

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



Rwanda Statement

Delivered by

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Under Agenda Item

“The Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction”

Before the Sixth Committee, 76th session

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Chairperson

RWANDA aligns herself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Africa Group and that delivered on behalf of NAM

Chairperson

Rwanda reiterates that the purpose of the debate on universal jurisdiction is not to question the legitimacy of the principle universal jurisdiction, but rather prevent its misuse and abuse. We must recall that when this agenda item was placed on the agenda of the sixth committee some countries had been victims of the abuse and misuse of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction, a trend that continued for some time. Manipulation does not serve justice, but rather affects the credibility of international law, puts international criminal justice into a credibility crisis and cooperation in the fight against impunity becomes even more difficulty.

Chairperson

To be clear, Rwanda fully supports the principle of universal jurisdiction within the context of fighting impunity, as well as the need to punish perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

Rwanda is supportive of mechanisms that can help fight impunity and afford justice to victims.

Chairperson

We must walk the talk when we speak about universal justice. Rwanda regrets to inform that several genocide fugitives are still enjoying safe haven in some Member States, including key genocide fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. We all heard yesterday in the general assembly, the outcry by the president of the residual mechanism regarding the lack of cooperation from member states to cooperate and apprehend or try genocide fugitives. There is no merit at all to allow and protect genocide suspects in your backyards.

Chairperson

In order to prevent abuse of the principle, agreement must be reached on specific safeguards and conditions for the assertion of universal jurisdiction. It should be exercised in good faith and with due regard to other principles of international law. In this context, because of the potential or disruptive effect of abuse and misuse of universal jurisdiction,

it is imperative that disciplines be established regarding regulation of the Universal Jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairman

In view of addressing confusion in the Universal Jurisdiction, African countries through AU adopted the African Model Law on Universal Jurisdiction over International Crimes to assist member states in adopting and strengthening national legislations on the prosecution of those accused of International Crimes. This model law offered Rwanda with a template for developing UJ legislation that suits our domestic peculiarities. The model law has the potential to ensure that our laws on UJ are harmonized in content, thereby minimizing potential clashes similar to those brought about by the UJ laws in other countries

Madam Chairperson

To conclude, my delegation reiterates the following.

1. There is a need to end the culture of impunity while at the same time establishing safeguards against the potential abuse and misuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction,

2. In cases where political manipulation is suspected, my delegation believes that there must be a system of review whereby an aggrieved party can appeal to review the decision of a judge issuing indictments and/or international arrest warrants against the leaders of another country,
3. While this review process is going on, individuals and States should be permitted to conduct their businesses normally until the review process is completed. Short of this, large and powerful states or political judges from those states may stifle or swallow small nations or its entire leadership or both. This has high potential of instability and negative effects on international law and order

I thank you