



# ARMENIA

September 6, 2017

**General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on responsibility to protect: Accountability for prevention**

Statement by Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations

Mr President,

Thank you for convening the traditional informal dialogue on the responsibility to protect. I express our profound appreciation to the Secretary General for his report, for sharing his vision, and for identifying steps to strengthen accountability for atrocity crimes.

The report begins saliently on the prioritisation of prevention. Indeed, the Secretary General has placed prevention at the heart of his vision for the best and most effective action to avert crises, conflicts, atrocities and massive crimes. This vision receives our absolute support.

At the same time, we have consistently emphasised the importance and priority of early prevention, which entails sufficient capacity to detect, monitor and address early warning signs of situations, which, if not addressed, may lead to deteriorations beyond control and all the way to perpetration of massive crimes. Early prevention, in other words means early action. Such observation once again leads to a point where prevention first of all implies legal and institutional capacity, firmly based on political and moral responsibility to protect and promote basic human rights and freedoms, civil and political, economic social and cultural rights for all within the jurisdiction of states. We are reminded in the report that pillar one - the national level represents the cornerstone of the responsibility to protect. We should also consistently recall that flawed capacities to secure human rights for all create particular risks for identity-based violations of rights, the ultimate manifestation of which, as we know all too well, is genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect populations from atrocity crimes in other words requires consistent and determined protection of fundamental human rights and rests firmly on the notion of responsibility to prevent. Indeed, prevention should be viewed as a responsibility to be delivered first of all at a national level. In this context, we have noted favourably and with interest the deliberations in the report concerning the notion of accountability, as well as recommendations to strengthen accountability mechanisms at national level. At the same time, we also need to retain focus on the phenomenon of perpetration of massive crimes by non-state actors, such as terrorist groups and formations. The atrocities of ISIL, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab have been defying and straining the notions of protection and accountability. This remains an open challenge.

We support the Secretary General's view that accountability for atrocity crimes prevention can be strengthened by open reflection and inclusive dialogue on national experiences and that practical steps are needed to strengthen atrocity prevention. Solid national institutions, an active, diverse and robust civil society that can operate freely and openly without fear of harassment, persecution or reprisal, free media and academia contribute towards ensuring transparency and accountability.

Mr President,

We were pleased to note the elaborate analysis in the report of the considerable normative and institutional frameworks available within the United Nations in support of atrocity prevention. We view these analyses first of all in the same context and through the same prism of early prevention and early action. We once again recall that the human rights and preventive machinery within the UN system has over years generated considerable capacity to detect risk situations, to gather and analyse early warning signs and to deliver it to the membership. The respective recommendations in the report, concerning the role and functions of the available human rights mechanisms, special procedures, treaty bodies and the UPR process deserve utilisation, as they are indeed well placed to secure collaborative action aimed at early prevention.

As we have previously observed, it is very important to admit the remaining scepticism towards the concept of the responsibility to protect. Varying interpretations of its core substance and ensuing political divisions undermine the solid foundation on which the implementation should rest. Therefore, patient yet resolute engagement of the membership in addressing the concerns and disagreements remains an important objective. The Security Council and the General Assembly could indeed provide necessary platform to this end. We have therefore received with interest the respective observations in the report about the role and functions of these two principal organs of the United Nations.

Mr President,

The report provides upsetting statistics about the status of ratifications and accessions to most basic legal instruments relevant to the responsibility to protect. Mr President, 2018 will mark 70 years of the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Yet, seventy years later forty seven states, or quarter of the membership of the United Nations delays accession to this core international instrument. As a country to have been consistently advancing the prevention of genocide, including within the United Nations, Armenia proposes to use this occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary for launching a resolute UN-wide campaign for awareness raising of the Convention and its universalization. The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime on 9 December is a fitting occasion to set in motion such campaign.

Armenia continues to exert resolute efforts in promoting consolidated international action against the crime of genocide, including within the United Nations, and the Human Rights Council in particular. Since 2015 Armenia has been regularly hosting a Global Forum Against the Crime of Genocide, attended by political, public, religious, academic, civil society and media

representatives from all over the world. The 2018 Global Forum will focus on the role of education and media in eliminating hatred, intolerance and xenophobia. We encourage all member states and all relevant bodies and entities of the United Nations to bring their participation.

Finally, Mr President, we reiterate our full support to the Secretary General for his steadfast promotion of the concept of prevention. We also reaffirm our deep appreciation, cooperation and continued support to the Joint Office of the Special Advisers, to Mr Adama Dieng and Mr Ivan Simonovic.

Thank you.