



United Nations Sixth Committee – 76th Session

Statement of Ireland

on the Agenda item 83:

"Crimes against humanity"

United Nations

New York

October 2021

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Ireland strongly supports the recommendation of the International Law Commission to elaborate a Convention on the basis of the Crimes against Humanity draft articles. It is time for the international community to address this significant gap in the international treaty law framework and contribute, in a meaningful way, to the fight against impunity.

This is the third occasion on which the draft articles concluded by the International Law Commission are before the Sixth Committee, and we must now take action on them. The admirable work by the International Law Commission deserves appropriate recognition and consideration by the Sixth Committee. The draft articles reflect the Commission's balanced and nuanced approach to this topic, and are the proper starting point to codify the law in this area.

Madam Chair,

It is imperative that we bear in mind that our end goal is not just the elaboration of an international convention. Rather, it is the creation of a national and international framework that prevents crimes against humanity, and effectively punishes the perpetrators of such crimes, where they occur.

Ireland also remains committed to the successful conclusion of the International initiative towards the development of a Multilateral Treaty for Mutual Legal Assistance and

Extradition in Domestic Prosecution of Atrocity Crimes. Ireland is supportive of both initiatives and continues to view them as complementary.

Madam Chair,

While Ireland still believes that an international conference of plenipotentiaries would be the preferred next step, we have reflected on the discussions over the last number of years and appreciate that some Member States are not yet ready for that next phase.

In order to address the concerns of such States, and to ensure that the momentum achieved by the Commission on this important topic is not lost, Ireland can support the proposal for the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee. This will allow for time for a detailed debate and discussion and allow for reflection on the next steps towards the elaboration of a Convention. However, for such an Ad Hoc Committee to be effective, its terms of reference must be clear and it must operate under a precise timeframe for the completion of its work.

Ireland urges other Member States to look constructively and flexibly on this approach in order to advance the Sixth Committee's consideration of this important topic.

Madam Chair,

Crimes against humanity threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Sixth Committee has an obligation to promote and maintain international peace and security, as well as justice and accountability. The elaboration of a convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity is one concrete step which the Sixth Committee can take towards this goal.

The international community must now take steps to fill this gap and elaborate such a treaty, in order to reflect the most abhorrent nature of such crimes and to express the universal revulsion which we, the peoples of the United Nations, experience when such crimes occur.

Progress proved elusive last year, owing in part to the difficult circumstances surrounding the pandemic. Let's seize the moment, commit to a clear timeline and work together to avoid any prolonged delays.

Ireland is ready to engage and to actively participate in the next steps on the path to a convention.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

ENDS.