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President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Beleffi (San Marino), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 168 (continued)

The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/898)

Mr. Moussa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank the President for her wise stewardship in convening this meeting. My delegation takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/898) entitled “The responsibility to protect: lessons learned for prevention”.

Contemporary history has taught us harsh lessons about the humanitarian tragedies that might have been the result of hate messaging, racism and fascism leading to dehumanizing the other, discrimination against the other, violations of the rights of the other and even attacks on the right to life. Historically, such practices have always led to events of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and massacres of all forms in all kinds of contexts — religious, ethnic or racial.

In that regard, Egypt renews its support for the content of the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit whereby every State commits to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We believe that this

is appropriate in order to address grave international atrocities that originate from hatred within States and then worsen and evolve to turn into real crimes at a time when the international community and the United Nations have not truly taken up their responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation believes that the ideal way to deal with this thorny issue is to focus efforts on closing the real gaps that have been revealed by historical tragedies. At the same time, we must not waste efforts by trying to develop the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) in a way that runs counter to the current international consensus. Doing so could threaten the sovereignty of States and the principles of international law, in particular the sovereign equality of States and the prohibition of interference in internal affairs. We believe that such an expansionist approach is a source of concern. It undermines international consensus on the very basis of the concept. It also leads to unfocused efforts and to politicizing the issue while slowing down United Nations involvement in dealing with these atrocities. That in turn can only lead to more thousands of victims, as history has well taught us.

In that regard, we once again stress the fact that the R2P concept is quite clear in the Charter of the United Nations and the mechanisms of this international organization. There is therefore no need to reinvent the wheel, so to speak, or to expand the interpretation of the concept. All we need is national political will on the part of States and the collective will of the entire international community and the United Nations, as set out in the 2005 World Summit outcome document.

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The fundamental responsibility to protect populations against atrocities falls on Member States. National and international efforts to prevent atrocities must focus on strengthening national capabilities to prevent such crimes, including by supporting national jurisdictions in cases of conflict and in post-conflict situations. We must respect the hierarchy of implementing the three main pillars pertaining to R2P, where collective work is the last resort, in line with the United Nations Charter.

We would like to question those States that included this item on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session about its continued inclusion on the agenda of the current session despite the understanding at the time that the item would not be inscribed on the agendas of future sessions. At the previous session, my delegation, supported by many others, stressed the need for the item not to be included on the agenda of the current session until agreement was reached on a clear and agreed understanding of the R2P concept.

While we welcome the continuation of informal consultations in that regard, we believe that the continued inclusion of this item on the agenda, against the prevailing understanding and in the absence of other developments, would only weaken the international consensus. Furthermore, it would lead to a lack of focus on the real obstacles in dealing with those atrocities and their causes, whether at the national or international level.

I would like to mention the escalating xenophobia, hate speech against immigrants and, in particular, Islamophobia that in some countries have led to a number of terrorist acts, targeting particular groups of civilians whose only crime was to be the other. In a way, that is in line with all forms of ethnic cleansing. We appeal to all States to take appropriate measures to prevent the perpetration of such atrocities in future.

Experience teaches us that, through proper preparation and a genuine desire to achieve real consensus, we can enhance the United Nations system to defend citizens of all groups. Perhaps one of the most important examples in that regard is Security Council resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of health-care workers and health facilities in armed conflict, which Egypt, joined by a number of States, drafted during Egypt's presidency of the Council in 2016. We believe that this is the best way to deal with the R2P issue.

Ms. Yáñez Loza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I appreciate the convening of this plenary meeting on an issue of great importance that requires serious and thorough analysis by the General Assembly. I would also like to convey my gratitude, through the President, to the Secretary-General for his report on the responsibility to protect (A/73/898), which focuses on lessons learned for prevention.

The State of Ecuador believes that the responsibility to protect is an issue that cannot be taken lightly. Although the concept has a humanitarian basis, it is also true that it must be implemented based on premises that do not undermine the guarantees and sovereignty of States

Ecuador supported the adoption of resolution 60/1 in 2005, which endorsed by consensus the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, which clearly established the pillars that should underpin the idea of the responsibility to protect. Pillar I identifies the State as the entity with the primary role of protecting its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Pillar II emphasizes the role to be played by the international community through cooperation and the provision of assistance in order to enable States to build local capacity that will enable them to meet their responsibilities. And pillar III enables the international community to take collective measures, in accordance with the norms and procedures established in the Charter of the United Nations — that is, through the Security Council — in accordance with Chapters VI and VII of the Charter.

The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador sets out, as a fundamental principle of coexistence, the need to guarantee full respect for human rights and the obligation of States to fight for their realization. We therefore believe that pillars I, II and III should be implemented in strict accord with national policy and in chronological sequence, with priority always accorded to the pillars I and II, on the understanding that pillar III, and any eventual use of force, should come into play only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort.

Ecuador has adopted mechanisms to prevent atrocity crimes. In doing so it included in its 2008 Constitution and national legislation no statute of limitation for prosecuting and penalizing crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, forced disappearance of persons and crimes of aggression. In our country none of those cases is eligible for amnesty.

With the same commitment, the Government of Ecuador signed the code of conduct for the Security Council to respond in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Moreover, we agree with the Secretary-General that the responsibility to protect is a universal principle. That is why we have supported every regional and subregional initiative that would encourage Governments to assume their responsibilities emanating from relevant international treaties and to identify and address points of friction in their societies before they lead to violent situations or atrocities.

We take note of the balance struck in the report on the importance of examining the practices I mentioned, the lessons of which aim to strengthen preventive measures and initiatives, including the role played by States and the international community in that regard.

We reiterate that only the General Assembly has the legal capacity and authority to define the responsibility to protect and, more specifically, to identify the conceptual, institutional and political dimensions of the task of its implementation. The responsibility to protect is a concept that requires further analysis and discussion among the States Members of the Organization. That is why last year Ecuador voted in favour of including this topic on the agenda of the General Assembly at this session, with a view to constructively, in a transparent manner and without politicizing the dialogue make progress towards an agreement that will, as an ultimate goal, guarantee the protection of civilians in all places where atrocity crimes are committed.

Ecuador emphasizes that the prevention of conflicts through the peaceful settlement of disputes is the best way to prevent the commission of atrocity crimes. The best way to prevent conflicts and the most expeditious way to strengthen national capacities lies in building trust — trust in both the law and international public law, as well as in the application, respectability and accountability of the institutions established to implement it.

With regard to accountability, we want to highlight the role played by the International Criminal Court in the maintenance of international peace and justice, in safeguarding the rule of law and as an essential element in conflict prevention and the provision of reparations to the victims of the most serious crimes. We also believe that the numerous initiatives and commitments generated by this forum, such as the recent United

Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and the fight against violence and sexual violence, and the search for the root causes of conflicts should be joined together as important mechanisms to complement the responsibility to protect.

Lastly, we reiterate our confidence in the role played by regional and subregional organizations in preventing conflicts and the commission of atrocity crimes. We attach high value to early-warning mechanisms to avoid the deterioration of the situation of a country and avert the outbreak of crises and violence against the civilian population, the most vulnerable of whom are generally the most affected.

Mr. Horna (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this debate on the responsibility to protect, the thematic focus of which is the lessons learned for prevention. In that regard, we appreciate the corresponding report of the Secretary-General (A/73/898).

Peru, current member of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, supports the consolidation of the principle of the responsibility to protect. By reaffirming that the responsibility falls primarily on States, we view this formal debate as a step towards consensus, with the recognition that such a principle is not designed to undermine, but rather to reinforce, State sovereignty. That means that, when national authorities fail to protect their populations, the international community has a responsibility, under the Charter of the United Nations, to take measures to protect the most vulnerable.

Peru is committed to the full enforcement of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We are a party to the fundamental instruments in both fields and our authorities ensure their proper implementation, including through the continued training of our armed forces. We have also adopted several initiatives to guarantee the proper conduct of Peruvian troops deployed in peacekeeping operations. However, we wish to express our deep regret and concern at the impunity with which international humanitarian law is violated in today's world, in many cases without the Security Council being up to the role upon which it is called to fulfil.

We therefore stress that it is the obligation of the members of the Security Council and the organized international community to act with unity in order to put an end to the suffering that for various reasons

affects millions of people across different regions of the world. In that regard, we wish to emphasize that 119 States, including Peru, have signed a code of conduct that obliges us to act promptly and decisively to prevent and put an end to the most serious crimes. Peru also supports the French-Mexican initiative to restrict the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. We also take due note of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report and propose to make diversity a strength and not a weakness in order to guarantee access to justice, defend the rule of law and consolidate the guarantees of non-recurrence.

We underscore that the most effective means of protection is through prevention. In that respect, we wish to highlight the importance of understanding sustainable peace as a permanent objective focused on human beings and institutions. That, together with full respect for fundamental freedoms, represents the basic premise for achieving peaceful and inclusive societies that are free of impunity. We must therefore promote proper accountability mechanisms. In addition to supporting the work of the International Criminal Court, we express our support for all initiatives aimed at ensuring that perpetrators of atrocities are held accountable for the crimes committed. We therefore welcome the progress made with regard to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the prosecution of crimes in Syria; the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant; and the mechanism for accountability in Myanmar.

We wish to conclude by reiterating Peru's commitment to the responsibility to protect and by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General's Special Advisers for their work.

Ms. French (United States of America): The United States is pleased to participate in this debate on the responsibility to protect (R2P).

We continue to support the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and believe that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We applaud the work of the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Ms. Karen Smith, and encourage the General Assembly to consider making this debate an annual agenda item. We recommend that the Secretary-General more closely examine the impact of human rights violations

and abuses, including sexual violence, as key early-warning indicators in his 2020 report.

The United States recognizes that there are vital interests in protecting populations from mass atrocities. Our December 2017 national security strategy highlighted the importance of holding perpetrators of genocide and mass atrocities accountable. On 14 January, the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act came into law, reaffirming the United States commitment to preventing and responding to atrocities. That legislation highlights the importance of a coordinated, whole-of-Government approach in order to strengthen our Governments ability to forecast, prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

In support of early warning and prevention, the Department of State conducts regular analysis of global atrocity risks and a deeper analysis focused on high-risk countries that are susceptible to atrocities. In order to address atrocity risks, the United States Government identifies gaps in existing diplomatic and programmatic activities and formulates recommendations and policy options. The United States is engaged in preventative work, too. In early June, we unveiled the United States strategy on women and peace and security, a Government-wide framework that articulates the United States commitment to promoting the meaningful participation of women in efforts to respond to conflict. Through women's meaningful participation in mediation efforts and preventative work, we can avert atrocities before they happen.

The United States continues to play an active role in the Global Network of R2P Focal Points and was pleased to participate in recent meetings in Brussels. We continue to support best practices in the prevention space. The United States has also been a strong supporter of the Human Rights Up Front initiative since its inception. The initiative is a valuable convening mechanism to ensure a whole-of-United Nations approach to prevention with regard to human rights abuses and violations. Given that human rights abuses and violations are often an early-warning indicator of mass atrocities, we encourage Member States to engage further in the work of the Third Committee. Member States can deliver statements on the Third Committee's agenda items during interactive dialogues with the special rapporteurs, such as the Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

The United States Government supports a range of efforts that both directly and indirectly reduce the risks of mass atrocities. Such efforts include establishing and training local communities to use early-warning systems, supporting criminal justice system reform and documenting human rights abuses for justice and accountability processes. In one example, we surveyed and documented human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya in 2017, in a time sensitive and comprehensive manner. The data collected is bolstering current efforts to pursue accountability for those responsible for atrocities and to contribute to justice for the victims.

We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to better coordinate within the United Nations system to prevent atrocities, and we are pleased to support this formal debate. Moving forward, we will continue to look for opportunities to integrate prevention efforts across the United Nations system.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): I would like to begin by making reference to the 2009 report of the Secretary-General on this subject, which asserts that:

“The task ahead is not to reinterpret or renegotiate the conclusions of the World Summit but to find ways of implementing its decisions in a fully faithful and consistent manner.” (A/63/677, para. 2)

Yet, precisely 10 years after the report, that particular assertion still has validity in our present time. My delegation has been engaged in various debates on this topic, whether under this agenda item or different settings in the halls of the Organization. A divergence of views still exists regarding this concept. Nevertheless, my delegation is also cognizant and appreciative of the efforts to operationalize the concept and meet the noble objectives and purposes that it is intended to serve. Needless to say, there are also stringent views regarding how to forge a clear and practical modality for that concept, and in fact, whether it should stand as an agenda item at all.

In that connection, allow me to recall our position that the inclusion of this topic as a one-off agenda item at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly would be an option for the purpose of enriching the knowledge of States Members of the United Nations concerning the strengthening of the primary responsibility of States. My delegation would therefore continue to insist that deliberation on this topic should be on the basis of consensus so that any process that we

choose to advance is one that garners collective support and ownership, and not the imposition of the few or even the majority. Against that backdrop, I would like to make the following points.

First, a few divergent views do exist, particularly on pillar III, and that requires a careful approach. But, at the same time, we cannot be complacent with what we have achieved with pillars I and II. That atrocities and conflicts are still continuously occurring in many parts of the world is clear evidence of the lack of prevention and early-warning mechanism efforts by the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations already provides the tools to take such steps, and we need to exhaust them.

Secondly, the openness of the concept should be in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter that promote peaceful and appropriate diplomatic means, as well as non-coercive measures. The concept of the responsibility to protect does not provide justifications for unilateral action. It reinforces the primacy of multilateralism, as embodied in the United Nations Charter, for the assumption of that responsibility.

Thirdly, any effort to establish links between violations of human rights and the presumed imminence of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity should be forged carefully so as to avoid creating criteria or thresholds that are expansive or intrusive and could be misleading.

There are indeed divergent views on the practicality and operationalization of this concept. The politicization of the concept will only widen such divergence. Instead, we should focus on concrete cooperation to help build capacity in the exchange of views and learn from each other's experiences. My delegation remains prepared to positively engage in the discussion of this concept with the objective of reaching consensus and achieving the collective engagement of all Member States.

Mr. Cuellar Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Colombia thanks the Secretary-General for his report entitled “Responsibility to protect: lessons learned for prevention” (A/73/898). The report makes an appropriate assessment of the measures that each State and the international community can take to comply with their preventive responsibilities, based on best practices since the adoption of the 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome document on the responsibility to protect. The series of practical suggestions based on the experiences over the past

decade serve as a call to action to prevent atrocity crimes and other very serious phenomena that activate the concept of the responsibility to protect.

Colombia is not oblivious to the consequences of violence. We therefore recognize the importance of taking all the necessary measures to avoid and prevent the commission of the most serious crimes for the international community as a whole. The world is aware of the efforts that we have made — and will continue to make — to promote peace not just in Colombia but throughout the world.

The need to strengthen the rule of law and ensure accountability for atrocity crimes committed in the past is a fundamental guarantee to prevent the repetition of such crimes. Colombia is aware of that, and through the implementation of the General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed in 2016, as a component of the objectives enshrined in our peace law policy, we have implemented a series of mechanisms of the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition, with a view to guaranteeing victims their rights and the fulfilment of the commitments made under international law, including sanctions proportional to the gravity of the crimes committed.

In 2011, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Colombia took a favourable stance on measures that seek to protect the civilian population from imminent attacks from a Government that, through its actions and statements, has shown that it is not up to the task of the international responsibility it has to protect its people. As a result, we believe that it is necessary for all Member States to comply with our duties under international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law, while keeping the doors open for those who are fleeing a lack of protection and seeking to meet their most basic needs.

In that regard, I highlight Colombia's support for Switzerland's proposal to reform the Rome Statute in order to add the starvation of a population as a war crime in non-international armed conflicts. That illegal, immoral and criminal practice, which, unfortunately, is still being used in different regions of the world, must be eradicated and prosecuted wherever it is committed.

To conclude, I would like to underpin two points that my country believes are equally important for the prevention of atrocities.

On the one hand, we emphasize that the Sustainable Development Goals are an opportunity to create a more sustainable and peaceful future. In that context, we view the role of Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, as especially relevant. President Duque Márquez is committed to providing all Colombians a secure and legitimate peace. That means guaranteeing legality by strengthening the rule of law and physical and legal safeties and securities, stimulating entrepreneurship and the generation of new wealth and broadening Colombians' access to equitable social welfare. That is our best weapon to prevent atrocity crimes, to which we have been no stranger.

On the other hand, Colombia insists on the leading role that women have in the prevention of atrocity crimes as a key element for early warning, the promotion of cooperation and building capacities and support networks at the local, regional and international levels. We cannot change the events of the past, but we can do everything within our grasp to prevent more serious crimes from being committed in our world.

