



ICRC

**United Nations General Assembly, 79th session, Sixth Committee Plenary
Meeting on Crimes Against Humanity**

Statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

10 October 2024

Chair,

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) welcomes the international community's sustained collective interest and efforts to strengthen accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

In armed conflict, violations of international humanitarian law categorized as "grave breaches" under the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I, as well as other serious violations of international humanitarian law, amount to "war crimes." In accordance with its mandate, the ICRC supports states in the adoption of legislation providing for criminal sanctions for such violations, in line with states' obligations to respect and ensure respect for IHL. Investigating and prosecuting serious violations promotes respect for, and trust in, IHL and is an important tool against impunity. Furthermore, accountability for violations provides civilians with justice and strengthens respect for international humanitarian law. The ICRC emphasizes the role of accountability for such violations as a deterrent in future armed conflicts, preventing further violations of international humanitarian law.

Chair,

In this regard, the ICRC has a favorable view of the efforts toward a dedicated legally binding instrument on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity, negotiated on the basis of the Draft Articles on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, as adopted by the International Law Commission. It would welcome in particular a convention that emphasizes the protection of victims' rights and their access to justice and bolsters efforts towards preventing violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. It is the view of the ICRC that a dedicated convention on crimes against humanity would complement humanitarian protections during situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence.

To conclude, the ICRC invites States to support efforts towards constructive dialogue on strengthening the international legal framework on the repression and prevention of such crimes and encourages the elaboration of a legally binding instrument.

Thank you, Chair.