

Statement of Ambassador Perceval
Unofficial Transcription from Webcast
11 September 2013

Good Morning.

I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his Report and greet the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, The Minister of Integration of Italy, the Special Adviser for the Responsibility to Protect, and all of you.

A few days ago, I remembered the open letter of a writer, an Argentinian writer, who wrote to the military junta before he was tortured, kidnapped and disappeared: Rodolfo Walsh. He wrote the following;

“Perpetrators, what you call facts are errors. What you recognize as errors are crimes, and what you omit are disasters. The lack of limit in time has been complemented with the lack of limit in methods. Perpetrators, through excessive concessions with the purpose of exterminating enemies, you are justifying every means and you have reached absolute torture. Metaphysical torture, giving into the impulse of destroying the human substance until you break it, making them lose their dignity; the dignity that you yourselves have lost.”

Mr. President,

The Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit includes the commitment of the Heads of State and Government to protect the civilian population recognized as the Responsibility to Protect and involves all of the international obligations of the States in this area.

The Responsibility to Protect as we know, is not a category nor is it a new law, but rather it is a synthesis of all of the obligations of States when it comes to international humanitarian law, international human rights law as well as international refugee law.

From its outset, my country, Argentina, has supported the concept of the Responsibility to Protect to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing as well as crimes against humanity and we share and we take on the primary responsibility of States to prevent these crimes. Argentina would like to acknowledge that the last Report of the Secretary-General focused on prevention. My country, for several years now, has promoted this focus with the understanding that every State, but also regional and international cooperation, are crucial in the area of prevention. In the SG's report, Argentina mentions that the latest developments that we've undertaken through actions, public policies, and we formulated a few considerations on the path to be followed in the future. The primordial responsibility of states was reaffirmed. Argentina, due to the

Statement of Ambassador Perceval
Unofficial Transcription from Webcast
11 September 2013

cruel experience that it had in the 70s, starting with the commission of the most horrific crimes against humanity due to the military dictatorship in our country. It's often said that Argentina is admired around the world because we judged these crimes of torture. This is undoubtedly the case, but the most important thing is that judging crimes of dictatorship was only possible due to the great collective memory exercise. All of the strategies of oblivion failed, mainly trying to trivialize what happened. Society took on a duty to remember. When we talk about the duty to remember, it's to understand that a moment of atrocity has taken place, that that reality has existed, and hence we have to keep this in mind when we think about the present and the future. Memory has undeniable requirements. Oblivion is ignorance, but taking importance away from what happened is injustice. Memory as a duty includes the recognition of truth, the historical reconstruction of what was experienced, making errors physical. We did all that we needed to do while the investigation of the crimes of torture by the dictatorship and the universe of complicity that still exists and that we can see from the truth trial should still be the cornerstone of a cultural change. In order to make 'Never Again' a political reality, we have to promote a cultural change. If that doesn't happen, nothing would guarantee that hell would not return, or what is even worse, that we haven't emerged from this hell and that it continues to be a reality among us. Undoubtedly perhaps each of the victims of state terrorism in Argentina, we remember different intellectuals, journalists, human rights defenders who made us remember that it's not that the victims were not heard, but quite simply we were made invisible. But today in my country, through fair trials with due process starting in 2003 after having declared null and void the laws of impunity which were decreed in the 90s, we have 1,503 people on trial, 453 prosecuted, and were sentenced, and 45 have been acquitted. Argentina is convinced that it's crucial for states to support international instruments to protect human beings and to support their follow-up mechanisms.

With France, Argentina promoting the documentation of the international convention against forced disappearances. We also encouraged the establishment of a Special Rapporteur for the Promotion of Truth, Justice and Reparation as well as a guarantee of non-repetition of the HRC. We support as well the ICC.

Mr. President,

In order to give you a few examples in Argentina we have built the Latin American Network for Prevention of Gen and Mass Atrocities in 2012. At the same time, there was another valuable experience and that was the activity that we carried out with the Institute for Peace and Reconciliation of Auschwitz, and also regional fora for the prevention of genocide with Switzerland, Tanzania Cambodia. These are all different fora where we are building a culture of prevention. I'd like to conclude because my time

Statement of Ambassador Perceval
Unofficial Transcription from Webcast
11 September 2013

seems to be coming up. There's no doubt that genocide has always been committed and is still being committed because some have decided to do so. But many others remain indifferent to this. Syria must be resolved. This is not the time for prevention. Now we have the responsibility to provide a comprehensive, legitimate, and legal multilateral response to prevent the violation of human rights.