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The rule of law at the national and international levels

Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/126](#), provides information on efforts to promote and strengthen the rule of law at the national and international levels as well as on the coordination of United Nations rule of law assistance from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

* [A/80/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report provides information on United Nations rule of law activities, in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution [63/128](#), and addresses, in a balanced manner, the national and international dimensions of the rule of law, as requested in paragraph 17 of Assembly resolution [79/126](#).

II. United Nations activities to strengthen the rule of law

In focus

Rule of law commitments in the Pact for the Future

2. The Pact for the Future, including the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, was adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024 (resolution [79/1](#)) to strengthen global cooperation towards sustainable development, peace, security, rule of law and human rights. It reaffirms Member States' unwavering commitment to act in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and seeks to reinvigorate the multilateral system to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities of today and tomorrow.

3. The rule of law is integrated throughout the Pact and its importance is emphasized in actions 7, 13, 17 and 46. The Pact further asserts the importance of the rule of law at the international and national levels, recognizing the interdependence of international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Significantly, and in line with its call to promote the rule of law and develop good governance at all levels, as well as the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, Member States committed in the Pact to fulfilling their obligation to comply with the decisions of the International Court of Justice in any case to which they are a Party and to uphold its mandate.

Rule of law at the national and international levels at the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations

4. In resolution [79/126](#), the General Assembly invited Member States to focus their comments during the Sixth Committee debate on the subtopic "The rule of law at the national and international levels at the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations", under the agenda item on the rule of law.

5. Since its inception, the Organization has played a fundamental role in the progressive development of international law and its codification. In the past 80 years, it has helped to develop multilateral treaties covering areas of global concern, including human rights, disarmament, penal matters, the law of the sea and environmental protection. The Secretary-General acts as the depositary for over 600 such treaties. Since 1947, the International Court of Justice has dealt with 200 cases, including both disputes between States and requests for advisory opinions on legal questions. In so doing, the Court was instrumental in implementing and promoting international law and upholding the rule of law at the international level. The International Law Commission, established in 1947, has similarly made significant contributions to international law, from the draft articles on the law of treaties (1966) to, more recently, the draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of disasters (2016) and on the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity (2019).

6. At the national level, the United Nations is providing rule-of-law assistance in over 150 Member States spanning every region of the world. These activities take place in all contexts, including development, fragility, conflict and peacebuilding (see

A/66/133, para. 2). The broad areas of support include access to justice, security and corrections, constitutional assistance, transitional justice, corruption, drugs and crime, and terrorism.

7. These and many other initiatives demonstrate the importance of the rule of law, which was succinctly captured in 2012 in the declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels (resolution 67/1). In the declaration, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the rule of law and its fundamental importance for political dialogue and cooperation among all States and for the further development of the three main pillars upon which the United Nations is built: international peace and security, human rights, and development. They agreed that their collective response to the challenges and opportunities arising from the many complex political, social and economic transformations before them must be guided by the rule of law, as it is the foundation of friendly and equitable relations between States and the basis on which just and fair societies are built.

A. Promotion of the rule of law at the national level

8. The present section offers examples of rule of law assistance programmes at the national level undertaken at the request of Member States.

1. Advancing security and justice

Effective, inclusive and accountable justice and security institutions

9. The Organization worked with diverse partners to support activities on effective, inclusive and accountable institutions in response to local needs.

10. In Chile, the United Nations provided technical assistance on police reform, sharing international best practices, updating legal standards and strengthening law enforcement capacity, including by supporting the implementation of a juvenile social reintegration service that focuses on alternative residential care.

11. In the context of the escalating conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations worked closely with the Government to enhance the protection of judicial and prison authorities and to secure judicial files and prison records, preventing them from being destroyed or lost. The United Nations also assisted the Government on prison decongestion, the transfer of high-risk prisoners and the protection of the vulnerable prison population, particularly women and children in conflict with the law.

12. In Djibouti, the Organization supported the development of a code of ethics for magistrates and court clerks to promote judicial accountability and helped to design a fully functional statistical information system that, once implemented, will enhance transparency, oversight and the effective management of the courts.

13. In Indonesia, the Organization conducted studies on restorative justice principles, considering the new amendment to the country's Criminal Code that emphasized moving away from punitive to restorative measures in the criminal justice system. The Organization also contributed to the development of the country's new Criminal Code.

14. In Mozambique, the Organization created a dedicated platform for cooperation between the criminal justice sector and the private sector. This reduced response times to data requests by the criminal justice sector from, in some cases, three months to 48 hours, enabling investigators and prosecutors to build cases promptly and increasing the likelihood of successful convictions.

