

# The Responsibility to Protect at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly

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## SUMMARY

The UN General Assembly held the opening of its 69th Session between 24 September and 1 October 2014. The theme of the General Debate, as chosen by the new President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sam Kutesa of the Permanent Mission of Uganda, was “Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda.”

The following document compiles references to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and relevant themes in statements delivered by member states during the opening debate. During their opening statements, ten countries and one observer directly referenced R2P. The vast majority of these statements were strong, positive reflections on the need to uphold and advance R2P. One country, Botswana, also mentioned the Global Network of R2P Focal Points.

With respect to country-specific situations, a large number of states, 93 in total, mentioned the situation in Syria, while 83 raised the situation in Iraq. Many of these interventions focused on the deterioration of the situation in both countries as a result of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). There were also calls for action to address the ongoing crises in the Central African Republic, Nigeria and South Sudan.

Among thematic references, 15 countries expressed the need for restraint on the use of the veto by the UN Security Council’s five permanent members in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Nine countries mentioned the UN Secretary-General’s “Rights Up Front” initiative. Many states also called for the need for greater accountability for mass atrocity crimes, including through the International Criminal Court.

### TOTAL NUMBER OF SPEAKERS: 194

Themes	Speakers	Total
<b>Direct Reference to R2P</b>	States: Barbados; Botswana; Chile; Czech Republic; Lesotho; Luxembourg; Monaco; Montenegro; Poland; Slovenia  Observers: Holy See	<b>11</b>
<b>Syria</b>	States: Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Andorra; Argentina; Armenia; Austria; Bahrain; Barbados; Belgium; Bolivia; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Comoros; Costa Rica; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Denmark; Croatia; Ecuador; Egypt; Estonia; Finland; France; Gabon; Germany; Greece; Guatemala; Guyana; Iceland; Indonesia; Iraq; Ireland; Islamic Republic of Iran; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Jordan; Kuwait; Kyrgyzstan; Latvia; Lebanon; Liechtenstein; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Malta; Marshall Islands; Mauritania; Monaco; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Palau; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania; Russia; Saint Lucia; San Marino; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Switzerland; Syria; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Togo; Turkey; Tuvalu; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; Yemen  Observers and Regional Organizations: European Union; Holy See	<b>95</b>
<b>Iraq</b>	States: Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Andorra; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Barbados; Belgium; Bolivia; Botswana; Bulgaria; Cambodia; Canada; China; Colombia; Comoros; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Denmark; Ecuador; Egypt; Estonia; France; Gabon; Germany; Greece; Guyana; Iceland; Iraq; Ireland; Islamic Republic of Iran; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Jordan; Korea; Kuwait; Latvia; Lebanon; Liechtenstein; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Marshall Islands; Mauritania; Monaco; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Niger; Nigeria; Norway; Oman; Pakistan; Palau; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania; Russia; San Marino; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; Sweden; Switzerland; Syria;	<b>85</b>

	Thailand; Timor-Leste; Togo; Turkey; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; Viet Nam; Yemen  Observers and Regional Organizations: European Union; Holy See	
<b>Central African Republic</b>	States: Angola; Austria; Barbados; Belgium; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Central African Republic; China; Comoros; Congo; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of Congo; Gabon; Georgia; Jamaica; Kenya; Latvia; Liberia; Luxembourg; Madagascar; Mali; Mauritania; Monaco; Mozambique; Namibia; New Zealand; Norway; Pakistan; São Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone; Slovenia; South Sudan; Sudan; Tanzania; Togo; United States; Zimbabwe  Regional Organizations: European Union	<b>42</b>
<b>Sudan</b>	States: Burkina Faso; Italy; Mozambique; Papua New Guinea; Sudan	<b>5</b>
<b>South Sudan</b>	States: Albania; Angola; Barbados; Botswana; Burundi; Cambodia; China; Congo; Costa Rica; Ethiopia; Gabon; Jamaica; Kenya; Liberia; Luxembourg; Mauritania; Monaco; Mozambique; Namibia; New Zealand; Norway; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; São Tomé and Príncipe; Sierra Leone; Slovenia; South Africa; South Sudan; Sudan; Tanzania; Togo; Viet Nam; Zimbabwe	<b>33</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	States: Burkina Faso; Cabo Verde; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of Congo; Lesotho; Liberia; Mali; Mauritania; Monaco; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; São Tomé and Príncipe; Togo; Comoros; United Kingdom; Zambia  Regional Organizations: European Union	<b>20</b>
<b>Prevention of mass atrocities</b>	States: Norway	<b>1</b>
<b>Accountability and the ICC</b>	States: Albania; Bangladesh; Botswana; Central African Republic; Costa Rica; Croatia; Czech Republic; Finland; Iceland; Ireland; Latvia; Lesotho; Liechtenstein; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Slovenia; Switzerland; Uruguay	<b>19</b>
<b>UN Security Council Veto Restraint/Code of Conduct</b>	States: Botswana; Central African Republic; Chile; Costa Rica; Croatia; Finland; Iceland; Ireland; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Mexico; Montenegro; Netherlands; Slovenia; Switzerland  Observers: Holy See	<b>16</b>
<b>Rights Up Front initiative</b>	States: Bulgaria; Costa Rica; Czech Republic; Denmark; Luxembourg; Monaco; Norway; Republic of Korea; Slovenia	<b>9</b>

*The quotes below appeared in speeches delivered by government heads of state and ministers during the opening of the General Assembly and are relevant to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).*

## **DIRECT REFERENCE TO R2P**

### *Barbados*

“Barbados reiterates its commitment to democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We welcome discussions which will take place during this Session on the **Responsibility to Protect**. Our position is motivated by principle and objectivity and we have no desire to see this issue politicized.”

