

70th meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations
Political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity
Presented by France and Mexico
Open to signature by Member States of the United Nations

We, the signatories, Member States of the United Nations, reaffirm that the United Nations was created to save future generations from the scourge of war and to regain faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person. We also reaffirm that the Charter of the United Nations entrusted the primary responsibility of peacekeeping and international security to the Security Council.

We believe that situations of mass atrocities, in the form of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes on a grand scale, constitute in their nature a threat to peace and international security, and necessitate action by the international community. In this regard, we recall that the member heads of state and government of the United Nations declared themselves ready “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 population from genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes” (2005 World Summit Outcome Document).

As a result, we believe that the Security Council should not be impeded, by recourse to the veto, from acting in order to prevent or put an end to situations of mass atrocities. We reiterate that the veto is not a privilege but an international responsibility. In this regard, we welcome and support the initiative of France, presented in conjunction with Mexico, to propose a collective and voluntary agreement of the permanent members of the Security Council in which the permanent members would abstain from using their veto powers in cases of mass atrocities. We reaffirm our resolute determination to continue our efforts to prevent and put an end to mass atrocities.