15. The United Nations continued to support the development of the Somali legal framework by advising on the drafting of police laws. In October 2024, the draft Somali Police Force Bill was endorsed by the Cabinet and is under consideration by the Federal Parliament. The United Nations also supported the development of the country's first national justice sector strategic plan, which was officially launched by the Prime Minister on 7 December.

16. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and related digital technologies presents both challenges and opportunities for criminal justice systems.¹ The United Nations launched a specialized training curriculum on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in law enforcement, which was piloted with national agencies in the Caribbean, the Arab region and Europe.

17. The United Nations supported the development of national security strategic frameworks in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

18. The United Nations provided guidance and support to corrections authorities in Namibia and Thailand for the responsible use of digital rehabilitation technologies within criminal justice systems, to align national policies and legislation with human rights standards.

Security, crime prevention and armed violence reduction

19. The Organization continued efforts to assist Member States in preventing crime, reducing armed violence and strengthening human security.

20. In Ecuador, national and local authorities, in collaboration with civil society, strengthened their capacities to address escalating violence and prevent social conflicts, with support from the United Nations. At the municipal level, more than 40 local governments developed security plans using a participatory methodology, developed with the United Nations, that prioritizes social cohesion.

21. With United Nations support, the Ruta Segura project strengthened the capacity of 231 community members and leaders in one of the most insecure areas of Mexico to design a strategy that contributes to crime prevention and violence reduction. This resulted in the establishment of a community-based governance mechanism and the revitalization of public spaces identified with higher crime rates.

22. The International Criminal Police Organization, in cooperation with the United Nations, carried out an operation across 116 countries between 29 September and 4 October 2024 that led to the rescue of 3,222 potential victims of trafficking and the identification of 17,793 irregular migrants. During the operation, the United Nations convened in North Macedonia law enforcement officers and prosecutors from South-Eastern Europe to facilitate case identification and cross-border judicial cooperation and ensure coordinated responses against trafficking.

23. The Organization aided in strengthening national legal and institutional frameworks on firearms in 18 countries, bolstered the capacities of criminal justice practitioners in 23 countries to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate firearms trafficking and related forms of crime, collected data on illicit arms flows and brought together more than 500 practitioners to disrupt firearms trafficking in the Sahel region.

24. Through the Saving Lives Entity initiative, the United Nations supported nationally led small arms control and armed violence reduction activities in Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Panama and Papua New Guinea.

¹ See <https://unicri.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/Public-Perceptions-Police-Use-Artificial-Intelligence.pdf>.

Equal access to justice for all

25. Global strides towards ensuring equal access to justice were being advanced through wide-ranging initiatives supported by the Organization, as set out below.

26. In Bangladesh, the Organization continued to support the roll-out of the semi-formal dispute resolution mechanism, or village courts, providing affordable and accessible justice to populations in rural areas, preventing disputes from spiralling into violent conflict.

27. The United Nations supported the Expert Group Meeting on Equal Access to Justice for All, in Brazil, convening representatives from 30 Member States across the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe, in line with General Assembly resolution [78/227](#). Experts discussed a wide range of topics and measures relevant to ensuring equal access to justice for all in the criminal justice context and adopted concrete policy recommendations.

28. In South Sudan, the Organization supported the deployment of mobile courts to remote areas, some for the first time since the country's independence, which allowed for the processing of over 267 cases.

29. In Morocco, the Organization supported the development and implementation of a digital transformation strategy for the judiciary, which helped to reduce case backlogs and improve overall efficiency. Electronic services were also expanded to underserved regions, with a particular focus on making information more accessible through multilingual content and sign language.

30. In Namibia, the United Nations organized a regional workshop on enhancing equal access to legal aid in criminal justice systems for the Southern African Development Community, which recommended actions to help underserved communities to effectively navigate the justice system.

31. In the Philippines, the United Nations advanced justice sector coordination, automated case management to reduce court congestion and shorten pretrial detention and worked to increase access to justice for vulnerable groups.

32. The Organization supported the establishment of the national legal aid system in Tajikistan, which became fully funded by the national Government in 2024. With 55 legal aid centres operating around the country, access to justice was improved and free legal aid was provided to more than 11,841 people.

33. The United Nations also conducted a series of strategic dialogues across South-East Asian countries, including Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, focused on access to justice, criminal procedures, court proceedings, legal aid and defence, as well as the functioning of the prosecution service and the judiciary at large. The dialogues resulted in recommendations to strengthen criminal justice institutions and mechanisms and advance access to justice. Based on the outcome of the strategic dialogues, the Organization is supporting Viet Nam in developing a new law on justice for minors, in cooperation with the Supreme People's Court.

