

2020-2021 UN Security Council Elections and the Responsibility to Protect

Today, 7 June 2019, the United Nations General Assembly elected Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam to the UN Security Council for the period of 2020-2021. With their election, 6 of the 15 members of the Council in 2020 will be “Friends of the Responsibility to Protect” – having appointed an R2P Focal Point and/or joined the Group of Friends of R2P in New York and Geneva.

Despite its role as the UN body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has often been unable to take timely action on mass atrocity situations due to deep political divisions inside the Council over human rights, conflict prevention and national sovereignty. In recent years this has had a debilitating effect on the Council’s capacity to respond to ongoing atrocities in Syria and Yemen, as well as developing crises in Cameroon, Myanmar, Venezuela and elsewhere. It is therefore more important than ever for Council members to work in creative ways to ensure that the international community is able to take timely practical action to uphold its responsibility to protect vulnerable populations.

Since 2005 the Security Council has adopted 81 resolutions and 21 Presidential Statements that refer to the Responsibility to Protect, including with regard to Central African Republic, South Sudan, Syria and eight other country situations, as well as a number of thematic issue areas. It is our hope that the Security Council will consistently uphold their commitment to R2P by taking early preventive action to avert emerging crises and halt atrocities wherever they are threatened.

To this end, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect encourages all Security Council members to:

- Request briefings from the UN Secretary-General’s Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, as well as relevant Special Rapporteurs, on situations where populations are at risk.
- Raise awareness and mobilize timely responses to crises, including through convening “Arria formula meetings” on country situations that are not on the Council’s formal agenda, and coordinating Security Council visiting missions to countries or regions where mass atrocity risks are evident.
- Reaffirm the Security Council’s commitment to preventing mass atrocities by establishing a Security Council Working Group on the Prevention of Genocide and other Mass Atrocity Crimes.
- Adhere to the ACT Code of Conduct by which Council members commit to take timely and decisive action to protect civilians and not vote against any credible resolution aimed at preventing mass atrocities.
- Support the International Criminal Court and other international justice mechanisms and ensure all perpetrators of mass atrocities are held to account, regardless of position or affiliation.
- Ratify or accede to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Global Centre has compiled basic profiles on each of the newly-elected Security Council members. These provide an overview of their engagement with R2P, including whether they have appointed an R2P Focal Point, their respective contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, and their status with relevant international legal regimes, including the Genocide Convention and Arms Trade Treaty.

Estonia

Head of State: President Kersti Kaljulaid

Head of Government: Prime Minister Jüri Ratas

Minister of Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Urmas Reinsalu

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Sven Jürgenson

Summary of R2P Engagement

Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2012, 2013 2014 and 2015 (delivered a joint statement on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania) 2016, 2017 and 2018 (delivered by Latvia on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania) Also part of the statement by the European Union: 2009-2018
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No

Background

Regional Group:	Eastern European Group
UN Security Council Membership:	-
Human Rights Council Membership:	2013-2015
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	7 (103 rd largest contributor)
Signatory Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians:	Yes
Signatory Safe Schools Declaration:	No
Signatory ACT Code of Conduct:	Yes
Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration:	Yes
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Ratified 30 January 2002
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 21 October 1991
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified 2 April 2014

Security Council Priorities:

- Promoting greater accountability, coherence, and transparency of the UN Security Council
- Focusing on conflict prevention
- Promoting solutions to new and emerging threats to international peace and security, including cybersecurity and cyber-attacks
- Exploring climate change and climate security
- Acting as an advocate for the common interests of small states

On R2P: “With [the] help of available prevention tools we must better translate early warning signs into timely preventive action, to avoid repeating tragic mistakes of the past.... The UN system has a particular role in advancing and operationalizing the R2P concept, including through the protection of civilians in the peacekeeping operations.... The Security Council [also] has a special responsibility to take timely and decisive action to prevent the outbreak of brutality against innocent people.” (Statement delivered by Latvia on behalf of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania at the UN General Assembly Formal Debate on R2P, 2018)

Niger

Head of State: President Mahamadou Issoufou

Head of Government: Prime Minister Brigi Rafini

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Kalla Ankourao

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Abdou Abarry

Summary of R2P Engagement

Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue: No

R2P Group of Friends member: No

Appointed R2P Focal Point: No

Background

Regional Group: African Group

UN Security Council Membership: 1980-1981

Human Rights Council Membership: -

Contribution to UN Peacekeeping: 998 personnel (22nd largest contributor)

