

September 2017

German Statement at the UNGA Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P

Thank you, Mr. President,

First of all, Germany would like to thank the Special Advisers, Mr. Adama Dieng and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, for their committed efforts to strengthen prevention and the responsibility to protect. Furthermore we would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid al-Hussein, for maintaining an early warning mechanism by continuously bringing critical country situations to our attention.

The fact that genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing not only persist but are actually on the rise, constitutes a stark reminder of the urgent need to find solutions to prevent these crimes and thereby implement the responsibility to protect. Therefore we welcome today's opportunity to discuss the first report of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on "Accountability for prevention".

In his report the Secretary General points out the importance of strengthening accountability for the implementation of R2P. Germany supports the views expressed here and would like to share best practices in relation to two aspects of this report in order to operationalize the debate on R2P:

1. As mentioned in the report, it is essential that States have an accurate understanding of the sources of potential domestic risks. This risk assessment stemming from pillar 1 of R2P is based on the principle that **no country is immune from atrocity risks**. Germany has seen a rise in hate speech on social media. Hate speech carries the risk of triggering violence, even genocidal violence in worst-case scenarios. To counter hate speech and to fulfil our obligation under pillar 1, we drafted a law which sets out binding standards for the way operators of social networks deal with complaints and obliges them to delete criminal content.
2. The report emphasizes the importance of ensuring accountability for past and present atrocity crimes in order to prevent their recurrence. At the national level, Germany contributes to the **fight against impunity** by investigating war crimes and crimes against humanity under the principle of universal jurisdiction and on the basis of our International Criminal Code. Furthermore, since 2011, the Federal Public Prosecutor General has started investigations with regards to war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria and Iraq. These files serve primarily to secure evidence for national or international criminal proceedings at a later stage. But these files have also already led to various investigations into and charges against specific individuals, who were prosecuted for concrete war crimes in both Syria and Iraq. Germany has also pledged 1 Million Euros of voluntary funding in support of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) of the General Assembly in order to further improve the gathering of evidence on atrocities being committed in Syria. We urge all UN member states to cooperate fully with the IIIM and facilitate its work. Germany very much welcomes the initiative to include the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in the formal agenda of the General Assembly.

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Thank you, Mr. President.