

## **Qatar – Statement at the July 2009 GA Debate on RtoP (As Delivered)**

The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations

Statement By: Mr. Al-Shafi

Permanent Representative to the United Nations

**Mr. Al-Shafi** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for having organized the interactive debate and for holding this meeting on a most important issue — the responsibility to protect — that requires an expanded and frank discussion of its emerging specificities. We express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his useful report on implementing the responsibility to protect (A/63/677) and thank the panel of experts who participated in the interactive debate yesterday.

We also align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In discussing this very important subject, we must realize above all that the principles and concepts of human rights and their protection continue to develop and advance in the modern world. We must, at the outset, agree on the importance of working together towards the continued promotion of this positive trend. In this context, it is natural that the concept of security should expand, develop, and incorporate new concepts, such as the responsibility to protect and human security.

No one could object to the noble foundations and aims of the principle of the responsibility to protect. The solidarity of human beings with their fellows rises above political, racial, ethnic and religious differences, and is one of the noblest achievements of human civilization. There is no doubt that the international community, united as one family, must not stand silent before crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or genocide, no matter where they occur. It should act with complete equality and fairness in order to preserve the credibility of this international Organization.

In that understanding, the consensus reached by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit emphasized the importance of protecting civilians and the responsibility of Governments in that respect, as expressed in the Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) and reaffirmed by the Security Council in resolution 1674 (2006). Any discussion of responsibility entails an implicit discussion of accountability, but we all know that the Summit did not agree on what needs to be done in cases where Governments fail or are unwilling to protect their population. We also know the reason for that failure.

The implementation of the responsibility to protect must be subject to regulation in line with international law, must not affect or undermine the territorial sovereignty of States, and must prioritize the protection of populations under occupation and States and populations subject to foreign invasion in violation of their sovereignty. Those who seek to develop the concept must strive to conclude a detailed, internationally agreed definition of situations in which the responsibility to protect should be invoked and of the conditions that must prevail before it can be invoked. This must be done by the principal political forum of the world — the General Assembly.

Furthermore, history has taught us that many measures introduced under noble principles were not in fact what they were purported to be. One of the most important examples of that dark history was the era of colonialism and racial segregation, which were justified even by eminent Western intellectuals of the time as enterprises seeking the welfare of the uncivilized, barbaric nations that were subjected to colonialism.

In addition to these theoretical obstacles, the implementation of the responsibility to protect is also hindered by practical obstacles, the most prominent of which is the fact that the United Nations, the foremost international mechanism through which any humanitarian intervention can

be carried out in the name of the international community, is bound by political realities that make it difficult to implement this principle in a consistent or harmonized way, thereby impeding the universal acceptance of the principle. How can the Security Council implement and enforce the responsibility to protect when it has repeatedly and clearly failed to implement and enforce its mandate under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security in the face of atrocities committed against populations? These failures can be attributed to certain considerations now under discussion in the context of the intergovernmental process to reform the Security Council. The recent events in Gaza and, before that, in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan highlighted the international community's reluctance to implement the responsibility to protect principle fairly, justly and without politicization.

One of the most important factors that have led to criticism of principles that, in theory, should be above criticism — the principles of humanitarian intervention, human security and the responsibility to protect — is their misuse, not to mention the double standards invoked in relation to them and their subjection to such ignoble principles such as the use of force, pre-emptive strikes and hegemony. Worse still are the abuse and exploitation of noble humanitarian principles as cover for pursuing political ends of an entirely apposite nature, as witnessed throughout the era of colonialism and to this very day.

With respect to the scope and mechanism of protection, we emphasize the importance of implementing such concepts in a manner that helps States to protect their populations. We emphasize a comprehensive approach to the protection of civilians because the procedures and provisions that have often been very effective in ending the suffering of civilians include the diplomatic, humanitarian and appropriate peaceful means set out in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit.

On the basis of its belief that preventive peaceful solutions are more effective and legitimate than the use of force, and that they are based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VI, the State of Qatar has repeatedly undertaken joint diplomatic efforts with the United Nations and friendly countries of our region and beyond, and has contributed to resolving international and regional disputes and to protecting the populations affected by those disputes. We take this opportunity to reaffirm the linkage between development and security and the need to promote collective efforts to achieve political and economic development in developing countries within the framework of tripartite cooperation in the service of humanity.