34. The United Nations continued to work to address statelessness. The Senate of Malaysia passed a constitutional amendment bill to allow Malaysian women to confer nationality on their children born abroad, thereby granting women the same rights as men to confer nationality on children. Montenegro amended its law on free legal aid to extend coverage to individuals seeking recognition of their stateless status. Turkmenistan resolved all known cases of statelessness within its territory, becoming the second country to do so, having granted citizenship to more than 32,000 individuals, including refugees and stateless persons. In October 2024, the Global

Alliance to End Statelessness, a multi-stakeholder platform to further enhance global efforts to tackle statelessness, was officially launched.

Security and justice for women and girls

35. Discriminatory laws deny women equal rights and opportunities, exclude them from the benefits of development and negatively affect their access to justice. Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls across the legal system is a human rights imperative and a priority for the United Nations.

36. In Afghanistan, the United Nations advocated for access to justice and women's participation in the de facto justice system amid continued restrictions and discriminatory policies and practices against women and girls. Unlike men, women defence lawyers are prohibited from acquiring licences to practice law. Following United Nations advocacy, some de facto judges allowed unlicensed women defence lawyers to represent clients in selected civil cases.

37. In Nauru, the Organization partnered with the police to enhance the response to and investigation of domestic violence, including sexual violence cases. This collaboration led to the development of a nine-step mapping process for investigating sexual violence and an assessment of the Domestic Violence Unit.

38. In Serbia, the Organization equipped 137 justice practitioners and social workers with skills to respond effectively to and process cases of sexual violence against women.

39. In Yemen, the Organization supported legal assistance to 261 women detainees and 41 children deprived of liberty with their mothers. While advocacy is ongoing for non-custodial measures, spaces for women and children were expanded, such as two women litigant units at local courts, a health service centre within a prison and two shelters for vulnerable women. The Organization further empowered women-led teams, consisting of women community leaders and women lawyers, who addressed 1,200 cases through alternative dispute resolution in partnership with security and justice authorities.

40. In 2024, the United Nations supported the adoption or revision of 77 national and local laws addressing violence against women, women's political participation and their economic inclusion. This includes amendments to the transitional justice law in Nepal, the prohibition of child marriage in Sierra Leone and the adoption of a 30 per cent quota for women's representation in parliament in Somalia. Legal protections for violence against women and girls were also enacted in Albania, Honduras and Mexico.

Security and justice for children

41. The United Nations continued to ensure security and justice for children through coordinated national strategies and legal reforms as essential components of comprehensive child protection responses.

42. The Organization co-convened the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence against Children, in Bogotá, which generated an unprecedented level of commitment to ending violence against children, with 110 Member States announcing pledges for child protection.

43. In Brazil, the United Nations supported the development of the country's first national strategy aimed at ending violence against children. The initiative brought together key sectors, including the judiciary and the private sector, to protect children from crime, drugs and violence, improving child protection frameworks.

44. In Viet Nam, the development of a new law on justice for children in collaboration with the United Nations, among other reforms, led to better judicial protections for children.

45. The United Nations developed an advocacy brief on addressing the deprivation of liberty of children in the administration of justice,² promoting the use of alternative measures, such as diversion and restorative justice, and an advocacy brief on ending the immigration detention of children.³ The Organization also developed a working paper on armed violence and programming in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴

46. The United Nations supported 156 countries in strengthening their specialized justice systems for children and protecting children from detention through diversion from formal justice systems and non-custodial measures according to international standards, including in Guinea, Honduras, Lebanon and Ukraine.

47. The United Nations continued to support Member States in establishing and implementing legislation that protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation, including through technology. It also launched a policy brief for Member States on protecting children from violence and exploitation in digital spaces.⁵

Security and justice for victims

48. The United Nations supports legal aid centres and specialized services for victims of crime and violence with a view to ensuring that victims receive necessary protection, including legal assistance, tailored to their needs and to improve their access to justice and safety.

49. The Organization has worked to enhance responsive policing through the establishment of such services in Pakistan and Tajikistan. In Egypt, it supported the establishment of a secure area at the East Alexandria court, which enabled women victims to access justice services in a safer environment, minimizing the risk of their secondary victimization and enhancing their protection from threats.

50. The United Nations continued to support Member States in South-East Asia in strengthening their existing mechanisms for the identification and protection of and assistance for victims of trafficking. It is also working to reduce the barriers that victims continue to encounter when accessing the criminal justice system, advocating for the expansion of the non-punishment principle, legislative amendments and building a robust system of legal aid providers. As a result of the various knowledge products developed by the United Nations,⁶ government and law enforcement partners in South-East Asia advanced their understanding of issues related to victims' rights in the context of the evolving transnational organized crime landscape with the objective of strengthening prevention and response mechanisms at the operational and legislative levels.

