

Media Update

9 December 2018

United Nations

MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

International Anti-Corruption Day

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“Corruption is present in all countries, rich and poor, North and South. It is an assault on the values of the United Nations.

It robs societies of schools, hospitals and other vital services, drives away foreign investment and strips nations of their natural resources. It undermines the rule of law and abets crimes such as the illicit trafficking of people, drugs and arms.

Tax evasion, money laundering and other illicit flows divert much-needed resources for sustainable development.

The World Economic Forum estimates that the cost of corruption is at least \$2.6 trillion – or 5 per cent of global gross domestic product.

And according to the World Bank, businesses and individuals pay more than \$1 trillion in bribes each year.

Corruption begets more corruption, and fosters a corrosive culture of impunity.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is among our primary tools for advancing the fight.

Sustainable Development Goal 16 and its targets also offer a template for action.



Through the Convention's peer review mechanism, we can work together to build a foundation of trust and accountability. We can educate and empower citizens, promote transparency and strengthen international cooperation to recover stolen assets.

Millions of people around the world have gone to the ballots this year with corruption as one of their top priorities. On International Anti-Corruption Day, let us take a stand for integrity.”

António Guterres

Background:

On 31 October 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties (resolution 58/4).

The Assembly also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it. The Convention entered into force in December 2005.

Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the media and citizens around the world are joining forces to fight this crime. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are at the forefront of these efforts.

Every year \$1 trillion is paid in bribes while an estimated \$2.6 trillion are stolen annually through corruption – a sum equivalent to more than 5 per cent of the global GDP. In developing countries, according to the United Nations Development Programme, funds lost to corruption are estimated at 10 times the amount of official development assistance.

Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all countries. Corruption undermines democratic institutions, slows economic development and contributes to governmental instability.

Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the soliciting of bribes. Economic development is stunted because foreign direct investment is discouraged and small businesses within the country often find it impossible to overcome the "start-up costs" required because of corruption.

This year UNODC and UNDP have developed a joint [global campaign](#), focusing on how corruption affects education, health, justice, democracy, prosperity and development.

United Nations

MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime

9 December 2018

“In the aftermath of the Holocaust and Second World War, the world came together and adopted a convention to prevent genocide and punish those who commit this heinous crime.

Seventy years later, the prevention of genocide remains a cardinal task for our time.

That is why I launched an appeal for every country to ratify the Genocide Convention.

I urge the 45 remaining States to do so without delay.

And I call on all states to translate the Convention’s words into action to prevent massive human suffering and advance accountability.



At a time of rising anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry and other forms of hatred, racism and xenophobia, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the equality and dignity of all. Thank you.”

António Guterres

Background:

The [Genocide Convention \(article 2\)](#) defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group ... ", including:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The Convention confirms that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or war, is a crime under international law which parties to the Convention undertake “to prevent and to punish” (article 1). The primary responsibility to prevent and stop genocide lies with the State.

Prevention of Genocide:

To prevent genocide and genocidal conflicts, it is critically important to understand their root causes. While conflict has many causes, genocidal conflict is identity-based. Genocide and related atrocities tend to occur in societies with diverse national, racial, ethnic or religious groups that are locked in identity-related conflicts. It is not simply differences in identity, whether real or perceived, that generate conflict, but the implication of those differences in terms of access to power and wealth, services and resources, employment, development opportunities, citizenship and the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. These conflicts are fomented by discrimination, hate speech inciting violence and other violations of human rights.

In terms of prevention, the critical step is to identify the factors (discriminatory practices) in a given situation that lead to or account for acute disparities in the treatment of a diverse population, and to seek ways to diminish and eventually eradicate these possible causes of genocidal violence. Given that no country is perfectly homogeneous, genocide is a truly global challenge.

Responsibility to Protect:

At the [2005 World Summit](#), Member States committed to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. They agreed that when States require assistance to fulfil that responsibility, the international community must be ready to assist them and, when States manifestly fail to protect their populations from those crimes, the international community must be ready to take action, collectively, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Intervention only happens when prevention fails. Therefore, prevention is the basis of the principle of the responsibility to protect.

These three pillars of the responsibility to protect are articulated in the Outcome Document of the World Summit ([A/RES/60/1](#), para. 138-140) and formulated in the [Secretary-General's 2009 Report \(A/63/677\) on Implementing the Responsibility to Protect](#). The political commitment made by Member States in 2005 is deeply rooted in international law, including the Genocide Convention.

The Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect:

[The Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect](#) work together to advance national and international efforts to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, including their incitement. One of their main tasks is to collect information on situations where there may be a risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, based on the risk factors outlined in the [Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes](#) . Due to the sensitive nature of their mandate, much of the Office's work remains outside of the public eye. However, when the Special Advisers assess that making their concerns public will reduce the risk of atrocity crimes in a specific situation, they do so by issuing [public statements](#) and, upon request, by briefing the Security Council.
