

2023-2024 UN Security Council Elections and the Responsibility to Protect

Today, 9 June 2022, the UN General Assembly elected Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique and Switzerland to the UN Security Council for the period of 2023-2024. With their election, 8 of the 15 members of the Council in 2023 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. Malta and Switzerland co-sponsored and voted for UN General Assembly Resolution 75/277 on R2P. Japan and Ecuador also voted in favor of the resolution while Mozambique did not participate in the vote, but supported the resolution via a joint statement by the Group of Friends of R2P.

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. In recent years this has had a debilitating effect on the Council’s capacity to respond to atrocities in Myanmar (Burma), 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 87 resolutions and 14 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 UN 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.
- Reinstate monthly “horizon scanning briefings” within the working methods of the Council.
- Ensure transparency by encouraging open sessions of the Council when discussing crises where populations are at risk of 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.
- 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 nationality, position or affiliation.
- Ratify or accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
- Host thematic meetings during your presidency on topics related to the prevention of mass atrocities.

The Global Centre has compiled basic profiles on each of the newly elected Security Council members providing an overview of their engagement with R2P and other issues related to the prevention of mass atrocities.

Ecuador

Head of State: President Guillermo Lasso Mendoza

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Holguín

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Cristian Espinoza Cañizares

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue/debate:	2009, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Support for UNGA Resolution 75/277:	Voted yes
Background	
Regional Group:	Latin American and Caribbean
UN Security Council Membership:	1950-1951; 1960-1961; 1991-1992
UN Human Rights Council Membership:	2006-2007; 2010-2013; 2016-2018
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	7
Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement:	Yes
Safe Schools Declaration:	Yes
Code of Conduct/Veto Initiatives:	Signatory ACT Code of Conduct and France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration. Co-sponsored General Assembly Resolution A/77/L.52.
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified: 5 Feb 2002
Genocide Convention:	Ratified: 21 Dec 1949
Arms Trade Treaty:	N/A

Security Council Priorities: Strengthening sustainable peace through the prevention of outbreaks, recurrence or continuation of armed conflicts; the protection of civilians as the best way to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Convention in 2024; strengthening efforts to keep children out of armed conflicts and to protect those affected by conflict settings; supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda by calling for the elimination of barriers that prevents a greater participation of women in peace process, peacebuilding and peacekeeping; supporting non-proliferation efforts through existing Council mechanisms; and fighting against illicit arms trafficking.

On R2P: “The State of Ecuador believes that the responsibility to protect is an issue that cannot be taken lightly. Although the concept has a humanitarian basis, it is also true that it must be implemented based on premises that do not undermine the guarantees provided to and the sovereignty of States. We believe that pillars I, II and III should be implemented in strict accord with national policy and in chronological sequence, with priority always accorded to the pillars I and II, on the understanding that pillar III, and any eventual use of force, should come into play only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort. Moreover, we agree with the Secretary-General that the responsibility to protect is a universal principle.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 27 June 2019)

Japan

Head of Government: Prime Minister Kishida Fumio

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Hayashi Yoshimasa

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Ishikane Kimihiro

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue/debate:	2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 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
Support for UNGA Resolution 75/277:	Voted yes
Background	
Regional Group:	Asia-Pacific
UN Security Council Membership:	1958-1959; 1966-1967; 1971-1972; 1975-1976; 1981-1982; 1987-1988; 1992-1993; 1997-1998; 2005-2006; 2009-2010; 2016-2017
UN Human Rights Council Membership:	2006-2008; 2008-2011; 2013-2015; 2017-2019; 2020-2022
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	4
Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement:	Yes
Safe Schools Declaration:	No
Code of Conduct/Veto Initiatives:	Signatory ACT Code of Conduct and France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration. Co-sponsored General Assembly Resolution A/77/L.52.
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Accession: 17 Jul 2007
Genocide Convention:	N/A
Arms Trade Treaty:	Acceptance: 9 May 2014

Security Council Priorities: Promoting peacebuilding and sustaining peace, focusing on local actors, communities, women and youth; supporting efforts for non-proliferation; addressing global challenges guided by the principle of human security; strengthening the nexus between peace and security and sustainable development, humanitarian action and human rights; reinforcing a rules-based international order for a just and prosperous world; promoting fundamental rights such as human rights and fundamental freedoms; and working to achieve Security Council reform and improving working methods.

