

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



Statement by Rwanda on Universal Jurisdiction

Chair, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Rwanda has a profound interest in the fair application of universal jurisdiction, especially given our history with the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

This principle should effectively hold perpetrators of serious international crimes accountable, regardless of their location.

However, we are deeply concerned about its misuse for political purposes, which undermines its credibility.

Universal jurisdiction was meant to address impunity, yet we see instances where it has been selectively applied to target political adversaries or infringe on state sovereignty, damaging international relations.

Rwanda's concern is tangible; many genocide fugitives reside in countries that fail to act against them, disregarding their international obligations.

Notably, Felicien Kabuga evaded justice for decades before his arrest, exemplifying the international community's shortcomings in applying universal jurisdiction.

Rwanda supports universal jurisdiction but insists it must not be manipulated for political agendas.

We urge the international community to apply it fairly and transparently, ensuring it remains a tool for justice and accountability.

We call on states harboring genocide fugitives to fulfill their obligations by prosecuting or extraditing them. Failure to do so betrays the victims of genocide and breaches international commitments.

Rwanda is committed to the proper application of universal jurisdiction, which, if used correctly, can effectively combat impunity.

Finally allow me to offer few key steps to Prevent Misuse of Universal Jurisdiction

1. Foster International Cooperation: Create mechanisms for enhanced cooperation between states, including information

sharing and joint investigations, to effectively address serious international crimes.

2. Monitor and Report Misuse: Establish an independent body to monitor the application of universal jurisdiction and report instances of misuse, ensuring accountability for those who exploit the principle for political ends.
3. Encourage Extradition and Prosecution: Urge states to fulfill their international obligations by prosecuting or extraditing individuals accused of serious international crimes, ensuring that justice is served without political interference.

Chair and colleagues

By implementing these steps, we can safeguard the integrity of universal jurisdiction as a vital tool for justice and accountability, free from political manipulation.