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**TURKEY AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P) IN SYRIA: A CASE OF NORMATIVE FOREIGN POLICY FAILURE
(ТУРЦИЯ И ОТВЕТСТВЕННОСТЬ ЗА ЗАЩИТУ (ОЗЗ)
В СИРИИ: СЛУЧАЙ ОШИБКИ ВО ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ)**

Introduction

Turkey has generally remained cautious vis-à-vis international law and international legal norms mostly because of security threat perceptions. But interestingly, in the Syrian crisis, Turkish foreign policy has been overwhelmingly normative. Since the crisis began, Turkish foreign policy makers have remained committed to the protection of lives and interests of the Syrian people. During the popular riots, Turkey called on the regime to be responsive to the demands of the people, introduce reforms and stay away from violent measures. However, realizing that Assad would never constructively respond to his people (as evidenced by the brutal response to the initial peaceful protests), Turkey urged the Syrian government to step down. In so doing, Turkish policy makers insinuated that this government can no longer be considered legitimate due to its failure to protect its people.

It is possible to argue that Turkey's foreign policy elite has not wavered on its position because initial reaction (laden with a fairly normative and ethical discourse) could have been attributable to the success of the popular revolts in parts of the Arab world, indicating that a similar outcome could have been expected in Syria as well. This is an important point to note, given that many other global and regional actors

who initially sided with the opposition forces switched to a more reluctant position. This was mostly because of uncertainty and the rise of the extremist groups which concerned Western states as to the potential impact of religious fundamentalism.

But this does not necessarily imply that Turkish foreign policy in the Syrian conflict has always been successful, although success can be measured by many different criteria. Nor is it always possible to insinuate that Turkey's policy, based on the promotion of the right to protect (R2P), stems from ethical considerations.

There have been failures and decisions reflecting political ambivalence; and in some cases, some may argue, Turkey's preference can be barely justified by ethical criteria. Nonetheless, Turkey's approach vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis, in overall terms, is a good case of normative promotion on the regional and international political stage. Some may find Turkey's policy choices in Syria wrong, whilst some may view them proper and effective. This depends on the perspective employed and of course, the political orientation.

However, I believe that at least one aspect of this policy remains undisputable: that Turkey has stayed focused in the Syrian crisis on whether or not the central government fulfilled its responsibilities under international law associated with being a recognized member of the international community vis-à-vis the Syrian people. Whether this position is based on the promotion of national interests or consideration of regional developments is a separate matter.

Despite serious security challenges posed by the Syrian crisis, the Turkish foreign policy elite insistently defined the whole situation with particular reference to the international responsibility of the Syrian government. One remarkable security challenge was the influx of Syrian asylum seekers in Turkish lands; where official records show that there are more than 600,000 Syrians who have sought refuge in Turkey because of the ongoing civil war. Turkey has provided food, shelter and healthcare to the asylum seekers and an allowance to follow their curricula in schools

specifically designed for them. Turkish authorities never defined this as a national security matter; instead, they acted as if Turkey was fulfilling the responsibility to protect the Syrians. Turkey did not frame the situation in Syria as a national security issue even when a Turkish military jet was downed by Syrian forces. The Turkish military announced a change in the rules of engagement; and the Turkish foreign ministry issued a strong warning stressing that Turkey reserved the right to retaliate. However, this incident did not provide any understanding on how Turkey should approach the crisis. Turkey did not alter its position despite a huge explosion in Reyhanlı, which was attributable to its role in Syria. Even though the perpetrators remain unidentified, the Assad regime is believed to have been responsible for the terrorist attack. Despite a strong popular reaction and a growing dissent towards Turkey's resoluteness towards welcoming the Syrians, the Turkish authorities have maintained pressure on the Syrian government's responsibility vis-à-vis the people under international law.

Discourse of Normativity: Turkey's Promotion of R2P Norm in Syrian Crisis

Since the early days of the popular protests and riots in Syria, Turkey placed greater emphasis upon the responsibility of the Syrian government to protect the people. The tone in the discourse of promoting this norm was sometimes strong and sometimes direct. Turkish government, referring to the Syrian government as the main culprit, further based its argument that Syrian regime was not legitimate and should step down on the alleged failure of the regime to observe its responsibility to protect the people.

