged in unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions that violated international human rights law, serious international humanitarian law, and Ethiopia's Constitution.

Additionally, they note that the denial of access to humanitarian aid resulted in obstacles or delays in aid delivery that were put down to an ongoing conflict, the absence of effective local administrative bodies for coordination, and the ENDF and EDF's lack of cooperation at checkpoints, which resulted in the confiscation of medication and aid supplies like food, fuel, and additional aid.

The troops of Tigray were also held accountable for mounting roadblocks that prevented the distribution of humanitarian aid. Following the deaths of over 20 humanitarian workers, the conflict had an even greater impact on the operations of these groups. The report acknowledged the need for further investigation into alleged violations related to the denial of access to humanitarian relief and the killing of humanitarian workers, even though it was unable to confirm the deliberate or intentional denial of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Tigray or the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

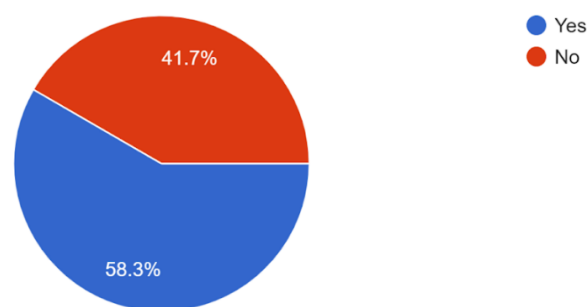
## Findings from the respondents

The respondents were gauged on their awareness of reports of human rights violations that occurred during the Tigray. 7 of the respondents including the interviewees encountered reports while 5 of the respondents had not, as shown in the table below.

The Key informants described their encounters with reports developed by independent journalists covering the conflict and from refugee reports of Tigrayans who evacuated to Sudan.

Are you aware of the reports of human rights violations, including violence against civilians, that occurred during Tigray conflict?

12 responses



**Fig 4.9:** Degree of respondents awareness of human rights violations that occurred during the Tigray conflict.

The respondents were asked if they believed thresholds were met during the Tigray crisis to have prompted R2P.

*“According to the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, they found reasonable grounds to believe that the federal government committed crimes against humanity in the Tigray region and that Tigrayan Forces also committed serious human rights abuses, some amounting to war crimes. This should have prompted R2P to be applied.”*

[ Key informant A: 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

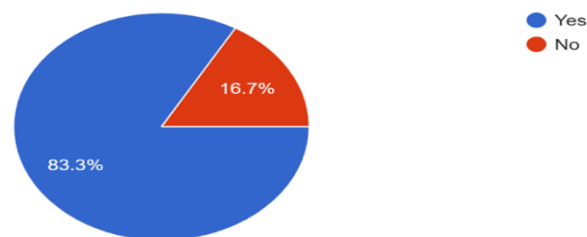
*“If reasonable grounds were discovered that humanitarian violations were occurring, then R2P should have been prompted.”*

[Key informant B: 23/02/2023- In person interview]

The respondents described the threshold accepted internationally for intervention to be put in place as illustrated by the spectrum to qualify international humanitarian intervention according to the ICISS.

The respondents were asked if they thought that the international community should have put pressure on the Ethiopian government to allow for independent humanitarian access to the Tigray region. 10 of the respondents including the 2 interviewees agreed that the international community should apply pressure for humanitarian reasons while 2 objected to that idea, as shown in the table below.

Do you think the international community should have put pressure on the Ethiopian government to allow for independent humanitarian access to the Tigray region?  
12 responses



**Fig 4.10:** *Thoughts on whether the international community should have put pressure on the Ethiopian government to allow for independent humanitarian access to the Tigray region.*

Respondents had different opinions on who should have prompted the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine in this case;

*“The Ethiopian government has a primary responsibility to take care of the interests of its citizens, as such they are obligated to look after the human rights of the victims and civilians*

*of the Tigray. This is without R2P and just their paramount obligation.”*

[Key informant B: 23/02/2023 – in person interview]

According to some respondents, the Ethiopian government should have been in charge of safeguarding its people and stopping heinous crimes in Tigray. They pointed out that it is primarily the government's duty to safeguard its people and avert mass atrocities on its soil. As a result, the government was required to handle the Tigray crisis and stop the violence from getting worse.

