

**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE ON THE
RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT”
New York, 30 September 2015**

The plight of so many people facing or fleeing serious human rights violations, including atrocity crimes, starkly illustrates the need to move the responsibility to protect from principle to practice.

My latest report on the concept, issued earlier this year, outlines an achievable agenda for the next decade. Much can be accomplished with renewed political commitment, investment in prevention, timely responses, support for breaking cycles of recurring violence, enhanced regional action, and expanded peer networks.

Improving the protection of vulnerable populations requires adapting existing tools, undertaking institutional reform and redirecting resources.

I welcome the focus of this Ministerial roundtable on the links between atrocity crime prevention and our wider work in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, the protection of civilians, the empowerment of women and girls and international criminal justice. Indeed, the identification and mitigation of atrocity crimes must be integrated into these broader efforts, which are all aimed at fulfilling our obligations to promote, respect and protect the human rights of all.

Member States bear the primary duty to prevent and protect. Implementing the responsibility to protect demands political will and national commitment, backed when needed by international assistance and sharing of experiences.

I encourage you to make the principle a guiding priority in your international cooperation, regional engagement, foreign policy and national implementation. We need your strong and public commitment to advance real change. Strong cooperation with regional organizations and civil society actors is essential.

Member States of the Security Council carry a special responsibility when national actors are unwilling or unable to act.

Internally, my Human Rights Up Front initiative seeks to achieve cultural and operational change within the United Nations family to ensure that the prevention of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law is a system-wide responsibility.

I am deeply committed to its implementation, and will also continue employing my good offices to encourage proactive responses to situations of concern. I urge Member States to support the Human Rights Up Front initiative.

Fulfilling the responsibility to protect is a collective endeavour. I welcome the growing network of national focal points dedicated to the responsibility to protect, and the positive momentum this represents.

Let us step up efforts to make our responsibility a reality in the lives of those in need of protection.