Initially, however, Turkey's reference to responsibility of the Syrian government was limited to the need for democratic reforms. In some rare cases, statements by Syrian regime figures were even welcomed by the Turkish government [34]. Turkey also remained engaged with the Syrian government in an attempt to influence the regime's attitude and response to the popular uprisings. In bilateral meetings, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu discussed possible reforms with Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister

Waleed Muallim [1]. In fact, Syrian regime seemed to have responded positively to at least some of the calls for reforms. For instance, Assad regime lifted the martial law that has been in effect since 1963 [2]. But Turkey did not find the progress sufficient, noting that they were ready to cooperate with the Syrian regime to accelerate the reform process in Syria [3]. Prime Minister Erdoğan, taking credit for the lifting of the martial law in Syria [4], suggested that Turkey is very influential in changing the attitude of the Assad regime. Prime Minister Erdoğan also told Beshar Assad over the phone that they should cease violence and introduce further reforms to improve the democratic standards in Syria [6]. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu who welcomed the announcement of general amnesty by the Assad regime [5] believed at this stage that it was possible to cooperate with the regime to address the demands of the protestors [7].

Turkey and other stakeholders in the Syrian crisis have remained optimistic (and even constructive) up to early July 2011. Turkey, addition to sending messages to the Syrian regime, worked closely with the US in an attempt to ensure introduction of further reforms in Syria. To this end, Turkey and US reached a consensus over working together to force the regime to respond to the demands of Syrian people [8]. But they changed their position since mid-July. US State Secretary Hillary Clinton stated on 12 July that President Assad could no longer stay in power [9]. Similarly, US President Barack Obama also said in a televised show that Assad lost his legitimacy as president [11]. As a last resort, Turkey, realizing that diplomatic engagement would not work to secure the change they desired, decided to deliver an ultimatum to Syrian government in early August. In this ultimatum, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu defined Syrian crisis as an internal matter of Turkey [12]. But Assad regime dismissed this call and strongly reacted to the ultimatum, noting that any international or regional initiative envisaging interference with their domestic affairs would be considered unacceptable [13].

Turkey's initial moves also had the blessing of major powers and actors including the US and the EU. An EU figure stated their hope that

Assad administration would respond to Turkey's calls constructively whereas Mark Toner from the US State Department referred to Turkey's attempts as strong message to the Syrian government that reliance on violent measures to suppress popular riots was unacceptable [14]. In a phone conversation, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and US President Obama discussed the Syrian crisis and expressed deep concerns over the excessive measures against civilians in that country. They further urged Syrian regime to cease violence against civilian protestors [15]. In a similar vein, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu told the press that unless he stops the military operations against civilian people, there would remain nothing to discuss with Assad [16]. Prime Minister Erdoğan made a similar call where he stated that those who rely on brutal measures would attain nothing other than a bloody outcome [17]. In addition, Turkish President Abdullah Gül confirmed the stance upheld by the government and noted that they have exhausted all diplomatic options to settle the dispute peacefully [18].

Starting September 2011, Turkish government switched its position from diplomatic engagement to an activist stance by which it placed strong emphasis upon the responsibility of Syrian government and the need to replace it with a democratic and responsible alternative government. By this stance, Turkey associated legitimacy of a government to whether or not it fulfills its international legal responsibilities to protect the civilian people. Reliance on this discourse of responsibility can be attributed to how Turkey framed the Syrian refugee crisis and how it attempted to create an international coalition to ensure that Assad is toppled.

Turkey pursued an open door policy for the Syrians leaving their country out of fear of persecution instead of relying on a securitizing discourse. However, rather than focusing on the possible repercussions of admitting the growing number of Syrian refugees, Turkish government preferred drawing attention to the Syrian government's responsibility. Foreign Ministry, for instance, announced that it was the responsibility of

the Syrian regime to create the necessary ground for the return of the Syrians who were living in Turkey temporarily [35].

In the meantime, Turkey also welcomed the UN Human Rights Council committee members who were investigating the situation in Syria in the camps where the Syrian refugees were hosted. The Turkish government further used this opportunity to prove how the Syrian regime breached its international legal responsibilities vis-à-vis its people. During a Council visit, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the regime committed crimes against humanity and that the inflow of refugees was a proof of widespread criminality of Assad administration [37].

