



United Nations General Assembly

**Informal interactive dialogue on the
“Report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect:
Timely and decisive response”**

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Mr President,
Thank you for giving the floor to the European Union.

At the outset, we would like to thank the UN Secretary-General for his keynote address today and greet the new Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Adama Dieng. We also thank the Secretary-General's two former Special Advisors, Ed Luck and Francis Deng, for their work.

We appreciate today's GA dialogue which continues the United Nations's regular consideration of this important concept as it gives us an opportunity to reaffirm strong support to the Responsibility to Protect and its implementation. The adoption in 2005 of the RtoP principle and its subsequent elaboration has been a remarkable achievement for the international community.

The EU thanks the Secretary-General for his report and commends him and the joint office on the work. As previous ones, the report further clarifies our common understanding of the concept. We commend the SG for the comprehensive and measured approach taken.

We are grateful to the distinguished panellists for providing interesting insights on the topic. The EU has a few questions for the panel, but allow me first to outline some general thoughts and initiatives.

Mr President,

We particularly appreciate that the Secretary-General report before us

- Reaffirms the RtoP concept as enshrined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document as the reference point for our efforts to make prevention and response to atrocities - genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity - a reality on the ground;
- Reminds us that it is indeed the responsibility of each State to protect its populations from those crimes but also our collective responsibility to prevent and counter mass atrocities if national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations;
- Recalls the non-sequential and mutually reinforcing nature of measures undertaken as part of a timely and decisive response;
- Argues that each situation will require a different, tailored mix of tools and approaches;
- Restates that, while careful assessment of the situation, our possibilities for action and possible undesirable effects are of course necessary, non-action is not an option and that action should not be constrained by a set of pre-defined abstract criteria or guidelines;
- Helpfully integrates the contribution made by the Brazilian concept paper on "Responsibility while Protecting" circulated last year and discussed in an insightful meeting in February.

Mr President,

More specifically, we wish to recall again that the three pillars of RtoP are parallel and finely balanced, and SG reports in the past have underlined this. Just as there is no automatism to move from one pillar to the other, there can be neither a prioritization of action under one pillar over another, nor a chronological sequencing between them. We also recall that the international community, through the United Nations, has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, to help to protect populations.

If such peaceful means are inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations, the international community must be prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate.

Moreover, we attach great importance to recalling that pillar 3 of RtoP is more than military intervention as there are many other non-military coercive measures that the Security Council could and should put to use, including sanctions and the involvement of the ICC. We all have an obligation to consider such measures and make use of them in the face of a government's failure or unwillingness to exercise its responsibility to protect its population. We also believe

that Commissions of Inquiry, fact-finding missions and preventive deployments have an important role to play.

The application of targeted sanctions and arms embargoes can contribute to the efforts of the international community to ensure that governments meet their international obligations.

Mr President,

Turning to the situation in Syria that is often on our minds these days and was again debated by this distinguished body yesterday.

The EU remains gravely concerned by the situation in Syria. The continued intense suffering of the Syria people is unacceptable and those responsible for crimes committed must be held to account. The EU calls for united action by all members of the UN Security Council to add more robust and effective pressure and ensure that there will be serious consequences for continued non-compliance with its previous decisions. After all, our collective commitment is and was to agree on ways to prevent and end gross and systematic violations of human rights.

On the humanitarian situation on the ground, last week's briefings in the Security Council by both the Deputy Secretary General and UN High Commissioner for Refugees confirmed a sharp deterioration. The General Assembly has been clear in Resolution 66/253 B on what is required to address this humanitarian urgency. We need to continue to press on all parties to ensure respect for the protection of civilians and to allow unfettered and safe access for humanitarian workers, including in conflict zones throughout the country, and to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, in this and other comparable situations.

Turning back to the SG report before us, we appreciate that its section IV emphasizes the issue of partnership, including with other regional organisations.

As set out in last year's debate on the role of regional organisations, the political project that led to the establishment of the European Union was born as a reaction to the mass atrocities perpetrated last century on our continent. In this vein, the EU has been a vocal contributor to the GA debates on different aspects of RtoP as well as an active partner for the United Nations in the implementation of the concept both at global level and as regional organisation.

As partner of the UN, we exchange information and analysis aimed at early warning. We are cooperating closely, including on desk-to-desk level. We ensure complementarity in our mediation and electoral assistance efforts as well as in crisis management. Given the centrality of prevention from the EU perspective, we have long mainstreamed conflict prevention into our cooperation with third partners and engage in the preventive deployment of EU missions. Moreover, our development policies aim at addressing the root causes of insecurity and division. We are also an active contributor to the Peace Building Commission.

As mass atrocities are more likely to be committed in an environment of weak protection of human rights and bad governance, the EU, through its recently adopted "Human Rights package" will further strengthen its human rights promotion and defence activities, including through support to civil society, and assist building democratic, transparent and effective institutions and independent justice systems.

Mr. President,

In closing, the EU would like to reaffirm its commitment to cooperate further with the UN, including with the new Special Adviser for Genocide Prevention and with the successor of Ed Luck, once appointed.

May we now submit the following questions to the Panellists?

1. Underlining the centrality of **prevention**: please elaborate how the United National and Member States can further develop the measures already mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, namely early warning, assessment and action; mediation and dialogue; preventive diplomacy?
2. **Civil society networks and NGOs** are often the first to pick up signs of nascent RtoP situations and should hence be part of our overall approach to the situation. What could the UN do to benefit more from their insights and cooperation?
3. As you will be aware, a UNGA High-Level meeting on the **Rule of Law** is currently being prepared – where do you see linkages and synergies to the rule of law agenda?

Thank you.

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