² See www.unicef.org/documents/deprivation-liberty-administration-justice#:~:text=This%20advocacy%20brief%20has%20been%20endorsed%20by%20the,and%20the%20key%20actions%20needed%20to%20address%20it.

³ See www.unicef.org/documents/advocacy-brief-end-immigration-detention-children.

⁴ See www.unicef.org/lac/media/50156/file/Armed%20Violence%20Working%20Paper%20-%20English.pdf.pdf.

⁵ See www.unicef.org/media/164421/file/Policy%20brief_Protecting%20children%20from%20violence%20in%20the%20digital%20environment.pdf.pdf.

⁶ See www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2024/Casino_Underground_Banking_Report_2024.pdf, www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2024/TOC_Convergence_Report_2024.pdf and www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2023/TiP_for_FC_Policy_Report.pdf.

51. The United Nations strengthened victim support mechanisms in Burkina Faso by developing a road map for supporting victims of terrorism and creating a handbook on psychological support. In Nigeria and the Philippines, the United Nations provided technical assistance to strengthen national legislative protections for victims and survivors of terrorism.

52. As a result of the Organization's project in Iraq on strengthening accountability, criminal justice responses and support for victims of terrorism, the Government of Iraq decided to establish a national victims' association, which will serve as a platform for long-term assistance to victims of terrorism.

53. Cybercrime disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. Focusing on Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda, a United Nations study explored barriers to justice for cybercrime victims and identified gaps and ways to enhance access to justice in the digital age.

Access to justice in situations of forced displacement

54. The Organization continued to address a range of issues for persons in situations of forced displacement and statelessness, including matters relating to obtaining and renewing residency permits, civil registration documents, such as late birth registration, and identification credentials, all of which are essential to achieving effective access to justice. The Organization also continued to monitor and provide legal and other support to prevent, and to protect persons in need of international protection against, refoulement and arbitrary detention.

55. The United Nations strengthened access to justice for displaced children by addressing protection risks and ensuring that the rights of children on the move who have experienced violence, exploitation and abuse are upheld. For example, the Organization, in partnership with the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, has assisted over 5,600 unaccompanied children in timely identification, release from immigration detention centres, provision of legal information and assistance, and support for reunification with their families.

56. In the Republic of Moldova, in partnership with civil society, the Organization helped to expand access to justice for vulnerable groups. Over 6,300 people, including refugees, benefited from legal counselling, assistance and information to address pressing legal needs and grievances.

Safety and security for justice system practitioners

57. Supporting the safety and security of justice system practitioners is a vital component of any robust judicial framework. The United Nations supported the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors with the launch of their guide to best practices in prosecutor protection and the generation of an implementation mechanism.

58. In Guatemala, the United Nations continued to document cases of criminalization of justice operators who investigated individuals for and convicted them of corruption and human rights violations, developed tools for the protection of justice operators and supported criminalized justice operators in exile, including advising them on the presentation of their cases before the Human Rights Committee.

59. In Kyrgyzstan, the United Nations delivered training on security for 27 front-line prison and probation officers that enhanced capacity among prison staff to identify and manage high-risk inmates and improved coordination between security personnel and psychological services.

2. Supporting efforts to substantially reduce corruption and other financial crimes

60. Efforts to combat corruption and financial crimes remain crucial for fostering transparency, accountability and the rule of law. The United Nations supported Member States in strengthening their legal frameworks, investigative capacities and international cooperation to curb corruption, recover assets and disrupt illicit financial flows.

61. In Egypt, anti-corruption training programmes for over 300 university students and professors equipped them with knowledge on ethical decision-making and business integrity principles.

62. In Nigeria, the Organization assisted the implementation of the Proceeds of Crime Act, leading to the recovery of millions of United States dollars in forfeited assets and the ongoing development of a national asset recovery database.

63. Across Eastern and Southern Africa, the United Nations-supported Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Southern Africa significantly enhanced cross-border asset recovery cooperation. As a result, over \$107.7 million in seizures and \$114 million in forfeitures was reported, along with 1,847 new money-laundering cases.

64. In Latin America, the United Nations provided technical assistance in Argentina to enhance asset recovery processes in organized crime cases and supported Honduras in drafting a whistleblower protection law.

65. In Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, the Organization provided technical guidance on asset recovery, leading to the seizure of illicitly acquired assets valued at over \$6 billion.

66. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the Organization provided technical assistance to develop comprehensive national anti-corruption strategies aligned with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

67. Efforts have also been extended to specialized sectors. In Sri Lanka, justice actors received training on governance and ethical standards. In Somalia, the United Nations facilitated electronic payment systems to enhance security sector governance and mitigate corruption risks. In the United Republic of Tanzania, anti-poaching regulations and enforcement strategies strengthened protections for endangered species.

