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Statement by

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**On behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect
at the “Arria” formula meeting of the UN Security Council on the
“Responsibility to Protect and non-state actors”**

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Statement by the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect at the "Arria" formula meeting of the UN Security Council on the "Responsibility to Protect and non-state actors"

Mr President,

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the 50 Members of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, co-chaired by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Rwanda.

The Group of Friends congratulates Chile and Spain for convening this timely Security Council "Arria" format discussion on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). We welcome the holding of the 5th Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points in Spain in June 2015, the outcomes of which served as the basis for the letter of 22 October from Chile and Spain, and this meeting today.

R2P is a vital principle for the Security Council's work. The tenth anniversary of the unanimous endorsement of R2P at the 2005 UN World Summit comes at a critical time. As the Council itself has done, including in resolutions 2150 and 2171, we reaffirm our enduring commitment to paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document on the Responsibility to Protect.

In the face of the number and severity of mass atrocities taking place globally, R2P has never been more relevant. These atrocities are being perpetrated not only by States but, increasingly, also by non-state actors – such as Daesh and Boko Haram.

The continuing rise of non-state violent extremist groups with transnational reach, which deliberately commit atrocities for the purpose of promoting their cause, represents a dangerous shift in conflict dynamics and a challenge to the norms which underpin our safety and security. Tackling this scourge will require concerted, coordinated, consistent and sustained international efforts.

First and foremost, states must meet their responsibility – under R2P's Pillar 1 – to protect their populations from atrocity crimes. This includes making all possible efforts – in a manner consistent with their international humanitarian law and human rights obligations – to limit the ability of non-state groups to violate international humanitarian law and abuse human rights. Weak governance, an absence of the rule of law, political instability, impunity and human rights abuses create fertile ground for the rise of violent extremists.

The international community must also meet its responsibilities under R2P Pillar 2, by assisting States to enable them to fulfil their responsibility to protect their populations from atrocity crimes. We note that non-state actors, such as international NGOs, civil society organizations, community and religious leaders, media and the private sector can have a positive role in assisting States in upholding their primary Responsibility to Protect.

As a global community, we must make clear to non-state armed groups that we will seek to ensure that they be held to account for the crimes they commit. And we must act on these words by taking concrete steps to end impunity if we are to deter such acts. The Security Council has an important role in this regard.

States must also ensure that their armed forces comply with international humanitarian law and do not commit mass atrocities, regardless of how lawless the non-state armed groups they face as opponents may be.

There may be circumstances where actions under R2P's Pillar 3 are required to address the threat of non-state armed groups. As the Secretary-General has highlighted in his various annual reports on R2P, there is a spectrum of options available to the Security Council in such circumstances. These actions should be embedded within comprehensive, sustainable, political strategies and seek to strengthen the role of the State to tackle the threat posed by non-state armed groups.

The Responsibility to Protect places a particular responsibility on the members of the Security Council. The Group of Friends of R2P advocates for timely and decisive action by the Security Council in order to prevent or end atrocity crimes.

The challenge of addressing the commission of mass atrocities by non-state armed groups is exacerbated when these groups are able to mobilize, radicalize or recruit individuals from abroad. In order to meet their Responsibility to Protect, and in keeping with Resolutions of the Security Council, member states should take action, in a manner consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, to prevent their nationals from becoming foreign terrorist fighters.

Taking action consistent with R2P also requires all of us to counter violent extremism. The Council and the international community should focus on prevention and be alert to the early warning signs. We recognize and support the important work of the Office of the

Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and R2P. The UN's Framework of Analysis on Atrocity Crimes is a useful tool in this regard. Early warning signs should be translated to early action through the various options set out in this meeting's concept note.

While we develop strategies to protect populations from violent extremists, we must also tackle the drivers of violent extremism to commit mass atrocities. Building strong and resilient communities is key to preventing and addressing violent extremism at the grassroots level. States need to engage with their civil societies both at home and abroad to enlist them in this collective endeavour. As part of the continuum, it is vital that societies are rebuilt in a more resilient fashion in the aftermath of those crimes.

The challenges posed by non-state armed groups require the Council to consider all the tools available to it. The Responsibility to Protect provides crucial guidance for determining the most appropriate tools in a particular situation, and we reiterate our call for the full and effective implementation of all of its three pillars. We again thank Chile and Spain for convening this debate on R2P and stand ready to assist the Council in its endeavours.