

2022-2023 UN Security Council Elections and the Responsibility to Protect

Today, 11 June 2021, the UN General Assembly elected Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates to the UN Security Council for the period of 2022-2023. With their election, 9 of the 15 members of the Council in 2022 will be “Friends of the Responsibility to Protect” – having appointed an R2P Focal Point and/or joined the Group of Friends of R2P in New York and Geneva. Albania, Brazil and Ghana all co-sponsored and voted for the recent UN General Assembly resolution on R2P. The United Arab Emirates also voted in favor of the resolution while Gabon did not participate in the vote.

Despite its role as the UN body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, all too often the Security Council has been unable to take timely action on mass atrocity situations due to deep political divisions inside the Council over human rights, conflict prevention and national sovereignty. In recent years this has had a debilitating effect on the Council’s capacity to respond to atrocities in Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia and elsewhere. It is therefore more important than ever for Council members to work in creative ways to ensure that the international community is able to take timely, practical action to prevent atrocities and protect vulnerable populations.

Since 2005 the Security Council has adopted 92 resolutions and 21 presidential statements that refer to the Responsibility to Protect, including with regard to situations in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria and eight other country situations, as well as a number of thematic issue areas. It is our hope that the Security Council will consistently uphold their commitment to R2P by taking decisive action to avert emerging crises and halt atrocities wherever they are threatened.

To this end, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect encourages all Security Council members to:

- Request briefings from the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, as well as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant Special Rapporteurs, Human Right Council-mandated investigative mechanisms and civil society representatives, on situations where populations are at risk of mass atrocities.
- Raise awareness and mobilize timely responses to crises, including through convening “Arria formula meetings” or raising country situations that are not on the Council’s formal agenda under “Any Other Business,” and coordinating Security Council visiting missions to countries where mass atrocity risks are evident.
- Reaffirm the Security Council’s commitment to preventing mass atrocities by establishing a Security Council Working Group on the Prevention of Genocide and other Mass Atrocity Crimes.
- Adhere to the ACT Code of Conduct by which Council members commit to take timely and decisive action to protect civilians and not vote against any credible resolution aimed at preventing mass atrocities.
- Support the International Criminal Court and other international justice mechanisms and ensure all perpetrators of mass atrocities are held to account, regardless of position or affiliation.
- Ratify or accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

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

Albania

Head of State: President Ilir Meta

Head of Government: Prime Minister Edi Rama

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs: H.E. Ms. Olta Xhaçka

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Ms. Besiana Kadare

Summary of R2P Engagement

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| Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: | 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019, 2021 Also part of the statement by the EU: 2016, 2018-2019 |
| R2P Group of Friends member: | No |
| Appointed R2P Focal Point: | Yes |

Background

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|---|---|
| Regional Group: | Eastern European Group |
| UN Security Council Membership: | - |
| Human Rights Council Membership: | 2015-2017 |
| Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: | 2 personnel (111 th largest contributor) |
| Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement: | Yes |
| Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: | Yes |
| Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: | Yes |
| Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: | Yes |
| Rome Statute of the ICC: | Ratified 31 January 2003 |
| Genocide Convention: | Acceded 12 May 1955 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: | Ratified 19 March 2014 |

Security Council Priorities: Supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda and strengthening the role of women in political processes, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; bridging the gap between the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council; addressing the root causes of violent extremism; and confronting the threat of climate change and its impact on international peace and security.

On R2P: “The Responsibility to Protect is a core principle in promoting and protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law, as well as preventing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. In our region, the Balkans, we have witnessed first-hand the vital importance of the international community’s engagement, in order to ensure peace. It was thanks to the NATO intervention in Kosovo, 22 years ago, that dictator Slobodan Milosevic was forced to end his ethnic-cleansing campaign against Albanian population in Kosovo. To this day, Kosovo Albanians are grateful that someone stood up for them before it was too late.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 18 May 2021)

Brazil

Head of State: President Jair Messias Bolsonaro

Minister for External Relations: H.E. Mr. Carlos França

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho

| Summary of R2P Engagement | |
|---|--|
| Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: | 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 |
| R2P Group of Friends member: | No |
| Appointed R2P Focal Point: | No |
| Background | |
| Regional Group: | Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) |
| UN Security Council Membership: | 1946-1947, 1951-1952, 1954-1955, 1963-1964, 1967-1968, 1988-1989, 1993-1994, 1998-1999, 2004-2005, 2010-2011 |
| Human Rights Council Membership: | 2006-2008, 2008-2011, 2013-2015, 2017-2019, 2020-2022 |
| Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: | 71 personnel (65 th largest contributor) |
| Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement: | Yes |
| Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: | Yes |
| Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: | No |
| Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: | Yes |
| Rome Statute of the ICC: | Ratified 20 June 2002 |
| Genocide Convention: | Ratified 15 April 1952 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: | Ratified 14 August 2018 |

Security Council Priorities: Promoting peacebuilding; integrating the Women, Peace and Security agenda within UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding; enhancing cooperation between the UN Security Council and regional organizations; and fostering the Security Council's role in conflict prevention and resolution.

