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General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue
on
the Report of the Secretary-General entitled “Implementing the
Responsibility to Protect: Accountability for Prevention”

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Intervention by
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Permanent Representative

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank the Secretary-General for his forward-looking 9th report, which is the first by SG Antonio Guterres. We really appreciate and welcome the results of the report, which reaffirms that **R2P is still in the focus of the UN's attention** and provides a clear and realistic view of the challenges Member States, the United Nations and regional organizations have to face while implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect.

Since the UN's establishment some 72 years ago, perhaps our greatest failure has been our inability to always protect civilians against atrocity crimes. Although we are **deeply concerned about the worldwide negative trends**, we share the view expressed in the report that prevention of atrocity is the first step to implement R2P. However, taking into account the growing number of conflicts on international and national levels, it is **inevitable to think also about steps to be taken to address atrocity crimes** that have already happened.

Since the adoption of the principles on the R2P in 2005, **we are fully committed to raise the awareness on this issue on national and international level as well**. Hungary is a proud member of the Friends of R2P Group and a party to all important Conventions related to mass atrocities and war crimes.

Hungary – as an active member of the ACT Group – welcomes the **reference in the report to the Code of Conduct** and the role of the Security Council. We advocate for refraining voluntarily from the use of veto in the Security Council in cases of mass atrocities and we encourage all Member States who have not yet done so to support the Code of Conduct elaborated by the ACT Group and signed by 113 Member States to date. **We strongly support the efforts to transform the principle of R2P into an agenda for concrete action** and we agree with the comprehensive approach when addressing the issue of accountability.

As a clear sign of our commitment to **prevent** atrocities, Hungary takes actions through education, remembrance and commemoration, and zero tolerance policy:

- The Hungarian government introduced the policy of **zero tolerance** against anti-semitism and xenophobia. Moreover, the **education** of the Holocaust is compulsory and is an integral part of the national curriculum. The **Holocaust Remembrance Day** is observed in public schools since 2000. **Hungary held the presidency of the International Holocaust**

Remembrance Alliance in 2015. The Hungarian Criminal Code **penalizes** genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and hate speech as well.

- **Hungary has signed** the joint statement on the “Principles for UN Global Leadership on Preventing Violent Extremism”, proposed by the UK, and we call on all Member States to do so. With this step, **we support the implementation of the Secretary General’s Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism** through an all-of-UN approach.

As regards the institutional framework of reviewing mechanisms, I would emphasize the followings:

- We have various alternatives for international response, thus we support efforts to **use existing fora** in a more efficient and coordinated manner, and we welcome the practical approach of the report and the guidance given to states, regional and international fora aiming to help the implementation of R2P norms. In this regard we strongly support utilizing **mechanisms of the Human Rights Council**, even more so in these times, since Hungary has been elected a member of the UN Human Rights Council
- We must **recognize the important role of civil society** in supporting the advancement of R2P. We **also support to using** the Universal Periodic Review process to address atrocity prevention gaps and to considering further exploration of the responsibility to protect by the Security Council.
- We must **dedicate special attention** to ending impunity and ensuring justice for victims of atrocities, including trial-based mechanisms and other forms of transitional justice.
- We appreciate the efforts taken by the **International Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC) to implement and ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in armed conflict situations**, and welcome the request by OSCE to the IHFFC to conduct an independent forensic investigation, the first task since the establishment of the Commission in 1991. We also encourage states to make better use of good offices of the IHFFC.
- **Hungary is still a staunch supporter of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)** on international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Related to NGOs, international forums, regional cooperation, I would also mentioned some facts:

- Hungary hosts the **Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities**, which provides an invaluable input that can contribute to effective and timely action aimed at preventing the commitment of atrocity crimes: in institution building, technical assistance, early warning capacity building, best practice advice and persistent attention to the warning signs. Such warning sign can be the emerging presence of extremism in our societies.
- **In 2008**, Hungary launched the **Budapest Human Rights Forum**, a series of **annual international human rights conferences** attended by national and international human rights experts, representatives of international organizations, non-governmental organizations and governments.
- **In 2016**, one of the panels of the **9th Budapest Human Rights Forum** was dedicated to the human rights aspects of the prevention of mass atrocities and the responsibility to protect.
- Regarding this topic, I would highlight that **in May 2017 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**, in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, **hosted an international Conference on “Victims of armed conflicts at the juncture of international humanitarian law and human rights law”**. The Conference concentrated on the prevention aspect and brought together academics from various universities, experts and government representatives from a number of countries to discuss the interrelation between international humanitarian law and human rights law with a focus on issues relating to compliance, accountability and fact-finding. The Hungarian MFAT plans to organize IHL-related conferences on a regular basis.
- In the **‘Visegrad Group’**, Hungary, with Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia cooperates in **developing national and regional mechanisms** to serve the Responsibility to Protect idea.

We kindly request the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres to place atrocity prevention at the heart of his overall prevention platform in advance. In this regard, Hungary strongly supports for the work of the Special Advisers and their Office in the context of the ongoing reform process in the organization.

We believe that with strengthened political will of Member States and better use of already **existing wide range of tools**, the international community could effectively prevent and end mass atrocities.

I thank you, Mr. President!