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Seventy-fourth year

8675th meeting

Tuesday, 26 November 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Germany	Mr. Schulz
	Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	South Africa	Ms. Mogashoa
	United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/878)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/878)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017); and our civil society briefer, Mr. Kachi, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Kachi is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Iraq.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/878, which contains the text of a letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan: It is indeed an honour to be able to present the third report (see S/2019/878) of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD).

Since my last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8573), the Investigative Team has worked with some purpose and continued to ensure that the experiences and needs of the survivors of crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as their

families and victims, are placed at the centre of our work — and not simply by paying them lip service, but through demonstrable action of members of the Team. All communities, whether Shabak, Kaka'i, Shia, Sunni, Christian, Turkmen or Yazidi, have suffered the unbelievable brutality and cruelty of the most un-Islamic State called Da'esh. It is, of course, essential that their voices and experiences be heard as we conduct our investigations to build credible cases in order to ensure accountability.

In the past six months since my last report (see S/2019/407), I have visited and met with tribal leaders throughout Iraq, family members and survivors — not only in Baghdad, but in Erbil, Tall Afar, Mosul, Ninawa Plains, Diyala and elsewhere in Iraq — to ensure that those accounts are recorded and that the interactions of the Investigative Team can be as informed as possible in order to understand the experiences of the victims and witnesses and to ensure proper investigations.

Last week, I visited two displacement camps in Dohuk and I saw women and children who had suffered awful slavery and sexual abuse., as well as men, trying to live with dignity in very difficult conditions. The effects of Da'esh still linger. Not only have the crimes been endured, but communities are still grappling with the aftermath. The courage of the survivors gives one pause for thought because in their engagement with us, they had to speak and relive hell on Earth, which is what they experienced. They spoke with such engagement and willingness that it put into sharp relief the heavy responsibility that lies with all of us to ensure that their cries, their tears and their suffering are met with purposeful action and credible investigations.

It is, of course, the responsibility of all of us — the Security Council, me and the Team — to ensure that not only are words spoken, but that we have the collective stamina and focus to make sure that proper investigations and accountability are realized in practice.

As reflected in my report, over the past six months, the Investigative Team has sought to draw on this imperative for urgent action in the delivery of its mandate. One year after our deployment to Iraq, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Team is now fully operational. We had about five staff members when we first deployed in Iraq, and we now have 107 members. I am delighted that, as we have grown, we have managed to maintain a good gender balance — 53 per cent of our substantive and support staff are women, and more

than 50 per cent of our senior leadership positions are occupied by women. At the same time, I am glad to say that we have achieved geographical diversity — all regional groups of the United Nations continue to be represented in our Team.

The establishment of that core infrastructure has provided a basis for significant progress in the collection, gathering and analysis of digital, testimonial and forensic evidence with respect to the three core areas that I adumbrated in my previous report, namely, crimes in Mosul, in Sinjar and in Speicher — the Tikrit Air Academy. At the same time, we have ensured that we have a responsibility to meet quickly and meaningfully the requests that we have received from third States and other domestic courts.

By using the trust fund, we have also ensured that we have expanded the scope of investigations to make sure that all the diverse communities — regardless of race, religion, tribe or ethnic origin — that were targeted by Da'esh will have investigations carried out that focus on the crimes that they endured in order to ensure criminal responsibility based on evidence. The breadth of the field work conducted by the Team during the reporting period has been reflected in key evidence-collection activities, even in recent weeks. We have managed, for example, to complete 3D laser scanning of crime scenes, which will help bring to life, by way of modern technology, scenes that may be known in Iraq or unknown in third countries. It is also a very useful aid when one is speaking to a witness, who can, without going into areas that may still be dangerous and traumatic, actually position themselves in that 3D modelling in a way that will bring clarity to their accounts and hopefully assist domestic courts in assessing criminal responsibility.