*“There exist early warning systems that the African Union has put in place in its peace and security architecture. This is a vital tool to help predict and inform governments on issues before they worsen. This should have been able to prompt a more responsive action towards the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray”.*

[Key informant B; 16/02/2023 -In person interview]

Others who responded claimed that the AU ought to have taken the initiative in fostering peace and stability in Ethiopia and stopping mass atrocities in Tigray because it is a regional organization. They emphasized that because the AU's mission is to advance stability, security, and peace on the continent, it is their duty to step in when mass atrocities occur. The AU has also already made some moves to address the situation, including the appointment of special envoys and the creation of a human rights investigation mission.

*“The UN is tasked with promoting and guaranteeing the safety and protection of all from the scourge of war. This is paramount because the Tigray conflict caused massive harm and destruction. The UN should have executed its mandate effectively in the early stages of the conflict to prevent further escalation.”*

[Respondent 6; 18/02/2023; Online questionnaire]

The UN, according to some respondents, ought to have taken more initiative to stop the Tigrayan mass crimes. They emphasized that under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UN is empowered to use force in order to defend civilians from mass atrocities. Therefore, the UN ought to have taken action to stop the bloodshed from getting worse and to safeguard the civilian population of Tigray.

*“There exist international provisions that call for when R2P should be applied. The massive loss of lives and damage to property should have brought international attention to the crisis.”*

[Respondent 8; 15/02/2023; online questionnaire]

Some respondents contended that the protection of people in Tigray should have fallen under the jurisdiction of the entire international community. They stated that when states fail to safeguard civilians, the international community must step in to stop mass atrocities. Therefore, the international community was required to take the necessary actions to stop the violence in Tigray from escalating and to safeguard people from mass atrocities.

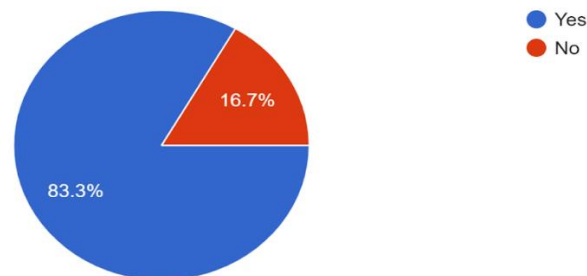
In conclusions respondents to the question of what should have prompted R2P in the case of the Tigray were aligned to the R2P framework set out by the ICISS. The main points brought out were that human rights violations documented by the JIT Report indicated a degree of the human rights violations that should have prompted R2P. The massive loss of lives, indiscriminate attacks and the fleeing of many Tigrayans should have also called for R2P to be implemented. Lastly the states inability to effectively mitigate the humanitarian crisis should have called for R2P to be instigated.

### 4.3.3: Findings on objective 3: Discussing the most responsible institution for triggering Responsibility to Protect.

This area of analysis aimed to get the opinions of the respondents on who they thought is a more appropriate agent of executing R2P in the case of the Tigray Conflict. Here the study sought to understand the respondents ideas on the separate roles the AU and the UN play and could play in the execution of R2P in the case of the Tigray conflict.

The respondents were asked if they thought the international community had a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray. 10 of the respondents thought that the international community had a responsibility to intervene while 2 maintained that it should not as the table shows below. The 2 key informants also explained that the international community does have a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray.

Do you think the international community had a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray?  
12 responses



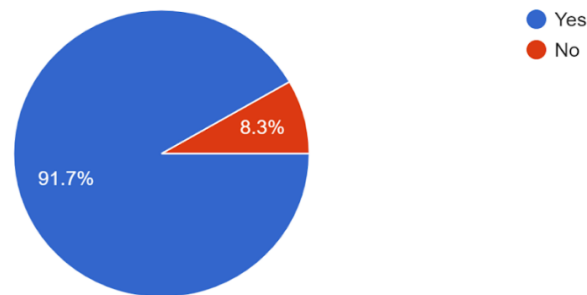
**Fig 4.6:** *The respondents thoughts on whether the international community had a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray.*

The respondents were asked if they believed that the international community has a responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens with an overwhelming majority part from one who did not agree that the international community has that responsibility to intervene as shown in the table below. The 2 key

informants also stated that the international community has the responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens.

Do you think the international community has a responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens?

