



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
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**UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 67TH SESSION
GENERAL DEBATE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. Ms. AURELIA FRICK
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

We are convening in this Assembly at a time when we are witnessing a worrisome phenomenon: senseless violence spreading through an entire region as a result of senseless offense to religious feelings. More than any other organization, the United Nations stands for the ideals of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. A strong message should therefore come out of this debate: The **hateful slander of people on the basis of their culture or religion is unacceptable**. It is an abuse of the right to freedom of expression. But just as clearly we must emphasize that **violence cannot be justified by insults** – no matter how understandable the outrage may be. These ongoing events also tell us that we must reach many more people in our effort to promote the values of the United Nations around the globe.

Mr. President

When we last met a year ago, we already heard many calls from this podium to bring an end to the crisis in **Syria**. Since then, the violence has turned into a civil war that puts the United Nations to shame. We have seen open divisions in the Security Council and little interest by the parties to the conflict in UN-led mediation. Instead, the situation on the ground has further escalated. There is now a threat of instability to the entire region. The blatant disregard for the life and rights of civilians, women and children in particular, is simply shocking. It is a crisis with profound and lasting effects for the three main pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. It is therefore also an existential challenge for this organization. The United Nations is only as effective as its political organs allow it to be. This crisis must therefore make us think in general terms about the lessons we should learn.

- The situation in Syria is clearly of burning concern to the membership as a whole – as a crisis of human security and as a threat to international peace and security. At the same time, the Security Council is unable to carry out its tasks under the Charter because of

disagreement among its Permanent Members. It is therefore essential that the **General Assembly** steps in and plays a more active role – as it has done on some occasions. This is all the more important as we are confronted with a **failure to fulfill the responsibility to protect a civilian population** – a principle adopted by this Assembly at the highest political level.

- The stalemate in the Council illustrates that we must look at the way the **veto** power is and can be used – without questioning its existence. There must be accountability in this respect vis-à-vis the membership of the organization as a whole. After all, the Council carries out its work on behalf of all of us. We call upon the Permanent Members to acknowledge that the UN Charter does not grant them the right to veto without any strings attached. We ask them to acknowledge that the Council must at all times act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. And we therefore request that they **pledge not to use the veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.**
- Clearly, the main priority is ending the suffering of the Syrian people: bringing about a political solution that guarantees human security and stability for the region. But we also have an obligation to ensure that there is **no impunity for the worst crimes** under international law. That those who have the greatest responsibility do not get away with murder. The evidence before us is alarming. The Commission of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council has come to clear conclusions. The primary responsibility to ensure accountability falls of course on the Syrian judiciary. But we can be under no illusions as to whether it will deliver justice to the victims and due process to all accused. We therefore join Switzerland in the **call on the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.** But we also ask the Council to accompany such a referral with its full support to ensure cooperation – and not to place any obstacles to the appropriate financing of the Court's work. Without these two prerequisites, referrals are a mixed blessing and problematic for the ICC.

Mr. President

This year, we are also commemorating the **tenth anniversary of the International Criminal Court**. The Rome Statute entered into force in July 2002. We are looking at the history of an astonishing success. Who would have thought that the Court's membership would be nearing two-thirds of the membership of the United Nations in such a short time? Who would have predicted that the Security Council would make referrals to the ICC twice? Once even by unanimous vote? And who would have expected the Court to emerge from political controversy as a stronger institution? These are remarkable achievements that we can be proud of. Nevertheless, the next decade is also fraught with challenges. We have been strongly united in setting up the Court and getting it underway. Now that it is fully operational, we must support it politically, more than ever.

I have therefore launched a **ministerial-level initiative to support the ICC** earlier this week. I was very encouraged by the strong response to my call for coordinated action when needed.

