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Statement by the Republic of Poland
at the Sixth Committee
on the Agenda Item 81:
“Crimes against humanity”

New York, 13th October 2021

Mr./Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Certainly, there exists a deficiency in international criminal law consisting of the lack of any convention on crimes against humanity (as opposed to those on genocide or war crimes). Thus, in our view a new Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity is urgently needed. The Draft Articles prepared by the International Law Commission constitute a very good starting point in this respect. In particular, they address the need to adopt national laws, establish national jurisdiction, and provide for interstate cooperation to punish such crimes, which are among the most horrendous atrocities imaginable.

It should be stressed that the Draft Articles rely extensively on provisions that most States have already accepted in widely-adhered-to treaties, such as the 1984 Convention against Torture and the 2003 Convention against Corruption. Poland believes that States ready to accept the need for a treaty to combat torture and corruption will find all the more reason to support a convention on preventing and combating the widespread or systematic murder of civilian populations.

Finally, it is to be noted that the Draft Articles are not in any way dependent or contingent on the Rome Statute, which Poland fully supports. Thus, the position of certain States with respect to the International Criminal Court, should not in any way be affected by, or influence, future work on the Draft Articles.

Mr./Madam Chair, Distinguish Delegates,

Poland supports the elaboration of a Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity on the basis of the Draft Articles, as recommended by the ILC, preferably by an international conference of plenipotentiaries.

Thank you