In an attempt to prove breach of legal responsibilities by Syrian regime, Turkey also frequently relied on other international institutions. Referring to the Arab League's decision on Syria as an indication that Syrian regime cannot be trusted, Turkey urged the Syrian administration to read the message of the League properly and underlined that Syria's failure to respond to the constructive calls should be taken by the international community into consideration [36].

Turkey consistently called the attention of the international institutions or mechanisms to the situation in Syria where it argued Syrian regime failed to fulfill its responsibilities. Thus, use of international mechanisms was part of its normative strategy in the Syrian crisis by which it has been seeking to ensure the fall of Assad regime. The institutions and mechanisms Turkey relied on in this strategy included Arab League, UN Human Rights Commission, UN Security Council and UN General Assembly. In reference to a decision by the Arab League's Foreign Ministers Council in Jan 2012, Turkey officially stated that reliance on collective punishment methods to deal with popular uprisings in Syria raised grave concerns and underlined that the Syrian administration had to withdraw all military units from residential areas, release political prisoners and allow international press and observers of Arab League to do their job inside Syria. Referring to the call in the League's decision, Turkey also asked the UN Security Council to respond this call for support

and to ensure that international community fulfills its responsibility in face of the dire situation in Syria [38].

Turkish authorities must have been aware that the League is a weak institution which would very unlikely change the attitude of the Syrian government. However, what Turkey was seeking was not a direct intervention or effective action by the League. Instead, Turkey seized the opportunity of Syria's failure to respond to the League's calls and the messages the League delivered to justify and strengthen its political position. In addition, Turkey also welcomed the League's work in tandem with the UN, although realizing that the latter would be far more influential in the Syrian case. Turkey offered full support for Kofi Annan who was designated as special envoy jointly by the League and the UN for Syria [41].

Turkish government, however, was aware, and actually stressed in the meantime, that Syria would not respond positively to Annan's efforts and requests. But Turkish authorities did not miss the opportunity when Syrian regime failed to honor its promises made to special envoy Annan to urge the international community's involvement in the Syrian crisis. Recalling that the Syrian regime had 48 hours to honor its promises, Turkey, noting that the regime failed to do so, argued that the UN Security Council should adopt a strong resolution on measures to protect Syrian people [43]. It should also be noted, however, that Turkey once more welcomed appointment of another special envoy for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi [50]. Yet the motivation remained the same: that Turkey wanted to prove its point and use Syria's failure to respond to the demands by international actors to justify its position.

It could be argued that the best option for internationalization of the Syrian crisis and for an effective response by international community was to ensure UN Security Council's involvement and decisive action in the crisis simply because the Council was authorized to make binding decisions on preservation of international security and peace. Thus, a decisive and strong Council decision was what Turkey desired for most. But Turkey, being aware that such an outcome was only a very remote

possibility, instead made its position public in international institutions like General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council where normativity at least partially mattered.

Turkey developed an active stance in the Human Rights Commission where decision-making is not very much affected by power balances and political entanglements in world affairs. Turkey actively took part in drafting a resolution at the UN Human Rights Commission in March 2012 on the humanitarian situation in Syria. The proposed draft was passed a resolution by overwhelming majority (3-37). Turkish foreign ministry presented this voting outcome as a strong and clear indicator that the international community cannot remain bystander to the ongoing humanitarian crisis and human rights violations in Syria and expressed full support for the efforts of the international community to address the Syrian crisis under the UN's supervision [42].

In a separate initiative, Turkey also took a massacre committed by regime forces in Homs on 25 May 2012 to the UN's human rights body. Turkey, along with a few other like-minded countries, made a call at this venue for a special meeting in Geneva. The meeting culminated in adoption of a resolution by 41 votes which condemned the murder of a number of civilians and recalled that this was a violation by Syrian regime of the UN Security Council Resolutions 2042 and 2043. The resolution also called the Syrian administration to end violence and human rights breaches in Syrian territories. In an official statement, Turkish foreign ministry reiterated its commitment to working closely with the Syrian people and international community in an effort to address the legitimate demands of the people [46].

