

Group of Friends on R2P Geneva
Statement on Item 2 - Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the
Secretary-General

7 March 2019

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of members of the Group of Friends on the Responsibility to Protect.

We would like to express our gratitude to the High Commissioner, who, since taking office six months ago, has highlighted gross human rights violations and abuses around the world and called upon the international community to protect those who are the most vulnerable.

Fourteen years ago, the principle of the Responsibility to Protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing was unanimously adopted by all UN member states. Too often, the ongoing disrespect for human rights can serve as an early warning sign of situations that may escalate into mass atrocity crimes. This is why the Group of Friends on R2P strongly believes that Geneva-based human rights mechanisms play a fundamental role in upholding our individual and shared commitment to mass atrocity prevention.

Mr. President,

The High Commissioner and her office play an important role in promoting and strengthening early warning and early action to respond to human rights violations and prevent mass atrocity crimes. The High Commissioner's reports and regular updates on country specific situations are particularly well suited to mobilize action when witnessing an emerging risk of mass atrocity crimes. Therefore, we strongly encourage the High Commissioner and her office, in accordance with her mandate, to continue in assisting the international community to uphold R2P.

In addition to OHCHR, special procedures mandate holders – both thematic and country-specific – represent a key mechanism to assist states in upholding and deepening their commitment to R2P in the early and imminent stages of atrocity prevention, including through strengthening their compliance with obligations under international human rights law.

The Universal Periodic Review provides a unique opportunity for mainstreaming and institutionalizing structural prevention, both through strengthening national capacities for atrocity risk analysis as well as through mobilizing international support through technical assistance and capacity building.

We further believe that in order to achieve a systematic integration of human rights into wider discussions and policies of prevention, greater coordination between Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and other UN agencies and organs as well as regional organizations and mechanisms is fundamental for developing a comprehensive prevention framework.

Mr President,

In conclusion, the Group of Friends believes that the international community can and should lay the ground for the prevention of mass atrocity crimes through strengthening and deepening its engagement with Geneva-based human rights mechanisms.

Thank you.