Signatory Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians: Yes

Signatory Safe Schools Declaration: Yes

Signatory ACT Code of Conduct: Yes

Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration: No

Rome Statute of the ICC: Ratified 11 April 2002

Genocide Convention: No

Arms Trade Treaty: Ratified 24 July 2015

Security Council Priorities:

None stated

On R2P: *Niger has not formally commented on the Responsibility to Protect.*

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Head of Government: Prime Minister Ralph E. Gonsalves

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Sir Louis Straker

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	Part of the statement by CARICOM: 2009, 2011
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Background	
Regional Group:	Latin America and the Caribbean
UN Security Council Membership:	-
Human Rights Council Membership:	-
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	-
Signatory Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians:	No
Signatory Safe Schools Declaration:	No
Signatory ACT Code of Conduct:	Yes
Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration:	No
Rome Statute of the ICC:	No
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 9 November 1981
Arms Trade Treaty:	Ratified 3 June 2014

Security Council Priorities:

- Advancing security related issues around climate change, sustainable development, disarmament and human rights
- Promoting the role of women and youth in conflict prevention and resolution
- Committing to multilateralism and the strengthening rule of law, and the principles of non-interference and non-intervention

On R2P: *Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has not formally commented on the Responsibility to Protect.*

Tunisia

Head of State: President Béji Caïd Essebsi

Head of Government: Prime Minister Youssef Chahed

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Khemais Jhinaoui

Permanent Representative to the UN: No current Ambassador

Summary of R2P Engagement	
Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2012
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Background	
Regional Group:	African Group
UN Security Council Membership:	1959-1960, 1980-1981, 2000-2001
Human Rights Council Membership:	2006-2007, 2017-2019
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	240 personnel (53 rd largest contributor)
Signatory Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians:	No
Signatory Safe Schools Declaration:	No
Signatory ACT Code of Conduct:	Yes
Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration:	Yes
Rome Statute of the ICC:	Acceded 24 June 2011
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 29 November 1956
Arms Trade Treaty:	No

Security Council Priorities:

- Fostering linkages between peace, security, development, and human rights
- Strengthening ties between the UN and regional bodies
- Focusing on conflict prevention through promoting sustainable peace
- Promoting the role of women and youth
- Fighting and combating terrorism
- Enhancing UN peacekeeping, with a focus on promoting greater effectiveness, clear and realistic mandates, and resource mobilization
- Building consensus on and combating climate change and cyber-threats

On R2P: “The Responsibility to Protect must not call into question the principle of non-interference or of state sovereignty, fundamental principles of international law. Nor should it justify unregulated interventionism. It is fundamental that any action stemming from this concept to be in complete harmony with the provision of the Charter and other rules of international law.” (UN General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 2012)

Viet Nam

Head of State: President Nguyen Phu Trong

Head of Government: Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Phạm Binh Minh

Permanent Representative to the UN: H.E. Mr. Dang Dinh Quy

Summary of R2P Engagement

Participation in UNGA R2P dialogue:	2009, 2012, 2018
R2P Group of Friends member:	No
Appointed R2P Focal Point:	No
Background	
Regional Group:	Asia-Pacific Group
UN Security Council Membership:	2008-2009
Human Rights Council Membership:	2014-2016
Contribution to UN Peacekeeping:	73 personnel (70 th largest contributor)
Signatory Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians:	No
Signatory Safe Schools Declaration:	No
Signatory ACT Code of Conduct:	No
Signatory France/Mexico Veto Restraint Declaration:	No
Rome Statute of the ICC:	No
Genocide Convention:	Acceded 9 June 1981
Arms Trade Treaty:	No

Security Council Priorities:

- Promoting conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy
- Improving the working methods of the Security Council
- Enhancing engagement with regional arrangements
- Promoting the Protection of Civilians and protection of civilian infrastructure in armed conflict
- Peacekeeping
- Addressing the aftermath of armed conflicts, including threats posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war
- Enhancing the Women, Peace, Security and Children and Armed Conflict agendas

On R2P: “In carrying out its primary responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, states need assistance and cooperation from the international community. International assistance would be most effective and sustainable on the basis of the needs and wishes of the people of countries concerned and in accordance with the UN Charter and principles of international law.” (UN General Assembly Interactive Dialogue on R2P, 2012)