



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**ADDRESS
BY
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**CHARGE D'AFFAIRES a.i.
OF TURKEY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

“RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT”

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Mr. President,

A decade ago, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan has made a call to the international community to find a new common denominator on how to respond to mass atrocities and genocides in order to prevent such crimes against humanity. And at the World Summit Outcome in 2005, we all reached a common denominator to this end. We all recognized the responsibility of each individual State to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We also collectively recognized the responsibility of the international community, through the UN, to help to protect populations from such crimes.

Adoption of the concept of the "responsibility to protect" (RTP) was one of the major achievements of the UN World Summit in 2005. Some important steps have been taken within the United Nations relating to RTP since the World Summit, such as adoption of UNSC Resolution 1674 (2006) as well as appointment of the UN Special Adviser. However, the conceptual work pertaining to RTP is yet to be completed for several reasons.

The Secretary-General's report (A/63/677) on RTP is another important step. It is a product of a meticulous study, opening new horizons for the development as well as operationalisation and implementation of this concept. It surely is a welcome step in this direction. It certainly needs further elaboration. Therefore, our discussion today here would hopefully contribute to the conceptual development of this important concept.

Mr. President,

It is regrettable to witness that crime of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are still being committed. Needless to say, protection of civilians is a common concern and constitutes a priority for all members of the international community. However, translating the concept of RTP into current action is a diligent exercise. It is true that we should stick to the carefully drafted and balanced text of the Summit Outcome Document on RTP, but we should also be able to further identify and clarify the elements of the concept to avoid misperceptions.

The responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity rests primarily with the States. Prevention of such crimes by State authorities in a lawful and timely manner is the most desirable way to exercise this responsibility. Thus, rule of law and a properly functioning judicial system appear as the key deterrent factors for potential perpetrators of these crimes. Sustainable prevention would be possible only if there is no impunity. Promotion of democracy may help prevent the type of human tragedies which fall under the purview of RTP. Hence, the international community has a duty to do more in this direction through capacity building and technical assistance.

In cases when prevention is not possible, detection of crises at their initial phases is of utmost importance so that their appalling consequences could be prevented or at least mitigated. For this purpose, the UN, its member states and other stakeholders must work as a whole in a coordinated, coherent and cooperative manner.

In exceptional cases where States could not and would not protect their populations, the international community has the responsibility to do so through a range of means, from sanctions to, as a last resort, collective action. However, we must be extremely careful in resorting to these coercive measures and always seek to enable the States in question to assume and deliver their responsibilities. The very concept of RTP is, first and foremost, designed for that purpose.

We believe that the RTP is not only limited to prevention and reaction. It also covers post-conflict rehabilitation. Indeed, for the protection of civilians in the long-term, it is crucial to ensure that States would not find themselves at the end of the day still challenging with the underlying problems that have caused or triggered the crisis itself. Thus, the follow-up of crises is as important as managing them, with a view to both rebuilding shattered societies and preventing the recurrence of crises.

Furthermore, a confusion of concepts (RTP and Protection of Civilians) with this house should be avoided.

Finally, Mr. President, there is another important dimension that we all have to focus on. This concept has been misused on different occasions in the past. It should, therefore, be no surprise to all of us that many States perceive that they are faced with a new concept of neo-colonialism. RTP, therefore, should be better defined and better communicated in order to overcome misperceptions. Otherwise, it would be difficult for the promoters of this concept to gain the confidence and support of the wider membership.

Thank you.