We have continued to collect evidence and interview witnesses, including witnesses who endured sexual and gender based-violence, rape or slavery, as well as other witnesses, from Dohuk and elsewhere. We have managed to do that with full respect for international standards — as the Council requires of us — by way of our witness protection unit and our clinical psychologists, who we recruited with the kind assistance of the Netherlands. We have also garnered together the successful use of social media and reviewed some of the social media to put forward the photographs of individuals who appear in the Da'esh propaganda videos and elsewhere. We have received thousands of responses that have helped us identify the

names of those protagonists, which will further inform the investigations of the Team. We have also worked hand in glove with the Iraqi domestic authorities to continue to gather DNA samples from the remains of mass gravesites so that hopefully we can build cases, as well as identify the remains and, together with the mass graves directorate of Iraq, return them to their loved ones for burial, in accordance with their religious and cultural practices.

As I address the Council today, we have two field-based missions that are actively conducting investigations in the Ninawa governorate. In fact, at this moment they are investigating crimes that targeted in particular judges, religious clergy, journalists and health-care professionals — because, as we see, among many other aspects, Da'esh seems to have targeted some of the leaders, some of the informers of Mosul, when they strangled that city and then suffocated it when they took over completely. Based upon those activities, the Investigative Team has identified a number of individual ISIL members as primary targets for further investigations in relation to each of the areas that we have previously identified — the three investigative priorities that were detailed in my previous report. For example, just in relation to the crimes that targeted the Yazidi community alone, we have identified more than 160 perpetrators of massacres against the Yazidis, particularly in Kojo, and elsewhere, and we are focusing our work to build solid cases, hopefully, in relation to each of those that may be presented to domestic courts — Iraq, of course, is the primary intended recipient — but any courts that are willing and able to hold members of Da'esh accountable.

The progress achieved by the Team in the past six months has continued to build on our relationship of mutual support and collaboration with the national authorities of Iraq, and their support and assistance has been exemplary. I used that word when I had the honour of delivering my second briefing to the Council. I am glad to say that that has continued to be the case. Without the support and the real, meaningful assistance of the Government of Iraq, this hope and prayer for justice would fall on fallow ground. Only by that hand guiding us step by step can we achieve on the promise of justice that we all wish to see. Since my previous report, over the past six months we have conducted 203 field-based investigative activities with the direct support of the Iraqi authorities. These missions are planned and facilitated with the support of the National Operations

Centre within the Office of the Prime Minister. Once again, without that support, which has been critical, we simply could not move outside of Baghdad.

Our engagement with the Iraqi judiciary has been essential. I think, personally, that it is one of the key aspects that the Team has managed to move forward as dynamically as it has done. While I must pay my thanks to the Chief Justice, all the judges of Iraq who we have dealt with have made meaningful contributions to allow UNITAD, together with the Government of Iraq, to meet the requirements of justice. An example of that is in Mosul, where we have had quite extensive discussions with the Counter-Terrorism Court in Tallkayf. We have gathered thousands of pages of material pertaining to 37 case files, and further volumes of evidence are also being digitized. That will be an advantage and an asset to UNITAD, and it is also of mutual benefit to the Iraqi investigative judges, so that they can actually access the material that they have once it is digitized.

Similarly, in relation to Camp Speicher and the awful massacre of mostly Shia cadets at Tikrit Air Academy, we have had unbelievable support from the national investigative commission that the Republic of Iraq established to look into that. I will come back to that a little bit later with regard to how we have managed to work together and build cases. Following the unanimous renewal of the mandate of the Investigative Team in September, I have also reached out and tried to ensure even closer communication and understanding with the Government of Iraq. I am delighted to say that, after the renewal, the Office of the Prime Minister set up a new national coordinating committee within his Office — it is a new composition — and includes a representative of the Kurdish Regional Government. I think that the Government of Iraq should be applauded for that foresight as well. The mandate repeatedly talks about the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, and it is important that we have representatives from the entire territory of Iraq to make sure that we speak and work with one voice as effectively as possible. I met that new committee on 4 November in Baghdad and will meet with it again on my return on 10 November.