On R2P: “We strongly believe that the international community’s collective action in linking development assistance with R2P will help advance the implementation of prevention and early action. ... Japan also believes that the Security Council not only has the primary responsibility to deal with actual conflicts, but it should also play a more active role in preventing conflicts.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 25 June 2018)

Malta

Head of State: President George Vella

Head of Government: Prime Minister Robert Abela

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Ian Borg

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mrs. Vanessa Frazier

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue/debate:	2019, 2021 Also part of the statement by the EU: 2009-2021
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Support for UNGA Resolution 75/277:	Co-sponsored, Voted yes
Background	
Regional Group:	Western European and Others Group (WEOG)
UN Security Council Membership:	1983-1984
UN Human Rights Council Membership:	N/A
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	9
Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement:	Yes
Safe Schools Declaration:	Yes
Code of Conduct/Veto Initiatives:	Signatory ACT Code of Conduct and France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration. Co-sponsored General Assembly Resolution A/77/L.52.
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified: 29 Nov 2002
Genocide Convention:	Accession: 6 Jun 2014
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified: 2 Apr 2014

Security Council Priorities: Addressing climate change, bridging the gap between science and global security, and ensuring that the voices of states most impacted by climate change are heard; promoting dialogue, understanding and advancement of human rights; protecting children in armed conflict; actively supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda through highlighting the consequences of conflict on women, promoting inclusive language, underscoring the role of women at all stages of peace processes, and inviting women briefers; and eradicating poverty by providing quality education, building infrastructure and empowering the potential of women and youth in their personal development.

On R2P: “Reiterating Malta’s full support to the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the Secretary-General’s two Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. We look forward to enhancing our cooperation with this Office, including within the parameters of the Security Council should Malta be entrusted with the responsibility to serve as a member of the Security Council in 2023- 2024, given our common priority of addressing emerging atrocity risks and preventing the perpetration of 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)

Mozambique

Head of State: President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi

Head of Government: Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Ms. Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Pedro Comissário Afonso

Summary of R2P Engagement

Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue/debate:	N/A Part of the statement by the Group of Friends of R2P: 2015-2021
R2P Group of Friends member:	Yes
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	Yes
Support for UNGA Resolution 75/277:	Vote N/A, supported via Group of Friends of R2P

Background

Regional Group:	Africa
UN Security Council Membership:	N/A
UN Human Rights Council Membership:	N/A
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	N/A
Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement:	N/A
Safe Schools Declaration:	Yes
Code of Conduct/Veto Initiatives:	Signatory ACT Code of Conduct
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Signed: 28 Dec 2000
Genocide Convention:	Accession: 18 Apr 1983
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified: 14 Dec 2018

Security Council Priorities: Supporting an equitable, resilient, collaborative world for all; protecting women, children, and vulnerable groups; and addressing the nexus of resource scarcity and climate change.

On R2P: Mozambique has never spoken publicly on the Responsibility to Protect in a UN forum.

Switzerland

Head of State: President Ignazio Cassis

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Ignazio Cassis

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mrs. Pascale Christine Baeriswyl

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue/debate:	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 Part of the statement by the Group of Friends of R2P: 2015-2021
R2P Group of Friends member:	Yes
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	Yes
Support for UNGA Resolution 75/277:	Co-sponsored, Voted yes
Background	
Regional Group:	Western European and Others Group (WEOG)
UN Security Council Membership:	N/A
UN Human Rights Council Membership:	2006-2009; 2010-2013; 2016-2018
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	32
Action for Peacekeeping Endorsement:	Yes
Safe Schools Declaration:	Yes
Code of Conduct/Veto Initiatives:	Signatory ACT Code of Conduct and France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration. Co-sponsored General Assembly Resolution A/77/L.52.
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified: 12 Oct 2001
Genocide Convention:	Accession: 7 Sep 2000
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified: 30 Jan 2015

Security Council Priorities: Promoting human rights; committing to climate action; preventing and peacefully resolving conflict; and supporting the full participation of women in peace and security.

On R2P: “In the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic and a resurgence of violence, the impact on conflict and human rights only underscores the importance of Member States’ responsibility to protect. ... Switzerland reiterates its call to make full use of the prevention potential of the Security Council to move from early warning to early action. As coordinator of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group in the Council, Switzerland urges all Member States to commit to our code of conduct. The code calls on Council members, elected and permanent, to refrain from voting against any draft resolution that seeks to prevent or end mass atrocities.” (UN General Assembly Plenary Meeting on R2P and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 17 May 2021)