The international institutions Turkey used to prove breach of responsibility to protect by the Assad regime include the UN General Assembly. In an attempt to address the Syrian crisis which, in the words of Turkish foreign ministry, "has become a threat to international peace and security," delegations from 70 countries including Turkey proposed a draft resolution at the Assembly in Feb 2012. The proposal was adopted as a

resolution by 137 affirmative votes. Turkey, referring to the overwhelming support for the initiative, depicted the outcome as an indication that international community should consider measures to deal with the crisis in Syria. Based on this resolution, Turkey also argued that Syrian regime is no longer legitimate in interstate relations [40]. Turkish decision makers attempted to use the General Assembly in another instant to promote their stance. Along with some 60 countries, Turkey contributed to the drafting of a resolution at the Assembly and lobbied for its adoption. The draft was passed as a resolution by 133 votes. Turkey's reaction in this case was also the same; the resolution was presented as an indication of the international community's decisiveness to remain focused on the Syrian case. In addition, by reference to this resolution, Turkey also underlined that the Syrian regime should comply with what the message in this resolution asked for [49].

But Turkey intensified its efforts at taking attention of the UN Security Council to the Syrian crisis. This is interesting given that the General Assembly is the best place to consolidate the will and intention of the international community. In other words, in case of performing responsibility to protect in place of a government that failed to observe its responsibilities, General Assembly is the best candidate as all UN members are represented in this body on the basis of equal voting rights. However, Turkey's interest in the Security Council is also understandable because the Council is authorized to make binding decisions. And because of this role and power, the Council seems to be the best option for Turkey's Syria policy by which it sought to change the regime.

Turkey's reaction to the UN Security Council's stance vis-à-vis the humanitarian crisis and civil war in Syria was sometimes critical; but in some instances, Turkish authorities welcomed the Council's resolutions on the same matter. The ambivalence of Turkish decision makers could be explained by their focus on ensuring the end of Assad regime rather than proper fulfilment of the responsibility to protect. Where the Council failed to adopt a resolution introducing some sanctions for the Syrian regime,

Turkey ardently criticized the composition of this body, arguing that the veto power the permanent members enjoy is not justifiable.

To this end, Turkey strongly reacted to the Council's failure to adopt a draft resolution in early Feb 2012 and underlined that the veto power actually means greater responsibility which Russia and China, in this particular case, did not deliver. Turkish decision makers further condemned the Council because it was not able to address a situation threatening the international peace and security which falls into its jurisdiction [39]. But Turkey praised another Security Council action which culminated in adoption of a draft resolution by unanimous vote. Referred to as the Council's ability to respond to the situation in Syria decisively and unanimously and as a step taken towards the right direction, the resolution endorsed a six-article plan Annan offered to the parties [44]. Turkey also expressed its satisfaction with a similar Council resolution in late April 2012 which created a UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS). Turkey's foreign ministry also noted that it was expecting full cooperation by the Syrian regime with the international community and UNSMIS [45].

However, with the exception of some few cases like this one, Turkey harshly criticized the Council and even questioned its competence and legitimacy to supervise the international security and peace. Turkey accused the Council of failing to fulfil its responsibilities under UN Charter to supervise international peace and security when a draft resolution on the UNSMIS was vetoed by two permanent members in late July 2012 [48].

Similarly, speaking at the UN General Assembly plenary session, Turkish President Abdullah Gül described the Council's inability to take action in Syrian crisis as "shameful." [31] Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, speaking to a Swiss paper, criticized the Council for blocking the discussion of the situation in Syria [32].

Turkey's initiative to create a loose coalition of states, Friends of Syria

As part of its policy, Turkey worked tirelessly at efforts to build and sustain a broad international coalition. The coalition was assembled to prove

that the international community is not with the Assad regime and sides with the opposition. This was a fairly bold move given that a state is considered equal to all others in the international stage and that its sovereignty needs to be respected by the others all the time. This cardinal principle of international law suggests that a state is member of a global community and that by virtue of this membership; it is supposed to enjoy the rights all others do. Turkey however has implied that Syria, as a member of this community, has failed to observe its international legal responsibilities which were in fact associated with its sovereignty, attracting more than 90 countries to its ambitious initiative, Friends of Syria.

Turkey's attempts to create a loose and yet a broad coalition of like-minded states which would subscribe to some major principles applicable to the Syrian crisis mainly included conferences held with the participation of a group of states. Turkish decision makers paid particular attention to these conferences as venues of proving the illegitimacy of the Syrian regime under international law. Turkey, along with a few other states, served as the core of this initiative which turned into a major part of Turkey's Syria policy in early 2012.

