



SLOVENIA

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STATEMENT

BY

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Agenda item 84

The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Mr Chairman,

Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. In addition, we wish to contribute to this important debate in our national capacity.

Allow me to begin by welcoming the Secretary-General's reports under this agenda item. Strengthening and promoting the rule of law, including respect for international law, has been one of Slovenia's long-standing priorities. Slovenia recognises the fundamental role of the rule of law in international peace and security, sustainable development, respect for human rights and accountability for international crimes. Appreciating the far-reaching importance of the rule of law should constantly motivate us all to do more and to do better.

Mr Chairman,

Slovenia is pleased that this year's report, too, attests to the instrumental contribution made by the United Nations to strengthening the rule of law at the national level. Much of this work accords with my country's priorities. To give an example, women's empowerment is a thematic priority of Slovenia's development cooperation. In this context, Slovenia is currently providing preventive workshops for 900 refugee women in Lebanon and is engaged in a project in Jordan that focuses on empowerment through the education and vocational rehabilitation of Syrian refugee families.

Efforts to strengthen the rule of law at the national level would be of little avail without the international rule of law. Thus the UN's contribution to the rule of law at the international level is also of paramount importance. Respect for international legal rules and the fulfillment of international legal obligations are the very foundation of international relations based on the rule of law. Especially the decisions and awards by the international courts and tribunals must be respected and implemented.

International and hybrid courts and tribunals play a central role in the peaceful settlement of disputes. They have the jurisdiction and authority to decide on violations of international law, including with a view to maintaining their impartiality and independence. Any failure to respect the decisions of international courts and tribunals constitutes a failure of respect for the rule of law. This is Slovenia's general and principled position, which we follow also regarding decisions that present a considerable financial burden and do not necessarily accord with our arguments, views or desired outcomes.

Mr Chairman,

The most evident and dreadful consequences of the failure to uphold the rule of law include gross human rights violations and atrocity crimes. As a long-standing supporter of the International Criminal Court, Slovenia joins the Secretary General in encouraging all states that have not done so to consider joining the Court. We furthermore express our strong support for the activation of the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute this year.

Being cognisant of limitations arising from the ICC's lack of universality, Slovenia welcomes the recent steps taken to combat impunity. These include the establishment of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria and, more recently, the Security Council's authorisation of the establishment of a team to investigate acts that may amount to atrocity crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq.

As stated earlier, the far-reaching significance of the rule of law should motivate us to do more and to do better. Despite the progress made in the impact of UN assistance, including through the Global Focal Point, there is still significant room for improvement. This is why we welcome the Secretary General's farsighted approach in identifying concrete challenges and the need for enhanced efforts to improve the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of the United Nations' rule of law assistance.

Slovenia appreciates the Secretary General's call to Member States to engage in a frank and open dialogue on these critical issues. Let us seize this opportunity. To this end, we would welcome the inclusion in the next report of concrete steps to further improve the UN's rule of law assistance, along with an elaboration of this year's chapter V topics. In addition, Slovenia calls for a reflection on how to improve the format and inclusiveness in future discussions, with a view to providing conditions conducive to comprehensive deliberations and desired outcomes.

In this context, I wish to recall Slovenia's previous statement under this agenda item and restate our proposal that the rule of law sub-topic at the next General Assembly session be dedicated to the implementation of the rule of law dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Chairman,

Turning briefly to the issue of ways and means to further disseminate international law, Slovenia wishes to commend the UN efforts, through the UN OLA and its specialised divisions, for their important contribution.

Sharing knowledge of international law is indispensable for its effective and correct application. For this reason, Slovenia, too, actively contributes to disseminating international law. Treaties binding upon Slovenia are made available through the publically and electronically accessible Official Gazette, while the relationship between international and national law can be observed via publicly accessible national courts' decisions.

Particular focus is put on training and awareness raising with respect to international humanitarian law and human rights law. IHL is an important part of Slovenia's military and police education programme. With a view to promoting IHL and R2P, the United Nations publication *'Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: a tool for prevention'* was recently translated into Slovene.

Raising knowledge of international law is important also in the context of education. One of the key priorities of Slovenia in the area of human rights is the empowerment of children. Since 2005, Slovenia has been actively providing education on children's rights to almost 190,000 children in 26 countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa through its project and teaching materials 'Our Rights'. This teaching material has been translated into 22 languages. A recent example of an awareness-raising project concerned the rights of children refugees and migrants. In the spring of 2016, the Ministry of Foreign affairs drew up a worksheet entitled 'Children Refugees' intended for schoolchildren in Slovenia.

International law is further promoted through international conferences organised by Slovenia or in joint cooperation with academia. A further example of good practice is the International Law Series, a book collection established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation

with the Faculty of Social Sciences. The books published in the Series are available electronically, free of charge, and cover various topics, such as treaty law, the law of the sea and children's rights.

To conclude, the rule of law is the best guarantee for freedom, dignity and prosperity of all people. It is an essential prerequisite for successful cooperation between nations, peaceful settlement of disputes as well as stability, predictability and progress in international and bilateral relations. As such, it deserves our unwavering commitment. Slovenia stands ready to contribute to strengthening and promoting the rule of law at both the national and international level.

Thank you, Mr Chairman