Our recruitment is moving at a good pace. We have completed a competitive recruitment process in accordance with United Nations rules, identified candidates for the posts that are to be occupied by Iraqi candidates and now we are at a working group-level stage of mutual consultations with the Government of Iraq to make sure that the Iraqi experts that we

recruit have the confidence of the Government of Iraq and, again, that we work together in concert to the greatest possible extent. That unity of purpose in terms of collaboration and cooperation on logistics and support for the investigations has been mirrored by the cooperation and assistance given by the President and the Prime Minister of the Kurdish Regional Government. In the same way, I can only describe their support as exemplary, which is extremely positive. They have also set up an intergovernmental task force, which was created in order to hopefully ensure the effective transmission of requests from the Investigative Team and an effective receipt of information as we try to ensure accountability.

A technical assistance programme has also been pursued. The mandate, of course, repeatedly emphasizes that we are required to share knowledge with the Iraqi members of the Team, who work on an equal footing with us, but also to share our technical knowledge and enhance some capacities. We have done so through a number of measures — not only exhumations and the identification of victims, but also with other trainings and assistance, whether related to drones, 3D laser scanners or rapid DNA machines. We have conducted trainings for all of those.

We have an important aspect coming up: we have received funding from the European Union. Together with the Government of Iraq, we hope to create a digitization programme that allows Iraq to have a digitized version of its records and information that are relevant to Da'esh crimes. It will also allow UNITAD to harvest those and build cases in accordance with international standards. In my previous report, I intimated that UNITAD would imminently be feeding into domestic courts, which we have done.

I am glad to report that we received a request from Finland, which had a case relating to the Camp Speicher massacre. It was before the court of appeal. With the full support and knowledge and real meaningful assistance of the Iraqi authorities — particularly the judiciary — we managed to have eight witnesses give evidence from the UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad straight into the court of appeal in Turku, Finland, in complete accordance with international standards. We saw not only prosecution witnesses, but also defence witnesses. It is a very real credit to my brothers and sisters in Iraq and the Government that it even extended to transferring people from custody to the UNITAD headquarters. The authorities in Finland have formally

expressed their thanks to the Government of Iraq for that facilitation.

Through this engagement, UNITAD has demonstrated its ability and willingness to respond to a requirement in the mandate to feed into courts in Iraq or those of third States. We are currently in receipt of three further formal requests from States to feed into domestic prosecutions that they are conducting in relation to Da'esh crimes. We have also received an assortment of additional inquiries from other States that believe that, with the assistance of the Government of Iraq, we may be able to move forward. Over the past six months, we have also received commitments of support from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, Sweden and Uganda. Again, without both the assistance of Government-provided personnel and contributions to the trust fund, the operational activities of UNITAD would be severely circumscribed.

The past six months have been characterized, in my view, by a real move forward from start-up to real operations. We have assisted in building case files and fed into third-country courts. We are refocusing our commitment to bring our communication with the Government of Iraq ever-closer, while maintaining the independence of our investigations, which, of course, is absolutely essential. I am profoundly grateful for the support not only from the Government of Iraq, but for the support and the trust that we are fostering and that we have been so generously given by survivors. I am pleased that today, at the initiative of the United Kingdom — and I thank you, Madam President — the Council will have an opportunity to hear from a survivor — Mr. Kachi — who is on screen at the moment. I would humbly suggest that this precedent is a very good one. I hope that, in future briefings, by the leave of the Council, other survivors from other communities in Iraq will also have the chance and the honour to address the Council for a few moments.

The President: I thank Mr. Khan for his briefing.

We do indeed have a practice of trying to get civil society briefers to come and address the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kachi.

Mr. Kachi (*spoke in Arabic*): My name is Kachi, a Yazidi from Sinjar, Iraq. I am one of the survivors of

the killings and mass graves in the in the devastated village of Kojo.

On 3 August 2014, the terrorist gangs of Da'esh took control over Sinjar and its villages, causing tens of thousands of the Yazidi population to flee to Sinjar Mountain. About 7,000 Yazidi women, children and men were killed and captured that day.

