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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى
الأمم المتحدة
نيويورك

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF ERITREA
SIXTH COMMITTEE
80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AGENDA ITEM 85: "THE SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF
UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION"
21 OCTOBER 2025, NEW YORK**

Mr. Chair,

Eritrea takes note of the Secretary-General's report A/80/274, in which we have reviewed the information and observations on the scope and application of universal jurisdiction, including the submissions from Member States and relevant observers.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished delegations of Cameroon on behalf of the African Group and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would now like to make the following brief remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item, which was included in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly and allocated to the Sixth Committee at the specific request of the African Group. It is the manner in which the application of universal jurisdiction has been sought to be used and abused by foreign courts, particularly in relation to African officials, that compelled the African Group to request the inclusion of this topic in 2009.

Regrettably, more than a decade and half later, the reality remains unchanged and so does the relevance of the agenda item.

Over time, we have witnessed certain States conveniently invoke criminal justice mechanisms to pursue their vested interests, while evading any kind of accountability for crimes perpetrated by their own nationals in other countries.

Eritrea categorically rejects the systemic and doctrinal obstacles to prosecution, where international law appears to be limited in its application or relevance to foreigners from States that are considered relatively weak or do not impose substantial political, diplomatic, or economic costs to the political branches of the prosecuting State. This approach does not only reflect sharpened and entrenched inequities within and between states, but it also reveals the disingenuous and pervasive double standards in the application of international criminal justice.

Unfortunately, the universal jurisdiction system lacks the appropriate means to address the root causes of the structural imbalances that perpetuate a hegemonic dynamic of difference between nations of various States.

It is in this context that my delegation notes with concern the increasing extraterritorial exercise of criminal jurisdiction by domestic courts, while its selective application remains persistent.

As highlighted in the African Union model on universal jurisdiction, such abuse must be rectified against the general principles of international law, including the sovereign equality of States, territorial jurisdiction, and the immunity of State officials.

Therefore, Eritrea would like to underscore that the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction must be deemed as complementary and not a substitute for national jurisdiction. The primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting certain crimes under international law should fall within the domestic jurisdiction where the alleged crime is committed.

Chair,

In closing, my delegation notes that previous sessions have shown that there remains an overwhelming divergence of views on the list of offenses that could be subjected to the application of universal jurisdiction, as well as the role of customary international law. We further note the significant difference in *state practice* and *opinio juris* on the identification of widely recognized rules for the application of the principle.

In this regard, Eritrea urges a cautious approach in defining the scope and application of this principle. We welcome the Sixth Committee's decision to establish, at its eighty-first session, a working group to continue a thorough discussion and to consider the question "how the principle of universal jurisdiction is distinct from other related concepts." We look forward to engaging in these substantive deliberations.

Thank you, Chair.