

*Permanent Observer Mission
of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لدولة فلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

13 October 2022

Statement by Loureen Sayej, Third Secretary, before the 77th Session of the General Assembly Meeting of the Sixth Committee on the Scope and Application of Universal Jurisdiction (Agenda Item 85)

Mr. Chair,

We align ourselves with the statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Impunity for grave breaches and serious crimes threaten international peace and security and undermine our international law-based order. Accountability is indispensable to preserve the rule of international law and to advance peace.

Despite decades of efforts in this regard, including the establishment of the International Criminal Court, victims still fear that justice is beyond reach and perpetrators still believe immunity is conferred.

Rooted in the Geneva Conventions and reaffirmed in international treaties prohibiting the most serious crimes, universal jurisdiction is essential to ensure the rights of victims to an effective judicial remedy, to combat impunity, and to promote deterrence. It is precisely the horrific nature of the crimes concerned that justifies such universal jurisdiction.

Universal jurisdiction is an established component of international law. It overcomes the jurisdictional gaps in our international legal order. It is a stepping-stone towards universal justice. We have the power, and indeed the responsibility, to promote, advance, and materialize universal jurisdiction, including by rejecting politicization of its mechanisms.

Mr. Chair,

The International Criminal Court is the first criminal court with universal calling. A project of 50 years in the making. Never before in history has an effort been made to bring within the scope of one international Court a universal response to countless crimes, spanning decades, across all continents, and building on a century of efforts to develop international criminal law.

Despite the magnitude of such a development and its innovative nature, the International Criminal Court lacks universal jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression.

Therefore, it is important that the United Nations bodies and States continue promote such universal jurisdiction.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine regrets the repeated political pressures to thwart efforts in front of both domestic courts and the International Criminal Court in the pursuit of justice for serious crimes committed against the Palestinian people.

Such politicization and double standards undermine the viability of courts of law as vehicles for international justice, truth, and fairness, and further undermine the rule of international law and the purpose of an impartial and unbiased international justice.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Palestine looks forward to engage in a discussion on universal jurisdiction, its definition, scope, and application, in order to advance its appropriate exercise, in accordance with the principles of international law, in service of justice for victims of the most serious crimes of concern for humanity as a whole.