On R2P: “Viewing R2P as an exclusively international issue reinforces the erroneous notion that it is primarily about international responses to domestic crises. On the contrary, for R2P to overcome criticism, its implementation should not focus on the exceptional and sporadic imposition of coercive measures, but rather on the ongoing development of structural policies that contribute to more peaceful, inclusive and tolerant societies. Such policies include actions on human rights education, the promotion of a culture of peace and tolerance, measures against xenophobia and racial discrimination, reparation programmes for victims of serious human rights violations and the promotion and protection of the human rights of the most vulnerable segments of the population.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 27 June 2019)

Gabon

Head of State: President Ali Bongo Ondimba

Head of Government: Prime Minister Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Pacôme Moubelet Boubeya

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Michel Xavier Biang

Summary of R2P Engagement

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|-------------------------------------|------|
| Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: | 2018 |
| R2P Group of Friends member: | No |
| Appointed R2P Focal Point: | No |

Background

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|---|--|
| Regional Group: | African Group |
| UN Security Council Membership: | 1978-1979, 1998-1999, 2010-2011 |
| Human Rights Council Membership: | 2006-2008, 2008-2011, 2013-2015, 2021-2023 |
| Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: | 453 personnel (41 st largest contributor) |
| Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement: | Yes |
| Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: | No |
| Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: | Yes |
| Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: | Yes |
| Rome Statute of the ICC: | Ratified 20 September 2000 |
| Genocide Convention: | Acceded 21 January 1983 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: | Signed 25 September 2013 |

Security Council Priorities: Enhancing partnerships between the UN and African Union (AU) and ensuring predictable, flexible and sustainable funding for AU peace operations; fighting against illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons; advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda; confronting the threat of climate change; and combatting terrorism

On R2P: “The responsibility to protect people and prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity lies primarily with States, both in times of peace and during war. That responsibility also extends to protecting refugee camps. I also want to take this opportunity to reiterate Gabon’s commitment to international criminal justice and the fight against impunity so as to ensure that those responsible for serious crimes are held accountable for their actions before competent national or international courts. My country affirms its commitment to the standards set by the responsibility to protect, particularly the implementation of the three pillars – prevention, encouraging the international community and collective action in the case of a State’s failure.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 2 July 2018)

Ghana

Head of State: President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration: H.E. Ms. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, MP

Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Harold Adlai Agyeman

| Summary of R2P Engagement | |
|---|--|
| Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: | 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 Also part of the statement by the Group of Friends of R2P: 2015-2021 |
| R2P Group of Friends member: | Yes |
| Appointed R2P Focal Point: | Yes* Founding member of the Global Network |
| Background | |
| Regional Group: | African Group |
| UN Security Council Membership: | 1962-1963, 1986-1987, 2006-2007 |
| Human Rights Council Membership: | 2006-2008, 2008-2011, 2015-2017 |
| Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: | 2,283 personnel (10 th largest contributor) |
| Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement: | Yes |
| Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: | Yes |
| Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: | Yes |
| Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: | Yes |
| Rome Statute of the ICC: | Ratified 20 December 1999 |
| Genocide Convention: | Acceded 24 December 1958 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: | Ratified 22 December 2015 |

Security Council Priorities: Promoting conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction; Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda; enhancing partnerships between the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations to promote international peace and security; and combating violent extremism

On R2P: “The Responsibility to Protect is an expression of a political and moral commitment as well as a blueprint for action to prevent and end genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We are encouraged by the continuous expression of commitment by a large number of states and agree with previous delegations who have emphasized the need for greater collaboration at national, regional and international levels to narrow the implementation deficit in responding to and ending atrocity crimes.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 17 May 2021)

United Arab Emirates

Head of State: H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Head of Government: H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh

Summary of R2P Engagement

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: | 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021 |
| R2P Group of Friends member: | No |
| Appointed R2P Focal Point: | No |
| Background | |
| Regional Group: | Asia-Pacific Group |
| UN Security Council Membership: | 1986-1987 |
| Human Rights Council Membership: | 2013-2015, 2016-2018 |
| Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: | 0 personnel |
| Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement: | Yes |
| Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: | No |
| Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: | Yes |
| Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: | Yes |
| Rome Statute of the ICC: | Signed 27 November 2000 |
| Genocide Convention: | Acceded 11 November 2005 |
| Arms Trade Treaty: | Signed 9 July 2013 |

Security Council Priorities: Promoting gender equality; fostering tolerance and countering terrorism and extremism; building resilience to climate change; prioritizing humanitarian relief and sustaining peace; tackling global health crises and pandemics; and harnessing the potential of innovation for peace.

On R2P: “The United Arab Emirates associates itself with the content of the Secretary-General’s report on the importance of being committed to multilateralism and international law in order to entrench and activate the conceptual framework of R2P. We therefore reiterate our international commitments within the framework of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and we call on Member States to do the same. The United Arab Emirates also underscores the importance of a foreign policy based on humanitarian action so as to support States to enable them to shoulder their responsibility and protect their societies. My country believes that R2P is first and foremost the obligation of States, as well as a right in itself, which is linked to specific responsibilities, the most important of which is to protect the entire population and ensure their well-being. That must be the key focus of Governments, as well as prioritizing diversity, pluralism and multilateralism.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 27 June 2019)