### *Botswana*

“Regrettably, Iraq is also under siege of ISIL and the AI-Nusrah Front, terrorist groups which threaten not only the stability and security of the Middle East, but the maintenance of international peace and security at large. Not only are we failing, as nation states to exercise our duty and **responsibility to protect** populations from impunity, war crimes and crimes against humanity, we, in effect, inadvertently acquiesce in the annihilation of future generations.”

### *Chile*

“Chile favors a serious debate on the French proposal to limit the right of veto in the case of crimes involving the **responsibility to protect**.”

### *Czech Republic*

“The first precondition for human dignity is the possibility to enjoy life without threats to physical integrity and physical suffering. For this reason, the Czech Republic has vigorously supported the **Responsibility to Protect** concept with its strong dimension of prevention and capacity building. Yet when a conflict cannot be prevented for various reasons, the United Nations is ultimately responsible, through its peacekeeping role, for preventing further deterioration of the situation, loss of lives and human suffering.”

### *Holy See*

“And yet, we do not face the challenges of terrorism and violence with cultural openness alone. The important path of international law is also available to us. The situation today requires a more incisive understanding of this law, giving particular attention to the **responsibility to protect**.”

[...]

“While the concept of the **responsibility to protect** is implicit in the constitutional principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of Humanitarian Law, it does not specifically favour a recourse to arms. It asserts, rather, the responsibility of the entire international community, in a spirit of solidarity, to confront heinous crimes such as genocide, ethnic cleansing and religiously motivated persecution.”

[...]

“The **responsibility to protect**, as stated earlier, refers to extreme aggressions against human rights, cases of serious contempt of humanitarian law or grave natural catastrophes. In a similar way there is a need to make legal provision for protecting people against other forms of aggression, which are less evident but just as serious and real.”

### *Lesotho*

“Let us not forget that we unanimously adopted the principle of **Responsibility to Protect** (R2P) about a decade ago in order to protect and safeguard innocent civilians from war crimes, genocide, mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Indeed the Security Council has re-affirmed this principle in several conflicts around the world, and in some instances authorized military intervention. Unfortunately, in the case of the slaughter of thousands of Palestinian civilians, the Council has shied away from invoking the principle of **Responsibility to Protect**.”

### *Luxembourg*

“On the African continent, our credibility and our **responsibility to protect** are at stake. 20 years after the Rwandan genocide, indifference is no longer an option.”

## *Monaco*

“On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the 2005 Summit and especially in memory of sinister genocides, it is incumbent upon us to better promote the **responsibility to protect**. This is the primary responsibility of each State, as we know, but it also belongs to assist in building the capacity and capabilities of states.”

## *Montenegro*

“I would like to reaffirm Montenegro's strong commitment to the **Responsibility to Protect** as a matter of national priority. Montenegro welcomes French initiative on a "Code of conduct" on the use of veto in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing and remains keen in operationalization of this proposal.”

## *Poland*

“We intend to support such a reform of that body that will increase its representative character with parallel reinforcement of its efficiency. This primarily concerns the consequences of the duties of the Security Council in situations covered by the principle of **responsibility for protection**, approved by our community in 2005. The idea is to develop a mechanism that will provide the Council with the capacity to act in such a situation, while at the same time making it impossible to abuse the mandate of the Council for purposes other than execution of this responsibility. I have mentioned this from this podium twice already. This should perhaps be combined with a broader reform of the Council, whose directions were outlined before the historic summit in 2005.”

## *Slovenia*

“Next year, we will not only honor the historic breadth of the Organization's development, security and human rights work, but also commemorate some other important milestones, like 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica. They should serve as a sober reminder of the urgency to implement our **responsibility to protect** civilians in situations like Iraq, Syria, South Sudan and Central African Republic.”

## COUNTRY-SPECIFIC

### **Syria**

#### *Albania*

“It is hard to find the proper words to describe the situation in **Syria**. After more than three years of deadly fighting, the country is hardly a place where one can have a living. Everything in the dictionary of horrible acts has happened there. More than 170 thousand people have died, millions have become refugees, and large parts of the country are in ruins. With fighting going on and mass atrocities being committed every day, hope of putting an end to the war is still a remote dream for those still trapped in. Albania has joined the initiative of some sixty UN Member States to refer the situation in **Syria** to the International Criminal Court. Unfortunately, like many other initiatives on **Syria**, this effort was vetoed in the Security Council. We reiterate and reaffirm, strongly and with conviction that the perpetrators of atrocities in **Syria** must be held accountable and the people of **Syria** deserve relief and justice.”

