



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

BY

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FIRST SECRETARY

AT THE 80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**SIXTH COMMITTEE PLENARY MEETING ON AGENDA ITEM 81: CRIMES
AGAINST HUMANITY**

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Chair,

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone is honoured to take the floor on agenda item 81, Crimes against Humanity. We align our statement with the one delivered by the Distinguished Representative of **Cameroon** on behalf of the African Group.
2. We thank the chair and co-facilitators of the **first and second resumed sessions** for their excellent work and welcome the adoption of General Assembly **Resolution 79/122** as a historic step toward achieving a global convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity – and outcome broadly endorsed during last year's 79th session. We also take positive note of the co-facilitators' oral reports, as they were the foundation for the Chair's written report from the 79th Session (**A/79/470**).
3. **At the outset**, Sierra Leone would like to thank all Member States for their constructive support and engagement that made possible the consensus adoption of **Resolution 72/122** and the decision to convene a diplomatic conference process. This resolution represents a historic milestone: the decision to convene a **United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries for the elaboration of a convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity**.

4. My delegation was privileged to have delivered last year's **cross-regional joint statement**, endorsed by more than 80 States, in support of this important endeavour for all humankind. The regional breadth of this support reflects the shared determination of the international community to close the long-standing gap in the legal framework governing atrocity crimes and to advance a convention that speaks to the **collective conscience of humanity**.
5. We remain **gravely concerned** by ongoing crimes against humanity perpetrated with impunity around the world. This troubling reality underscores the urgency of our work and the need to forge a binding convention that will elevate crimes against humanity to the **same legal status** as genocide and war crimes.
6. **In this regard**, Sierra Leone welcomes recent developments that demonstrate progress in the fight against impunity. We take note of the ICC's recent conviction of **Mr. Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman** for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in **Darfur**, the first conviction in that situation and the first based on a **Security Council referral under resolution 1593 (2005)**. This judgment represents a milestone for accountability for atrocity crimes and underscores the imperative for a global convention on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. As we look head to the first session of the Preparatory Committee in January 2026, this precedent also reinforces the urgency of negotiating a comprehensive treaty that strengthens **prevention, redress, and accountability at both national and international levels**.

Chair,

In light of these **concerns and considerations**, and as we prepare for the forthcoming Preparatory session in January 2026, Sierra Leone wishes to advance and reaffirm the following points:

7. **First**, Sierra Leone attaches great importance to the **adoption of a clear and predictable treaty timeline**. Last year's consensus resolution foresees the first Preparatory Committee session in 2026, followed by a diplomatic conference in 2028, with the possibility of continuation into 2029. This timeline must be respected and advanced without delay. My delegation believes that **certainty** is essential to sustain momentum and to avert the risk of further stagnation in advancing this important legal issue of global significance. We stand ready to contribute actively to the Preparatory Committee and to consider **hosting the diplomatic conference sessions**, in order to ensure inclusive and balanced progress.
8. **Second**, Sierra Leone reiterates its strong call for the **explicit inclusion of slavery and the slave trade as crimes against humanity in the future treaty**. While slavery is referenced in customary international law, its omission as a standalone crime in the ILC's 2019 draft articles is a serious legal gap. Recognition in treaty law would carry immense **symbolic and practical importance**. For victims and survivors, explicit recognition affirms dignity and

provides a legal basis for accountability and redress. For the international community, it would mark a principled step in addressing historical injustice and ensuring that such atrocity crimes are never repeated.

9. **Third**, Sierra Leone supports the **establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism** within the future convention. My delegation believes that **implementation** is the true test of any treaty. A credible monitoring body, composed of independent experts serving in their personal capacity, would **assess compliance, issue recommendations, and crucially, provide capacity-building and technical assistance to States**. Such a mechanism, modeled on existing treaty bodies like the Human Rights Committee and the Committee against Torture, should be efficient, minimize reporting burdens, and foster cooperation rather than confrontation.
10. Sierra Leone also places special emphasis on **clear and workable provisions on mutual legal assistance, extradition, and capacity-building**. These are vital to ensure that States are able to investigate, prosecute, and punish crimes against humanity effectively at the domestic level. The future convention should also provide practical frameworks for **evidence-sharing, judicial cooperation, and support for strengthening national legal systems**, including the training of investigators, prosecutors, and judges. This will reinforce **complementarity** and ensure that the treaty obligations are fully implementable at the national level.

11. **Fourth**, the future convention must be based on the **principle of complementarity**, keeping national jurisdictions as the main forum for investigation and prosecution, with international mechanisms playing a supportive role. This approach, consistent with the Rome Statute, both affirms State sovereignty and strengthens domestic accountability. Sierra Leone's own experience with the **Special Court for Sierra Leone** illustrates the value of complementarity, where national and international actors worked together to deliver justice.
12. **Furthermore**, Sierra Leone underscores the need for **sovereignty safeguards, ensuring that obligations under the treaty cannot be misapplied as grounds for intervention in the domestic and internal affairs of States**. Explicit treaty language **affirming non-intervention**, while reinforcing obligations for prevention and accountability, will strengthen the legitimacy and universality of the Convention.

Chair,

13. **Equally important** is the role of **coalition-building**. Sierra Leone will continue to work closely with the African Group and foster cross-regional alliances, particularly on critical issues such as slavery inclusion and monitoring. These approaches were instrumental in achieving consensus last year, and they remain vital as we enter the **negotiation stage**.

14. **Finally**, my delegation believes that **civil society** participation must be prioritized. Survivors, victims' associations, and non-governmental organizations bring indispensable perspectives, technical expertise, and lived experiences. Our own national experience after conflict confirms that sustainable peace and accountability cannot be achieved without inclusive participation. We therefore encourage meaningful civil society engagement throughout the Preparatory Committee and the diplomatic conference, with particular attention to survivor-centric and gender-responsive approaches.

Chair,

15. Sierra Leone welcomes the **preparatory work** already undertaken, including workshops and reports that have enriched have our substantive discussions. We encourage delegations to continue engaging with transparency and inclusivity as we move forward. My delegation is convinced that success in this process will require **broad ownership and the highest level of commitment by all states**.

16. **In conclusion**, Sierra Leone reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the elaboration and adoption of a **comprehensive, effective, and universally acceptable convention** on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. The momentum achieved in 2024 must propel us forward through the Preparatory Committee and the Diplomatic Conference toward a landmark treaty, one that delivers justice, strengthens prevention, and advances the rule

of law, both the national and international levels. We look forward to working closely and constructively with all delegations in pursuit of these shared objectives.

I thank you.

