

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Statement by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Before the Sixth Committee of the seventy-ninth session of General Assembly

The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction

16 October 2024-New York

Mr. Chair

My delegation has reflected its views and observations regarding the scope and application universal jurisdiction at the previous relevant meetings of the Sixth Committee. Our position on this matter has not changed and remains consistent. We would like to reiterate a few points in this relation.

It is understood that the main purpose of this concept is to avoid impunity. Nevertheless, Member States have not yet reached a consensus or a common understanding as to the conceptual and legal framework of universal jurisdiction and its scope of application. We have consistently raised our concerns regarding undue growth of the scope of the principle of universal jurisdiction. We reaffirm the view that it would be impermissible and a judicial chaos if all courts intend to exercise jurisdiction over international crimes, this would run afoul of the very purpose sought in the concept of universal jurisdiction. The principle of *aut dedere aut judicare* should not be equated with the concept of universal jurisdiction.

Along similar lines, we underline that during previous meetings of the Sixth Committee on the scope and application of universal jurisdiction caution was advised by a number of delegations against the unnecessary expansion of crimes under universal jurisdiction. The unwarranted expansion of crimes could lead to the potential application of such jurisdiction for politically-motivated purposes and could also undermine the role and the *raison d'être* of the said form of jurisdiction in combating the most egregious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. Therefore, resort to this complementary jurisdiction as well as consideration of its scope of application require prudent approach.

Mr. Chair

The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its concerns regarding the proclivity of few who tend to misuse universal jurisdiction as an arbitrary tool in pursuance of unjust political objectives in violation of the fundamental principles of international law. The Islamic Republic of Iran, rejecting such unacceptable approaches, reiterates that the selective and politically-motivated application of universal jurisdiction would be detrimental to the attainment of the objective sought in establishing such jurisdiction, namely, ending impunity.

Also, in the application of universal jurisdiction, that is to be invoked on the basis of treaty frameworks to which the concerned states are parties, due regard shall be had to the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention, and territorial integrity. Such applications should not encroach upon the principle of State sovereignty, as the hallmark of international relations and the principle of immunity of State officials, which is a significant manifestation thereof.

In sum, the Islamic Republic of Iran views universal jurisdiction as a treaty-based exception in exercising national criminal jurisdiction. In other words, the prevailing principle remains to be the principle of territorial jurisdiction, as the key to sovereign equality of States.

I thank you.