12 responses



**Fig 4.7:** Positions on whether respondents think the international community has a responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens

The international community raised alarm over the situation in Tigray, Ethiopia. The study questioned respondents on their opinions on who should be in charge of carrying out R2P. On whether the AU or the UN should implement R2P in Tigray, respondents had varying views. We will look at respondents' viewpoints.

The respondents were asked about what the AU should have done in relation to the Tigray conflict.

*“The AU should have taken a firmer approach through its AU constitutive act to protect the victims of the conflict.”*

[Key informant B: 23/02/2023 – In person interview]

*“Through negotiations, the AU could have lobbied for continental support to promote relief support to reach the people of the Tigray and those fleeing into Sudan.”*

[Key informant A: 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

The respondents presented strong support for the AU’s active role in the support of the victims of the conflict. This supports the existing framework the AU holds under the AU Constitutive Act of 2000 Article 4(j), that enables intervention for the purpose of restoring peace and security.

The respondents were asked on the UN’s role in dealing with the humanitarian crisis in the Tigray and this is what they said.

*“The UN should have been much more involved to advance an agenda that is beneficial to the crisis in the Tigray. They should provide clearer guidelines on the limits of sovereignty when it comes at the cost of human lives.”*

[Respondent 4: 5/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“They should have spearheaded a mediator role that would bring all parties involved and affected on board to express themselves and discuss a way forward that unites the people and brings peace to the country and region.”*

[Respondent 8; 15/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“The UN should have been more responsive to the early warnings from international crisis group and other early warning systems to respond to the issue before it escalated”.*

[Key informant A: 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

The respondents discussed a variety of factors, including their resourcefulness, the need to pay closer attention to early warning signals, and the need to talk about contentious issues like SS, which has some inconsistencies with the non-intervention principles stated above.

The respondents were also asked to describe the effectiveness of regional actors involvement in the conflict.

*“Regional actors' involvement made a great impact and was the turning point in bringing about the peace agreement. The regional actors are more conversant with the conflict and they knew better than the western actors how to resolve the conflict.”*

[Respondent 3: 05/02/2023; Online questionnaire]

*“The Horn of Africa Peace Envoys led by Former President Uhuru Kenyatta and Former President Obasanjo played a key role in beginning the peace process.”*

[Key informant B: 23/02/2023 – In person interview]

As a regional organization, the AU, according to some respondents, has a better grasp of the local situation and is therefore better equipped to implement R2P in Tigray. They emphasized that the AU has already moved to handle the crisis, including the appointment of special envoys to encourage communication between the parties and the creation of a human rights investigation mission. Additionally, the AU is mandated to advance stability, security, and peace in the region; as such, it is their duty to step in when mass atrocities occur.

*“The UN has more resources at its disposal in order to facilitate an effective R2P exercise.”*

[Respondent 3; 5/02/2023; Online questionnaire]

*“Since the World 2005 Summit, the UN has been at the forefront of promoting R2P and as such it holds a stronger mandate to assist during a humanitarian crisis.”*

[Key informant A; 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

Other respondents argued that the UN is better equipped to apply R2P in Tigray because it has more resources and a stronger mandate to intervene in cases of mass atrocities.

One of the Key informants, noted that the UN has a history of intervening in similar cases, such as the crisis in Darfur, and has mechanisms in place, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), to hold perpetrators of mass atrocities accountable.

When asked of what a joint approach looked like here is what the respondents said;

*“Both organizations could assist in peace making and protecting the citizens in the long run, by ensuring that the UN facilitates and undertakes oversight while the AU plays a mediator role.”*

[Respondent 7: 15/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“The UN should be able to provide humanitarian assistance through intervention to save lives while the AU should play an active role by negotiating with the African states to support a peace process to mitigate the humanitarian crisis.”*

[Respondent 10: 16/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

Finally, some respondents proposed that the best strategy for implementing R2P in Tigray would be a joint effort between the AU and UN. They pointed out that the complementary skills and strengths of the two groups could be combined to address the crisis. A collaborative effort could also help to forge consensus and guarantee that any intervention is carried out in a manner that respects regional customs and standards.

