

## STATEMENT

at the Informal Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect: “Responsibility of States to protect their populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity through appropriate and necessary means”

11 September 2013

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me express my gratitude for this timely opportunity to address the issue of the responsibility to protect the civilians by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity through appropriate and necessary means, and more importantly – to foresee the ways to increase the effectiveness of enhanced efforts from the UN community in this regard. Herein, I would like to also stress that Georgia welcomes the appointment of Ms. Jennifer Welsh as the Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary-General and stands ready to cooperate with her to support the successful implementation of her mandate.

While reflecting on the importance of our endeavors, we have to stress again the urgent need to effectively address the needs of the innocent population in war-affected areas, a great part of which are deliberately targeted for ethnic, religious, political or other pretexts. As we speak, millions of people worldwide still suffer from genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing and its consequences, in most cases, being deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms, separated from their families and expelled from the places of their permanent residence. In this context, the UN has a primary role in undertaking immediate actions to protect civilians and ensure their basic rights.

We condemn the violence against civilians in Syria, the culmination of which was the use of chemical weapons and deplore the death of more than 100 thousand people. We believe that the protection of the civilians should be the highest priority for each Government and the entire international community. Georgia welcomes and supports readiness of the international community to play a more active role in resolving humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Unfortunately, Syria is not the only place in the world where such atrocities take place. Here I cannot but say few words about the situation in my own country, where the Government of Georgia cannot provide security and protection of the population in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These people, living under detrimental conditions of foreign occupation and ongoing process of ethnic cleansing, are deprived their fundamental rights and freedoms, including but not limited to the continuous denial to return to their homelands and reunifying with their families and restrictions to the freedom of movement

and the right to education in native language.

Moreover, occupying forces continue to aggravate the situation through their activities on daily basis. The illegal installation of barbwire fences along the Administrative Boundary Line significantly affects the livelihoods of the local population, divides families and communities, and prevents people-to-people contacts. Such alarming developments compel the local residents to leave their permanent places of residence, thus, creating a new generation of internally displaced persons.

The grave security and human rights situation in Georgia's occupied regions illustrates an urgent necessity of international mechanisms on the ground. After the unilateral blockage of the mandate of the UN monitoring mission in Georgia in 2009, the vacuum in terms of international presence have not been overcome. As a result of artificial barriers, the establishment of international security arrangements and human rights monitoring mechanisms has not been materialized. The EUMM – the only international mission on the territory of Georgia – still lacks the possibility to thoroughly implement its mandate and monitor the situation inside the occupied regions of Georgia. It is imperative that the conflict-affected population is provided with unhindered humanitarian aid and the relevant international actors are allowed to carry out their activities according to their respective mandates.

I would like to underline that in the circumstances, when the central Government of Georgia is denied de facto control over its regions, the overall responsibility for security situation rests solely with the state exercising effective control.

Mr. President,

Georgia fully shares the requirements of the Report of the UN Secretary-General of July 8, 2013 on the Responsibility to Protect: State responsibility and prevention and we express our readiness to implement it. Moreover, in my country the numerous measures have been taken for the prevention of massive crimes. Recently, Georgia designated a R2P Focal Point as we believe that the coordination of intra-governmental and inter-governmental efforts to mainstream R2P is essential. The Criminal Code of Georgia plays the important role to prevent crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Government of Georgia believes that building the independent and democratic state is the most effective way to achieve prosperous future for the reunited Georgia.

From its side, Georgia stands ready to contribute to concerted international efforts and ensure more effective protection of the civil population by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Georgia also remains committed to assume an active role in the strengthening of international security in the region and the out world.