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ICRtoP

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

HRW.org

H.E. Laurent Fabius
Ministre des Affaires étrangères
et du Développement international
37, Quai d'Orsay
75007
Paris, France

15 September 2014

Dear Foreign Minister,

We welcome France's leadership in calling upon the Permanent Members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council to adopt a 'code of conduct' whereby they agree to voluntarily refrain from using their veto in situations of mass atrocity, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We strongly support your hosting of a Ministerial-level meeting on 25 September, during the opening of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly, to discuss ways to advance this initiative.

This September will mark the one-year anniversary since President François Hollande articulated the need for veto restraint in mass atrocity situations. Since then there has been a dramatic increase in the number of states and civil society organizations echoing your call.

We believe that the Ministerial meeting is an important opportunity to continue to build momentum and have a substantive discussion amongst concerned states, including your fellow permanent members of the Security Council. We urge you to consider the following:

- Options for an outcome product for the meeting, potentially including a short statement supporting voluntary restraint on the use of the veto, to which member-states can lend their signature of support.
- Establish a timeline with key benchmarks for moving the initiative forward between the Ministerial and the 70th anniversary of the UN next year. We believe this is an important moment for the Permanent Members to work towards reaching an agreement.
- Refrain from creating an exemption for "vital national interests" in any code of conduct or statement of principles agreed to as this would undermine the effectiveness of any agreement on veto restraint, and is unnecessary given the voluntary nature of the code.
- Appeal directly to your counter-parts, the Foreign Ministers of the United Kingdom, United States, China and Russia to participate in the meeting.

- Continue your engagement with the wider UN membership in order to diversify cross-regional support for the initiative. Broadening consensus through the UN General Assembly is an important step in securing the commitment of all the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council.

We thank you again for your personal commitment in pursuing this laudable endeavour.

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. François Delattre, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations