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## **Special Events Passes will be distributed prior to the start of the event in front of the nearest security checkpoint to Conference Room 4 (next to the Vienna Cafe).**

### **“Preventing and ending atrocity crimes: a key challenge for the UN Security Council”**

A side-event at the 71<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations

#### **Background and Purpose:**

The UN Security Council’s frequent inability to take effective action to prevent or end genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – the worst crimes under international law – has been a stain on its reputation and a challenge for the whole membership of the United Nations. In order to ensure a more effective Security Council response in the future *given its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security under the United Nations Charter*, UN Member States from all regional groups have endorsed two separate but complementary initiatives: The Code of Conduct, as elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency Group (ACT), and a joint French/Mexican proposal on voluntarily suspending the veto in situations of mass atrocities.

112 States (including eight current members of the Security Council) have endorsed the ACT Code of Conduct, thereby not only pledging not to vote against a credible draft resolution aimed at preventing or ending genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, but also to support timely Security Council action to this end. Prior to the official launch of the ACT Code of Conduct, France proposed that permanent members of the Security Council should make a voluntary commitment to refrain from using their veto in situations of mass atrocities. Mexico was quick to fully support the French proposal, and therefore France and Mexico launched a joint '*political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity*', a year ago.

The panel discussion will aim to explore the progress made and remaining implementation challenges of both the Code of Conduct and French/Mexican proposal, by addressing among others the following questions:

- A majority of Security Council members have committed themselves to the Code of Conduct—how can this commitment best be turned into action in the Council?
- What can supporters of the Code of Conduct and the French/Mexican proposal outside the Security Council do to further the aim of preventing or ending atrocity crimes and to inspire application of the respective initiatives in the Council? How can these initiatives be better applied? Would there be any procedural trigger for these initiatives to be implemented?
- How can States and civil society, based on their commitment to the Code of Conduct and the French/Mexican proposal, and the Secretariat, especially in light of the Human Rights Up Front initiative and the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes developed by the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, work together to prevent atrocities?

**Format:**

After the panel discussion, the floor will be opened for interventions by Member States and civil society representatives.

**Panelists:**

H.E. Mr. Manuel A. González Sanz, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica  
H.E. Dr. Aurelia Frick, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein  
H.E. Ms. Claudia Ruiz Massieu, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico  
H.R.H. Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, The Elders  
Dr. Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch

**Moderator:**

Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

**Date and time:** Thursday, 22 September 2016, 1:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Location:** United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 4

**Contact:**

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