

General Assembly
Seventy-sixth Session
13 October 2021
Sixth Committee
Agenda item 83:
Crimes against humanity
Statement by Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries

Madam 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. Yet, among the three core international crimes only crimes against humanity lack a convention. 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. The elaboration of a Convention on the basis of these draft articles, as recommended by the ILC, would strengthen the international criminal justice system and 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 efficient investigations of crimes against humanity.

Madam Chair,

The Nordic countries continue to fully support the ILC recommendation to elaborate a convention on crimes against humanity. This process must not be delayed any longer. There is substantial support among states to move forward towards the elaboration of a convention. However, a few states have asked for clarification on some of the Draft Articles. We are convinced that these concerns can be addressed through efficient, inclusive, transparent, and constructive intersessional discussions among experts. An Ad Hoc Committee with a clear mandate and time frame could provide a suitable format for these discussions. The aim should be to ensure progress.

The sixth committee should carry on the successful and important work of the ILC to strengthen the prevention and fight against impunity for these horrendous crimes, which are the concern of the international community as a whole.

Thank you.