#### *China*

“The Syrian crisis has continued for nearly four years. It is negotiation, not fighting, that offers solution. China urges all parties in **Syria** to immediately stop fighting and violence, cooperate fully with the humanitarian assistance operations of the United Nations, and promptly put an end to the sufferings of the innocent civilians. We urge all parties in **Syria** to act in the overall interests of the future and destiny of their country and of their people, demonstrate political will, actively support the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and his special envoy, and follow a middle way that draws on workable practices of other countries and regions, suits **Syria's** national conditions and accommodates the interests of various parties, so as to give peace an opportunity.”

#### *Finland*

“As the Secretary-General has reminded us, the international community must not abandon the people of **Syria**. We cannot forget those who have died or those driven from their homes – half of the population in **Syria**. Three million Syrians have been received as

refugees in the neighboring countries. The Syrian conflict can only be solved by political means. Finland continues to give its full support to the UN's Special Envoy for **Syria**. Women in **Syria**, as in other conflict-driven countries, must be included in the peace process. We welcome women's active efforts to strengthen their voices in **Syria** and everywhere.

I strongly reiterate the appeal to the Security Council to refer the **Syrian situation** to the International Criminal Court. The ICC must be used when the national justice system is not able to deliver.”

### *Germany*

“Next month Germany is hosting a conference in Berlin to mobilize urgently needed humanitarian assistance for the millions of Syrian refugees. My country will play its part, and I sincerely hope that many others will follow suit. Support is needed above all by **Syria**'s neighbours, which are doing a tremendous job but are also under tremendous strain as a result of the huge influx of displaced persons.”

### *Jordan*

“In **Syria**, there must be a political solution based on reforms that give all communities a role in rebuilding their country. International influence is vital, to get the moderate opposition and the regime back to the negotiating table immediately. The heavy flow of Syrian refugees continues. My country is sheltering nearly 1.4 million Syrians. We are now the world's third largest host of refugees. This is placing an overwhelming burden on Jordan's people, infrastructure and already limited resources.”

### *Latvia*

“We welcome the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons and related materials. While easing of continuous human suffering of Syrians is the immediate goal, the international community must continue political efforts to find a solution to this horrific conflict. Those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in **Syria** must be held accountable by the International Criminal Court.”

### *Liechtenstein*

“The civilian population of **Syria** has gone through enormous suffering for over three years now. Atrocities have been committed against men, women and children, by the regime and increasingly by other actors. Humanitarian access has been blocked systematically as a method of warfare. And civilians in both **Syria** and Iraq are left at the mercy of the sickening brutality of ISIS. There has rarely been a time when civilians were at stronger risk of being victimized by atrocity crimes. We are not living up to our promise made some ten years ago to collectively ensure protection against these crimes.”

### *Luxembourg*

“This conflict has been raging on for three and a half years now. It shocks the conscience of humanity. More than 191,000 dead; 10.8 million Syrians, over half of them children, in need of urgent humanitarian assistance; more than 4.5 million Syrians trapped by the fighting, surviving in areas that are difficult to reach for humanitarian actors; more than 3 million Syrians forced to leave their country, over one million of them refugees in Lebanon. Those figures rarely make the headlines nowadays. However, behind those figures, how much suffering, how many shattered lives! This cannot continue. We must put an end to indiscriminate attacks against civilian populations, schools and hospitals, to the bombardment with barrel bombs, to the denial of humanitarian assistance, to the use of famine as a weapon of war. At the initiative of Australia, Jordan and Luxembourg, the Security Council has adopted unanimously two resolutions on humanitarian aid access to **Syria**. It is my strong hope that those resolutions will have a real impact, a decisive impact on the ground. Yet humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political action. A lasting settlement of the Syrian conflict will only be reached through a political solution, a political transition that responds to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, in line with the Geneva communique of June 2012.”

### *New Zealand*

“In **Syria** and Iraq we see the truly frightening consequences when leadership, both internally and in the Security Council, has failed. **Syria** has been a weeping sore for over 3 years. Thousands of Syrians have died; millions have become refugees and all Syrian people have suffered terribly from the multiple conflicts engulfing the

country. And now the tragedy of **Syria** has spilled over into Iraq which was already wrestling with its own deep seated problems.”

*Eighty-six other countries also referenced the situation in Syria at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.*

## **Iraq**

### *Armenia*

“The catastrophic situation in Syria and north of **Iraq** continuously deteriorates, and today hundreds of thousands of people are directly imperiled. Among them are tens of thousands Armenians of Aleppo. It is an instance of a peril to consider in the context of our joint commitments to preventing the crimes against humanity. Armenia has voiced on numerous occasions the necessity to defend the Armenian population of Syria and Yezidi population of Iraqi North West, and we are encouraged by the unified stance of the international community in this regard.”