After that, the village of Kojo — my village — was besieged by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) for 12 days. It remained under siege until 15 August 2014. On that date a large numbers of ISIL terrorist elements besieged the village of Kojo. They assembled us inside the village school. We were around 1,250 persons, including women and children. As we entered the school, we were searched by ISIL members and our belongings were confiscated. They separated men from women. They took the men — around 400 of us — in groups to different locations on the outskirts of the village, towards the orchards and farms. Later, they began shooting at us, shouting *Allahu Akbar* — “God is the greatest” — while carrying Da'esh flags.

After they were done with killing our group, the ISIL members left for another place. I found myself under a pile of dead bodies. I was not dead, but I had minor injuries. When I opened my eyes, I saw three of my brothers next to me, but they were dead. My nephews and my cousins had also been killed. There were about 50 to 60 men in this group. I managed to run away for fear of being killed by ISIL, leaving behind the remains of my brothers and their children in that mass grave. I survived by God's will, to be a witness for the hideous crimes committed by the ISIL terrorist group against the defenceless Yazidis. After all the men were killed, members of ISIL kidnapped around 850 of the women, girls and children. They took them to the area of Solagh, to the east of the city Sinjar. The ISIL members separated some 77 elderly women, including my 90-year-old step-mother, from the rest of the group. The ISIL members killed the elderly women or buried them alive in a mass grave in Solagh area. They then took other women, girls and children, including my wife and daughters — Yara, Sara and Lara — to be sold in slave markets in Iraq and Syria.

I speak before the Council today as someone who lost some 75 members of my family and my brothers' families, all of whom were killed on that day at the hands of ISIL. The terrorist group exterminated the village of Kojo, which had 1,250 people. Only 19 people

survived those mass graves, including myself. I am one of those survivors. I continue, however, to suffer from the psychological aftermath to this day. Despite the fact that five years have passed, I still remember the remains of my brothers and nephews, and I can still hear them calling me. More than five years have passed, but I still hear my wife and daughters screaming as the members of ISIL kidnapped them. I still hear the crying of my daughter Lara, who was three-months-old when she passed away in captivity, owing to thirst and hunger. My life continues to be extremely hard.

I thank the Security Council today for establishing the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Investigative Team was established upon the request made by the Yazidi and other communities in Iraq, as well as by the Iraqi Government, to investigate and collect evidence related to the crimes committed by ISIL against the innocent people of the Yazidi and other communities in Iraq, hold accountable and prosecute those who committed these crimes. The ongoing work of the Investigative Team to achieve accountability and justice is therefore very important to me and to the entire Yazidi community and other communities.

Today, for the Yazidi community, it is not enough to hold those responsible accountable for their crimes and prosecute them. The international community must acknowledge that the crimes committed against the Yazidi community amount to genocide. I also hope that the Security Council will continue to support the Investigative Team in establishing a fair accountability mechanism to prevent similar crimes and genocide in the future.

I would like to thank the Investigative Team and Mr. Karim Khan for their efforts in overseeing the exhumation process of the mass graves, including in the village of Kojo, with participation of and in the presence of survivors, the victims' families, Yazidi clerics, the Iraqi Yazidi Spiritual Council, national authorities and others. I ask the Investigative Team to continue to listen to the personal account of the survivors and the families of victims.

Lastly, I believe that international recognition of the conduct of fair trials, based on irrefutable evidence, is a crucial principle to help us move forward. The importance of that is not limited to the Yazidi

community, but extends to all components of Iraqi society that have been affected by ISIL crimes.

The President: I thank Mr. Kachi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank Special Adviser Khan for being with us in person today. I want to begin my remarks by paying tribute to the 13 French soldiers who died overnight in a helicopter accident in Mali. Our prayers and deepest sympathies are with the families and loved ones as they mourn the loss of those most precious to them. We appreciate Mr. Khan's update on the collection of evidence by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) of the atrocities committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), as well as his efforts to fully staff UNITAD's team with international experts on Iraq.