Mr. Yaremenko (Ukraine): At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for this year's report on the responsibility to protect (R2P), with a special emphasis on lessons learned for prevention (A/73/898). This discussion on R2P serves as yet further confirmation of its importance for the international community. It is difficult to overestimate its significance in the light of the persistent, and sometimes widening, gap between the commitments and actions of some United Nations States Members.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/73/PV.93). We would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Ukraine is a party to the core instruments of international law relating to the prevention of atrocity crimes, the protection of populations, upholding human rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. We removed internal legal obstacles in the way of Ukraine's ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and are actively working on the preparation of legislation aimed at implementing the Statute.

The R2P principles fully exclude any possibility of the use of military forces by one State against another State under the pretext of the protection of its population from imagined threats with the actual sole goal of

annexing another State's territory. There are criteria for the legitimacy of the use of force, such as just cause, the right intention, as a last resort, the proportionality of means and a reasonable prospect of success. What is important to highlight is that military force must not be used to alter borders or pursue occupation.

Nevertheless, the exploitation of R2P in violation of the Charter of the United Nations principles continues to take place. The military actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, under the sociocultural pretext of protecting Russian-speaking Ukrainians, are a clear example of that. It is nothing more than a crude and unsuccessful attempt of employing certain elements of R2P to justify its armed aggression.

The General Assembly, in its resolutions in relation to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, has affirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and has condemned the temporary occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation. The adoption of those resolutions means that the United Nations family is not going to tolerate the manipulation of R2P principles.

Russia's supply of weapons and ammunition to its armed formations in occupied Ukrainian Donbas and their daily attacks and shelling, which threaten the lives of the civilian population, are crimes under the principle of R2P. The ongoing occupation of parts of its territory limits Ukraine's ability to implement R2P pillar I.

The Russian occupation regime continues to deny access to international human rights observers in Crimea, including the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. In the context of today's discussion, it is worth mentioning that human rights and humanitarian presence constitute a critical part of a prevention mechanism, which, in addition to monitoring, can also identify risks of a sharp deterioration of the situation and make respective recommendations for early action.

In that regard, we again urge the Russian Federation to reverse the occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol, as well as territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and to stop its aggression, including by withdrawing its armed formations from the temporarily occupied territories and fully implementing its commitments under the Minsk agreements. In addition, we urge the

release of Ukrainian military servicemen and naval vessels, as well as all political prisoners held in Russia and in occupied Crimea and Donbas.

Turning to pillar II, and especially pillar III, we would like to highlight the role of the United Nations, through its organs, in preventing atrocity crimes. A special responsibility for that rests with the Security Council. However, the use of the veto, or even the mere threat of its use, can stall the Council's response in situations where urgent action is needed to protect civilians. In that regard, we would like to reiterate our strong position on the need to phase out the veto, as a major obstacle to the Council's ability to act efficiently in certain situations.

We have supported all kinds of ideas against the misuse or abuse of the veto power. For instance, we fully share the respective French-Mexican initiative and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. However, we are also convinced that the use of the veto should also be restricted in cases when a permanent member is directly involved in a conflict under consideration by the Council or if it is a party to a dispute, and therefore cannot be expected to exercise its voting rights and privileges in an impartial manner.

Nevertheless, in the current state of affairs, it is quite possible that the Security Council will again fail to act as it did on too many occasions already. Therefore, the General Assembly should be ready to assume its responsibility and play its role. In that regard, strengthened and improved awareness on the part of Member States regarding the risks of atrocity crimes, recommendations on the prevention of such crimes and mechanisms to support such steps could greatly enhance the General Assembly's ability to take fair, just, efficient and results-oriented decisions in the proper implementation of R2P.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will begin my statement in a less than traditional way, with some words of regret. We regret the fact that, for the second year in a row, debates on this issue have been moved to the General Assembly through a vote. The interactive dialogue format that prevailed prior to 2018 has been relegated to the past, and with it opportunities to discuss and reconcile positions. There was a time when the older United Nations elites would say that if you want to make an idea boring, drown it in

the routine of national statements; if you want to kill an idea, refuse all compromise and put it to a vote. We see a similar situation here with the unfortunate concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P).

