



Statement
on behalf of the Republic of South Africa
by

Thabo Molefe, Legal Counselor
Before the Sixth Committee of the
76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Under Agenda Item 83
“CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”

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Chairperson

Approximately two weeks ago, on 24 September, South Africa celebrated Heritage Day. It is a day on which the many cultures that make up the diverse population of South Africa are remembered and honoured.

It is sobering to think that 27 years ago, this diverse country witnessed crimes of the most serious kind, crimes which by their nature targeted the very diversity that we now celebrate. Incidentally, 27 years is the same number of years Nelson Mandela spent in prison for defending the human rights of those very people against whom crimes against humanity were being committed.

The wounds caused by crimes against humanity underlie South Africa's support for the proposed convention.

We see much merit in elaborating a convention which will serve to ensure accountability for crimes against humanity. Notably the only category of most serious crimes which is currently not governed by an international convention.

South Africa still suffers from the wounds of its past and knows first-hand that healing cannot take place without accountability. A convention on crimes against humanity offers an opportunity to ensure accountability through effective investigation, prosecution and punishment.

I thank you