3. Strengthening the rule of law in the prevention and countering of terrorism and organized crime

68. The United Nations continued to support countries in their efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the prevention and countering of terrorism and organized crime.

69. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations organized workshops to enhance the capacities of practitioners to investigate and prosecute cases of terrorist attacks and financing and complex money-laundering.

70. In Iraq, the Organization supported the human rights-compliant prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from conflict zones, advising on a new security structure for the Amal camp. It also established forums in Da'esh-affected governorates to promote dialogue between counter-terrorism forces and the Human Rights Commission of Iraq.

71. In Kyrgyzstan, the Organization strengthened the capacities of authorities to effectively utilize digital forensics in counter-terrorism investigations, including training on the proper collection and preservation of digital information and support for the digital forensic laboratory within the Ministry of Justice.

72. In Uganda, the United Nations supported the adoption of an intelligence-led and prosecutions-guided approach to investigating suspected terrorism offences. This

involved providing technical assistance to the police and public prosecutors to create operational guidance, develop training plans and enhance case management.

73. The Organization also supported Uzbekistan in organizing meetings of the Central Asia Regional Expert Council for the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees. These events facilitated the sharing of practices and the identification of ongoing challenges related to the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals repatriated from conflict zones.

74. The United Nations was also active in enhancing border controls in South-Eastern Europe, leading to better prevention of regional cross-border and transnational criminality through intensified controls of passengers and goods.

75. Efforts to combat organized crime included training representatives from Europe and the Pacific on developing comprehensive, gender-sensitive and human rights-compliant strategies and policies, as well as supporting 20 States and regional organizations in the development and implementation of strategies against organized crime, leading to the validation of such strategies by Finland, Mozambique, Senegal and the Pacific Islands Forum. The Organization supported countries in preventing and combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, promoting South-South cooperation and exchanges between criminal justice practitioners from West Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

76. The United Nations provided legal technical assistance to 27 Member States to establish passenger data normative frameworks for countering terrorist offences and other serious crimes, leading to new legislation being adopted in Malawi, Nigeria and the Republic of Moldova.

4. Advancing accountability

Accountability for violations of international law and other serious crimes

77. The United Nations continued to support accountability efforts for serious violations of international law across multiple countries.

78. In Burkina Faso, the Organization helped to operationalize a human rights consultation and early warning framework. The framework, which was formally institutionalized through a decree, is tasked with following up on allegations of human rights violations and abuses.

79. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations continued to support the Special Criminal Court, which issued its verdict in its second trial, convicting four individuals of crimes against humanity and war crimes and sentencing them to 15 to 20 years of imprisonment. The presentation of the evidence in two additional trials concluded in March 2025.

80. In Guinea, the Organization supported accountability efforts through trial monitoring and training on human rights, judicial administration, fair trial rights, victim and witness protection, and the handling of cases involving sexual violence, enforced disappearances, mass crimes and crimes against humanity. On 31 July 2024, the Criminal Court of Dixinn convicted eight high-ranking officials for crimes against humanity related to the massacre and mass rapes on 28 September 2009. One official has subsequently been pardoned.

81. The Organization worked intensively to support accountability mechanisms for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Libya. A report published in August 2024 detailed findings of gross human rights violations and abuses committed in and around

Tarhunah from 2013 to 2022.⁷ In October 2024, the International Criminal Court unsealed arrest warrants for six Libyan nationals alleged to have committed crimes in Tarhunah.

82. With regard to Nicaragua, the United Nations bolstered the capacity of civil society organizations to document and advocate for accountability regarding human rights violations, leading to increased engagement with United Nations mechanisms.

83. In the Sudan, the Organization engaged in a joint programme for 2025–2026 to enhance accountability and contribute to ending cycles of violence and building sustainable peace. The programme serves to mainstream human rights into United Nations efforts on accountability and transitional justice, strengthening the nexus between human rights, peace and development.

84. In Ukraine, the United Nations helped to strengthen the Office of the Prosecutor General's Specialized Unit on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, enhancing its ability to investigate and prosecute large-scale sexual violence cases. The Organization provided technical support to reform laws ensuring reparations for conflict-related sexual violence, aligning them with international accountability standards.

Implementation of Security Council resolution 2589 (2021) on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers

85. In 2024, 4 peacekeepers were killed and 50 injured as a result of malicious acts. In the Central African Republic, one individual was convicted for the killing of two peacekeepers, and the United Nations established a forensic laboratory to assist in prosecuting the perpetrators of attacks against United Nations personnel.

