



STATEMENT

by

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During the General Debate in the Sixth Committee
On the Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction
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Mr. Chairman,

As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, I take this opportunity to join my colleagues in congratulating you and members of the Bureau on your deserved election. I commend you, Mr. Chairman, on the able manner in which you have conducted these deliberations thus far. Please be assured of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout the work of the Committee.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of the African Group. We note the report of the Secretary General contained in document A/72/112, and commend those States who continue to submit comments for inclusion in the report.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset let me state the great importance my delegation places on this agenda item, "The Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction". The principle itself is an integral part of International Law, and it provides the realization of prospects of justice in places where it would otherwise be unimaginable. It is a principle that unmistakably reflects the understanding that crimes that shock humanity's conscience are, and should be a concern to humankind.

My delegation, however, wishes to reiterate that definition of the principle is NOT the issue before this committee. This agenda item was included with the sole purpose of defining the scope and application of this principle in the wake of

abuses of the same. My delegation wishes to emphasize the importance of this committee not losing sight of the task it has before it.

Mr. Chairman,

It is vital that the scope and application of universal jurisdiction be clearly and unequivocally defined to avoid abuse of the principle, which abuse could endanger international law, order and security. Even though, if applied appropriately, the principle is an effective way to combat impunity internationally, and to ensure protection of humanity's common values by waiving habitual rules of classical international law and appealing to the criminal justice of States, my delegation categorically rejects the misuse and abuse of this principle contrary to the sovereign equality and independence of States.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation reaffirms its concerns, not with the principle of universal jurisdiction, but with respect to its potential abuse or political manipulation, and emphasizes the need to avoid arbitrary or selective application of the principle, in order to avoid its manipulation or exploitation. We note the well-known and repeated criticism of universal jurisdiction, that it is open to misuse by States to usurp or contravene the sovereign integrity of other States, particularly that of African States.

We further highlight in this regard the various resolutions of the African Union summits, expressing grave concerns about misuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction, and that its application would lead to the violation of immunity of State leaders and officials. It is therefore the wish and hope of my delegation that

the continued interrogation of this issue will lead to progress of the issue at hand, and will lead this Committee back on track.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I reiterate the purpose of universal jurisdiction, which is to ensure that individuals who have committed grave offences, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, do not do so with impunity and are brought to justice. My delegation would like to reaffirm its commitment to contributing to this very important issue and in furthering dialogue in the hope of seeing consensus being reached with regard to the scope and application of this vital rule of International Law.

I thank you.