### *Denmark*

“Every day, we witness expressions of the darker side of human nature: Thousands of innocent civilians besieged on a mountain in northern **Iraq** by heavily armed extremists...Denmark will stand up for our common values as enshrined in the UN charter. And Denmark will support the victims of ISIL’s atrocities. We take part in the humanitarian relief efforts in Northern **Iraq**. And we will continue our active contribution to the international efforts to support **Iraq** in the fight against ISIL.”

### *Iraq*

“We saw how in the past few months this heinous terrorist organization [ISIS] committed crimes against humanity. It killed. It displaced. It committed genocide, ethnic cleansing and inflicted all of the suffering on all parts of the Iraqi people by committing horrific crimes. It kidnapped women and sold them as slave captives. It destroyed religious shrines and houses of worship, as well as cultural and historic monuments. It oppressed components of the Iraqi people in the basis of their ethnic identity, like Turkmen, Kurds, and targeted and religious and confessional minorities like the Yezidis. We

would like to thank the free people of the world who expressed their dismay and rejected these crimes, as well as standing in solidarity with the victims and provided assistance.”

[...]

“We would also like to pay tribute to the resolution of the Human Rights Council which condemned ISIS and established a fact-finding committee to investigate crimes against humanity by the organization committed against all Iraqis.”

### *Qatar*

“In this context, the international community needs to stand firmly beside brotherly **Iraq** to confront terrorism and end its ordeal. Preserving its sovereignty, territorial integrity and diversity of sects can only be achieved by defusing sectarian conflict and achieving Iraqi reconciliation that lays the foundations for a society free of sectarian and ethnic conflicts, with the participation of all the political forces without exclusion of any party.”

### *Switzerland*

“We have also committed ourselves to an increase in our humanitarian aid in the region. Switzerland calls on the Iraqi government to ensure accountability for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It joins the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling on **Iraq** to consider accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.”

### *United States*

“First, the terrorist group known as ISIL must be degraded and ultimately destroyed. This group has terrorized all who they come across in **Iraq** and Syria. Mothers, sisters, daughters have been subjected to rape as a weapon of war. Innocent children have been gunned down. Bodies have been dumped in mass graves. Religious minorities have been starved to death. In the most horrific crimes imaginable, innocent human beings have been beheaded, with videos of the atrocity distributed to shock the conscience of the world. No God condones this terror. No grievance justifies these actions. There can be no reasoning -- no negotiation -- with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of

America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death.”

*Seventy-nine other countries also referenced the situation in Iraq at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.*

## **Central African Republic**

### *Cameroon*

“To the east, the **Central African Republic** has suffered a grave deterioration of its security since March 2013. Massacres and the displacement of people have cast a question mark over any hope for development, without mentioning the tens of thousands of refugees who have poured into Cameroon.”

### *Central African Republic*

“Since December 2012, Central African Republic has been shaken by one of the most serious crisis of its history. The Central African people found itself in a tragic situation.

After the resignation of my predecessor on January 10, 2014 I heeded the crisis and stress of the Central African population. My election gave rise to great hope, great hope within my countries population, which welcomed the election of the first female president of the Central African Republic as the sign of a radical break with the past and a new future. At that point I felt the weight of the responsibility coming upon me, and I took full measure of the situation in which I inherited. It is with determination I immediately set out to work to address the situation with support of the international community. In keeping with the roadmap for the transition whose main axes are; restoring security and peacebuilding, settling the very serious humanitarian crisis, reestablishing the authority of the state throughout a whole territory, re-launching economic activities and of course without forgetting the convening of free transparency and democratic election.”

[...]

“At a security level, I would like to again welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2149 on April 10, 2014. A resolution which authorized the deployment of multidimensional, integrated United

Nations mission for the destabilization in the Central African Republic. MINUSCA, which constituted a strong response by the international community to the Central African crisis, and which has led since September 15 to the transferable authority from MISCA to MINUSCA.”

[...]

“Turning now to political dialogue and national reconciliation. To enable us to better live with one another among Central Africans. I have always focused on disarming hearts and minds. This to achieve general national reconciliation. The first step was made in Brazzaville on July 23, 2014 and it is now time to continue the process in the Central African Republic itself.”

### *Congo*

“Finally, regarding the **Central African Republic**, encouraging developments that have been registered in recent weeks, with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities signed in Brazzaville on 23 July and the transfer of authority, on 15 Sept 2014, between the African mission MISCA and UN forces of MINUSCA, must be consolidated to allow the Central African people out of this crisis, which has lasted too long.”

### *Georgia*

“We are also proud to contribute to the European Union's efforts under the Common Security and Defense Policy to build peace and security worldwide. In this context, as the second largest participant, a Georgian battalion and one light infantry company have already started a mission under the EU-led operation in the **Central African Republic.**”

### *Pakistan*

“Pakistan's strong commitment to peacekeeping is rooted in our foreign policy and in our belief that every nation should contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. Inspired by this ideal, Pakistan has maintained high levels of participation in the UN peacekeeping, becoming the largest troop contributing country. We are contributing more than 1,100 troops to the **Central African Republic**, despite the dire situation there.”