86. A database on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers was made available to Member States, as mandated under Security Council resolution 2589 (2021).

5. Supporting inclusive transitional justice processes

87. The United Nations continued to support transitional justice efforts in countries emerging from conflict.

88. In Colombia, the Organization facilitated youth engagement with the findings of the Truth Commission, helping young people to reflect on the root causes of conflict and propose peacebuilding initiatives. The Organization also supported the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, ensuring victims' participation in legal proceedings, including in cases pertaining to the recruitment and use of children. The United Nations continued its support for the Government and the Special Jurisdiction in their efforts to establish the conditions required for the implementation of restorative sentences expected to be issued in 2025.

89. In Guinea, the United Nations supported the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and assisted in drafting legislation on victim compensation for serious human rights violations.

90. In Liberia, the Organization supported national partners in designing rule of law and transitional justice interventions, contributing to the establishment of an Office for the War and Economic Crimes Court and strengthening legal frameworks for justice delivery.

91. In South Sudan, with the Organization's support, laws establishing truth and reparations mechanisms were enacted in 2024, fulfilling commitments under the peace agreement.

⁷ See www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/tarhuna-mass-graves-and-related-human-rights-violations-and-abuses-libya.

92. In the Lake Chad basin, the United Nations supported the completion of the regional study on transitional justice as well as the development of policy framework guidelines, promoting a coherent approach to justice and reconciliation.

93. In the Western Balkans, the Organization worked with regional partners to support war crimes accountability, improve victim support mechanisms, enhance gender-responsiveness and promote regional cooperation in war crimes investigations. With United Nations support, Montenegro adopted its first war crimes prosecution strategy, Kosovo⁸ adopted a strategy on transitional justice, and over 230 legal professionals across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo received training on war crimes investigations and trials.

6. Supporting constitution-making

94. The Organization continued to support Member States in facilitating inclusive and participatory constitutional reform processes, including in Armenia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. The United Nations advocated for women's meaningful political participation in ongoing constitutional review processes, including in Haiti, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

7. Environmental rule of law

95. The Organization undertook several environmental rule of law-related activities in the reporting period. These included organizing a webinar on environmental rule of law in the Caribbean in August 2024 for policymakers, legal experts, judges and civil society and developing the Law and Climate Change Toolkit.⁹

B. Promotion of the rule of law at the international level

1. Codification and development of international instruments, norms, standards and rules

96. As a major development in the reporting period, the General Assembly adopted a new multilateral treaty on 24 December 2024 known as the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crimes (resolution 79/243). This new treaty is the first convention on cybercrime adopted at the global level. It is set to open for signature and ratification in Hanoi in October 2025.

97. The annual treaty event was held in September on the margins of the high-level week of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, during which 25 States undertook a total of 32 treaty actions covering a range of areas, including privileges and immunities, human rights, international trade and development, transport and communications, the law of the sea, disarmament and the environment.

98. The International Law Commission held its seventy-fifth session.¹⁰ The General Assembly considered the report of the Commission on the work of its seventy-fifth session (A/79/10), as reflected in resolution 79/121.

99. At its fifty-seventh session, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) adopted texts concerning warehouse receipts, dispute

⁸ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

⁹ See <https://leap.unep.org/en/knowledge/toolkits/climate>.

¹⁰ See <https://legal.un.org/ilc/sessions/75>.

resolution, investor-State dispute settlement reform (e.g. Advisory Centre on International Investment Dispute Resolution) and automated contracting. There were nine legislative actions concerning UNCITRAL texts, including one accession to and one ratification of the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation.

100. The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea by San Marino in July 2024 increased the number of parties thereto to 170, and the number of parties to the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention increased to 153. The number of parties to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the Convention relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks increased to 94, following the accession of the Comoros in May 2025. The number of signatories to, and ratifications, approvals or acceptances of, the Agreement under the Convention on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction increased to 137 and 51, respectively.

101. The Organization's support led to the accession of South Sudan to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, reinforcing global efforts to uphold the right to nationality. In July, the United Nations supported the League of Arab States in the official launch of the Arab Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity,¹¹ aimed at improving access to birth registration, thereby preventing childhood statelessness, and strengthening legal identity rights, particularly for women. Also in July, the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics adopted the São Paulo Declaration,¹² outlining key measures to uphold the right to legal identity and prevent statelessness. Moreover, Latin American and Caribbean States adopted Cartagena+40: Chile Declaration and Plan of Action 2024–2034,¹³ a road map focusing on simplifying naturalization and nationality restoration procedures, establishing accessible statelessness determination procedures and removing barriers to birth registration.

