

Statement by Mr. Nasir Uddin, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York on the agenda item no: 83 “Crimes against Humanity” at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee, 13 October 2021

Madam Chair,

The agenda item “Crime Against Humanity” is an important addition to the work of the Sixth Committee. We thank the International Law Commission for drafting articles on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. We also welcome the commission’s recommendation to elaborate a Convention on Crimes against Humanity by the General Assembly or by an international Conference based on the articles drafted by the ILC.

Madam Chair,

Crimes against humanity constitute one of the gravest crimes against the human beings. Bangladesh itself has experienced occurrence of this crime during its war of liberation in 1971. Around three million civilians lost their lives in a nine-month long war, while over two hundred thousand women were subjected to sexual violence.

As a State party to the Rome Statute, Bangladesh remains fully committed to the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity. In conformity with its principle of ‘complementarity’, the Government of Bangladesh established the International Crimes Tribunals, Bangladesh in 2010 to punish the

perpetrators of the crimes against humanity and genocide committed in our territory against our people in 1971.

The Tribunal which maintained high standards of judicial process and fair trial continues to function as an instrument of comfort to the victims of the crime.

As a manifestation of our commitment to prevent and punish crimes against humanity Bangladesh has extended cooperation to the International Criminal Court in its efforts to ensure justice to the Rohingya Muslims who have been subjected to 'forced deportation' from Myanmar.

Madam Chair,

Crimes against humanity are one of the most serious concerns to the international community. When such crimes occur, it should become a collective responsibility of the international community to hold the perpetrators accountable through appropriate judicial means.

Allow me to make few points in this regard:

First, the primary responsibility of protection of its people from crimes against humanity lies with the state itself. A state must take necessary measures to prevent crimes against humanity within its own jurisdiction. In this regard the States also need to develop necessary legal framework to punish such crimes, when it occurs.

Second, crimes against humanity threatens international peace and security. The Security Council has the primary responsibility under UN Charter to restore and maintain international peace and security. It should, therefore, resolutely play its part to prevent this heinous crime from happening in any part of the world.

Third, as a state party to Rome Statute Bangladesh recognizes the role of the International Criminal Court to punish the perpetrators of the Crimes against humanity. Other international judicial entities, regional bodies and the national courts with jurisdiction to try crimes against humanity continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring justice and ending these crimes.

Fourth, However, we also wish to see a UN Convention on Crimes against Humanity as a reality. In this regard, the draft articles of ILC provide a solid basis to begin with. However, we must ensure that the negotiation process to codify crimes against humanity be carried out in a consensus-based, inclusive and transparent manner.

I thank you.