## *São Tomé and Príncipe*

“With regard to **Central African Republic** we welcome the UN’s decision to send a multidimensional peacekeeping force (MINUSCA) to end the suffering of their people and to clear the way for national reconciliation. This process began with the recent Brazzaville Forum and should be completed with Bangui Forum and the holding of elections, which may open windows of opportunity for the resolution of this disturbing crisis and for this country in our sub-region to return to institutional normalcy.”

*Thirty-six other countries also referenced the situation in the Central African Republic at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.*

## **South Sudan**

### *Albania*

“We deplore the events in **South Sudan** where dramatic events have unfolded and continue to shake human conscience. Irrational fighting along ethnic lines has caused too much suffering of the innocent population. Only a political negotiated solution, where rights of all communities concerned are taken into account, protected and respected, can help rebuild trust and understanding, turning the page to a better future for the youngest country in the world.”

### *China*

“The two sides of the conflict in **South Sudan** should immediately effect a ceasefire, actively conduct political dialogue in the overall interests of the people in **South Sudan**, and, through the mediation of IGAD, work with all ethnic groups and parties in the country to speedily reach a fair and balanced solution and achieve national reconciliation and ethnic unity. **South Sudan** is the youngest member of the United Nations. The South Sudanese people deserve to live a life of hope and vitality instead of being haunted by conflicts and wars.”

### *Costa Rica*

“None of these conflicts erupted without prior warning. All showed clear signs of unrest. In some cases the threat was identified but no action was taken due to a lack of

consensus, as in Syria. In others, the danger was not acknowledged in time, as in **South Sudan**. In all of them, the victims are the ones who are most vulnerable and most in need of our help, those who cannot make their voice heard.”

### *Ethiopia*

“In our part of the world, progress made over the past decade is being undermined by new cycles of violence and conflicts. The crisis in **South Sudan** is an example. We in the IGAD region are doing everything we can to resolve the South Sudanese crisis through peaceful means with the support of the United Nations, the African Union and international partners. But progress, let alone a breakthrough, has not been easy to come by. This situation highlights an often encountered challenge. Progress in peacemaking can hardly be contemplated when there is lack of sufficient commitment to a peaceful resolution of a crisis by the parties to the conflict, But IGAD is determined to exert every possible effort to find a lasting solution to the crisis through an all-inclusive political dialogue.”

### *South Sudan*

“I have no doubt that the world has followed with shock and disbelief the violent conflict that erupted in **South Sudan** on Sunday 15 December 2013, which was plotted by my former Vice President who wanted to seize power by force. He was too impatient in his thirst for power and did not want to wait for the general elections, which were scheduled to take place in 2015, and to seek the mandate from the people of South Sudan as required by The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of **South Sudan**. The failed coup and the rebellion that followed resulted in the loss of too many innocent lives, destruction of properties, and damage of community relationships.”

[...]

“My Government is unwaveringly committed to resolve the conflict peacefully and my negotiating team has been in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, since January 2014 talking peace with the rebels to close this dark chapter in the history of our young country; open a new page and pave the way for us to, once again, embark on the difficult mission of socio-economic development, which our people urgently need. With the dedicated efforts of the mediators, we were able to sign the Cessation of

Hostilities Agreement on 23 January 2014, and re-affirm our commitment to that Agreement on 9 May 2014. My Government has demonstrated its firm commitment to peace, has unreservedly honoured these Agreements, and is continuing to negotiate in good faith to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. However, the rebels have violated the Agreements too many times, and have refused to sign the Protocol Agreement, which is a crucially important document signed by the Heads of State and Government of IGAD, including myself as a party to the conflict. This important document forms the basis for resolving the crisis peacefully and inclusively. Therefore, I urge the international community to exert efforts on the rebels to sign the Protocol Agreement.”

### *Sudan*

“Sudan has continued to play an effective and positive role on the regional level in the African continent with the view to creating peace and stability in the neighboring states. When conflict broke out in the state of **South Sudan**, Sudan appealed to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of the south Sudan state, Sudan was the first state to provide and still providing humanitarian aid to those affected in **South Sudan**.”

*Twenty-seven other countries also referenced the situation in South Sudan at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.*

## **Nigeria**

### *Central African Republic*

“The Central African Republic calls for greater mobilization of the international community against terrorism and in particular against the Boko Haram, which operates in **Nigeria** and Cameroon near the borders of my country.”

### *Mauritania*

“In **Nigeria**, Boko Haram continues to carry out criminal assassinations of innocent people, kidnapping of women, and destruction of entire villages.”

### *Namibia*

“Namibia condemns the abduction of more than 200 girls and other innocent people by Boko Haram in the Federal Republic of **Nigeria**. We call for their immediate and unconditional release.”

