



**THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATION**

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**Statement by Mr. Rovshan Israfilov  
Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to  
the United Nations, at the Sixth Committee of the sixty-nine session of the  
United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 84 “The scope and  
application of the principle of universal jurisdiction”**

**15 October 2014**

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The discussions on the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction maintains its importance for the Republic of Azerbaijan.

We believe that the principle in question contributes to such a vital matter as strengthening of the rule of law on both national and international levels as well as protection of common values and maintenance of the international legal order. The validity of the principle is explained by the very nature and scale of the crimes involved, the severity of their consequences and unacceptability of the impunity of its perpetrators.

In recent years, important steps have been taken for the protection and vindication of rights and the prevention and punishment of crimes having an international dimension and scope. Indeed, ending impunity is essential not only for the purposes of identifying responsibility of individual perpetrators but also for ensuring sustainable peace, truth, reconciliation, the rights and interests of victims and the well-being of international community at large.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General in his report provided valuable information on the key points of the legislation and judicial practice in a number of states as well as recent

developments of international jurisprudence in this field. As we previously informed the Secretary-General, the national law of the Republic of Azerbaijan establishes the jurisdiction of its criminal courts to judge a number of acts covered by the scope of the universal jurisdiction as well as existing practice in this field.

With regard to the scope of the principle, we are of the view that although a number of international treaties provide for universal jurisdiction with regard to various offences, States practice is largely limited to such crucial international offences as war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace.

We believe that the primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting serious international crimes lies with the State possessing territorial jurisdiction, and that universal jurisdiction provides a complementary mechanism to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and impunity is eradicated when this State is unable or unwilling to exercise jurisdiction and no international judicial mechanisms can be invoked.

Concerning the application of the principle we would like to highlight that it is particularly important with regard to situations of armed conflict, including those of protracted nature and those involving prolonged foreign military occupation. Indeed, past wrongs left unpunished continue to impede the progress in achieving long-awaited peace and reconciliation and can even play a key role in the eruption of new conflicts and the commission of new crimes. It is clear that any accountability efforts must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches and preferences.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Azerbaijan stresses the importance of continued attention by the Sixth Committee to the principle of universal jurisdiction and encourages it to continue examining the topic in a transparent and inclusive manner. We believe that the establishment of the Working Group for further assessing the scope and application of the principle was an important step. Meanwhile, we also share the view expressed by several delegations on significance of a thorough legal study on the issue towards a better understanding of the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

I thank you.