The world witnessed ISIS target innocent Iraqis, including diverse ethnic and religious communities, in barbaric attacks. Lest we forget, ISIS is responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians. It desecrated churches, mosques and other houses of worship; it drove millions of Iraqis from their homes; it held hundreds of women as slaves, subjecting them to brutal assault. Those are acts of pure evil, and, as the Security Council is the organ dedicated to maintaining international peace and security, it is our solemn responsibility to speak the truth about what ISIS did, document this truth and answer the prayer for justice for those whose lives have been turned upside down by ISIS. That is what makes UNITAD's work so important. With the support of the Iraqi Government, UNITAD is moving quickly, carefully and determinedly to create a detailed record of ISIS' appalling criminality against Iraqis of all faiths.

To Mr. Kachi, I say that, in this season dedicated to gratitude and generosity, as Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, I cannot express to him how very brave his testimony was with us today and what a stark reminder that we cannot waver in our pursuit of justice. Nothing the Council does will replace his family, but by holding criminals to account for their heinous actions, justice can be secured for victims and their loved ones. The work of UNITAD aims to do just that for Mr. Kachi, his family and the many Iraqis who have endured experiences like that.

In September, the Security Council through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2490 (2019) endorsed UNITAD's one-year mandate renewal for the support of the Government Iraq. The mandate will provide accountability and, we hope, a measure for healing for all Iraqis. A crucial step that several Member States are taking in support of UNITAD's mandate involves voluntary contributions. The United States has contributed \$3 million in support of UNITAD's field-based activities over the past year, including mass grave excavations in Sinjar, Mosel and Tikrit.

Thanks in part to that contribution, UNITAD has assisted the Iraqi national authorities in excavating 17 mass graves near the village of Kojo, which is of special significance to Iraq's Yazidi community. We thank our partners from the United Kingdom, Germany, Qatar, Cyprus, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, the European Union, Denmark, Sweden, Australia and Uganda for their voluntary contributions, and we urge other Member States to do their part to show the international community's support for the pursuit of justice on behalf of all the victims in Iraq — the Yazidis, the Christians and Shia and Sunni Muslims and the many others who have suffered at the hands of ISIS.

UNITAD's continued cooperation and coordination with Iraq's political, judicial, religious and societal leaders are essential for the successful implementation of its mandate. For example, this past year, utilizing existing evidence held by Iraqi authorities greatly improved the team's ability to pursue its mandate. In return, UNITAD is providing technical support to Iraqi authorities for mass-grave excavations, DNA analysis and the archiving of evidence documenting atrocities committed by ISIS. Additionally, UNITAD has demonstrated the value of its work by directly supporting third-country criminal proceedings against members of ISIS, which is an early indicator that UNITAD will successfully use its current work in future prosecutions, including those in Iraq.

When we witness actions that can only be described as evil, it is our responsibility to name it for what it is — it is hell on Earth — and we need to condemn it. But that is not enough: we must also be clear and forceful in stating that no perpetrator will ever be above the law, that we will be relentless in the pursuit of justice for the victims of ISIS and that we will never fail to live up to our duty to fight for the dignity of all people, most especially the weak and vulnerable.

As Special Adviser Khan powerfully just stated, the Council carries a heavy responsibility to ensure that the cries, tears and suffering of the victims, including those in Duhok and across Iraq, are met with powerful action. We again thank the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government for their support of UNITAD's mandate, and we commit today to working with all Council members to ensure that the mandate is fulfilled swiftly and effectively.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Let me also start by expressing our sincere condolences with respect to the 13 French soldiers who tragically lost their lives in Mali. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and the people of France.

Turning to today's theme and this morning's Security Council briefing, I would like to begin by sincerely thanking Mr. Kachi for his powerful and stark reminder of the horrific crimes and atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). I also thank Special Adviser Khan for his briefing and offer a more general thanks to him and his team for their hard work in supporting Iraq's justice system so as to hold perpetrators accountable and deliver justice.

The importance of accountability for reconciliation in a society in a post-conflict situation cannot be overestimated and is absolutely crucial. The protection of human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law, which go along with the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) are equally key to achieving this objective.

We commend Mr. Khan and his team for the substantial expansion of their work over the past six months, which has focused on the three instances of particularly horrific crimes committed by ISIL: first, the attacks committed against the Yazidi community in Sinjar in August 2014; secondly, the crimes committed in Mosul between 2014 and 2016, including the execution of members of religious minorities, crimes involving sexual and gender-based violence and crimes against children; and thirdly, the mass killings of unarmed Iraqi Air Force cadets from Tikrit in June 2014. We highly welcome the fact that the investigative activities have also been expanded to include crimes against Christian, Kaka'i, Shabak, Sunni and Turkmen communities.