102. The Organization began preparations for the convening of an open-ended intergovernmental expert group to take stock of the application and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in relation to crimes that affect the environment,¹⁴ to identify any possible gaps in the international legal framework against such crimes and consider responses to those gaps, including the possibility, feasibility and merits of any additional protocol to the Convention.

2. Promotion of international instruments, norms, standards and rules

103. Technical assistance activities form the foundation of the Organization's work in promoting international instruments, norms, standards and rules.

104. In the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea, the United Nations engaged in capacity-building, outreach and other activities with States and intergovernmental organizations (see A/80/70),¹⁵ including to promote better understanding of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction and prepare for its entry into force.

¹¹ See www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/las/2023/en/120608.

¹² See www.refworld.org/es/pol/inforreg/regorg/2024/es/149197?prevPage=/es/node/149197.

¹³ See www.acnur.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/Chile_Declaration_and_Plan_of_Action_ENG.pdf.

¹⁴ See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/CAE_IEG_2025.html.

¹⁵ See www.un.org/oceancapacity and www.un.org/bbnjagreement/en/capacity-building-and-technical-assistance/overview.

105. Activities under the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law, including its training programmes and the United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, a free online educational resource, continued to ensure access to high-quality training. Four training programmes in international law for developing countries or countries with emerging economies were conducted: the International Law Fellowship Programme and the United Nations Regional Courses in International Law for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.

106. The United Nations continued to assist States and other stakeholders, upon their request, with the implementation of law reforms based on UNCITRAL texts. Efforts focused on fostering a legal environment for digital economy and cross-border commercial dispute resolution, including investor-State disputes, and supporting micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. UNCITRAL Days series held across different regions also helped disseminate the Commission's work.

107. In order to advance the implementation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United Nations developed a comprehensive training manual.¹⁶ The document emphasizes, among other things, the need to achieve universal ratification of the Convention and advocates for strengthening global cooperation and response mechanisms.

108. In 2024, the United Nations, acting as the secretariat for the permanent follow-up mechanism of the Declaration of the G5 Sahel Countries on Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism in the Sahel (Niamey Declaration), co-organized in Rome the fourth high-level conference on the Niamey Declaration on the fight against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. Over 100 delegates from endorsing countries and regional and international organizations participated and shared progress made on the various pillars of the Declaration.

109. The United Nations promoted adherence to and effective implementation of international legal instruments against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism. It provided legislative assistance to six States to align counter-terrorism legislation with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism frameworks, and conducted workshops in Mozambique and Suriname and training in Cambodia and Tajikistan to promote compliance with the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. As a direct result of the work of the Organization, Ecuador, Mozambique and Seychelles became Parties to the Convention during the reporting period. The Organization also produced materials to assist Member States in implementing their international counter-terrorism obligations in line with human rights and rule of law approaches, including the non-binding guiding principles on preventing, detecting and disrupting the use of new and emerging financial technologies for terrorist purposes (S/2025/22, annex), "Evolving trends in the financing of foreign terrorist fighters' activity"¹⁷ and "Weapons management challenges in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Africa".¹⁸

110. The United Nations continued to support the development of the Ibero-American convention on access to justice, including through thematic dialogues with

¹⁶ See www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/training_manual_on_the_genocide_convention_nov2024.pdf.

¹⁷ See www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/cted_trends_tracker_evolution_trends_in_the_financing_of_foreign_terrorist_fighters_activity_2014_-_2024.pdf.

¹⁸ See www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/sites/www.un.org.securitycouncil.ctc/files/cted_analytical_brief_weapons_management_challenges_in_the_context_of_terrorism_and_counter-terrorism_in_africa.pdf.

more than 2,500 participants, a youth survey on access to justice, national forums and regional meetings.

111. The United Nations also developed guidelines to support Member States in the identification of risks associated with the collection and processing of personal data and potential mitigation measures to address these challenges while combating terrorism.

3. International and hybrid courts and tribunals

International Court of Justice

112. The International Court of Justice maintained a high level of judicial activity. The Court issued judgments on the merits in *Gabon/Equatorial Guinea* and on the preliminary objections in *Armenia v. Azerbaijan* and *Azerbaijan v. Armenia*. It issued an advisory opinion on the *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*.

113. The Court held public hearings in the advisory proceedings concerning *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change* and *Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. The Secretary-General submitted a written and an oral statement in the latter proceedings.

114. As at 30 June 2025, there were 26 cases pending before the Court.

Law of the sea tribunals

115. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea considered procedural matters in two cases: *The M/T "Heroic Idun" (No. 2) Case (Marshall Islands/Equatorial Guinea)* and *The "Zheng He" Case (Luxembourg v. Mexico)*.

