AFRICAN UNION (DRAFT) MODEL NATIONAL LAW ON UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION OVER INTERNATIONAL CRIMES
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This model national law has been prepared pursuant to concerns expressed in successive Decisions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Union, in Decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.199(XI), Assembly/AU/Dec.213(XII), Assembly/AU/Dec.233(XIII), Assembly/AU/Dec.292(XV) and Assembly/AU/Dec.335(XVI).

The intention and expectation is that Member States will adopt this Model Law and will legislate accordingly, in accordance with their national constitutional arrangements.

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Preamble

Recognizing that certain crimes are of such heinous character and of most serious concern to the international community that they must not go unpunished;

Recalling the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and in particular Article 4(h) which provides for the right of the Union to intervene in respect of grave circumstances namely genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity;

Mindful of the need for effective prosecution to be ensured by taking appropriate measures at the national level in order to enhance international co-operation;

Recognizing also that the primary responsibility for the prosecution of international crimes rests with States;

Now be it enacted by (Parliament, etc of the country) as follows:

1. Purpose

A law to provide for the exercise by (name of the country) of universal jurisdiction over international crimes and for connected matters and to give effect to its obligations under international law.

2. Definitions

Except where otherwise expressly indicated or where the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply throughout the law:

“Court” means a highest Court with originally jurisdiction; …


3. **Objectives**

The objectives of this law are to:

a) Put an end to impunity for crimes prohibited under this law, and prevent and punish such crimes;

b) Confer jurisdiction on the courts to try crimes prohibited under this law;

c) Define the jurisdiction of the courts over such crimes;

d) Define the crimes that are punishable under this law, and provide for the power to prosecute those responsible for such crimes;

e) Ensure fair trial of persons accused of such crimes;

f) Give effect to immunities enjoyed by foreign State officials under international law;

g) Provide for the extradition of persons accused of committing the crimes prohibited in this law;

h) Provide for mutual legal assistance and co-operation amongst States;

i) Provide for the punishment of the persons convicted of the crimes prohibited under this law; and

j) Provide for rehabilitation and reparation for victims.

4. **Jurisdiction**

4(1). The Court shall have jurisdiction to try any person charged with committing any crime prohibited under this law, regardless of whether such a crime is alleged to have been committed in the territory of the State or abroad and irrespective of the nationality of the victim, provided that such a person shall be within the territory of the State at the time of the commencement of the trial.

4(2). In exercising jurisdiction under this law, the Courts shall accord priority to the court of the State in whose territory the crime is alleged to have been committed, provided that the State is willing and able to prosecute.

5. **Power to Prosecute**

The Prosecuting Authority shall have the power to prosecute before the Court any person in the territory of the State who is alleged to have committed a crime prohibited under this law.

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6. Rights of an Accused Person
A person alleged to have committed a crime prohibited under this law shall have the same rights as those guaranteed to any other accused person in the State.

7. Witness Protection
The Prosecuting Authority and the Court shall ensure that any witness is accorded the necessary protection.

8. Crimes
The following serious international crimes are prohibited by this law: Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, piracy, trafficking in narcotics and terrorism.

9. Genocide

9 (1). Genocide shall be punishable under this law.

9 (2). For the purpose of this law, “genocide” means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group;
(f) Acts of rape that are intended to change the identity of a particular group.

10. Crimes against Humanity

10 (1). A crime against humanity shall be punishable under this law.

10 (2). For the purpose of this Law, “crime against humanity” means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

(a) Murder;
(b) Extermination;
(c) Enslavement;

(d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population;

(e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;

(f) Torture;

(g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;

(h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;

(i) Enforced disappearance of persons;

(j) The crime of apartheid;

(k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.

10 (3). For the purpose of paragraph 2:

(a) "Attack directed against any civilian population" means a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of acts referred to in paragraph 1 against any civilian population, pursuant to or in furtherance of a State or organizational policy to commit such attack;

(b) "Extermination" includes the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia the deprivation of access to food and medicine, calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population;

(c) "Enslavement" means the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children;

(d) "Deportation or forcible transfer of population" means forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law;

(e) "Torture" means the intentional infliction of severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, upon a person in the custody or under the control
of the accused; except that torture shall not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to, lawful sanctions;

(f) "Forced pregnancy" means the unlawful confinement of a woman forcibly made pregnant, with the intent of affecting the ethnic composition of any population or carrying out other grave violations of international law. This definition shall not in any way be interpreted as affecting national laws relating to pregnancy;

(g) "Persecution" means the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity;

(h) "Enforced disappearance of persons" means the arrest, detention or abduction of persons by, or with the authorization, support or acquiescence of, a State or a political organization, followed by a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the fate or whereabouts of those persons, with the intention of removing them from the protection of the law for a prolonged period of time.