Turkey also played a role of agenda-setting in these conferences; the items discussed in the meetings included a wide range of issues including cease of armed violence, withdrawal of the regime forces from the residential areas, provision of uninterrupted humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, start of an acceptable political transition process and provisional protection for the Syrian people who fled to neighboring countries for security reasons, the review of the international efforts being performed under the auspices of the UN and Arab League as well as future initiatives to address the situation in Syria. The delegations in a meeting in March 2012 which Turkey described as milestone towards a democratic Syria also discussed the recent activities and efforts by the Syrian opposition to start a democratic transformation process in recognition of the legitimate demands and expectations of the Syrian people. The participants also deliberated upon the 6-article Annan Plan which Turkish

Foreign Minister described as the last chance for the Syrian regime to honor the demands of the international community [22]. In a statement after the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu officially acknowledged that Turkey recognized the Syrian opposition groups' umbrella coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian state [23].

Another meeting of the Friends of Syria coalition was held around the same time in 2013 in Istanbul with the participation of foreign ministers. The participants, noting that the situation in Syria was product of the regime's policies to suppress the legitimate demands of the people by reliance on violence, regarded the meeting as a contribution to the efforts by the international community at assisting the Syrian people [53]. It appears that the meeting was dominated by the US and Turkey and that one of the key issues the participants tackled was how to create a unified and strong umbrella organization of Syrian opposition groups. In a press conference held subsequent to the meeting jointly held by US State Secretary John Kerry, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and the Syrian opposition's interim Prime Minister Ghassan Hitto, the support for Syrian opposition and growing interest of international community to the Syrian crisis was underlined [29].

A month later, a follow-up meeting of the one in Istanbul was held in Amman on 22 May 2013 with the participation of foreign ministries from a number of countries including Turkey, the US, Britain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE, Italy, Germany and France as well as members of Syrian opposition [54]. A similar meeting where the same subject matters were discussed was also held in London in October 2013 [30].

In the group's meeting in Doha, Qatar, in June 2013, members of the Friends of Syria coalition decided to supply arms to the opposition forces for use in their fight against Assad regime. This is a crucial decision which was, however, taken by only a small number of states (foreign ministers of 11 countries participated in the meeting) including Turkey, US, Britain, France, Egypt and Saudi Arabia that participated in the meeting. Speaking at the joint press conference after the meeting, Qatari foreign minister said

the delegations at the meeting agreed on the preservation of the balance between the parties in Syria and on delivery of arms to the chief of staff of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) [21].

Turkish foreign ministry depicts the creation of Friends of Syria initiative as the final stage of a four-stage strategy Turkey pursued vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis. Davutoğlu referred to the bilateral talks with Assad regime as stage 1, to the efforts within the Arab League as stage 2 and the measures within the UN as stage three, adding that they moved to stage 4 because the first three did not work [21]. This final stage apparently aimed at ensuring recognition of the Syrian opposition by the international community as the legal representative of Syria. The Friends of Syria coalition recognized the Syrian National Council in that role and capacity for the first time in a meeting in Morocco, held with the participation of more than 100 states [27].

Friends of Syria initiative was a smart move which Turkey used to prove that Syrian regime was illegitimate and unable to represent the Syrian people because of its failure to protect them from genocide and crimes against humanity. And Turkey also acted very carefully in the meetings of this group; most of the time, the agenda was worked out by Turkish delegates; in addition, Turkish decision makers sought to have an agreement on the most common denominator to avoid an impression that the members of the group hold different opinions. For this reason, Turkey saved relatively controversial issues for the meetings held with the participation of a small number of states and raised the issues that would potentially attract wider normative support in larger meetings of the group. In addition, to avoid schisms and to preserve the group consolidated and unified, Turkey also presented the initiative as a normative endeavor rather than as a block against other states or actors. In other words, Friends of Syria was defined as something every state with a normative stance in Syria would pay attention to.