The respondents were asked if they thought that the situation in Tigray could have been prevented if the international community had taken a more proactive approach. 9 of the respondents agreed while 3 did not, as shown by the table below. The interviewees also

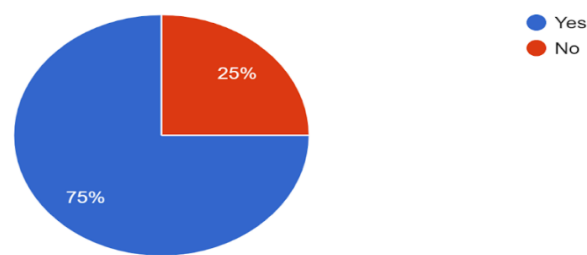
discussed at length the effectiveness of the international community in preventing the situation in the conflict if they were more deliberate and keener on it.

*“Early warning reports from organizations like Crisis Group developed information for policy makers, that if it were acted on promptly, the conflict would not have escalated as it has.”*

[Key informant A; 16/02/2023; online phone call]

Do you think the situation in Tigray could have been prevented if the international community had taken a more proactive stance?

12 responses



**Fig 4.8:** *The respondents thoughts on whether the situation in Tigray could have been prevented if the international community had taken a more proactive stance.*

In conclusion, respondents believed that both agents play a critical role, one of which is to ensure a mandate of shared responsibility and a clear description of each roles in the execution of R2P. The AU is being places as an important agent since it is well versed in the affairs of African states and the UN is indicated as a strong agent to facilitate R2P. There is more importance placed on the AU since it ,may guarantee desired outcomes of a trustworthy R2P process unlike the UN that has most African states sceptical about the influence western actors may desire to put forth against the interest of Africa.

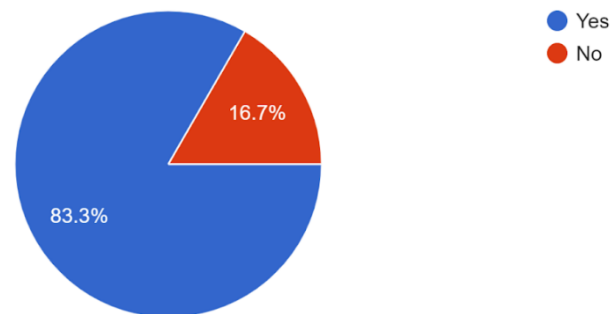
## Conclusions

The respondents in this area presented their last thoughts on SS and R2P. Here the study sought to understand the various solutions and last thoughts they had on the balance between SS and R2P. This section also discusses their ideas on the appropriate way forward in order to guarantee the desired goals of eliminating the crisis affecting the people in the Tigray.

The respondents were asked if they thought if it would be possible to balance SS and the protection of human rights in such situations. 10 of the respondents believed it to be possible while 2 rejected the notion, as shown in the table below. The interviewees do agree that a balance is possible only through deliberation and commitment to solving the basic mandates of promoting peace, security and human rights.

Do you believe that it is possible to balance state sovereignty and the protection of human rights in such situations?

12 responses



**Fig 4.11:** Respondents thoughts on whether it is possible to balance state sovereignty and the protection of human rights in such situations.

The respondents were asked for their opinion on the appropriate balance between state sovereignty and the international community's responsibility to protect civilians in cases of conflict. The overall theme from the respondents is that the interests of the population should come first and that states and international actors have a responsibility to protect their human rights. The respondents describe that to achieve a balance is complex. Respondents share that

the only way to a balance is through compromise that is directed to taking care of the interests of the populations.

Some of the respondents expressed that:

*“The balance can be achieved by creating a set of laws agreeable by both parties that stipulates that civilians should always be protected at all costs and humanitarian aid should always reach the civilians.”*

[Respondent 3; 5/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“There should be prescribed levels that determine when state sovereignty prevails in addressing an issue and when the international community's responsibility to protect should be allowed.”*

[Respondent 8; 15/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“A balance to ensue requires the basics of human rights to be observed with the populace’ interests at heart so that SS and R2P are not met to collide with one another but to complement each other.”*

[Key informant A ; 16/02/2023 – Online phone call]

Lastly, the respondents shared the lessons that could be learned from the Tigray conflict in terms of the relationship between state sovereignty and the principle of responsibility to protect. The clearest theme that occurs is that prevention is much more effective. They also describe the benefits from agreeing to international assistance in order to protect the lives of civilians. There are respondents that propose that state sovereignty should still remain upheld in order for a just international relations system.