Germany is encouraged by the fact that the exchange of information and support for the prosecution of ISIL

crimes in other national jurisdictions is growing and bearing fruit. I would like to thank in particular the Investigative Team for entering into a fruitful exchange with German authorities with regard to ongoing investigations. Germany actively supports the work of UNITAD and has dispatched experienced personnel to the Investigative Team, in addition to the financial support that we provide for the Investigative Team. On a more general note, I would like to recall that building collective support for investigative mechanisms, such as UNITAD, is therefore one of the aims of the alliance against impunity that Foreign Minister Maas initiated during the high-level week of the General Assembly in September (see A/74/PV.6).

Before concluding, let me also welcome the commitment of the Iraqi Government to pursuing justice and accountability. Justice is indispensable for national reconciliation and a peaceful and stable future. We are pleased that cooperation between the Iraqi Government and UNITAD is going very well and that it is receiving support from the highest political level.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Special Adviser Khan and Mr. Kachi for their briefings; I especially appreciate Mr. Kachi's courage as he spoke of crimes committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We express our full solidarity with the Yazidi community in the face of the heinous crimes committed against them.

Kuwait supports the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) to achieve justice and hold the responsible accountable. We commend the progress that the Investigative Team has made with its international and national members, and we hope that it will continue its work, in close coordination with the Iraqi Government, from the preparations stage to the implementation of its mandate with a clear strategy, by gathering all criminal evidence from mass graves and the testimonies of witnesses and survivors, protecting them, and securing physical and digital documentary evidence, in order to achieve the goals set out in its mandate and terms of reference.

That United Nations mechanism is of great importance in the context of comprehensive international measures to combat terrorism. It seeks to render justice in order to provide redress for victims and survivors and deter terrorists by holding members of

that terrorist organization accountable for their crimes, with a view to setting an example for others in order to prevent these heinous acts from happening elsewhere. The mechanism sends a very important message to Iraq that the international community has not forgotten and will not forget the atrocities committed by terrorist organizations against the people of Iraq — atrocities that violate international law and international humanitarian law. It also underscores full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory, pursuant to national legislation and in accordance with tangible evidence collected by the Investigative Team, without interference, in the pursuit of justice. We also underscore the importance for the Investigative Team to implement its mandate consistent with other United Nations and international community mechanisms related to counter terrorism so as to prevent duplication of efforts.

Terrorism, regardless of its forms and definitions, is the common enemy of humankind and international security. It is one of the gravest threats today with cross-border effects, and therefore no country can face it alone. Eradicating all forms of terrorism, with the support and assistance of the United Nations and friends and partners in the international community, is an international responsibility. We need today to address the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism and cut off the supply lines of extremist ideologies and their culture, which often target youth and use them to serve these criminal acts, preventing them from contributing to the development of their communities.

On a related matter, Kuwait strives to strengthen international measures to combat terrorism. For example, we are part of the Global Coalition against Da'esh and we co-chair the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group, together with the Netherlands and Turkey, under resolution 2178 (2014). We hope that all States will uphold their responsibility in that context, including the repatriation of their foreign terrorist fighters. Much work remains to be done in the same international and unified spirit to develop and adjust our efforts, which must be flexible and able to counter and thwart Da'esh's schemes.

To conclude, we agree with the Special Adviser that the brutality of Da'esh's crimes has not undermined Iraq's unity but rather strengthened it. We once again commend the Government and people of Iraq for their unity, determination and resolve, which have contributed to eradicating Da'esh, as we saw during

the Security Council's visit to Iraq. We also applaud Iraq's commitment to prosecuting the perpetrators of those terrifying crimes, rebuilding affected areas and bolstering national unity among all components of Iraqi society in order to preserve its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this briefing on the progress made in the implementation of the principle of accountability for the serious crimes and mass atrocities committed in Iraq by Da'esh. It commends Mr. Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), on the presentation of his third report, which informs the Council about the progress made and the challenges that remain to be addressed. We also thank Mr. Kachi, member of Iraqi civil society, for his very enlightening briefing.

