



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AGENDA ITEM 135 - THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE, WAR
CRIMES, ETHNIC CLEANSING AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY**

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes this debate of the General Assembly on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and aligns itself with the statement delivered by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of Friends of R2P. The agreement on the Responsibility to Protect is one of the most important achievements of the 2005 World Summit and Liechtenstein supports the resolution put forward by Croatia to institutionalize the General Assembly discussions on the topic. Liechtenstein continues to be fully committed to the R2P norm, as does the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly. Liechtenstein also recalls that the Charter provisions on the authorization of the use of force do not only apply as a matter of course, but they are also referenced in the relevant provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document on R2P. Hence, nothing in those provisions suggests a change in the legal basis for the use of force. While certain disagreements persist, it is time to redirect the debate away from the conceptual level and refocus it on implementation. The crimes subsumed under R2P are not theoretical or abstract in nature, they are the most harrowing expressions of brutality and disregard for human value and dignity that people have become victims of. Addressing them should therefore be a matter of practical urgency for the General Assembly, not of theoretical dispute.

Mr. President,

The responsibility of each State to protect its population from mass atrocities is uncontested, but in committing to the R2P norm we have also collectively agreed on a joint obligation when authorities are unable or unwilling to live up to this responsibility. R2P can be implemented through a broad variety of measures, from diplomatic engagement to more vigorous action, including action taken by the UN Security Council. With increasing frustration the world has been observing the inability of the Security Council to do its work. The Council not only refuses to act in many situations where it is clearly mandated to. It also often deprives itself of the tools to address situations early on with a preventive perspective, such as institutionalized briefings from relevant parts of the UN system, including its human rights special procedures, mandates and mechanisms as well as civil society. This points to significant untapped potential for the Security Council to support pillars 1 and 2 of the Responsibility to Protect. The COVID-19 pandemic would have provided an opportunity to strengthen that work of the Council. Instead, the Council has adopted working methods, and does so to this day, that has further limited its vision on developments of concern.

Mr. President,

In an important commitment to improve the performance of the Security Council, 122 States have signed on to the ACT Code of Conduct on mass atrocities. They thereby commit to take measures to end and prevent atrocity crimes, when serving on the Council, and not to vote against credible draft resolutions put forward to that effect. The Code of Conduct is an essential political commitment that can change the political culture in the Council when faced with the risk or occurrence of atrocity crimes. In spite of the strong support for the Code of Conduct, the use of the veto has significantly increased in recent years, in most cases preventing Security Council action in response to mass atrocities. Liechtenstein supports a strong and active role of the General Assembly, in particular where the Security Council fails to address atrocity crimes in accordance with its Charter mandate. Liechtenstein is also of the principled view that any veto

cast in the Security Council should automatically be discussed in the General Assembly, independently of the subject matter and without prejudice to the outcome of such a discussion.

Mr. President,

A stronger focus on prevention is necessary. The impact of hate speech on violence that in turn may spiral out of control and lead to atrocity crimes is well known and corroborated by research. The political leadership therefore has a key responsibility under pillar 1 to take a vocal stance against hate speech and incitement to violence. In addition, States must promote and make full use of the rule of law when mass atrocity crimes are committed, condoned or incited. Criminal accountability for such acts through independent justice mechanisms is of paramount importance to break recurring cycles of violence and deter the commission of future crimes. The International Criminal Court is a cornerstone in the international criminal justice architecture and Liechtenstein will continue to support the Court and its important work, including by promoting the universality of the Rome Statute.

I thank you.