Some of the feedback from the respondents:

*“The most important lesson is that when state sovereignty and R2P are not working it is the civilians that suffer when conflict escalates and is prolonged over a long period of time. When there is disagreement between the two external actors enter into the conflict further escalating it such as was with the case of Eritrea.”*

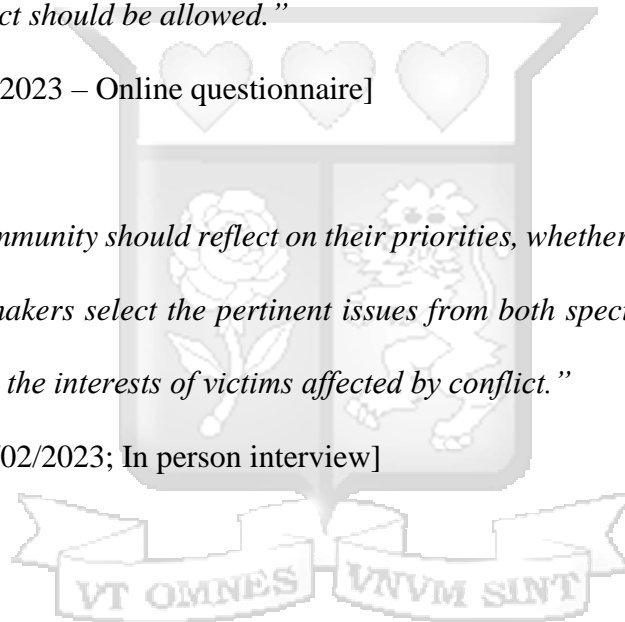
[Respondent 3; 5/02/2003 – Online questionnaire]

*“It is a complex situation and more should be done in terms of determining the levels in which state sovereignty should be allowed to prevail and when the international community's responsibility to protect should be allowed.”*

[Respondent 9; 15/02/2023 – Online questionnaire]

*“The international community should reflect on their priorities, whether to focus on SS or R2P, this will help policy makers select the pertinent issues from both spectrums to make the best decisions to look after the interests of victims affected by conflict.”*

[Key informant B; 23/02/2023; In person interview]



## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1: Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, the conclusion derived from the research and the relevant recommendations to be considered.

### 5.2: Summary of the findings

Important concerns about the perception of the connection between State Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle were highlighted by the study. The importance of state sovereignty in the Tigray conflict and whether the R2P principle applied in this situation were both examined in this research project. The study investigated the interlinkage between SS and R2P through an analysis of the Tigray conflict that occurred in Ethiopia between 2021 and 2023.

The study discovered that the conflict in Tigray was complex, involving many different dynamics. The COVID-19 pandemic-related election postponement dispute, which the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) opposed, served as the catalyst for the war. Following a military operation to remove the TPLF from power, the Ethiopian government accused the TPLF of attacking a regional federal military facility. With the involvement of numerous parties and the use of heavy weapons, the conflict soon turned into a full-fledged war.

With reports of widespread human rights violations, such as massacres, rapes, and the forcible eviction of civilians, the war caused a humanitarian crisis according to the OCHA reports on the situation in the Tigray in 2021. The Ethiopian government denied any outside involvement in the conflict and charged outside parties with interfering in domestic matters, described by the EU report on the Tigray (2022). Additionally, the government through a communications blockade prohibited access to independent investigations into regional violations of human rights and humanitarian assistance, as described by major NGOs such as Amnesty and Human

Rights Watch. The international community demanded that the conflict stop, that independent investigations into violations of human rights be permitted, and that the Ethiopian government make it easier for aid to reach its citizens. The government, invoking the idea of state sovereignty, rejected these requests.

The study also looked at the connection between the R2P concept and state sovereignty. The R2P principle acknowledges that while state sovereignty is a cornerstone of the international order, it is the shared responsibility of all nations to safeguard their citizens from mass atrocities. Important questions about the boundaries of state sovereignty and the circumstances in which the international community has a duty to step in to safeguard populations at risk are raised by the conflict in Tigray.

### 5.3: Conclusions

The conflict in Tigray brought to light the complex and intricate linkages between state sovereignty and the R2P principle. State sovereignty is a cornerstone of the international order, but it is not unrestricted and is subject to certain constraints, such as the duty to uphold human rights and the duty to defend people from atrocities like genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.

