

United Nations Security Council President Statement on conflict prevention in Africa stresses importance of the Responsibility to Protect 15 April 2013

On 15 April 2013, Members of the Security Council convened to discuss the “[prevention of conflicts in Africa: addressing the root causes](#)”, and adopted Presidential Statement (PRST/2013/4). Within the Statement, which discussed tools and factors that impact the prevention and mitigation of conflict in Africa, Council Members

stresse[d] the importance of the responsibility to protect as outlined in the 2005 World Summit outcome document

. The Statement also expressed that the Security Council “looks forward to the 2013 UN Secretary-General report on the Responsibility to Protect” and “recalls the important role of the Secretary-General’s Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect”.

During the meeting, Council Members considered a concept note on the theme of the meeting contained in an annex of a 2 April letter (

[document S/2013/204](#)

) that the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the UN had addressed to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The concept note proposed that the Security Council consider the role of national governments and civil society in addressing the root causes of conflicts; the effectiveness of national infrastructures; measures and initiatives aimed at mitigating and forestalling the resurgence of violence in post-conflict and transitional situations; collaboration of the United Nations with regional, sub-regional and non-governmental organizations; and an assessment of the effectiveness of various Africa-focused instruments seeking to prevent conflicts in the region.

Opening remarks were delivered by Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, and the

[Secretary-General](#)

. Council Members were then briefed by Elliot Ohin, Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo, and Tekeda Alemu, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union. An additional thirteen Member States then gave interventions during the meeting, several of whom, including

[Australia](#)

, France, Luxembourg and the

[United Kingdom](#)

, expressed support for the Responsibility to Protect. See below for excerpts from the Presidential Statement:

(...) “The Security Council reaffirms its strong opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and emphasizes in this context the responsibility of States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and, to that end, to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes

against humanity or other serious violations of international humanitarian law, also in the context of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The Council underlines the importance of raising awareness of and ensuring respect of all applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, **stresses the importance of the responsibility to protect as outlined in the 2005 World Summit outcome document, including the primary responsibility of Member States to protect their populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes.** □ **The Council further underlines the role of the international community in encouraging and helping States, including through capacity-building, to meet their primary responsibility.** □ **The Council looks forward to the 2013 UN Secretary-General report on the Responsibility to Protect.** □ **The Council further recalls the important role of the Secretary-General’s Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect in matters relating to the prevention and resolution of conflict.**

“The Security Council emphasizes that the fight against impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is an important element of conflict prevention. The Security Council affirms that these grave crimes must not go unpunished and that their effective prosecution must be ensured by taking appropriate action and highlights in this regard the role of the international criminal justice system. (...)

Read the [complete language](#) of the Presidential Statement (PRST/2013/4) at the bottom of the press release from the meeting.