### *Nigeria*

“Through a wave of terror, assassinations, bombings, and now abductions and kidnappings predominantly in the North East of the country, Boko Haram is attempting to truncate development, by murder and mayhem, in these areas. In April, our innocent daughters were abducted from a Secondary School, in Chibok- North East Nigeria. This callous and criminal act has attracted empathy and support for **Nigeria** across the globe. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the countries and organizations that expressed solidarity with us, and have continued to support our determined efforts to free our daughters. Although it has been over three months since they were abducted, we have never relented in our efforts to set them safely free. Together with our partners, we are working assiduously to free our daughters and reunite them with their families.”

*Sixteen other countries and the European Union also referenced the situation in Nigeria at the Opening of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.*

## **THEMATIC REFERENCES**

### **Global Network of R2P Focal Points**

#### *Botswana*

“In June this year, Botswana, together with the Netherlands, co-hosted the Fourth Meeting of the **Global Network of R2P Focal Points**, in an effort to further consolidate this fundamental principle which promotes our individual and collective sense of responsibility towards our citizens.”

## Prevention of Mass Atrocity Crimes

### *Norway*

“International peace, national security, social development and individual prosperity can best be fostered under a system of good democratic governance and human rights. Efforts to promote respect for human rights can help **prevent armed conflict and mass atrocities.**”

## Accountability and the ICC

### *Albania*

“With fighting going on and mass atrocities being committed every day, hope of putting an end to the war is still a remote dream for those still trapped in. Albania has joined the initiative of some sixty UN Member States to refer the situation in Syria to the **International Criminal Court**. Unfortunately, like many other initiatives on Syria, this effort was vetoed in the Security Council. We reiterate and reaffirm, strongly and with conviction that the perpetrators of atrocities in Syria must be held accountable and the people of Syria deserve relief and justice.”

### *Bangladesh*

“To uphold peace and 'rule of law' and end a 'culture of impunity', my government remains pledge-bound to bring to justice the culprits of war crimes, crimes against humanity, during our 1971 Liberation War. The highly transparent, impartial and independent International Crimes Tribunals, Bangladesh, have already completed trials of a few key criminals who perpetrated heinous crimes against humanity. We look towards international community's full appreciation of the aspirations of our people for this long-awaited justice.”

### *Botswana*

“Just this past May, the Council failed to adopt a resolution seeking to refer the situation in Syria to the **International Criminal Court**. Needless to say, this was nothing short of a travesty of international criminal justice.”

[...]

“Botswana's commitment to an effective international criminal justice system remains steadfast. To this end, we continue to support the independence and credibility of the **ICC**, as the only existing international mechanism available for the investigation and prosecution of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.”

### *Central African Republic*

“Linked to situations of war, there is the issue of justice and human rights. I am strongly engaged in the fight against impunity. The Central African Republic as a party to the Rome Statute will continue to support the actions of the **International Criminal Court** in its fight against impunity for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and especially my country.”

### *Costa Rica*

“Costa Rica firmly believes and applies all aspects of international law and therefore we draw particular attention to the role of the International Court of Justice and the **International Criminal Court**. Peace cannot take root where there is impunity. When war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity have been committed, those responsible must be investigated and put on trial, ultimately by the **International Criminal Court** where national justice proves insufficient. Our country is opposed to the weakening of the Statute of Rome and any proposal for reform that could lead to impunity becoming tolerated. Once again we remind the Security Council of its authority and responsibility with regard to cases that occur in States not party to the convention.”

### *Croatia*

“...a number of international mechanisms ensure stable democracies and sustainable development by eliminating double standards, insecurity and impunity. Thus, we add our voice in calling for universal adherence to the Rome Statute and the universal jurisdiction of the **International Criminal Court.**”

## *Czech Republic*

“National states and the international community share their responsibility for the protection of people from atrocities. However, if they fail, it is necessary to establish accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The Czech Republic continues to firmly support international criminal justice and the **International Criminal Court**. Our primary task is to combat impunity and to enforce protection of civilians and vulnerable groups in armed conflicts.”

## *Finland*

“I strongly reiterate the appeal to the Security Council to refer the Syrian situation to the **International Criminal Court**. The ICC must be used when the national justice system is not able to deliver.”

## *Iceland*

“Next year we will celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations. As we approach this milestone it is good to reflect on the successes of our organization: the extensive codification of international law, advances in combating poverty and disease and fighting human rights abuses. We have established monitoring mechanisms like the human rights treaty bodies, accountability tools such as the **International Criminal Court** and agreed on historic policy targets that have transformed international cooperation, such as the Millennium Development Goals.”

## *Ireland*

“The flagrant violation of international law by all sides in the Syrian conflict must be confronted and referred to the **International Criminal Court**.”

## *Latvia*

“While easing of continuous human suffering of Syrians is the immediate goal, the international community must continue political efforts to find a solution to this horrific conflict. Those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria must be held accountable by the **International Criminal Court**.”

