

2015-2016 UN Security Council Elections and the Responsibility to Protect

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect welcomes the election of Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela to the United Nations Security Council for 2015-2016. With the election of these members, 7 of the 15 members of the Security Council are members of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). It is our hope that the Security Council will uphold their commitment to R2P and take early preventive action to avert emerging crises. The Council should also work to halt atrocities in Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Syria.

Security Council members have a responsibility to maintain international peace and security and ensure that populations are protected in every country from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. To this end, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect urges all Security Council members to:

- Hold a UN Department of Political Affairs Horizon Scanning briefing during their presidency to inform council members of developing situations where there is a serious risk of mass atrocity crimes;
- Request briefings from the UN Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, as well as relevant Special Rapporteurs on situations where populations are at risk;
- Refrain from using a veto or blocking Council action aimed at preventing or halting mass atrocity crimes;
- Reaffirm the Security Council's commitment to the Responsibility to Protect by passing a stand-alone resolution to mark the tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit.

The Global Centre has compiled basic profiles on each of the newly-elected Security Council members. These provide an account of their engagement with R2P, including whether they have appointed a national R2P Focal Point, their respective contributions to UN peacekeeping operations and their status with relevant international legal regimes, including the Genocide Convention, Rome Statute and Arms Trade Treaty.

Following the election Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, remarked: "We welcome the election of these new UN Security Council members. The Council has a critical role in upholding the international community's responsibility to protect. As we approach the 20th anniversary of Srebrenica in 2015 it would be timely for the Council to reflect upon past tragedies and what it means to prevent mass atrocities in the 21st century."

Republic of Angola

Head of State: President José Eduardo dos Santos

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Mr. Georges Rebelo Chikoti

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	No
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Relevant Background Information	
Group:	Africa Group
UN Security Council Membership:	2003-2004
Human Rights Council Membership:	2007-2010, 2010-2013
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	N/A
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Signed 7 October 1988 (Not Ratified)
Genocide Convention:	Non-signatory
Arms Trade Treaty:	Signed 24 September 2013 (Not Ratified)
Other:	Member of the AU, ICGLR, SADC, G77, NAM

NOTES

Security Council Goals & Priorities: Conflict prevention, AU-UN cooperation, Peacebuilding, and Organized and transnational crime and international terrorism.

On R2P: No major statements or previous engagement on R2P.

Security Council Veto: No major statements or engagement on the issue of the veto in mass atrocity situations.

Notable Quote: “Angola took over the rotating presidency of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in January 2014, and in that forum, it continues to promote the resolution of conflicts on the African continent with a view to attaining stability, political and institutional development, internal and border security, as well as good governance and human rights. It is in this context that Angola is engaged in the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and the Great Lakes region.” –Manuel Domingos Vincente, Vice President of Angola, at the opening of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2014.

Malaysia

Head of Government: Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Dato' Sri Anifah Aman

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Hussein Haniff

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2009 , 2012 , 2013 , 2014
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Relevant Background Information	
Group:	Asia-Pacific Group
UN Security Council Membership:	1965, 1989-1990, 1999-2000
Human Rights Council Membership:	2006-2009, 2010-2013
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	882 personnel (30 th largest contributor)
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Non-signatory
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 20 December 1994
Arms Trade Treaty:	Signed 26 September 2013 (Not Ratified)
Other:	Member of ASEAN, G77, NAM, OIC

NOTES

Security Council Goals & Priorities: Human security, Women, peace and security, Children in armed conflict, and UN peacekeeping.

On R2P: “Malaysia does not object to R2P, nor are we against such noble efforts to reinforce and support States’ responsibility to protect its people. Nevertheless, my delegation is of the view that R2P requires a comprehensive and in-depth discussion so as to enable the international community to clearly define its understanding, applications, implementations and effects on states on both international and internal dimensions.” – H.E. Mr. Hussein Haniff, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the UN, at the 8 September 2014 UN General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on R2P.

Security Council Veto: No major statements or previous engagement on the issue of the veto in mass atrocity situations.

Notable Quote: “There are two things we must do. First, security and statehood must be returned to the people of Syria and Iraq... Second, we must pursue a different kind of politics. The emergence of these militants is a symptom of political failure; of poor governance in fragile states, and the conflict that still rages between Sunni and Shia... Individuals and ethnic and religious groups need to feel they have a stake in a nation's success, not its failure. So we should commit to more inclusive politics.” – Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, at the opening of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2014.

New Zealand

Head of Government: Prime Minister John Key

Minister of Foreign Affairs: The Hon. Mr. Murray McCully

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Jim McLay

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2009 , 2011 , 2012 , 2013 , 2014
R2P Group of Friends member:	Yes
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	Yes
Relevant Background Information	
Group:	Western Europe and Other Group
UN Security Council Membership:	1954-1955, 1966, 1993-1994
Human Rights Council Membership:	N/A
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	11 personnel (97 th largest contributor)
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified 7 September 2000
Genocide Convention:	Ratified 28 December 1978
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified 2 September 2014
Other:	Member of the Commonwealth, OECD, Pacific Islands Forum, ACT

NOTES

Security Council Goals & Priorities: Early warning and conflict prevention, Disarmament and arms control, UN peacekeeping, Women, Peace and Security, and Children in armed conflict.

