

General Assembly
Seventy-fifth Session
15 October 2020
Sixth Committee
Agenda item 81:
Crimes against humanity
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries

Mme/Mr Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway – and my own country, Sweden.

Crimes against humanity are among the most serious crimes under international law and their prevention and punishment is of concern to the international community as a whole. Despite being clearly prohibited under international law, civilian populations continue to be victims of such atrocities and perpetrators continue to act with impunity. We must redouble our efforts to prevent and punish these heinous crimes.

The draft articles adopted by the International Law Commission have significant potential for establishing a convention on crimes against humanity of great practical relevance to the international community. Among the three core international crimes only crimes against humanity lack a convention.

The elaboration of a Convention on the basis of the draft articles, as recommended by the ILC, would strengthen the international criminal justice system and could contribute to strengthening national laws and criminal jurisdiction in the fight against impunity for crimes against humanity. It would thus be an important addition to the international legal framework and promote inter-state cooperation and effective and efficient investigations of crimes against humanity.

Mme/Mr Chair,

The Sixth Committee has the opportunity to carry on the important work of the ILC by agreeing on an ambitious resolution providing efficient guidance on the way ahead. There is substantial support for the ILC recommendation to the General Assembly to elaborate a convention on the basis of the draft articles, either by the General Assembly itself or by an international conference of plenipotentiaries. This process must not be delayed. The Nordic countries continue to steadfastly support this work that is a timely and welcome contribution to the fight against impunity and stand ready to take the next steps.