

Statement by the delegation of Ukraine at an informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect

September 6, 2017

Mr. Moderator,

Like others, we would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his leadership and personal report on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) which contains a comprehensive analysis of ways to improve the implementation of RtoP at national and international levels. We are also grateful to all briefers for their insightful updates.

Let me begin by reaffirming my Government's commitment to the World Summit Outcome Document adopted by the General Assembly resolution without vote in 2005.

Among other important issues, such as establishing the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, this document contains three paragraphs on the subject of our discussion — the Responsibility to protect all populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Further first explicit endorsement of RtoP provisions by the UN Security Council in 2006 recognized their significance.

We welcome the special emphasis in the SG report on prevention component and fresh ideas on how to strengthen it through accountability by using different tools from legal to political as well as on the role of the United Nations in this process.

We fully share one of the main conclusions of the report regarding an existing serious gap between the solemn commitments and legal obligations of Member States.

Mr. Moderator,

The Ukrainian delegation has already expressed on many occasions that RtoP concept fully excludes any possibility of covert usage of military factor by one State against another State to serve as a front for protection of population from the pretended threats with the aim to acquisition of the territory.

Nevertheless, the exploitation of RtoP for strategic and security purposes continues to take place. Military actions of the Russian Federation in Georgia and Ukraine under

socio-cultural pretext of protection of so called Russian-speaking population are clear examples to this end.

The General Assembly in its resolution 71/205 condemned the temporary occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation showing its total intolerance to manipulations by principles of RtoP.

Despite this fact, the Russian Federation did not stop supply of heavy weapons, vehicles, equipment, and training armed groups that participate in terrorist acts against the civilian population in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

The Russian Federation continues to neglect the life and safety of people of Ukraine and conduct actions in contradiction of spirit and letter of RtoP.

Mr. Moderator,

Let me turn to another risk of selective application of RtoP due to the right to veto in the Security Council.

We believe that while abolishment of veto right is a far-reaching objective, all members of the Security Council, have to voluntarily pledge not to vote against resolutions in cases of mass atrocities, genocide, crimes against humanity.

The same approach should be implemented in case of war crimes and aggression. It is crucial in the course of the Council's reform to consider ways how to envisage a responsibility for a party to a conflict to abstain from voting on a Council decision concerning the conflict resolution since such voting cannot be empirical by its nature.

I thank you.