## *Liechtenstein*

“Justice and the rule of law are areas where we have made important progress. International courts and other judicial mechanisms are gaining greater acceptance. Calls for accountability are becoming louder. And we can look at an impressive body of international jurisprudence. This is particularly true for the **International Criminal Court** (ICC). Victims of the gravest crimes around the world are placing their hopes for justice into the Rome Statute system. This is a great responsibility for the Court, an institution which frequently works in a politically charged context. Those who support the Court must make their support felt. It is for this reason that I have initiated an informal network of ministers who support the ICC - who do so personally, as politicians. Our network has grown to 26 members. We stand ready to defend the Court and the integrity of the Rome Statute. We do so because we know that political attacks against the ICC are easy to launch, but difficult to respond to. The fact that the Court is an entirely independent institution that follows the law, not politics, does not grab headlines. And the fact that the ICC has jurisdiction in some places, but not in others, is easily misrepresented as selectivity. Our goal therefore remains for the Rome Statute to become a universal treaty. Victims of crimes in Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and North Korea - to cite just a few examples - deserve their day in court as much as victims in other parts of the world.”

## *Luxembourg*

“From Syria to the Central African Republic, from Iraq to South Sudan, the list of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on a daily basis becomes longer each day. The perpetrators of those crimes, of grave violations and abuses of human rights, of violations of international law and international humanitarian law must be held accountable before justice for their acts. The fight against impunity must cease to be an abstract objective and become a tangible reality. The **International Criminal Court** has an important role to play in this context.”

## *Netherlands*

“As a host country to many international legal institutions, including the International Court of Justice and the **International Criminal Court**, the Netherlands feels a special responsibility with respect to international law. When innocent people fall victim to impunity, human

rights violations and the violence of war, the international community cannot and should not just stand by and watch. Perpetrators must be brought to justice, however complex and time consuming the process may be.”

### *Senegal*

“...a body like the **International Criminal Court**, has, as part of its mandate, a non-negotiable role to play in the restoration of peace.”

### *Sierra Leone*

“We are seized of unfolding developments at the **ICC** and, we are supportive of their efforts to ensure judicial accountability in ways that are respectful of Africa’s concerns for the ability of its statesmen and women to steer the countries of the continent towards greater security, reconciliation, peace and development.”

### *Slovenia*

“Slovenia will continue to support these efforts and the work of the **International Criminal Court** as an indispensable instrument for **bringing those responsible for the most heinous crimes to justice.**”

### *Switzerland*

“It is with this in mind that Switzerland has taken the step, along with some sixty other States, of requesting that the Security Council refer the situation in Syria to the **International Criminal Court**. We have also committed ourselves to an increase in our humanitarian aid in the region. Switzerland calls on the Iraqi government to ensure **accountability for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law**. It joins the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling on Iraq to consider accession to the Rome Statute of the **International Criminal Court**.”

### *Uruguay*

“Since 2002 Uruguay is part of the Rome Statute, adapting a law that could be considered as a model of cooperation with the **International Criminal Court** against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

## **UN Security Council Veto Restraint/ Code of Conduct**

### *Botswana*

“It is our sincere hope that going forward, reason and basic human compassion will prevail in Council decisions intended to eliminate threats to international peace and security, as well as foster a global culture of judicial accountability, inclusive governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights. In this regard, Botswana welcomes the French initiative regarding **voluntary restraint on the use of the veto** by the Permanent Members of the Security Council in situations of mass atrocities.”

### *Central African Republic*

“...the Central African Republic supports the initiative taken by France and Mexico for the alleviation of the **misuse of the veto** in cases of massacres against civilians, war crimes and genocide.”

### *Chile*

“Chile favors a serious debate on the French proposal to **limit the right of veto** in the case of crimes involving the responsibility to protect.”

### *Costa Rica*

“My country has objected to the use of the veto for obstructing measures seeking to avoid or resolve conflicts. As Costa Ricans we are amazed at the way some permanent members of the Security Council have cited support for the principle of sovereignty in blocking the Council’s intervention at a moment when it should have been acting to prevent rivers from turning red with blood. The blood of innocent victims. We reiterate our call to the permanent members to **refrain from using the veto**, especially in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and mass human rights violations. We therefore welcome the French proposal for a **Code of Conduct** around the use of the veto.”

### *Croatia*

“With the World Summit in 2005 we have started reforming the UN system. Despite all the progress made,

we haven't managed to achieve palpable results in the reform of the Security Council.”

[...]

“In order to maintain the Council's authority, relevance and indispensability in maintaining global peace and security, its reform needs to be comprehensive and without further delays.”

[...]

“Croatia welcomes and supports the initiative for establishing **a code of conduct regarding the suspension of the veto** use in cases relating to a mass crime.”

### *Finland*

“Unfortunately, the UN Security Council has not been able to uphold its responsibilities neither in Ukraine nor in Syria. We need to reform the Security Council. Finland supports the efforts to **restrict the use of veto**.”

### *Holy See*

“It is disappointing, that up to now, the international community has been characterized by contradictory voices and even by silence with regard to the conflicts in Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. It is paramount that there be a unity of action for the common good, **avoiding the crossfire of vetoes**. As His Holiness wrote to the Secretary General on 9 August last, "the most basic understanding of human dignity compels the international community, particularly through the norms and mechanisms of international law, to do all that it can to stop and to prevent further systematic violence against ethnic and religious minorities.”

