

Translated from Arabic

Comments of Qatar concerning General Assembly resolution 72/120 concerning scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction

The principle of universal jurisdiction is one of the fundamental means to prevent, suppress and criminalize grave violations of international humanitarian law in accordance with the four Geneva Conventions. The latter provide that High Contracting Parties have an obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or ordered to have committed, grave violations of the four Geneva Conventions and the first Protocol optional thereto, and to prosecute such persons, regardless of their nationality, or hand them over to another High Contracting Party. The fact that terrorism has proliferated around the world, posing a threat to the lives and property of civilians, gives the international community another reason to consolidate the principle of universal jurisdiction.

The legislative tools in force in Qatar are subject to effective legislative constraints. Of particular significance are the provisions of Qatari laws that extend jurisdiction beyond its national borders in a manner congruent with the spirit and nature of the principle of universal jurisdiction. Examples are Law No. 11 (2004) promulgating the Penal Code; Law No. 3 (2004) promulgating the Counter-Terrorism Act; Law No. 4 (2010) promulgating the Anti-Money-Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Act, and Law No. 15 (2011) on combating human trafficking. Qatar has also acceded to a number of international instruments that uphold the principle of universal jurisdiction, particularly the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Action should be taken to foster legal and judicial cooperation mechanisms in support of the principle of universal jurisdiction, and to adopt such mechanisms in the relevant forums.
