



STATEMENT  
OF  
**The State of Qatar**

DELIVERED BY  
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**State of Qatar to the United Nations**

BEFORE  
**The Informal Dialogue of**  
**the United Nations General Assembly**

ON  
**The Report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility**  
**to protect: timely and decisive response (A/66/874-S/2012/578)**

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**Mr. Moderator,**

Genocide ... war crimes ... ethnic cleansing ... crimes against humanity ... these four serious crimes are among the worst manifestations of acts by mankind. It is hard to imagine that it is capable of them, but that is an unfortunate fact. We are certain that no-one in the civilized world hesitates to denounce these crimes, whatever the circumstances, and we do not know a reasonable person who could advocate condoning or turning a blind eye to them, wherever they may occur, and by whomsoever they are committed, because they are crimes against all of us. That is why the concept of the responsibility to protect has been met with wide acceptance by the international community.

Then why is that concept still being queried? We believe that this is largely because it is misunderstood. It is undeniable that this concept, which is based on the fundamental principles of international law and the most basic human norms, need further development, but this development should not be done by backtracking from accepting it. It should be done by a discussion of the approaches, measures and capacities necessary to operationalize it and the challenges facing it, and a discussion of a common viable strategy for achieving it.

That is why we appreciate this informal interactive dialogue, which enables Member States to freely debate the issue guided by the Secretary-General's fourth report on the responsibility to protect. We believe that this report provides useful insights into several aspects of this issue, which is important especially given the crises that have been witnessed and are being witnessed by several countries in the region which I hail from as well as other regions.

We would like, Mr. Moderator, to first refute a stereotype in which RTOP is often portrayed in the media and elsewhere, highlighting only one of its many facets, i.e., the military one. This stereotype results from the lack of a deep reading into and understanding of RTOP.

According to what the Heads of State and Government decided, this concept has three integral pillars of equal importance. We have learned from experience that they are not to be viewed in isolation from one another and are not sequential. Each of these pillars has a prevention aspect and a response aspect, though the preventive aspect is stressed more in the first and second pillars.

Prevention is undoubtedly better than treatment, and I would like here to note the State of Qatar's interest in promoting good governance,

counter-corruption, democratic practices and other values and practices that are part of the preventive measures. We also note the achievements of the State of Qatar in the area of education and spreading a culture of peace and its interest in dialogue among civilizations and religions. Supporting preventive diplomacy is also one of our priorities, and we have had experience in mediation for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

**Mr. Moderator,**

While we emphasize prevention first, we emphasize the importance of timely and decisive collective action when necessary, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and paragraph 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. We note that the longer we wait in situations of concern, the more dramatic and costly to all concerned the eventual intervention will be. At any rate, taking timely response measures does not mean discontinuing prevention measures.

It is also important to note that collective action is not limited to the use of force, but includes a range of other measures that can be taken under the Charter, such as targeted sanctions, arms embargoes, limiting diplomatic contacts, and other measures that should preferably be taken within a coherent and solid strategy with clear objectives. Here, we underline the need to understand the situations of concern thorough all available tools such as fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry and monitoring and observer missions. In most cases, it is useful that the United Nations engages with the relevant regional and sub-regional arrangements in taking measures according to the concept of RTOP under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

While the Charter should undoubtedly be adhered to, the fact must be stressed that it put at the disposal of States tools that should all be exploited to ensure the achievement of the its purposes. Those tools include provisions of Chapters VI, VII and VIII. Although resort to coercive measures is sometimes needed, we emphasize that they should be the last resort, especially the use of force, which must be considered with much caution given its risks as history has taught us. In the case force is used, that use must adhere strictly to international law, abide by international mandates and take all feasible precautions to avoid situations that put civilians in danger. At the same time, we emphasize that the fact that measures taken to protect hundreds of thousands of people may cause a much less collateral damage from certain death does not delegitimize those measures. In all cases, differences about the past

and what could be perceived as a shortcoming in the implementation of RTOP in certain cases should not be taken as a pretext to reject the whole principle.

**Mr. Moderator,**

While, in some cases, the responsibility to protect requires collective international action in all ways and means as guaranteed by international law in order to provide protection and assistance to civilians, this action must always strive to maintain the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of States. As we said, the concept of the responsibility to protect is based on the principles of international law, and therefore it is illogical to invoke the principles of international law to reject it altogether. The misuse of international principles is unacceptable. National sovereignty is a fundamental principle, but sovereignty comes with responsibility. Governments derive their sovereignty from their people and the sovereignty of Governments is not a right to annihilate their people. States bear the primary responsibility to protect their populations in all circumstances, even during and after any collective response. It is also unacceptable that the maintenance of the independence of States and their unity be used as an excuse to allow serious crimes that are indeed the fastest way to undermine the unity and territorial integrity of those States, tear apart their social fabric and threaten their independence.

At any rate, we must all seek to structure the principle of RTOP, while emphasizing that every case is different, and to ensure that the implementation of the concept is consistent with the purposes, principles and provisions of the Charter and with the intentions expressed by the Heads of State and Government. Integrity, credibility and the sincere desire to protect civilians require the full application of RTOP with honesty and consistency and without selectivity or politicization.

In light of the need to develop and strengthen the principle and avoid shortcomings in its implementation, we believe that the Brazilian initiative known as the Responsibility while Protecting provides beneficial and constructive proposals and a useful pathway for dialogue about the responsibility to protect.

**Mr. Moderator,**

The General Assembly's debate yesterday revealed the very serious situation in Syria, and I will not dwell on the details of that situation, but I will recall that everyone continues to warn that the country is sliding into worse violence and that the threat of sectarian violence is looming. The General Assembly has responded to this serious matter in its relevant resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 66/253 B. In this resolution, the GA expressed grave concern at the failure of the Syrian Government to protect its population and expressed its determination to seek ways and means to provide protection to them. But it is one thing to express a desire to provide protection and another to take effective action. Here I wonder: How long does the international community have to stand by watching these tragedies before taking effective measures to stop them?

As is the case in this General Assembly resolution, there are many other examples of where the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council have invoked the principle of RTOP. This is consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the responsibilities of the principal organs of the international Organization. Here I specifically underline the great responsibility that rests with the Security Council in the implementation of the responsibility to protect and that the Council should act responsibly in this regard.

**Mr. Moderator,**

The State of Qatar, which places the security, dignity, rights and well-being of people above all else, attaches importance to the principle of the responsibility to protect and calls for continued discussion of the principle by all Member States and agreement on its various aspects, development and implementation, while keeping in mind the heavy legacy of the grave crimes which we failed to prevent, and which overshadow our collective human conscience.

**Thank you.**