### *Iceland*

“Recent events have shown that we must reaffirm our commitment to the UN Charter and other legal instruments to safeguard the foundations of a just and peaceful world. This holds particularly true for the UN Security Council. In its role of maintaining international peace and security its compass should be the UN Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. It should apply the law equally to all parties. The Council needs to become more solution oriented and directly engaged. Its working methods must be improved, especially the

application of the veto. Iceland supports the recent French and Mexican led proposal for **refraining from the veto in cases of mass atrocities**.”

### *Ireland*

“While ultimately, Ireland would like to see the Security Council's veto power abolished, we strongly welcome the initiative of France, supported by Mexico, to better **regulate the use of this power** by Permanent Members of the Security Council.”

### *Latvia*

“The limited ability of the UN Security Council to address the urgent situations in Syria and Ukraine in a timely manner underlines the need to move forward with the reform of the Council. Latvia supports expansion of the Security Council in both categories of membership. At the same time, the French initiative, aimed at **restricting the use of the veto**, merits our joint attention.”

### *Liechtenstein*

“We do of course accept the veto as a reality of the Charter - as we did when we joined this organization. But we do not accept that the veto should be used in a manner that contradicts the very purposes of the United Nations. We have witnessed too many such instances in recent times. Change is urgently needed. We therefore look for a commitment from States serving on the Council **not to vote against action necessary to prevent or end atrocity crimes**. And indeed, we are looking in particular at the Permanent Members to give a clear commitment to this end.”

### *Mexico*

“The world needs a UN where the permanent members of the Security Council **refrain themselves from using its veto power** in cases of grave violations of International Humanitarian law.”

### *Montenegro*

“I would like to reaffirm Montenegro's strong commitment to the Responsibility to Protect as a matter of national priority. Montenegro welcomes French initiative on a **Code of conduct on the use of veto** in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against

humanity and ethnic cleansing and remains keen in operationalization of this proposal.”

### *Netherlands*

“The Security Council must be able to act in a crisis. When mass atrocities are being committed somewhere in the world, **veto power should be exercised with greater restraint**. We salute the French initiative in this regard.”

### *Slovenia*

“We support the French initiative on the **voluntary restraint of the use of veto** in situations of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

### *Switzerland*

“It is our view that the permanent members ought not to use their veto to block action designed to prevent or put an end to genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. Switzerland welcomes the French initiative for a voluntary agreement by the five permanent members of the Security Council to **restrain their veto power** in cases of mass atrocities.”

## **Rights Up Front Initiative**

### *Bulgaria*

“We support the Secretary-General's **Rights Up Front** initiative on safeguarding human rights around the world. Bulgaria commends Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his insightful vision and global leadership with regard to this initiative and his valuable contribution to advancing the human rights agenda throughout the United Nations.”

### *Costa Rica*

“In this spirit, Costa Rica also supports the Secretary General's "**Rights Up Front**" initiative to place human rights at the centre of the United Nation's preventive activities.”

### *Czech Republic*

“In order to reinforce prevention of various types of conflicts, we fully support the “**Rights Up Front**” initiative launched by the Secretary General. We understand it as an appeal to the United Nations and its bodies and Member States to ensure respect for human rights, good governance, fair and free elections and genuine participation in decision making without discrimination.”

### *Denmark*

“Respect for international law and human rights should always be at the very core of peace and development - as should the Rule of Law and good governance. That is why Denmark strongly supports bold and significant new steps in the UN such as the Secretary General's recent **Rights Up Front** initiative.”

### *Luxembourg*

“We know that most conflicts are preceded by a significant deterioration of the human rights situation. It is on that basis that the Secretary-General has launched the "**Rights Up Front**" initiative.”

[...]

“It is a forceful reminder of our collective obligation to protect and promote human rights. It rightly places the protection of human rights at the centre of the action undertaken by the United Nations system to prevent conflicts.”

### *Monaco*

“We welcome in this respect, the “**Rights Up Front**” initiative of the Secretary-General launched last November, whose primary objective is to prevent violations of human rights from turning into mass crimes and to allow the organization to move faster by placing people at the heart of its strategy and its operational activities.”

### *Norway*

“Norway endorses the Secretary-General's Human ‘**Rights Up Front**’ initiative, which places the protection of human rights at the heart of UN strategies and operational activities. The UN needs a strong and

assertive human rights pillar. Only if we fund the human rights pillar properly, we can achieve the results that we need and want from our world organization.”

### *Republic of Korea*

“The Republic of Korea strongly supports UN policies to protect human rights, such as, in particular, the **Rights Up Front** initiative and Open Gate Policy that the Secretary-General is leading.”

### *Slovenia*

“The Secretary General's "**Rights Up Front**" initiative timely draws the attention to the necessity to detect and address human rights violations at an early stage, thus preventing escalation into all out conflicts and mass atrocities.”