116. Law of the sea issues were also considered by two arbitral tribunals constituted under annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: the *Dispute Concerning the Detention of Ukrainian Naval Vessels and Servicemen (Ukraine v. the Russian Federation)* and the *Dispute Concerning Coastal State Rights in the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and Kerch Strait (Ukraine v. Russian Federation)*.

International criminal courts and tribunals

117. The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals continued to carry out the residual functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, including the enforcement of sentences, protection of victims and witnesses, assistance to national jurisdictions, and management of archives. The Appeals Chamber granted a request for review by Gérard Ntakirutimana against his convictions for aiding and abetting genocide and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda but found that he had failed to provide a new fact that a witness had truthfully recanted his testimony.

118. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia continued to implement their residual functions and ensure that the Court's legacy is maintained, including through the continued declassification of legacy documents, the opening of a resource centre and the launch of a test version of a legacy website.

119. The Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone continued to monitor the enforcement of sentences of persons convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, provide support to protected witnesses and address requests for assistance from national authorities.

120. The United Nations continued to cooperate with the International Criminal Court in accordance with the mutual relationship agreement. Ukraine became the 125th State Party to the Rome Statute on 1 January 2025. On 12 May 2025, the Court's Registry received a declaration declaring Libyan acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction with respect to alleged crimes in its territory from 2011 to 2027.

Other international accountability mechanisms

121. The International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 continued its efforts to contribute to the accountability process and support the work of jurisdictions investigating and prosecuting crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, as reflected in its annual report to the General Assembly ([A/79/799](#)). To date, the Mechanism has assisted over 300 national investigations.

122. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) concluded its mandate on 17 September 2024, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#). Overall, UNITAD produced 21 case assessments and analytical reports across its investigative lines of inquiry. As of September 2024, 19 cases in third States, supported by UNITAD, had led to indictments, with 15 resulting in convictions.

123. As reflected in its annual report ([A/HRC/57/18](#)), the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar made important progress across its various investigations, including into crimes committed following the military takeover in February 2021. The Mechanism continued to cooperate with the International Criminal Court, national investigative authorities and the States Parties in the case of *The Gambia v. Myanmar* before the International Court of Justice.

124. The United Nations is supporting 13 human rights investigations and accountability mechanisms mandated by the Human Rights Council.¹⁹ The investigation for North Kivu and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was established in February 2025 following the deterioration of the human rights situation there. Information, evidence and findings of these mechanisms are shared with national and international courts to enable prosecution and other accountability measures for perpetrators of serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law and international crimes.

125. Responding to the recommendation of the General Assembly in resolution [ES-11/5](#), 43 States and the European Union had joined the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine as of February 2025. In January 2025, the Register began accepting claims concerning the death of an immediate family member.

C. Strengthening the administration of justice within the Organization

126. The internal system of administration of justice is built to guarantee the observance of the rule of law within the Organization and for its staff members. As at 30 June 2025, the United Nations Dispute Tribunal had issued 2,629 judgments and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal 1,547 judgments.

¹⁹ See www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-is.

III. Coordination and cohesiveness in United Nations rule of law assistance

127. The Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group is a high-level platform chaired by Deputy Secretary-General that sets strategic direction for the rule of law activities of the Organization. The Group was established by the Secretary-General in 2006 pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 60/1 and 61/39. In the reporting period, the Group continued to implement the New Vision of the Secretary-General for the Rule of Law.²⁰

128. The Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law is a United Nations joint mechanism formed in 2012 to coordinate efficient and effective delivery of rule of law assistance at the country and international levels. In the reporting period, the Global Focal Point continued to provide expertise and funding for joint initiatives and ensure the integration of rule of law assistance across the United Nations.

129. In addition to these cross-cutting arrangements, the Organization continued its coordination and cooperation in specific subject-matter areas, including through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Policing, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, the United Nations Network on Migration, the Global Task Force on Corruption, the Inter-Agency Task Team on Combating Discrimination in Law, the United Nations task force on the global study on children deprived of liberty, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the Inter-Agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, the Al-Hol Taskforce and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Transitional Justice.

IV. Concluding observations

130. The rule of law is the bedrock of multilateralism and a foundation for just and peaceful societies. By ensuring that international treaties, norms, standards and agreements are applied consistently and equally, the rule of law at the international level helps to promote trust among States. At the national level, it promotes trust in national governance structures by helping to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

131. The present report describes just a small sample of the assistance programmes that the United Nations system has delivered, as mandated or requested, in line with its unwavering commitment to promoting the rule of law globally. It is nonetheless a strong example of the impacts that such programmes can have as accelerators in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the Pact for the Future, including to advance international peace and security and respect for human rights.

²⁰ See www.un.org/ruleoflaw/what-is-the-rule-of-law.