



Permanent Mission of Iceland  
to the United Nations

Statement by Ambassador Thórdur Aegir Óskarsson (DPR)  
on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden  
6th Committee, General Assembly 77, 06 October 2022, Agenda item 84

### The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels

*Check against delivery*

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M(r/s) Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden - and my own country - Iceland.

It should come as a no surprise that Nordic countries are strong supporters of the rule of law, both at national and international levels. Democracy and human rights are central elements of the Rule of law, which is a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, including the State itself, are accountable to the same laws that are equally enforced and independently adjudicated. Rule of law constitutes the ground upon which peace and prosperity can be built and maintained, both within and between States. Importantly, the rule of law involves respect for international law.

M(r/s) Chair,

The Report “Our Common Agenda” of the Secretary-General has much to offer to our work for the rule of law. We agree that the purposes and principles of the Charter of

the United Nations and international law remain timeless, universal and an indispensable foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The Report further tells us that international law, in particular international human rights law, underpins approximately 90 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals. This piece of information testifies to the importance of the rule of law for the human progress. The Report also contains a new vision for the rule of law. We fully support this ambition and agree with the assertion that justice is an essential dimension of the social contract. We also welcome the focus in the report on gender equality which sheds a light on how gender discriminating laws are still a problem in many parts of the world, including in conflicts. A topic and challenge very close to the hearts of all Nordic States.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on “Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities” that underlines the importance of transitional justice and anti-corruption. We cannot overemphasize the importance of these themes.

M(r/s) Chair,

During the global COVID-19 pandemic we have seen civil liberties curtailed to protect public health. Certain limitations in the enjoyment of freedoms may be justified if provided by law and necessary in a democratic society in the interest of *inter alia* protection of health, but never if the rules are applied arbitrarily. Furthermore, we have seen some unacceptable limitations of rights, safeguarded in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, under the cover of COVID-19 restrictions.

There is a concerning number of reported cases, where political pressure is put on judges - and the pandemic seems to have added to this pressure. Rule of law requires respect for the impartiality of the judiciary. When laws are promulgated, it is for the

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independent judiciary to apply them impartially and in accordance with principles of justice without the risk of being subject to undue pressure due to unpopular verdicts.

Rule of law is also the foundation for peace and orderly processes for solving disputes at the international stage. For instance, the prohibition in the UN Charter on the use of force is a fundamental norm of international law that must be observed consistently by all members of the UN, including members of the UN Security Council. Action in violation of the UN Charter, such as Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, cannot be accepted and must have consequences.

M(r/s) Chair,

The Nordic countries are staunch supporters of the rule of law. In spite of the burden of the pandemic felt by the entire globe, we must stand firm on the core principles of modern democracies. In times of emergency, the rule of law must not be weighed against other societal interests.

Lastly, we are delighted to inform you that Denmark has presented itself as a Nordic candidate for a seat at United Nations Security Council in 2025-2026, and in this specific context, will among many issues work for a world in which respect for rule of law constitutes a cornerstone of international life.

Thank you.