

General Assembly Debate Statement: Tunisia

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I would like, just as all the preceding speakers since this morning, to thank you and the Secretary-General, and all those on the podium for having organized this extremely important meeting.

The reflections, and the rich debates that have been undertaken on the concept of Responsibility to Protect, show the strong will of all components of the international community to explore ways of collectively managing emergency situations. Managing international crises, implies that we rally around new concepts and strategies because this world can't rise by the effects of globalization and growing interdependence amongst states, obliges us to react promptly and rapidly to human suffering. However, Mr. Chairman, are we to react anywhere, and at any time, how will this international intervention be implemented and in accordance with what mechanisms. It is broadly agreed that the concept of RtoP, in recent years, has seen a clear evolution often brought about by emergency situations. Nonetheless, for the evolution to continue, the concept has to garner the support of the largest number of states, because the concept which is aimed at managing international crises, must be developed in a consensus way and must be broadly agreed.

Removing any questions surrounding the concept requires that we work to strengthen its credibility by involving the largest possible number of state in its development. Only a climate of confidence which presupposes equality amongst states and strict respect for the principle of international sovereignty can make the concept truly applicable. We believe that this principle of sovereignty must not in any way be evoked to undertake action unacceptable to any government regarding its own population. The Responsibility to Protect must not call into question the principle of non-interference or of state sovereignty, fundamental principles of international law. Nor should it justify unregulated interventionism. It is fundamental that any action stemming from this concept to be in complete harmony with the provision of the Charter and other rules of international law. Adoptions of a global, participatory approach by all the actors of the international community, including international institution and indeed regional organizations, can bring about an evolution of the concept in keeping with the principles of international law and international legality.

It is in this spirit the Responsibility to Protect should be formulated in accordance with the principles of the UN, and it must be coherent with the logic of the Charter, especially relating international operation to prior authorization by the Security Council. The Council for its part needs to act gradually. The threshold for implementation of the concept in the framework of the UN has already been steted against extreme cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity. Thus council action should be well targeted and precise, and accompanied by an exit strategy set in advance.

Lastly, the concept should not be implemented on a double standard. What grounds could the international community use to justify its intervention, applying this concept in certain crises and silence regarding other crises when we see the same massive violations of human rights. The indifference of the international community in the face of the suffering of the Palestinian people does not allay fears as of the risk of selective application of the concept. In conclusion I would like to reaffirm that the concept of RtoP, remains a variable, unless an international commitment is established about its real scope, its relationship with international law and international legality and the question of legitimacy of the different stakeholders. For the operation to be legitimate the cause must be just, and the application of the concept must be equal. Then we can speak of the Responsibility to Protect as an expression of the will of the international community. Thank you.