

STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE DURING THE PLENARY OF THE SIXTH COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 81: CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: 13 OCTOBER 2025

Thank you, Chair

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election, and to commend you for the able manner in which you are steering the work of this Committee.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement delivered by Cameroon, on behalf of the African Group, and will make the following remarks in a national capacity.

Chair,

We welcome the decision to convene a United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries in 2028 and 2029. Equally, we welcome the decision to hold two sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 2026 and 2027. These Preparatory Committees will be critical in laying the foundation for a meaningful, inclusive and consensus-based process. Zimbabwe stands ready to engage constructively, with a view to ensuring that the process is transparent, consensus driven and responsive to the concerns of all Member States.

Chair,

Zimbabwe approaches this agenda item with the weight of its own history. As a country that has endured the injustices of colonialism, land dispossession, racial discrimination and systematic dehumanisation, we believe it is imperative that our discussions are firmly situated within both historical and contemporary contexts.

The legacies of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and unilateral coercive measures are not relics of the past. They continue to shape the lived realities and development trajectories of many countries, including Zimbabwe. These realities must inform our approach to any multilateral legal process aimed at achieving justice and accountability.

It is for this reason that the African Union adopted a decision recognising slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, deportation and colonialism as crimes against humanity and acts of genocide against Africans and people of African descent. This decision is a vital step towards the long-overdue recognition of the injustices inflicted upon Africa and its people. It reflects our collective commitment to reparative justice, truth and accountability. The moral and legal imperative to address these historical crimes remains urgent.

Chair,

Crimes against humanity are among the most serious violations of international law. They are a vice that corrodes the fabric of society, leaving behind deep scars, intergenerational trauma and social instability. The international community has a moral and legal duty to ensure that such crimes are prevented, condemned and prosecuted wherever they occur.

Our efforts must be grounded in justice, and not in selectivity or political expediency. They must reflect a shared commitment to uphold the dignity and rights of all peoples, equally. This includes ensuring that justice is neither weaponised nor applied unevenly.

In this regard, Zimbabwe reaffirms the principle of complementarity as central to international criminal law. National jurisdictions must retain primacy in prosecuting international crimes, with international mechanisms playing a supportive role. Respect for sovereignty and the strengthening of national legal systems must be a priority in our collective efforts.

Chair,

We also underscore the importance of upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. These principles are essential to preserving international peace and security and must be respected throughout this process.

In this context, Zimbabwe expresses deep concern over the situation in Gaza. We condemn all attacks on civilians and reiterate our call for the full protection of civilian populations, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. Zimbabwe joins others in expressing the hope that the recently announced ceasefire and the return of hostages will hold, and pave the way for a permanent and sustained cessation of hostilities.

Chair,

In conclusion, Zimbabwe remains committed to working constructively with all delegations. We believe this process offers a unique opportunity to deliver a truly universal and just outcome, one that not only addresses the atrocities of the past, but also confronts the structural injustices that persist today.

I thank you!