the exercise of universal jurisdiction by other States can serve as an effective mechanism to ensure accountability and limit impunity.

The ICRC welcomes the ever-growing increase in domestic prosecutions based on universal jurisdiction for serious IHL violations. According to the information available to the ICRC, since 2018, extra-territorial investigations in relation to international crimes alleged to have been committed in situations of armed conflict, have been initiated or resumed by national prosecution services in Argentina, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In addition, at least 15 trials are pending or are ongoing in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, and at least 9 judgments have been delivered by domestic courts on the basis of universal jurisdiction in Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

Such efforts demonstrate that universal jurisdiction is in fact part of the toolkit used by States to effectively address prevailing impunity gaps and move towards accountability for serious violations of IHL perpetrated beyond their borders, in past or ongoing armed conflicts. The ICRC hopes that more States will continue to join these efforts, which send an important message to victims and survivors that accountability is not just an aspirational goal.

Mr / Madam Chair,

As mentioned in previous statements, the ICRC continues, upon request, to support States both in strengthening their national criminal legislation and in establishing universal jurisdiction over serious violations of IHL. We also produce technical documents and practical tools on the application of universal jurisdiction, the purpose of which is to assist States to better understand this concept and find ways to translate it into their domestic framework.

The ICRC also still recognizes that there may be challenges to the effective exercise of the principle of universal jurisdiction but recalls once again that, although States may attach conditions to the application of universal jurisdiction to grave breaches or other serious violations of IHL, those conditions must be aimed at increasing the effectiveness and predictability of universal jurisdiction and not at unnecessarily restricting the possibility of bringing suspected offenders to justice.

We will continue to follow, with great interest, the discussion on the principle of universal jurisdiction in the Sixth Committee and in other UN forums. Finall00912 0 612 72 0 612 72 0 612 7ssion o