For instance, Turkey strongly denied the allegations that the Turkish Foreign Minister asked the participants in a meeting of the Friends of Syria

in Paris on 6 July 2012 to isolate Russian Federation and China in case they would not change their Syria policy and underlined that no reference was made to any country in the meeting. In an official statement, Turkey further said they find it normal if there are differences between the national policies of Turkey and the policies of other states with regard to the Syrian issue and that they use other venues to discuss these differences [47].

Friends of Syria would voice the response of the international community to the Syrian government's atrocities which legally entail the enforcement of R2P measures. In practice, the formation of Friends of Syria was expected to send a strong message to the Assad regime that it is no longer welcome as the legitimate representative of the state of Syria and to honor the opposition as its new recognized government. The line this initiative would draw between the principle of nonintervention and the breach of the R2P norm was certainly blurred.

Turkey's role and efforts at creating a unified Syrian opposition alliance

As part of its policy to change the regime and political administration in Syria, Turkey also made efforts to ensure emergence of a strong and unified opposition that could replace the Assad regime and serve as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and state in international arena. The efforts included contributing to the settlement of the disputes between different opposition groups and presenting the Syrian opposition as a legitimate political actor to the international community.

In an attempt to create unity among the different opposition elements, Turkey convened a Syrian national liberation conference in Istanbul in July 2011 where a council was set up to appoint an interim government enjoying broad support to fill the power gap after the Assad regime [10]. Turkey hosted another conference with the participation of Syrian opposition figures from different parts of the world in Istanbul. The participants declared the foundation of Syrian National Assembly (or Council) and adopted a paper reflecting their views at the meeting [19]. Turkish decision makers have remained focused on the whole process

where the Syrian opposition figures founded an umbrella organization. For instance, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu received their representatives in his office [20] without hesitating that such a move would violate the rights of Syrian state as an entity of international law.

Turkey further supported the activities of the Council which announced in late July 2012 that they would work on a transitional government in a meeting in Cairo. The Council also discussed a working constitution in this meeting [24]. This was a major step forward to create a unified organization that would be able to represent the different opposition groups in Syria. These groups met in Doha where they agreed on an alliance of Syrian opposition and revolutionary forces that comprised 60 members [25].

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu who delivered the closing speech at the meeting said: “This is a historic day; and tomorrow will be a fresh new start. This will be a new start. I would like to let you know that the Syrian representatives have agreed on a roadmap. These representatives will enjoy legitimacy by virtue of representing the Syrian people.” Davutoğlu who also sent a message to the Assad regime urged him to step down because the people would determine the fate of Syria [26]. Thus, Turkey’s efforts culminated in the creation of Syrian National Coalition, a loose umbrella organization of Syrian opposition elements, in Doha. Turkey, noting that this was the first time the Syrian opposition was able create such a broad coalition, welcomed this step. In an official statement, Turkey also asked the international community to recognize the Coalition as the legitimate authority of Syrian state and people and to express support for its activities and cause [51].

The Coalition further elected an interim government in a meeting in Istanbul in March 2013. Turkey welcomed this progress and referred to it as the decisiveness of the Syrian National Coalition to serve as the only legitimate representative of Syrian people [52]. Turkish elites strongly supported the interim government in different times and venues. Speaking at the Arab League Summit in Doha, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet

Davutoğlu urged the participants to make sure that the Syrian interim government would be represented at the United Nations [28]. But Turkey was not unable to keep the coalition intact. Despite intensive efforts to create a unified and strong political opposition, some serious disagreements resurfaced among the diverse members of the coalition. What forced Turkey to change its priorities dramatically, however, is the emergence of ISIL threat in the region. In consideration of the growing influence of this radical extremist organization, Turkey tried to present the Syrian opposition as something the international community needs to support to address international terrorism. Davutoğlu, arguing that al Qaeda and Assad cooperated in the Syrian conflict, further claimed that Syrian opposition was fighting both Assad and ISIL and for this reason, it deserved attention by the international community [33].

Non-intervention versus R2P

Non-intervention is certainly a strong norm which enjoys universal acceptance by states and the status as a universal customary law. But R2P, a nascent ethical norm, appears as a possible exception to non-intervention. The norm basically says that in cases where the national authorities are unable or unwilling to protect the people from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, the international community has a responsibility to intervene. The idea here is that sovereignty yields to responsibility under international law. This is not in fact an unusual approach given that the powers of a person should be proportionate to his or her responsibilities under a legal setting. Hence, it is not illogical or unreasonable to argue that a state, as a legal person under international law, should be held responsible in some cases given that it has substantial powers vested in it by the entire international community.

