



Royaume de Belgique

Intervention of H.E. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,
Permanent Representative

At the United Nations Security Council

« Arria-formula meeting »

**Arria-formula meeting on raising effectiveness of atrocity
crimes prevention : role of the United Nations Security Council
and its Members**

New York, 10 December 2018

[Reference to The Secretary-General message today on the 70th Anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime? – See Annex]

The primary responsibility of protecting its population from war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide belongs, of course, to each state. Nevertheless, it is up to the **Security Council** to implement the appropriate means when States are unable or unwilling to meet their obligations.

The fight against **impunity**, must also be a priority, as it is an important deterrent against possible future crimes of atrocity. It is up to the Security Council to strengthen its support for national judicial proceedings and hybrid mechanisms, but also for the International Criminal Court, particularly for the situations referred to it. The Council should also be involved in strengthening the institutional capacities of the States concerned by the establishment of police, courts and prisons.

In order to fulfill this mandate, the Security Council should be more regularly informed of situations that may lead to atrocity crimes, in an independent and impartial way . In fact, the United Nations system already has many tools to identify the **warning signs**. For example, it would be useful to hold regular informal consultations with the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and then make

recommendations for concrete action, using also the silent diplomacy tools at the disposal of the Council.

In the same vein, the interaction between the Security Council and the **Human Rights Council** can be strengthened. In this regard it might also be useful to hold regular informal horizontal briefings by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Security Council, or to invite other Human Rights mandate-holders to brief the Council when a specific situation is on the agenda. We all agree the Security Council should not replace the norm-setting work of the Human Rights Council, but we all also recognize that human rights violations can be an important driver or root cause of conflict, as established in the 3-pillar approach.

Despite early warning signs, the Security Council has failed to prevent the terrible situations we face today in Syria, Yemen or Myanmar. When it identifies a situation of mass atrocities or a situation that may lead to atrocity crimes, it can't let disagreements between its permanent members lead to inaction. A large majority of UN member states have adhered to the **ACT Group Code of Conduct** and support the Franco-Mexican initiative to regulate the right of veto. This is a strong signal that the Council can no longer ignore. Its credibility is a key player in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Nations **peacekeeping operations** play a vital role in the protection of civilians. In order to strengthen the early warning capacity and risk assessment, the Council could decide to mainstream in the peacekeeping operations mandates, the pre-deployment training of troops on the basis of the general guidelines contained in in the United Nations 2014 Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.