



4 February 2015 - UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson called for a stronger emphasis on Human Rights and the Rule of Law in the work of the World Organization at a press conference in Brussels yesterday.

Mr Eliasson covered a wide range of issues and called for "the enhanced role of human rights in all our work."

"The United Nations has introduced a programme, which we call [Human Rights Upfront](#) , which means that we try to enhance the role of human rights and rule of law in all our work, but also that we see Human Rights violations as the first signs of conflict", Mr Eliasson said.

"We should act when we hear the first vibrations in the ground and act on the Human Rights violations stage, rather than wait for mass atrocities. We saw huge dangers last year in the Central African Republic and South Sudan and I think we should draw lessons from that. We should not get used to saying "Never again". Everytime we say "Never again" we have failed, so therefore we will try to act preventibly."



In a press conference organized by UNRIC, the Brussels based Regional Information Center for Western Europe, Mr Eliasson was asked, what in his line of work kept him awake at night. Answering that he most often slept soundly, thus being able to survive in his work, he said the situation in Syria warranted a special mention.

"The festering sore and the infected wound of the conflict in Syria continues to be a concern to me and to many others. I really regret that the Security Council hasn't given our negotiations Staffan de Mistura, and before him Lakhdar Brahimi and Kofi Annan, the tools they needed.

"We need to be reminded," the Deputy Secretary-General added, "especially when we have a debate about receiving refugees in Europe, we should look at Lebanon, a country with a population of 4.5 million but hosting one and a half million Syrian refugees. I have recently visited Lebanon and I must express my admiration for the Lebanese people and the Lebanese authorities."

"Then of course I cannot stop worrying about the growing inequalities in the world, the diseases and the poverty that we need to deal with. This year is extremely important because we have the Post-2015 Development Agenda to be decided up on in New York in September and before that the financing of development, which is of great importance and at the to be end of the year the Climate Change agenda. 2015, which has begun quite badly, with all those conflicts and unsolved problems still has a chance of end up on a hopeful note. I think this could be a historic year."

In a two-day visit to Brussels, Mr Eliasson, had meetings with several members of the new European Commission and then left for Munich where he takes part in the Munich Security Conference.

Photos: UNRIC Press Conference, Mr. Eliasson (right) and UNRIC Director Afsané Bassir-Pour. UNRIC/Philippe Chabot.