On R2P: “With the best of intentions, not all states have the means to protect their populations singlehandedly and in isolation. It is for this reason that at the World Summit our leaders identified the international community’s collective responsibility to help protect populations.” – H.E. Mr. Jim McLay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the UN, at the 8 September 2014 UN General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on R2P.

Security Council Veto: “We now seem to have a practice whereby the Permanent Members cannot only block Council actions through the veto. They also appear to have privileged access to information and can stop the Council from meeting if it does not suit their collective purposes. Such behaviors damage the reputation and credibility of the wider organisation and must be challenged.” – John Key, Prime Minister of New Zealand, at the Opening of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2013.

Notable Quote: “We need to find a way to contain the madness that is ISIL, to address the humanitarian tragedy and to help the people of Syria and Iraq craft a better future. By any objective standard, this is a situation that cries out for Security Council attention, and that is true of both sides of the border. We need the Council Members and the Governments concerned to move past the ideological stalemate that has kept the Council largely impotent for the past 3 years.” – The Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, at the opening of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly, September 2014.

Spain

Head of Government: Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy Brey

Minister of Foreign Affairs: José Manuel García Margallo

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2011 , 2012 , 2013 , 2014
R2P Group of Friends member:	Yes
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	Yes
Relevant Background Information	
Group:	Western Europe and Other Group
UN Security Council Membership:	1969-1970, 1981-1982, 1993-1994, 2003-2004
Human Rights Council Membership:	2010-2013
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	599 personnel (36 th largest contributor)
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified 24 October 2000
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 13 September 1968
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified 2 April 2014
Other:	Member of EU, NATO, OECD, OSCE

NOTES

Security Council Goals and Priorities: Conflict prevention, protection of civilians, UN peacekeeping, combatting terrorism, piracy and transnational organized crime, and disarmament and non-proliferation.

On R2P: “2015 will mark the tenth anniversary of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. This will certainly be an excellent opportunity to assess the efforts undergone to effectively implement R2P up to the present, as well as to renew and deepen our collective commitment with R2P in the years ahead.” - H.E. Mr. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN, at the 8 September 2014 UN General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on R2P.

Security Council Veto: “Spain shares the concerns at the root of this initiative. If we want to face what the international society in the twenty first century demands us to face, then we must find a formula to fix the current model of unlimited use of exercising the power of veto.” – H.E. Mr. Gonzalo de Benito Secades, State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, at the 25 September 2014 Ministerial Side-Event on regulating the veto in the event of mass atrocities.

Notable Quote: “Spain vigorously condemns the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity during the Syrian conflict. The use of chemical weapons represents the starkest, but not the only example. Perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable, including through the International Criminal Court as appropriate.” – H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias, former Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN, at the 11 September 2013 UN General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on R2P.

Venezuela

Head of State: President Nicolás Maduro Moros

Minister of Foreign Affairs: Rafael Ramirez Carreño

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Samuel Moncada

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2009 , 2010, 2011, 2012 , 2013 , 2014
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Relevant Background Information	
Group:	Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
UN Security Council Membership:	1962-1963, 1977-1978, 1986-1987, 1992-1993
Human Rights Council Membership:	2015-2018
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	N/A
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified 7 June 2000
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 12 July 1960
Arms Trade Treaty:	Non-signatory
Other:	Member of G77, MERCOSUR, NAM, UNASUR

NOTES

Security Council Goals & Priorities: Combatting terrorism and transnational organized crime, Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Peaceful settlements of disputes and the non-use of force.

On R2P: “Ultimately it is the member state institutions which have the responsibility to act to prevent or respond to mass atrocity. There is much to be done to improve their own capacity for prevention. But never again should they be left in the dark. And never again should a warning for a courageous commander in the field be cast aside, leaving a UN Mission virtually helpless in the midst of a human catastrophe.” – Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the UN at the 15 January 2014 event, Genocide: A Preventable Crime – Understanding Early Warning of Mass Atrocities

Security Council Veto: No major statements or previous engagement on the issue of the veto in mass atrocity situations.

Notable Quote: “As for the current situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela reaffirms its support for the quest for a negotiated political solution that maintains the territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the Syrian people, in accordance with the principles of self-determination. For this reason, Venezuela deplores the attempt by some States to carry out a military aggression in Syria, which would only multiply the number of innocent victims and increase the risk of spreading the terrible effects of the conflict to the entire region of the Middle East.” - Permanent Mission of Venezuela to the UN at the 11 September 2013 UN General Assembly informal interactive dialogue on R2P.

List of Abbreviations

ACT – Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group
ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU – African Union
EU – European Union
G20 – Group of 20
G77 – Group of 77
ICC – International Criminal Court
ICGLR – International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
MERCOSUR – Southern Common Market
N/A – Not applicable
NAM – Non-Aligned Movement
NATO – North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
OIC – Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
R2P – Responsibility to Protect
SADC – Southern African Development Community
UNASUR – Union of South American Nations
UNGA – UN General Assembly