However, it may be argued that R2P is a radical interpretation and understanding of international law. A state has been considered responsible by virtue of being a sovereign entity in the international political plane vis-à-vis the other states. As part of its responsibility, a state has to honor its

international agreements, respect the borders of other states and avoid an act of aggression in its relations. A state's responsibility vis-à-vis its own people has been on the other hand defined by its national law rather than international law. In recognition of mass atrocities caused during World War II, the international community developed new rules and norms by which the states have become obligated to respect and guarantee some basic rights of the people in their jurisdiction. In other words, it is fair to argue that a state assumes international legal responsibility by acceding to international human rights treaty vis-à-vis real persons as well. In case this responsibility is breached, some measures are offered as a remedy. International human rights courts are established as a mechanism of external supervision towards these responsibilities. If a state breach of international human rights is confirmed by such an institution, the culprit is required under its international legal obligations to pay compensation or in extreme circumstances change its legislation.

The R2P norm pushes the scope of external measures towards a different dimension. In case a state breaches its responsibility of protecting the people, the international community as a whole is deemed authorized to take action and fulfill this responsibility in lieu of that state. How is this norm different from a state's human rights obligations under international law? In case of human rights violations, we can speak of intervention in different forms. A court verdict requiring payment of compensation may be viewed as some sort of intervention in the internal affairs. But where R2P is breached, the relevant norm states that the international community may take proper measures including military intervention to protect the people. Therefore, a violation of R2P norms entails broader measures available to the international community, ranging from condemnation to economic sanctions and from coercion to military intervention.

Conclusion: Problems in implementing R2P norm

Its implementation is of course not problem-free. A major problem remains as to who and how should determine whether a certain state has

violated its responsibility to protect the people and what measures should be enforced to address its breach. The practice so far reveals that the UN Security Council has assumed an aggressive role in defining the scope of R2P norms and has taken measures to handle situations where this norm has been gravely violated. In the cases of Darfur and Libya, the Council concluded that the Sudanese and Libyan governments failed to protect their peoples from such grave violations as crimes against humanity and war crimes, deciding that this constituted a threat to international peace and security. But, interestingly, the Council has never adopted a resolution allowing military intervention in Sudan whereas NATO forces carried out military operations in Libya to protect the people against probable brutality by Gaddafi with the Council's blessing.

For obvious reasons, the Council has so far failed to follow a similar course of action in Syria despite the fact that widespread international crimes have been documented by credible institutions including the Human Rights Council and Human Rights Watch. Russia did and will obviously block the Council from taking measures including military intervention in the Syrian civil war. This is why Turkey was and is unable to lean on a Council action. This poses a major problem and impasse for Turkey which has been committed to raising the issue of an R2P breach in the three-year long conflict. Aware of the Council's inability and ineptness, Turkey has made persistent and strong calls for an effective involvement of the international community in the matter.

This is a reliable alternative to the Council's involvement in determining a breach of the R2P norm and taking measures accordingly. Despite that, it has never mentioned an R2P norm in its Syria policy. Turkey, in the absence of the Security Council's as promotion of the norm, tried to attract members of the international community to the carnage in Syria. In its calls to the international community, Turkey referred to the grave violations in Syria and to the extensive sufferings of the Syrian people, suggesting that the international community needed to replace the Syrian central government given that it became apparent the people were

longer protected. A major initiative as part of this policy was Friends of Syria, an unofficial gathering of states expressing support for the opposition and/or the people in Syria. This bold initiative demonstrated some success in the initial stages. Turkey was able to attract more than 90 countries to this loose alliance. The initiative however, further required a strong and consolidated opposition which would have to prove its competence in order to replace the Assad regime. Additionally, the opposition groups should have refrained from grave violations and proved their continued commitment to a normative agenda. Sadly, the opposition has never managed to form a unified force; more importantly, documented crimes committed by foreign militants who fought against Assad's regime undermined the normative legitimacy of the opposition groups. The Friends of Syria, the broad coalition Turkey created, was dissolved because of these failures. As a result, Turkey's ambitious policy fell short of enforcement measures in connection with the R2P norm in the Syrian crisis.

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