



PERMANENT MISSION
OF MALTA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity - Report of the Secretary-General A/80/716 - Debate on the item

Statement delivered by H.E. Natasha Meli, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

6 July 2026, 10:00-13:00 General Assembly

Thank you President,

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect for her continued efforts to advance the implementation of this important framework.

The report comes at a time of profound global concern. As armed conflicts proliferate, humanitarian needs continue to rise, and grave violations of international law persist in multiple contexts, the imperative to ensure the principled, timely and decisive implementation of the Responsibility to Protect principle, across all its dimensions, is essential.

Behind the alarming figures outlined in the report are individuals and communities facing serious threats to their fundamental rights, security and dignity. Where warning signs of atrocity crimes emerge, failure to act promptly undermines both our collective commitment to prevention and our responsibility to protect those most at risk.



International law remains our strongest safeguard. The further development, application and implementation of international legal frameworks is essential to ensuring effective and sustained protection for all. In this regard, Malta underscores the importance of continued constructive engagement in the ongoing negotiations towards a Convention on Crimes Against Humanity, which offers an important opportunity to strengthen prevention, cooperation and accountability.

Accountability is not merely a response to atrocity crimes, it is a prerequisite for their prevention. Impunity creates the conditions in which violations recur and escalate. International law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law impose obligations on all States. These obligations are not discretionary, nor can they be applied selectively. All Member States bear a responsibility to fully implement their obligations and to proactively ensure respect for these legal frameworks.

Malta further reiterates the indispensable role of accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, international criminal tribunals, and domestic judicial systems. Accountability for atrocities must be pursued consistently and credibly. We also recall the role entrusted to the Security Council under the Charter in addressing situations involving atrocity crimes.

Victim-centred justice and the accountability of perpetrators remain essential both to restoring confidence in the rule of law and to deterring future violations.



Genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are among the gravest crimes of concern to the international community. Preventing such crimes requires more than responding to crises after they emerge; it demands sustained efforts to identify and address risks before they escalate. A prevention-centred approach, sustained by strengthened capacity building and early warning is indispensable to protecting populations and ensuring that warning signs are met with action rather than hindsight.

President,

In 1945 Member States undertook a collective commitment under the Charter to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Today, the international community is confronted with a choice: whether to reaffirm the commitments we have collectively undertaken, or to allow those commitments to be undermined by inaction and impunity.

Malta remains firmly committed to working with all Member States, the United Nations system and civil society to strengthen prevention, advance accountability and ensure meaningful protection for all those vulnerable to atrocity crimes.

I thank you.