

**PERMANENT MISSION OF BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**73rd Session of the General Assembly
Sixth Committee**

Item 87

**The scope and application of the principle of universal
jurisdiction**

**Statement delivered by
Ambassador Georgi Panayotov
Permanent Representative**

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Check against delivery!

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, let me join others before me in congratulating you and other members of the bureau for your election. As we look forward to your able leadership, allow me to assure you of the full support of my delegation in all your important endeavors.

I will begin by expressing my appreciation that the principle of universal jurisdiction continues to stay under consideration in the Sixth Committee. My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the topic prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/120. In our view, the listing of crimes and relevant legislation in the report is of mutual interest and we encourage other Member States to submit appropriate information on the relevant applicable international treaties and their national legal rules and judicial practice.

The Republic of Bulgaria commends the progress of the Sixth Committee on this subject and also welcomes the establishing of a working group to continue the delegations deliberation on the scope and application of the principle. Member States have referred many times to the universality principle which enables different stakeholders to draw and outline some guiding rules in invoking that same principle. Shedding light on its application could furthermore strengthen cooperation efforts with different international tribunals that rely on complementarity as an effective measure to address and tackle impunity.

Mr. Chairman,

Criminal tribunals should not be left on their own in the fight against impunity and that is where Member States should step in. The Republic of Bulgaria is aware of the importance of shared responsibility of national jurisdictions and permanent or ad hoc international courts despite of their somewhat limited field of action, as their founding documents cannot

include all types of wrongful criminal acts. Nevertheless, this so called lack of jurisdiction can be dealt with.

I would like to emphasize that the Republic of Bulgaria continues to address the relevant issues and to call attention to the need for international cooperation in dealing with impunity. On many occasions, EU Member States have pledged and undertaken measures to prevent Europe's territory from becoming a safe haven for perpetrators of the gravest crimes. In keeping with this policy the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of this year continued the established tradition and organized a special event in The Hague - the EU Day against impunity on the 23rd of May - together with the European Commission, Eurojust and the International Criminal Court, as well as other relevant stakeholders. This annual forum gathered many scholars, practitioners and representatives of civil society that are not indifferent to the topics at hand. The European Union has set up organizations and tools to support national authorities when faced with atrocious criminal activities. UN Member States and States Parties to the Rome Statute need a constant reminder that they also need to abide by their obligations in contributing to the upholding of the rule of law and the implementation of international criminal justice.

There is no doubt that the principle of universal jurisdiction has a role to play in the prosecution of the most heinous crimes of international concern. Nevertheless, resorting to this very principle is still considered a political act which can and does affect international relations. True international justice can be achieved only through dedicated, systematic and consistent policy lines focused on preserving common fundamental values.

In this vein, we welcome the inclusion in the long term programme of the International law commission of the topic "universal criminal jurisdiction".

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of Bulgaria encourages all UN Member States to use the analytical tools at their disposal and to cooperate in order to complement the activities of international organizations in confronting perpetrators of atrocious international crimes and delivering justice for the millions of

victims around the world. We hope that compliance with international criminal law will not be left to chance and will not be disregarded or overlooked by stakeholders.

I thank you.