



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

**MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY: REFLECTING ON HISTORY, REAFFIRMING THE STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**STATEMENT BY MR. STEFAN BARRIGA, MINISTER, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES A.I.**

*(as delivered)*

Thank you very much Mr. President. I would like to warmly thank your delegation for convening the debate on this very important topic.

We appreciate the possibility to give you the **perspective of the smallest state participating in this debate today**. I would like to thank New Zealand for pointing out the need to also listen to the standpoint of small states.

This morning we have heard in this chamber about a worrying trend to consider the Security Council as the playground of the powerful, the place where grand geopolitical moves are made – or where such moves are prevented. It is therefore appropriate to focus on the UN Charter in this debate.

**Liechtenstein reaffirms its strong commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter.**

You may say that is easy to do for a small State with no army, but it also underlines that for many small States respect for the Charter is a matter of survival – a very serious matter indeed.

It also appeared in today's debate that everybody seems to have their favorite Charter purposes and principles – a choice that is usually inspired by a country's history or standing in the world.

For us the starting point is **the very first purpose of the United Nations Charter: "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace [...]"**

In our view, **the Charter envisages an activist Security Council that responds to the needs of the world.** It is true that the number of meetings, resolutions, field missions is ever increasing, yet so is the number conflicts and people affected by conflict worldwide. Today, we have more refugees than at any point since WWII. We therefore need even more Security Council action. How to achieve this?

- (1) In reaffirming their commitment to the Charter, we believe that **Council members must make greater efforts to overcome their differences and to commit to work for compromise.** Rather than debating the contours of abstract concepts, Council members should search for practical solutions in concrete situations. In recent years, this has become more difficult as the differences, especially among the permanent members, have grown. We therefore believe **there is now an increased responsibility on elected members of the Council to take greater ownership of the work of the Council and to lead the way toward compromises.**

- (2) The **veto** – the use of the veto, the threat of the veto, the mere possibility of the use of the veto – **remains the greatest procedural obstacle for Security Council action** where permanent members have difficulty agreeing on the course of action. The price for inaction is unacceptably high when faced with mass atrocities, when faced with thousands of innocent victims. We cannot continue to give greater weight to the opinion of one single permanent member than to the need to save thousands of lives. We therefore reiterate our **call on Council members not to block Security Council action aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities, and to put such a commitment in writing.**
- (3) We need to recognize that the **Charter and change go hand-in-hand**. The Charter's values and principles underpin the international system and have inspired new instruments (e.g. Arms Trade Treaty). We need to act on our **evolving understanding of threats to peace and security**; as has been recognized by the Council for example in the case of terrorism, and as it has sometimes done in response to massive human rights violations. But we need to more firmly **place human rights and the dignity of person, especially the rights of civilians in armed conflict, at the center of our efforts**. Such an approach is also a return to the Charter itself which established that **"We the Peoples of the United Nations [...] [are] are determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."**

If the **world's greatest powers** were able to make such a statement in 1945, just after the end of World War II, after the complete collapse in human decency, they will **hopefully also be determined to reaffirm their faith in the role of the Security Council**, seventy years later. The Security Council chamber remains the most important forum for that "win-win cooperation" that has been called for by the presidency.