(i) "The crime of apartheid" means inhumane acts of a character similar to those referred to in paragraph 2, committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime;

10 (4). For the purpose of this law, it is understood that the term "gender" refers to the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society. The term "gender" does not indicate any meaning different from the above.

11. War Crimes

11 (1). War crimes shall be punishable under this law when committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes.

11 (2). For the purpose of this Law, "war crimes" means:

(a) Grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Conventions:

(i) Wilful killing;

(ii) Torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments;

(iii) Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;

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(iv) Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;

(v) Compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power;

(vi) Willfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial;

(vii) Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;

(viii) Taking of hostages.

(b) Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts:

(i) Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities;

(ii) Intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects, that is, objects which are not military objectives;

(iii) Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict;

(iv) Intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects or widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and direct overall military advantage anticipated;

(v) Attacking or bombarding, by whatever means, towns, villages, dwellings or buildings which are undefended and which are not military objectives;

(vi) Killing or wounding a combatant who, having laid down his arms or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion;

(vii) Making improper use of a flag of truce, of the flag or of the military insignia and uniform of the enemy or of the United Nations, as well as of the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions, resulting in death or serious personal injury;

(viii) The transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or

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transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory;

(ix) Intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives;

(x) Subjecting persons who are in the power of an adverse party to physical mutilation or to medical or scientific experiments of any kind which are neither justified by the medical, dental or hospital treatment of the person concerned nor carried out in his or her interest, and which cause death to or seriously endanger the health of such person or persons;

(xi) Killing or wounding treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army;

(xii) Declaring that no quarter will be given;

(xiii) Destroying or seizing the enemy's property unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war;

(xiv) Declaring abolished, suspended or inadmissible in a court of law the rights and actions of the nationals of the hostile party;

(xv) Compelling the nationals of the hostile party to take part in the operations of war directed against their own country, even if they were in the belligerent's service before the commencement of the war;

(xvi) Pillaging a town or place, even when taken by assault;

(xvii) Employing poison or poisoned weapons;

(xviii) Employing asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and all analogous liquids, materials or devices;

(xix) Employing bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, such as bullets with a hard envelope which does not entirely cover the core or is pierced with incisions;

(xx) Employing weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare which are of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering or which are inherently indiscriminate in violation of the international law of armed conflict, provided that such weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare are the subject of a comprehensive prohibition;

(xxi) Committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;
(xxii) Committing rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions;

(xxiii) Utilizing the presence of a civilian or other protected person to render certain points, areas or military forces immune from military operations;

(xxiv) Intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law;

(xxv) Intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare by depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including wilfully impeding relief supplies as provided for under the Geneva Conventions;

(xxvi) Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of eighteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities.

(c) In the case of an armed conflict not of an international character, serious violations of article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, namely, any of the following acts committed against persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention or any other cause:

(i) Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;

(ii) Committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment;

(iii) Taking of hostages;

(iv) The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all judicial guarantees which are generally recognized as indispensable.

(d) Paragraph (c) applies to armed conflicts not of an international character and thus does not apply to situations of internal disturbances and tensions, such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence or other acts of a similar nature.