We note the most recent report of the Secretary-General (A/73/898) on this topic. Like previous reports, we view it strictly through the lens of the relevant chapter of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document. We share the general view on the need to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, which runs throughout the Secretary-General's report. That is the right idea. It was first proposed by States in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document. However, over time the idea has been interpreted in too many different ways. Today the substance of the concept of R2P has been degraded. We regret the fact that the Secretary-General's report does not reflect the full spectrum of approaches taken. We are guided by the fact that reports must include a description of the current status of discussions on the concept, a list of all perspectives and, crucially, all contentious elements on which States must agree.

I had planned to end my statement here, but I am unable to do so. Just before I spoke, the representative of Ukraine took the floor and again levelled accusations at my country, with his hackneyed theories of occupation, aggression and other crimes and mortal sins. It must be understood that this is a country that includes among the ranks of its national heroes Nazi cronies such as and Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera; where every year a torch-bearing ceremony is held similar to the one in Nazi Germany in 1939; and where soldiers draw swastikas on their helmets. It is a country whose former President took photographs of himself with his soldiers in the background bearing symbols of Schutzstaffel squadrons. It is country that burned its own citizens and, during a talk show, those events were applauded by Ukrainians in an auditorium. As such, this country has no right to level accusations at the Russian Federation.

Regrettably, Ukraine now needs at least three things: denazification, demilitarization and democratization. It needs real democratization, and not just colourful gay parades in the central squares of Kyiv.

Mrs. Udida (Nigeria): Let me begin by thanking the President for convening this important meeting on the responsibility to protect (R2P).

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Denmark on behalf

of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/73/PV.93).

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/73/898) and its emphasis on early warning and early action.

Allow me to use this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Ms. Karen Smith, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, to mainstream R2P within the United Nations system, including through the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.

Nigeria welcomes the inclusion of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity on the formal agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary General's report in that concerted action makes a difference. We support the role of regional and subregional organizations in advancing the concept of the responsibility to protect. As appropriately reflected in the Secretary-General's report, there are several instances where the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations have worked in unison to avert the escalation of tensions, including those spelled out in the responsibility to protect. We urge the international community to continue to support such regional and subregional endeavours so as to enable them to play a more effective role in protecting populations and providing early warning and early action to prevent the commission of atrocious crimes. Nigeria supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to maintain this issue on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The international community is aware of the Boko Haram terrorist organization's mindless destruction and mass atrocities in Nigeria and the Lake Chad and Sahel regions, which have resulted in the forced displacement of people in the affected areas over the years. Already, substantive progress is being made through the renewed cooperation and strategic combined counter-terrorism operations of Nigeria and its immediate neighbours under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. To address the negative impacts of terrorist acts, Nigeria has adopted an integrated and holistic approach to both forced displacement and conflict-

affected populations, anchored on four pillars: the safe, dignified and voluntary return and resettlement of the displaced population; reconciliation, peacebuilding and community cohesion; local governance and citizen engagement; and community, security, justice, human rights and small arms control.

Nigeria believes that national Governments and the international community must do more to curb hate speech, especially in the media, as it can lead to the violation of human rights and mass atrocity crimes, as witnessed in Rwanda against the Tutsis and in Myanmar against the Rohingya. Nigeria will continue to join like-minded countries in emphasizing the need to prevent atrocity crimes within the broader context of human rights protection, particularly at the Human Rights Council. Nigeria reiterates the need for all Member States to uphold their obligations under international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, which underpins the commitment to the responsibility to protect. Nigeria is committed to the human rights instruments and supports all strategies at the regional and international levels to promote and protect human rights.

Nigeria subjected itself for review for the third time, through the Universal Periodic Review process. Since the previous review, civil-military cooperation in the fight against terrorism, insurgency and other internal security operations has been strengthened through several measures, including

the incorporation of modules on international human rights and international human rights law in the training curriculum for the military. Let me avail myself of this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to implementing the recommendations we adopted during the latest Universal Periodic Review process and state that Nigeria will continue to cooperate with human rights treaty bodies to address risk factors more systematically, as well as strengthen national efforts. We are committed to the implementation of our legal and institutional frameworks to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable people in our society, especially women, girls and children, from the impact of terrorist attacks. Policy interventions targeted at improving the social status of women, improving women's economic base, ensuring girl-child education and consolidating their political rights are already in place.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the responsibility to protect initiative and provide assurance of Nigeria's readiness to deepen cooperation and dialogue with a view to protecting lives and properties within its territory.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 168.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.