

Statement delivered by Israel – Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 6 September 2017
[UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION FROM WEBCAST]

Thank you, Mr. Moderator, and first we would like to thank you for convening this meeting. Israel welcomes the opportunity to engage in this important dialogue, and supports the view that in case of atrocity crimes, the international community cannot stand idly. We would also like to thank the Secretary General for his report, and express our appreciation for the efforts of the leadership of Australia and Ghana in this regard.

Founded in the wake of the Second World War, the United Nations promised that the atrocities that humanity witnessed would never happen again. As the Jewish people, we deeply understand from our own history, the need to protect people from the worst crimes humanity can face. But reality has proven that these continue to take place. Reality shows that each and every one of us sitting in this chamber has failed in this regard.

Mr. Moderator, when we speak about responsibility to protect, Israel believes that the key efforts should focus on the prevention level, while the use of force is part of the toolbox, it should be regarded as a measure of last resource, and only in accordance with existing international law. We believe a vital first step for states is national mechanisms to address the issue of prevention, is to foster stable democratic systems based on institutional frameworks and separations of power. We do not only stand for words, but also, for actions. Israel is involved in comprehensive regional and international training initiatives for capacity building in local communities undergoing democratic transition around the globe. In this context, above all, Israel used the role of education of youth as one of the important elements of prevention. We must ensure that our younger generation is educated on the causes of atrocities to eradicate them in the future, and we must ensure that we teach our children to promote democratic values, human rights, tolerance, and coexistence. Unfortunately, some refuse to educate their youth on these values. Instead, they train their children to incite violence and glorify terror. This culture of hate teaches our youth to honor deadly crimes. The values they promote feed into a toxic environment, from which atrocity can grow. Not only that, but their values completely contradict any possible progress towards preventative action.

Mr. Moderator, when we discussed the R2P Doctrine, we also need to ensure that we address the real issues at hand. In times when atrocity crimes are committed more and more by non-state actors, we must also address their despicable acts in any dialogue on R2P. We can no longer ignore the severe impact that they have and we need to address situations in which non-state actors put their citizens at risk for the most severe crimes. In addition, unfortunately, some UN member states have a clear history of exploiting the ideals of this institution to further their own agenda and we must be vigilant to protect the views of this important doctrine from these attempts.

Mr. Moderator, to conclude, in two weeks we will celebrate the holy day of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Rosh Hashanah is a day of reflection, a time to resolve to create a better future, so let us resolve to unite in our responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves and be on the right side of history.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.