



UN General Assembly Debate on the Responsibility to Protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, 26 June 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia
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President

Thank you for convening this meeting. Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, and we would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

This debate provides us with an opportune moment to recall our collective commitment made at the 2005 World Summit, where we pledged to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's report, and its focus on the interrelationship between sustainable development and the Responsibility to Protect.

Development deficits such as poverty, food insecurity, institutionalised discrimination, lack of access to educational opportunities, economic and gender inequalities, and social exclusion, have the potential to exacerbate existing grievances, and also give rise to mass atrocity risks.



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides us with a framework for global cooperation to achieve a better and more sustainable future. Through implementing our commitments in this regard, we can build the conditions for sustainable peace, equitable growth, and accountable governance and stability. This will cement the prospects for realising the fundamental objectives of the Responsibility to Protect and protecting civilians from atrocity crimes.

As the report painfully illustrates, much remains to be done. We must focus on strengthening prevention, understanding key risk factors, and addressing all forms of violence. In this vein, we welcome the recommendations in the report, which focus on early detection, early warning, prevention and response to atrocities, and its call for development programmes which are sensitive to the risks and drivers of atrocities.

Malta emphasises that atrocity prevention strategies can only be effective when affected populations are involved in their development, implementation and monitoring, and when the voices of victims and survivors, women and youth are listened to.

President



Current conflicts, in Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere, lend even more urgency to narrow the gap between Member States' obligations under international law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

It is our collective responsibility, including in the UN Security Council to take timely and clear action to prevent atrocity crimes. In this regard, Malta supports the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint in the case of mass atrocities, the ACT Code of Conduct, and the Veto Initiative.

In contexts where the international community fails in its commitment to preventing the commission of atrocity crimes, it is vital to prioritize accountability and promote justice. The International Criminal Court, as well as other international judicial bodies, play a crucial role in this regard.

Let me also reiterate Malta's full support to the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the Secretary-General's two Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect. Their efforts to fulfil their complex mandates and to provide Member States and the United Nations organs with concrete and timely advice on the implementation of the three pillars of the responsibility to protect are commendable.



We are also thankful for the contribution of other actors to the prevention of atrocity crimes, including civil society, human right defenders and humanitarian workers, who monitor risks and provide us with early warnings.

In conclusion, I emphasize that any initiative that seeks to advance the realization of our pledge made in 2005 and which seeks to ensure that the international community is not a bystander to atrocity crimes and large-scale human rights abuses is commendable.

I thank you.