



**PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS**  
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Statement by Finland at the UN General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on the  
Responsibility to Protect

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Kai Sauer  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Finland  
to the United Nations

New York, 8 September 2015

(check against delivery)





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Mr. Chairman,

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the European Union.

I wish to thank you for organizing this informal interactive dialogue as we approach the tenth anniversary of the concept of Responsibility to Protect. I would also like to express our support and gratitude for the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the R2P, Mr. Adama Dieng and Ms. Jennifer Welsh for their invaluable work and tireless efforts.

The principle of RtoP, as agreed by heads of state in 2005, is fully valid today and provides a solid point of departure for addressing situations where there's a risk of the most serious international crimes. This year, together with all ongoing review processes (peace operations review, 1325 and review of the peacebuilding architecture) provides us a special opportunity to renew and further strengthen our commitment.

In this regard, I would like to encourage states to use this opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to Responsibility to Protect. Inclusion of the item in the formal agenda of the General Assembly, as well as adoption of a resolution reaffirming the common understanding of the principle would be appropriate steps forward.

Mr. Chairman,

Looking back, we note that Responsibility to Protect has come a long way, maturing from an abstract principle to a broad and effective policy agenda. However, as demonstrated by the protracted conflicts, mass displacements such as the tragic exodus from Syria, and the rise in violent extremism, political will is too often lacking in terms of actual implementation.

Finland welcomes the 7<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Secretary General, supporting the six priorities as outlined in the report.

I would like to highlight some aspects of the report:

- Prevention is at the core of the responsibility to protect. Conflict prevention is inherently a government responsibility - through the creation of representative, legitimate and inclusive political and economic systems, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Also improving UN's prevention capacity is crucial, and in this regard I would like to commend the Human Rights up Front initiative.
- Also religious or traditional leaders may have a key role in preventing violent extremism and building resilience to prevent atrocity crimes. (The Government of Finland supported the establishment of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. A Finnish NGO – Finn Church Aid – acts as its secretariat. The network's link to the United Nations and other international organizations is crucial. )
- Another important tool of conflict prevention is mediation. Finland continues to be a keen promotor of mediation, supporting for example the strengthening of UN's as well as regional organizations' mediation capacities.

- Ensuring a timely and decisive response to mass atrocity situations is indispensable. In situations and crises where crimes falling under the responsibility to protect are imminent, the Security Council has a special responsibility to act. Too often, however, the Security Council has failed to live up to this responsibility. In this respect I would like to express Finland's firm support to the initiatives aiming to restrict the use of veto in situations involving mass atrocity crimes.

In enhancing our abilities to respond to atrocity crimes, we welcome the report's notion on the need to develop UN peacekeeping operations' RtoP capacities. Peacekeepers are increasingly called upon to protect civilians against mass atrocity crimes and require the training and resources necessary to do so. The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes is a very practical but still underused tool that should be integrated into the training of UN peacekeeping staff.

Furthermore, I would like to express Finland's continued commitment to strengthening international networks dedicated to RtoP such as the RtoP focal points' network.

Finally, ensuring accountability for the most serious international crimes through the International Criminal Court or through transitional justice initiatives is an essential part of the implementation of RtoP. Credible accountability is only possible where the crimes have been properly and professionally investigated. (In this context I wish to remind all delegations of the Pledging Event for the partnership of Justice Rapid Response and UNWomen organized on 15 September by the Missions of Finland, Canada and Sierra Leone.

Thank you Mr Chairman.