The Ethiopian government's opposition to outside intervention in the Tigray conflict, refusal to allow access to humanitarian aid, and suppression of independent inquiries into human rights violations in the area raise significant concerns about its dedication to ensuring the safety of its citizens. According to the R2P principle, the international community has a duty to support states that are unable or unwilling to protect their citizens from mass atrocities and, if necessary, to act to protect vulnerable populations.

In the Tigray conflict, the international community has a duty to uphold the R2P concept and take action to safeguard vulnerable populations. This might entail putting more pressure on the

Ethiopian government to permit independent inquiries into human rights violations in the area and to make it easier for people to access humanitarian aid. It also entails the use of foreign forces for peacekeeping or other purposes to safeguard local civilians.

To be compliant with international law and the UN Charter's guiding principles and the African Union's Constitutive Act, any intervention in the Tigray conflict must be thoroughly thought out, planned, and implemented. The R2P principle should not be used as a justification for military intervention or regime change, and any action must have as its primary goals the protection of populations at risk and the advancement of peace and stability in the area.

#### 5.4: Recommendations

This research project on state sovereignty and R2P in the Tigray conflict formulates several suggestions for the reader to take into consideration based on the findings in chapter 4. These suggestions are meant to address the Tigray humanitarian crisis and to make sure that state sovereignty and R2P are upheld in a sensible and effective way.

The normative foundation for R2P needs to be strengthened. The conflict in Tigray emphasizes the need for a more robust R2P normative framework that can offer the international community specific instructions for preventing and responding to mass atrocities. The UN General Assembly should appoint a high-level panel to assess the current state of R2P and suggest specific steps to strengthen its implementation, according to the study. States, civil society groups, and specialists in international law and human rights should all be represented on this panel to provide an inclusive and multifaceted solution.

As they are frequently better prepared to address the underlying causes of conflicts and to offer context-specific solutions, regional and sub-regional organizations have a crucial role to play in both preventing and reacting to mass atrocities. The findings of this study suggest that in order to strengthen regional and sub-regional organizations' ability to prevent and address mass

atrocities, the international community should give them more support. Initiatives to develop capacity, funding, and technical know-how are a few examples of this support.

Deep-seated grievances and mistrust among the warring parties as a consequence of the Tigray conflict could obstruct efforts to bring about a lasting peace. In order to address the conflict's underlying causes and foster trust and confidence, this study advises the international community and the government to support dialogue and reconciliation between the parties at odds. This might entail the creation of a truth-and-reconciliation committee, which would give both victims and offenders a forum to express their experiences and viewpoints.

The allegations of human rights violations in Tigray are extremely alarming, and impartial investigations are necessary to establish the truth and hold those responsible accountable. According to the research, the Ethiopian government should permit independent investigations into Tigray's human rights violations, and the international community should back these investigations with financial and technical support. In accordance with international human rights norms, anyone who violates human rights should be prosecuted in open, fair trials.

Important issues about the connection between state sovereignty and R2P have been brought up by the conflict in Tigray. The idea of state autonomy is a cornerstone of the international order, but it has some restrictions and is not unqualified. The R2P principle acknowledges that the international community has a shared responsibility for preventing and stopping mass atrocities, and that in some circumstances, using force may be required. In order to avoid mass atrocities and react to them in a timely and effective manner, this study advises that the international community uphold the R2P principle while also respecting the principle of state sovereignty.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A : Research Questionnaire

1. How do you view the relationship between state sovereignty and the responsibility to protect?
2. What is your understanding of state sovereignty?
3. What do you consider to be the main responsibilities of a sovereign state?
4. How does the principle of state sovereignty affect the ability of international organizations to intervene in domestic conflicts?
5. Do you believe that there are situations where state sovereignty should be limited or overridden in the interest of protecting human rights?
6. Are you familiar with the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle?
7. Do you think R2P provides a valid framework for addressing mass atrocities and human rights violations?
8. Do you think the international community has a responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens?
9. Have you been following the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia?
10. Do you think the Ethiopian government has been able to effectively exercise its responsibility to protect the people in Tigray?
11. Are you aware of the reports of human rights violations, including violence against civilians, that occurred during the Tigray conflict?
12. What measures do you think the Ethiopian government should have taken to protect the rights of Tigrayans during the conflict?
13. Do you think the international community had a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray?