(e) Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts not of an international character, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts:

(i) Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities;
(ii) Intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law;

(iii) Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict;

(iv) Intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives;

(v) Pillaging a town or place, even when taken by assault;

(vi) Committing rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and any other form of sexual violence also constituting a serious violation of article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions;

(vii) Conscribing or enlisting children under the age of eighteen years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities;

(viii) Ordering the displacement of the civilian population for reasons related to the conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand;

(ix) Killing or wounding treacherously a combatant adversary;

(x) Declaring that no quarter will be given;

(xi) Subjecting persons who are in the power of another party to the conflict to physical mutilation or to medical or scientific experiments of any kind which are neither justified by the medical, dental or hospital treatment of the person concerned nor carried out in his or her interest, and which cause death to or seriously endanger the health of such person or persons;

(xii) Destroying or seizing the property of an adversary unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of the conflict;

(f) Paragraph(e) applies to armed conflicts not of an international character and thus does not apply to situations of internal disturbances and tensions, such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence or other acts of a similar nature. It applies to armed conflicts that take place in the territory of a State when there is protracted armed conflict between governmental authorities and organized armed groups or between such groups;

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(g) Using nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction

11 (3). Nothing in paragraph (c) and (e) shall affect the responsibility of a Government to maintain or re-establish law and order in the State or to defend the unity and territorial integrity of the State, by all legitimate means.

12. **Piracy**

12 (1). Piracy by any person or persons shall be punishable under this law.

12 (2). For the purpose of this Law, “piracy” means any of the following acts:

(a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:

(i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft;

(ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;

(b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;

(c) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).

12 (3). The acts of piracy, as defined in clause 9(2), committed by a warship, government ship or government aircraft whose crew has mutinied and taken control of the ship or aircraft are assimilated to acts committed by a private ship or aircraft.

12 (4). A ship or aircraft is considered a pirate ship or aircraft if it is intended by the persons in dominant control to be used for the purpose of committing one of the acts referred to in clause 12(2). The same applies if the ship or aircraft has been used to commit any such act, so long as it remains under the control of the persons guilty of that act.
13. **Trafficking in narcotics**

13 (1). Trafficking in narcotics shall be punishable under this law.

13(2). For the purpose of this law, each of the following acts shall be treated as trafficking in narcotics:

a) i) The production, manufacture, extraction; preparation, offering, offering for sale, distribution, sale, delivery on any terms whatsoever, brokerage, dispatch, dispatch in transit, transport, importation or exportation of any narcotic drug or any psychotropic substance contrary to the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961;

ii) The cultivation of opium poppy, coca bush or cannabis plant for the purpose of the production of narcotic drugs contrary to the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961;

iii) The possession or purchase of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance for the purpose of any of the activities enumerated in i) above;

iv) The manufacture, transport or distribution of equipment, materials or of substances listed in Table I and Table II of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances 1988, knowing that they are to be used in or for the illicit cultivation, production or manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances;

v) The organization, management or financing of any of the acts listed above;

b) i) The conversion or transfer of property, knowing that such property is derived from any offence or offences established in accordance with subparagraph a) of this paragraph, or from an act of participation in such offence or offences, for the purpose of concealing or disguising the illicit origin of the property or of assisting any person who is involved in the commission of such an offence or offences to evade the legal consequences of his actions;

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ii) The concealment or disguise of the true nature, source, location, disposition, movement, rights with respect to, or ownership of property, knowing that such property is derived from an offence or offences established in accordance with subparagraph a) of this paragraph or from an act of participation in such an offence or offences;

iii) The acquisition, possession or use of property, knowing, at the time of receipt, that such property was derived from an offence or offences established in accordance with subparagraph a) of this paragraph or from an act of participation in such offence or offences;

iv) The possession of equipment or materials or substances listed in Table I and Table II, knowing that they are being or are to be used in or for the illicit cultivation, production;

v) Publicly inciting or inducing others, by any means, to commit any of the offences established in accordance with this article or to use narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances illicitly; or

vi) Participation in, association or conspiracy to commit, attempts to commit and aiding, abetting, facilitating and counselling the commission of any of the offences established in accordance with this article.

13(3). Under this law, it shall be a criminal offence to possess, purchase or cultivation of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances for personal consumption contrary to the provisions of the 1961 Convention, the 1961 Convention as amended or the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

13(4). Knowledge, intent or purpose is required as an element of an offence set forth in paragraph 2 of this article may be inferred from objective factual circumstances.

13(5). For the purpose of clause (a) (i):

"Narcotic drug" means any of the substances, natural or synthetic, in Schedules I and II of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, and that Convention as
amended by the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; and
“Psychotropic substance” means any substance, natural or synthetic, or any natural

14. Terrorism

14 (1). Terrorism shall be punishable under this law.

