



**United Nations General Assembly 79th Session
Sixth Committee**

Agenda Item 80: Crimes Against Humanity

Statement of Ireland

Delivered by James Kirk
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– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Chair,

1. Ireland aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union and the statement delivered by Sierra Leone on behalf of a cross-regional group of states.
2. Ireland continues to support the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the International Law Commission's draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, as recommended by the Commission.
3. Ireland has long been a strong supporter of the international criminal justice system as a means of ending impunity for international crimes and thereby contributing to the prevention of such crimes and the maintenance of international peace and security. Ireland has sought genuinely to facilitate the pursuit of accountability for international crimes in a principled and consistent manner, by calling for and supporting efforts to ensure accountability for such crimes regardless of where they occur and who may have committed them.
4. Ireland strongly believes that we must now redouble our efforts to consistently ensure accountability for international crimes. The recent and ongoing horrifying levels of violence suffered by civilians in conflicts shows that it is now more important than ever that we reinforce our system of international criminal justice and make any necessary improvements to it.
5. One such improvement is the elaboration of a convention on crimes against humanity. As Ireland and many others have said since this Committee began its consideration of the draft articles in 2019, a convention on the basis of these draft articles would close a stark gap in the international treaty law framework governing the prevention and punishment of international crimes.
6. The draft articles are the result of commendable work by the Commission and extensive interaction between the Commission and the Sixth Committee. They have received

extraordinarily detailed consideration by the Sixth Committee in recent years. They were closely examined during last year's resumed session, when the majority of states was in favour of the elaboration of a convention. States then made extensive written comments on the draft articles, which were helpfully summarised into a report by the Secretary-General in advance of a further resumed session last April. There was then further detailed consideration of the draft articles during that second resumed session.

7. This Committee has plainly, in Ireland's view, given the draft articles adequate consideration. We are now ready to proceed to the elaboration of a convention on the basis of them. By agreeing to proceed to the elaboration of a convention on the basis of the draft articles, states would not be endorsing entirely the draft articles in their current form; they would merely be agreeing to use the draft articles as a negotiating text which could be amended as much as states see fit during the negotiation process.
8. Ireland has considered with great interest the comments made by states in writing and during the two resumed sessions. These discussions have helped us to further clarify our views on the draft articles, and have enabled us to decide that proceeding to the elaboration of a convention on the basis of them is the next logical step. Although some divergences of views remain on the precise content of the draft articles, Ireland is confident that these divergences can be resolved during negotiations on the elaboration of a convention. Indeed we have identified a number of the draft articles which in our view require amendment or further development and we will look forward to exploring these with others in negotiations. But we believe that we are ready now to move to that next stage.
9. Ireland further believes that we should proceed to that next stage as soon as possible. The appalling violence suffered by civilians in conflicts since we began our consideration of these draft articles, and which we continue to see today, shows that we must advance without delay to make this essential improvement to our international justice system.

10. We again thank the Bureau and Secretariat for facilitating extensive discussion of the draft articles during regular and resumed sessions, and all delegations for their thoughtful and constructive engagement to date.

11. Finally, we thank the Gambia and Mexico for preparing a draft resolution which if adopted would convene a conference of plenipotentiaries to elaborate a convention on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. Ireland has co-sponsored this draft resolution, and looks forward to discussing it with colleagues in the coming days.

Thank you.