

70th General Assembly of the United Nations

Political statement on the suspension of the veto in case of mass atrocities

Presented by France and Mexico

Open to signature to the members of the United Nations

We, the undersigned, Member States of the United Nations, reaffirm that the United Nations were created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to protect the dignity and worth of the human person as well as the fundamental human rights. We further reaffirm that the Security Council was given the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security by the United Nations Charter.

We consider that situations of mass atrocities, when crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes on a large scale are committed, may constitute a threat to international peace and security and require action by the international community. In that regard, we recall that the Heads of state and government of the United Nations expressed their readiness to “take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter” when national authorities fail to protect their populations from genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes (World Summit Outcome Document of 2005).

We therefore consider that the Security Council should not be prevented by the use of veto from taking action with the aim of preventing or bringing an end to situations involving the commission of mass atrocities. We underscore that the veto is not a privilege, but an international responsibility. In that respect, we welcome and support the initiative by France, jointly presented with Mexico, to propose a collective and voluntary agreement among the permanent members of the Security Council to the effect that the permanent members would refrain from using the veto in case of mass atrocities. We express our strong resolve to continue our efforts to prevent and end the commission of mass atrocities.