

**Statement on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia by Elvira Cupika-Mavrina,
Legal advisor of Latvia to the United Nations on Rule of law**

New York, 16 October 2023

Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to address the Sixth Committee on behalf of the 3 Baltic States - Estonia, Lithuania and my own country Latvia.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the European Union.

The rule of law is not merely a concept, it is the bedrock upon which the United Nations was founded. It is a principle that transcends borders and cultures, binding us together in a common pursuit of a fair and just world.

At its core, rule of law serves as a safeguard against arbitrary rule, protecting the rights and freedoms of all individuals, fostering peace, and promoting development.

Rule of law ensures that those in positions of power are held accountable for their actions, curbing corruption and abuse. It provides a framework for resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful means, reducing the likelihood of violence and instability.

Unfortunately, one is still pursuing the rule of force instead of the rule of law. Russia's war of aggression against the sovereign nation of Ukraine is the most blatant violation of the UN Charter since the Second World War.

Currently, the unanimously adopted UN Charter, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the UN and the General Assembly resolutions affirming the importance of the rule of law is not just disregarded, it is completely undermined unless the international community reacts properly to ensure comprehensive accountability on individual level and state responsibility on international level.

We must work tirelessly to promote and support the rule of law from the grassroots to the international level, to end impunity and to ensure that justice is delivered without bias or prejudice.

The rule of law is preserved by independent and impartial judiciary, being it on international or national levels. Therefore, the Baltic States remain supportive of international courts, as core legal institutions.

We reiterated our commitment to strengthen the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC), including through providing financial support and human resources. We deplore all measures announced by the Russian Federation against the ICC Prosecutor and Judges involved in the issuance of the arrest warrant for Mr. Putin.

These unacceptable manipulations must be rigorously rejected to ensure the integrity of the Court. Russia's has also developed a habit of intimidating judges and officers of the law of other countries at national level, threatening judiciary for performance of their constitutional duty.

In conclusion, the rule of law guides us towards a more peaceful, just, and prosperous future in a complex and uncertain world. It is not a fixed destination, but a continuous pursuit that requires our unwavering dedication. The United Nations, with its global mandate, is uniquely positioned to lead this endeavor. The rule of law is not an ideal but a practical necessity to address urgent global issues, from climate change to human rights abuses, and promote justice, equality, and peace for all.

I thank you!