



GLOBAL CENTRE
FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

ICRtoP
INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

HRW.org

Mr. François Hollande
President of the Republic of France
Palais de l'Élysée
55 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris, France

13 March 2014

Mr. President,

We welcome France's leadership in calling upon the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council to adopt a 'code of conduct' agreeing to voluntarily refrain from using the veto in situations of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Since France's former Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Hubert Védrine, first articulated the need for a 'code of conduct' in 2001, over forty countries have endorsed the idea at various UN fora. Your reiteration of the need for the code in your September 2013 statement at the Opening of the sixty-eighth Session of the UN General Assembly, and H.E. Laurent Fabius' elaboration in the *New York Times*, have re-energized debate about the use and abuse of the veto in mass atrocity situations.

The veto has been used several times in mass atrocity situations since the universal endorsement of the Responsibility to Protect at the 2005 UN World Summit. Most recently, three double vetoes by Russia and China have blocked Security Council action on Syria that could have helped save civilian lives.

As we approach the third anniversary of the Syrian crisis and the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, we encourage you to substantively develop your proposal. To this end, we respectfully urge you to increase efforts to define how the code of conduct would work and build political support for restraint of the use of the veto amongst your fellow permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the broader UN membership.

This should entail:

- Expediting the completion of the aide-mémoire on the code of conduct your Ministry of Foreign Affairs is drafting, refining the ideas put forward by H.E. Mr. Laurent Fabius in his article in the *New York Times* on 4 October 2013;
- Ensuring the code of conduct is operationalized regardless of whether the national interests of the permanent members of the Security Council are at stake;

- Raising the need for a code of conduct bilaterally with your fellow permanent members of the Security Council in New York, Paris and in their respective capitals;
- Supporting a resolution in the General Assembly which welcomes the code of conduct and recommends the permanent members of the Security Council consider refraining from using a veto to block Security Council action aimed at preventing or halting the commission of mass atrocity crimes.

We stand ready to urge the Security Council and the broader UN membership to discuss and support your proposal.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Adams
Executive Director
Global Centre for R2P



Salil Shetty
Secretary-General
Amnesty International



Kenneth Roth
Executive Director
Human Rights Watch



Karim Lahidji
President
The International Federation
for Human Rights



Sapna Chhatpar Considine
Program Director
International Coalition for R2P



Michel Tubiana
President
Euro-Mediterranean
Human Rights Network

c.c. H.E. Mr. Laurent Fabius, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France

c.c. H.E. Mr. Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of the Republic of France to the United Nations