

United Nations General Assembly holds successful seventh dialogue marking ten years of the Responsibility to Protect

On 8 September 2015 the UN General Assembly held a successful seventh Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The Interactive Dialogue addressed the UN Secretary-General's seventh annual report on R2P, entitled "*A vital and enduring commitment: Implementing the responsibility to protect.*"

During the dialogue, 69 member states and 1 regional organization delivered statements on behalf of 91 states. The 49-member Group of Friends of R2P also delivered a joint statement, read by the Netherlands. In addition to member states and the European Union, four civil society organizations, including the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, delivered statements.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the dialogue stating, "For ten years, R2P has offered an alternative to indifference and fatalism. The challenges of atrocity crimes are enormous – and the human cost is staggering. That is not a reason to be overwhelmed – it is a cause for urgent action. The collective weight of international action can make a difference. I count on your leadership in making sure that R2P provides real protection for people in dire need."

The majority of member states reaffirmed the considerable progress made in advancing the principle since the 2005 World Summit. At least 16 individual states and the Group of Friends of R2P, showed support for a UN General Assembly resolution to mark the tenth anniversary. A number of states, including the Group of Friends, also expressed their support for moving R2P onto the formal agenda of the United Nations.

Member states also expressed concern about the dire situation facing civilians around the world, including in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Recalling the special responsibility borne by the UN Security Council, many states raised the need for voluntary restraint on the use of the veto within the UN Security Council when dealing with situations where mass atrocity crimes are occurring. Specific attention was paid to the complementary initiatives of the Governments of France and Mexico and of the 25-member Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group in this regard.

Recognizing the importance of intergovernmental networks for mass atrocity prevention, at least 26 speakers recalled the importance of appointing a national R2P Focal Point and participation in the Global Network of R2P Focal Points.

Dr. Simon Adams, in his statement on behalf of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, reminded the assembled states of "the plight of those untold millions of our fellow human beings" still threatened by mass atrocity crimes in Iraq, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere.

Dr. Adams said that, "their voices will not be heard in this chamber today, but the Responsibility to Protect was created for them. The success or failure of R2P must continue to be judged on the ability of the international community to meaningfully protect the vulnerable against those who would incite, plan or perpetrate genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity."

For the Global Centre's statement at the interactive dialogue, please see: [Statement of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect at the 2015 UN General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect](#).

To see a summary of the Secretary-General's report and for more information about the dialogue, please see: [UN General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect: "A vital and enduring commitment: Implementing the responsibility to protect," 2015](#). The Global Centre will be releasing a summary of the interactive dialogue shortly.

For more information or media inquiries please contact Evan Cinq-Mars at ecinq-mars@globalr2p.org or +1-212-817-1931.