



**Sixth Committee, 78<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Item 83:**

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

Statement delivered by

CANZ

October 16, 2023

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and my own country, Canada.

The rule of law underpins the United Nations and the rules-based international order as a whole. This system is central to the maintenance of international peace, security, and stability. We also recognize the essential role that the rule of law plays within this system for the achievement of sustainable development and eradication of poverty, access to justice and accountability, and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. CANZ countries have always been and will continue to be strong supporters of the rule of law at both the national and international levels.

We recognize the fact that the rule of law and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. In this respect, we reaffirm our commitment to Our Common Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. We recognize the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 16, which strives to promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, as an enabler of the entire 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the important contribution of good governance, the rule of law and transparent, effective, and accountable institutions to sustainable development.

The rule of law is embedded in the United Nations Charter and other key multilateral instruments. These instruments are essential for just and effective governance as well as for maintenance of international peace and security. This is especially true at a time when we face challenges of an enormous scope, scale, and complexity. It is imperative that all fundamental rules of international law be respected.

The challenges we face are vast and ever evolving and are not limited to a single State or region. Some of these challenges are caused by actors who continue to act outside the limits of the rules-based international order and threaten the peace and stability of the international community as well as erode the independence of judicial institutions and threaten democratic systems. Some issues stem from new and rapidly developing technologies that create new ways for individuals to interact and connect but also bring with them new challenges for the protection and promotion of human rights and international law.

New and emerging challenges can be addressed through the application of the international law framework. Issues such as artificial intelligence and cybercrime and their implications for the respect for human rights; the emergence of non-traditional actors who pose a risk to global peace and stability; and ensuring the sustainable, responsible, and peaceful use of outer space present new questions for policy makers and legal experts, can and should be addressed through international law. While the problems we collectively face may be changing, our response must remain steadfast. The international rules-based system, with the rule of law at its core, must be defended.

While ensuring the strengthening of the rule of law at the international level is imperative for the maintenance of peace and stability, CANZ countries also call upon all States to recognize the importance of strengthening the rule of law domestically. People must be at the centre of justice. CANZ countries have been actively engaged in providing assistance for capacity building activities including through the support of legislative capacity in partner countries, the development of efficient and transparent legal systems and the promotion of effective governance, which includes access to justice.

CANZ countries call on States to work together to put an end to the practice of arbitrary detention of foreign nationals as a method to exert leverage over other countries. This practice undermines the rules-based international order. Moreover, all States must ensure the just treatment of citizens of other States in their judicial systems.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report, which provides a detailed account of the actions that have been undertaken at both the national and international levels to promote and strengthen the rule of law as well as the vital efforts of the United Nations to coordinate rule of law assistance. The UN system is instrumental in translating the rule of law into practical measures that contribute to the effective and inclusive functioning of justice institutions, accountability for violations of human rights and making justice accessible for all.

A crucial component in the rules-based international order is a system through which international disputes and accountability can be resolved in a peaceful manner. CANZ countries acknowledge the crucial work of independent,

professional, and recognized international courts and tribunals for the role they play in maintaining the rules-based international order. The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court are two of the institutions whose work is essential in developing and clarifying international law as well as contributing to the fight against impunity for violations of international law. CANZ countries remain committed to supporting the important work that these Courts do. We call upon all countries which have not done so to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and to ratify the Rome Statute.

Finally, CANZ countries emphasize the critical contribution of women and girls as agents of change for the rule of law at the national and international levels. Simultaneously, however, women and girls can be disproportionately affected by gaps in the rule of law and its application. Our efforts to strengthen the rule of law are more effective when they take a gender-responsive approach. We therefore propose that the sub-topic for this agenda item for the next session should be 'Women and girls and the rule of law at the national and international levels'.

As we continue to engage in work that promotes the rule of law and strengthens the rules-based international order we should be guided by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. CANZ countries will continue to allow this approach to guide our actions and encourage other States to do the same.

Thank you.