

## France's Statement at the 2014 General Assembly Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect

[UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION]

Mr. Special Adviser,

I thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this interactive informal dialogue, as well as the Secretary-General for his report. We support the entirety of your recommendations, particularly on the formalization of this dialogue onto the agenda of the General Assembly.

France aligns itself with the interventions made, respectively, by the European Union and by Rwanda on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

In my national capacity, I will present three observations.

Firstly, we applaud the approach taken by the report that puts human rights instruments at the heart of the prevention of the most heinous crimes.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have made progress over the past few years in implementing their responsibility in conflict and atrocity prevention. We have worked increasingly with the High Commission for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs. The Security Council has just unanimously reaffirmed, twice, the early warning role of the Special Advisers for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect. We have had increased civil society participation at our meetings. The protection of civilians is now a priority for numerous peacekeeping operations. These are positive steps which allow us to be better informed and to help States to assume their responsibilities to protect. In the Central African Republic, in Mali and in Iraq, it has been the governments who have asked us to intervene.

In contrast, we cannot help a State whose politics consist precisely of committing atrocities against its population. Nevertheless, that does not exempt us, in this instance, of our responsibility and in our capacity to act. Our responsibility remains whole. In these situations, coercive measures are indispensable in forcing a government to protect its population. Sanctions, commissions of inquiry, and referral to the International Criminal Court are essential tools for deterrence. And, in certain circumstances, our collective responsibility entails resorting to force to stop massacres.

Finally, when mass atrocities are committed, the Council must not add to the failure of prevention by failing to act. In Syria, four double vetoes did not allow us to take the necessary preventive measures and to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes. This is why France is working with its partners in order to regulate the use of the veto in cases of mass crimes, in the framework of a voluntary and collective commitment of the Permanent Members. France is organizing, with Mexico, an event on this initiative during Ministerial week.

Thank you.