

This prohibition against the taking of hostages is found in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and in the two Additional Protocols to these Conventions adopted in June 1977 by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts. Other international legal precedents which stipulate similar prohibitions are: General Assembly Resolution 2645 (XXV) of November 25, 1970 which condemns, without exception whatsoever, all acts of aerial hijacking or other interference with civil air travel, and Resolution A/32/8 of November 12, 1977 which reiterates this condemnation.

In addition, the concept that all such acts should be condemned and made punishable, regardless of the motives of the perpetrators, underlies three international conventions which, in the Canadian view, provide the foundation of the work of the Hostage-Taking Committee. These are the 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, the 1971 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, and the 1973 New York Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. These three Conventions are based on a principle accepted by many governments in all parts of the world, which provides an option for the state to extradite the alleged offender or to prosecute him in its own courts. In the Canadian view, the convention against the taking of hostages should build upon these precedents without duplicating or disturbing the existing and accepted international legal framework.

It is clear from the report of the Hostage-Taking Committee that the basic questions have been discussed and progress has been achieved in the drafting of an international convention against the taking of hostages. In this connection, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the substantial contribution made to the work of the Committee by the Federal Republic of Germany through its submission of a draft convention contained in document A/AC.L88/L.3. In the Canadian view, this draft convention provides a firm basis for discussion of all the necessary elements for effective international cooperation against the taking of hostages. My government particularly supports the proposal in this draft for the necessary extension of the jurisdiction of national courts over those offences outside the usual territorial jurisdiction. The concept of universal jurisdiction, along with the provisions for the extradition and prosecution of offenders, obviously seeks to guarantee the offenders will not escape punishment for their acts, wherever they may flee.

If the work of the Hostage-Taking Committee is to proceed with the sense of urgency appropriate to the task entrusted to it, as reflected in Resolution 31/103, it will be important for it to concentrate on specific and concrete proposals. It will also be required to focus on a number of issues which were not resolved at the last session of the Committee.

One such question involves the proposal regarding the application of the convention to national liberation movements which was submitted by certain delegations at the first session of the Committee. Canada supports the principle of self-determination of peoples in accordance with the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. However, Canada does not support the use of