14 (2). For the purposes of this Law, ‘terrorism’ means any of the following acts:

A. Any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party, the laws of the
African Union or a regional economic community recognized by the African
Union, or by international law, and which may endanger the life, physical
integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any
number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private
property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or
intended to:

1- intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution,
the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or
to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain
principles; or

2- disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to
create a public emergency; or

3- create general insurrection in a State.

B-Any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement,
attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person, with the intent to
commit any act referred to in sub-paragraph (a) (1) to(3).

C-Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs A and B, the struggle waged by peoples in
accordance with the principles of international law for their liberation or self-determination,
including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by
foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts.

D-The acts covered by international Humanitarian Law, committed in the course of an
international or non-international armed conflict by government forces or members of
organized armed groups, shall not be considered as terrorist acts.

E-Political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other motives shall not be a
justifiable defence against a terrorist act.
15. **Inchoate Offences**

An offence is committed by any person who, in relation to any of the crimes or offences proscribed by this law:

I. Incites, instigates, organizes, directs, facilitates, counsels or participates as a principal, co-principal, agent or accomplice in any of the offences set forth in the present law;

II. Aids or abets the commission of any of the offences set forth in the present law;

III. Is an accessory before or after the fact or in any other manner participates in a collaboration or conspiracy to commit any of the offences set forth in the present law;

IV. Attempts to commit any of the offences set forth in the present law.

16. **Jurisdictional Immunities**

16(1). Foreign state officials entitled to jurisdictional immunity under international law shall not be charged or prosecuted under this law, except in situations where these crimes are covered by a treaty to which the State and the State of nationality of such officials are parties and which prohibits immunity.

16(2). The jurisdiction of the High Court or national Court of equivalent jurisdiction in clause 4, and the powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the person in overall charge of public prosecutions in clause 5 shall not extend to such officials.

17. **Extradition**

17(1). The crimes prohibited under this law shall be extraditable offences.

17(2). This law shall be the legal basis for making and receiving requests for extradition in respect of the crimes prohibited under this law.

17(3). The State shall endeavour to expedite extradition requests, provided that fair trial standards and other procedural guarantees are assured.
17(4). Where the State does not extradite a person alleged to have committed a crime prohibited under this law, the Prosecuting Authority shall prosecute such a person, subject to jurisdictional immunities as provided for in this law.

18. **Mutual Legal Assistance**

18(1). The Prosecuting Authority shall request and afford other States, to the extent possible, the widest measure of mutual legal assistance in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings in relation to the prosecution of the crimes prohibited in this law.

18(2). Mutual legal assistance to be afforded in accordance with this clause may be requested for any of the following purposes:

a) Taking evidence or statements from persons;

b) Effecting service of judicial documents;

c) Executing searches and seizures;

d) Examining objects and sites;

e) Providing information and evidentiary items;

f) Providing originals or certified copies of relevant documents and records, including bank, financial, corporate or business records;

g) Identifying or tracing proceeds, property, instrumentalities or other things for evidentiary purposes.

18(3). The Director of Public Prosecutions or the person in overall charge of public prosecutions may afford other States any other forms of mutual legal assistance under this law.

18(4). The provisions of this clause shall not affect the obligations under any other treaty, bilateral or multilateral, which governs or will govern, in whole or in part, mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.

19. **Punishment**

Any person guilty of serious international crimes under this law shall be liable to punishment upon conviction to a sentence not less than (twenty) years.
20. **Entry into force**

This law shall enter into force at such time as the State or Minister responsible shall determine.

**ANNEX**

Psychotropic substances in Schedules I, II, III and IV of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971. Revised Tables including the amendments made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in force as of 23 November 1992

*N*-acetylantranilic acid Acetic anhydride

Ephedrine Acetone

Ergometrine Anthranilic acid

Ergotamine Ethyl ether

Isosafrole Hydrochloric acid

Lysergic acid Methyl ethyl ketone

3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone Phenylacetic acid

1-phenyl-2-propanone Piperidine

Piperonal Potassium permanganate

Pseudoephedrine Sulphuric acid

Safrrole Toluene

The salts of the substances listed in this Table whenever the existence of such salts is possible.

The salts of the substances listed in this Table whenever the existence of such salts is possible (the salts of hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid are specifically excluded)