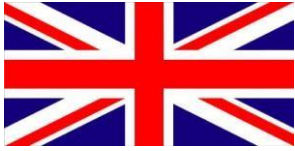


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United Kingdom Mission to  
the United Nations

One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza  
(885 Second Avenue)  
New York, NY 10017

[x.com/UKUN\\_NewYork](https://x.com/UKUN_NewYork)

# UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH COMMITTEE,  
UNGA 79, AGENDA ITEM 84

THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

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Delivered by Lieve Caron

*Check against delivery*

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Chair,

I would like to start by thanking the Secretary General for his report on efforts to promote and strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels. The United Kingdom is a strong supporter of the United Nations' important work in promoting rule of law at both the national and international levels, and the UN Rule of Law Unit in coordinating rule of law activities across the UN system.

The rule of law is integral to ensuring the prosperity and security of all global citizens. But rules that we have all worked so hard to maintain are being undermined. The challenges we face are increasingly global – whether the development of AI, the threat of climate change, growing conflict and inequality, or increased migration – and we need a functioning global order, underpinned by a strong commitment to the rule of law, to tackle them. We must seek to build and secure the long-term resilience of the rule of law.

Chair,

In the UK Prime Minister's first speech at the General Assembly, he emphasised the UK's commitment to the United Nations, internationalism, and the rule of law. **The UK Government is committed to upholding**

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**and promoting the rule of law and putting it at the heart of our work,** building on the UK's legal traditions and historic role in contributing to the development and promotion of international law and institutions. We will do this in three ways: by promoting and abiding by these principles domestically and internationally, working in partnership to strengthen the rule of law and accountability globally, and championing the international institutions that defend international law.

Firstly, we will **uphold and promote these principles both domestically and internationally.** The UK is committed to protecting and maintaining the independence of the judiciary and to respecting the decisions of courts. We are unequivocally committed to the European Convention on Human Rights. An impartial and independent judiciary, free to make decisions without external interference, is essential to the rule of law and is a foundation of a fair, peaceful and democratic society.

Secondly, the UK is **focusing on working in partnership with countries across the world to strengthen the rule of law and promote accountability for all.** The UK's legal sector has a long and valued history of building partnerships with international counterparts to share experiences and learn from each other. Through the **Rule of Law Expertise (ROLE UK) programme**, the UK works in partnership with

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stakeholders across the legal, judicial and development sectors to provide high-quality pro bono legal and judicial expertise in countries across the world, including in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and across the Indo-Pacific.

The UK supports the United Nations' work, outlined in the report, to advance accountability for violations of international law and other serious crimes. Through the **Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group**, the UK is working jointly with the European Union and United States to provide collective support to the Office of the Prosecutor General in Ukraine to document, investigate and prosecute atrocity crimes. This includes on-the-ground advice and training, as well as facilitating the deployment of financial resources, skilled personnel, and Mobile Justice Teams to atrocity sites, assisting Ukrainian investigators to gather evidence and map cases that can be used in future prosecutions. The UK champions the work and independence of institutions upholding international order, including the International Criminal Court in its role in investigating and prosecuting the most serious crimes. We also continue to support a **Crimes Against Humanity Convention** at the UN, which would aim to strengthen the legal framework for preventing and prosecuting atrocity crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence.

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Thirdly, at the multilateral level, we stand firm in our **commitment to the importance of institutions that defend the international rule of law**, to tackle shared problems which threaten the resilience of the international system. This includes the **Council of Europe**, which promotes the fundamental values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including through the commitments under the Reykjavik Declaration. And at the **Human Rights Council**, where the UK is standing for election for the period 2026-28.

The UK is pleased to announce that the UK National Group intends to nominate **Professor Dapo Akande** for election as a judge to the International Court of Justice in 2026. He is an outstanding international lawyer, who, if elected, will bring deep legal expertise and experience to the ICJ.

Chair,

The UK welcomes the focus of the SG report on **full, equal and equitable participation at all levels in the international legal system**, including a focus on the empowerment of women who have been historically under-represented in the international legal system. **The UK is committed to promoting women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation at**

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**the international level.** We promote women's political, social and economic empowerment across all diplomatic and development work, and champion the voices of women and girls, so that they can lead their development and better influence international action.

We welcome the commitment of the New Vision to people-centred rule of law initiatives, ensuring that work is informed by, and responsive to, the needs of individuals. **Access to justice** is a key component of a fair, effective, inclusive and efficient justice system, so that all groups in society can enjoy their rights equally. Without access to justice, individual rights are left unprotected. If left untreated, people's unresolved legal problems may give way to growing social frustrations and unrest, thereby exacerbating tensions and conflicts within societies. The UK is proud to champion **Sustainable Development Goal 16** to provide access to justice for all and build effective institutions. The UK is committed to working across the world, in particular in conflict-affected countries, to support democratic security sector governance, security for all, and transitional justice.

Full, equal and equitable participation should also apply to the **Security Council**. It has to change to become a more representative body, willing to act – not paralysed by politics. We want to see permanent African

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representation on the Council, Brazil, India, Japan and Germany as permanent members, and more seats for elected members as well.

As the Prime Minister stated at the General Assembly, together, in all our interests, we can change direction from the dangerous, destructive path we find ourselves on and turn instead towards the rule of law, cooperation, responsibility and progress. Towards peace.

Thank you.