14. What are your thoughts on the involvement of international actors in the Tigray conflict?
15. Do you think the situation in Tigray could have been prevented if the international community had taken a more proactive stance?
16. What measures do you think the international community could have taken to address the conflict in Tigray?
17. Do you think the international community should have put pressure on the Ethiopian government to allow for independent humanitarian access to the Tigray region?
18. In your opinion, what role should the UN play in resolving conflicts that affect state sovereignty?
19. What is your opinion on the involvement of regional actors in the conflict in Tigray?
20. In your opinion, what role should the AU play in resolving conflicts that affect state sovereignty?
21. Do you believe that it is possible to balance state sovereignty and the protection of human rights in such situations?
22. What is your opinion on the appropriate balance between state sovereignty and the international community's responsibility to protect civilians in cases of conflict?
23. In your opinion, what lessons can be learned from the Tigray conflict in terms of the relationship between state sovereignty and the responsibility to protect?

## Appendix B: List of Tables

**Fig 4.1.** *Gender of the respondents*

**Fig 4.2.** *Occupation of the respondents*

**Fig 4.3:** *Degree of effect SS has on international organizations in domestic conflict intervention.*

**Fig 4.4:** *Degree of familiarity with the concept R2P*

**Fig 4.5:** *Thoughts on whether R2P provides a valid framework for addressing mass atrocities and human rights violations.*

**Fig 4.6:** *The respondents thoughts on whether the international community had a responsibility to intervene in the conflict in Tigray.*

**Fig 4.7:** *Positions on whether respondents think the international community has a responsibility to intervene in situations where a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own citizens.*

**Fig 4.8:** *The respondents thoughts on whether the situation in Tigray could have been prevented if the international community had taken a more proactive stance.*

**Fig 4.9:** *Degree of respondents awareness of human rights violations that occurred during the Tigray conflict.*

**Fig 4.10:** *Thoughts on whether the international community should have put pressure on the Ethiopian government to allow for independent humanitarian access to the Tigray region*

**Fig 4.11:** *Respondents thoughts on whether it is possible to balance state sovereignty and the protection of human rights in such situations.*



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

This is to certify that **Ian Kiiru Wairimu** is a fourth-year student undertaking a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies at Strathmore University. To complete his degree, he is required to write a project paper applying the knowledge and skills he has acquired.

Ian has titled his project paper, '*State Sovereignty and Responsibility to Protect: A case of the Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia.*'

He and the university commit to following all confidentiality regulations and submitting the findings to your institution's management before publishing or disseminating them.

We shall appreciate any assistance given to him.

Yours truly,

S. Muiruri

for:

**Dr. Maureen Syallow**

Director for Research and Innovation,

School of Humanities and Social Sciences.



31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2023

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Appendix D: Research Meeting Sign Sheet

2022  
Project Supervision Sheet

Student Name: Wairimu Ian Kiiru ADM NO 100469

Supervisor Name: Dr. James Nyawo Ph.D

Date	Comment	Next Meeting	Signed: Supervisor
24/07/2022	Discussed topic and variables possible on a R2P and Trigey	05/07/2022	
05/08/2022	- Reviewed Concept Paper - To correct the concept paper by 12 ch 6 objectives, Primary and sec sources (3) (5) each.	12/07/2022	
02/09/2022	- Reviewed Chapter 1 - Rework the background - dive deeper into the variables + objectives + justification	09/08/2022	
14/09/2022	- Reviewed Chapter 1 corrections - Approved to comment on chapter 2		
30/09/2022	- Discussed Chapter 2 submission, chapter 1/2 corrections - Approved to continue to chapter 3	7/10/2022	
14/10/2022	- Discussed Chapter 3 - Continuing to est appropriate research questions	21/10/2022	
21/10/2022	- Discussed Chapter 3 - Sample population, size, research questions		
13/10/2023	- Discussed Corrections - Questionnaire review		
2/03/2023	- Discussed Entire draft - Correction of entire research project		

## Appendix E: Plagiarism Index

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TOPIC: STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: A CASE  
STUDY OF THE TIGRAY CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA

WAIRIME, IAN KIIRU

Adm. No.: 10049

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