In adopting the Rome Statute, we have not just set up an international tribunal located in The Hague. We have also created a **global system to fight impunity**, which assigns a strong role to us States. It also offers the Security Council an important role, if it chooses to play it. Political support is particularly required where ICC investigations are based on referrals from the Security Council. The obligation for the State in question to cooperate is entirely based on the Security Council's authority, not on the Rome Statute. Therefore, the Council must play a key role in ensuring that such **cooperation** is forthcoming. We as States are also responsible to ensure that indicted individuals are arrested and transferred to the Court. Clearly, we must step up our efforts in this regard.

We are also given a historic opportunity – both for the Court and the United Nations: For the first time since the end of World War II, we can enable an international tribunal to prosecute the **crime of aggression**.

The prohibition of the illegal use of force is at the core of the Charter of the United Nations.

And aggression has been considered a crime under international law for decades. But the consensual adoption of the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute allows us to turn the principle into practice. Leaders that consider resorting to the illegal use of force will be put on notice – once 30 States Parties have ratified the amendments, and once we have activated them in 2017. I am proud that Liechtenstein, after its Presidency at the Review Conference, was the first State to ratify the amendments on 8 May this year. We chose the date as a tribute to the commemoration of the end of World War II in Europe. We have also launched an **initiative to support the ratification process** underway.

I would therefore encourage all of you, current and future Parties to the Rome Statute, to ratify the Kampala amendments as soon as possible. Together we can make this big step forward in the history of international law.

Mr. President

Criminalizing the illegal use of force between States would be a very significant step forward in the promotion of the **rule of law** at the international level. The rule of law is rightfully moving to the center of our attention. We have illustrated this by holding the high-level meeting on this topic earlier this week. The rule of law permeates many of the activities we pursue here at the United Nations. Indeed, there can be no lasting security, no sustainable development and no effective protection of human rights without the rule of law.

We therefore look forward to a strong **rule of law dimension in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** – the goals that we will work on as a result of the Rio plus 20 Conference.

This conference has resulted in a number of important agreements. It has also illustrated the value of **inclusive and transparent multilateralism** – especially when compared to other, more exclusive decision-making processes. This serves as a reminder to reconcile seemingly competing interests in international decision-making: transparency and inclusiveness on the one side, and efficiency and effectiveness on the other.

Multilateral decision-making is efficient when there is sufficient political will.

It is effective when it has the necessary legitimacy to ensure full implementation.

We must return to consider the **universality and openness of the General Assembly** as key assets, not as signs of weakness. This Assembly must reaffirm its unique and central role in global governance, including in the economic dimension. I welcome your strong commitment, Mr. President, expressed at the beginning of this session: Your commitment to work for genuine multilateralism and, to this end, to reach a new level of engagement with other actors in the field of economic and financial governance. I assure you of our full support in this endeavor.

There must be **accountability for decisions of global impact**, before this Assembly, or before other relevant and universally accessible bodies.

To achieve this aim, we will build on the progress made during the last years in the framework of the **Global Governance Group (3G)**. The 3G has become a trusted bridge-builder in these matters. We hope that this issue will become one of the highlights of your Presidency.

Mr. President

Let me conclude with some remarks about an issue that is particularly dear to my heart. Ever since becoming Foreign Minister, I have tried to make use of the relevant international platforms to promote the **advancement of women**. I also hope to bring Liechtenstein's expertise and passion for women's issues to the Commission on the Status of Women during the term 2015 – 2019.

I am grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his strong leadership in this area. UN Women, headed so charismatically by Michelle Bachelet, has given a much-needed additional boost to our efforts.

If we continue our path, then the **United Nations can be the decisive driving force for gender equality** worldwide.

Until then, we can and must do much more, in particular in the area of **women, peace and security**. Stronger protection of women, both legal and otherwise, in situations where they are particularly prone to becoming victims, is a key component. The UN with its very strong field presence all over the world can make a unique contribution to this end. But most importantly, the UN must **lead by example** when it comes to gender equality and the advancement of women. We must make the best use of their talents, skills and experiences as peace-makers, as agents for sustainable development and as advocates for human rights and the rule of law.

Only with women fully included will we, the United Nations, be successful in pursuing our goals.

I thank you.