My country reiterates its support for Mr. Khan and his team and thanks him for the quality of the work accomplished thus far. It also welcomes the adoption of resolution 2490 (2019) extending for 12 months the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD). My delegation urges UNITAD to continue its cooperation with the Iraqi authorities; ethnic and religious communities; civil society, particularly women; and State and institutional actors, in order to consolidate the gains made thus far.

Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that UNITAD, working in synergy with the Iraqi authorities, will be able to identify appropriate responses despite the multiple complex challenges that remain. These challenges include the transnational nature of Da'esh's activities, which requires us to identify areas of judicial cooperation between the States of the region so that the members of that terrorist organization who are being detained beyond Iraqi borders can be made to answer for their crimes.

My country urges UNITAD and the Iraqi authorities to further strengthen their cooperation in order to develop consensus-based judicial mechanisms that will allow for crimes committed by Da'esh to be covered by the Iraqi legal arsenal. In that context, my country welcomes the establishment of the UNITAD witness protection programme and commends its excellent

cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and INTERPOL.

Côte d'Ivoire is of the view that our collective commitment to translate into concrete action the principle of accountability for mass crimes committed during conflicts, in particular by terrorist groups, goes well beyond the context of Iraq and the region. That is above all a challenge to international peace and security that requires the mobilization of the entire United Nations system as well as of all actors involved in combating terrorism and transnational organized crime.

My country wishes to reaffirm the urgent need to find lasting responses to the structural causes of insecurity and instability in our countries and regions. In that context, combating poverty and unemployment should be at the heart of our priorities, as should ensuring better socioeconomic prospects to safeguard youth from radical rhetoric and the temptation to join terrorist groups. My country therefore calls on the international community to continue supporting national and regional socioeconomic development strategies through investments that can generate employment and help provide basic services. That is also true of the much-needed economic and social reconstruction of Iraq as well as all of the other regions ravaged by terrorism, transnational organized crime and community-based conflict.

To conclude, Côte d'Ivoire once again wishes every success to Mr. Khan and the United Nations Investigative Team. It remains convinced that UNITAD's success will undoubtedly constitute a positive example and a decisive step forward in the action of the United Nations and the international community to fully and effectively implement the principle of accountability for all terrorist actors and organizations that commit mass crimes.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join other speakers in conveying our condolences to the Government of France and the families of the soldiers who died yesterday in Mali, in the framework of the combat that we all are waging against the Islamic State.

We also wish to thank the Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) for his briefing, and we commend the valuable and strong testimony provided to us by Mr. Kachi.

Peru acknowledges the crucial work done by the Investigative Team, which makes it possible to not only ensure the necessary accountability for the heinous terrorist acts committed by Da'esh but also to contribute to national reconciliation. We reaffirm our support for the vital role that it plays and welcome the fact that it is now fully operational, which has enabled it to add capacity in key areas such as investigation, forensic analysis, the excavation of graves, including the identification of missing persons, and witness protection. Particularly important also are the establishment of special units dealing with gender-based violence and child abuse.

We also acknowledge the positive synergies in the cooperation and complementarity between the Investigative Team and the Government of Iraq, which we commend for its important contributions to these efforts. Also particularly significant are the efforts undertaken to provide technical and capacity-building support in various priority areas, including investigative activities and the analysis and preservation of evidence. This has also contributed to the elaboration of the legislation necessary for the prosecution of such crimes and the use of evidentiary and informational material, which can be made available to any States that require it.

We also stress the support that the Investigative Team has been receiving from other States in the region and beyond as well as from international, academic and non-governmental organizations. We stress the special assistance and cooperation provided by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the need to ensure that the Investigative team has the resources it requires to discharge its mandate.

We would conclude by saying that while progress has been made in the fight against the Islamic State, we cannot play down the threat that it continues to pose in new areas. It is clear that the success of the work of the Investigative Team, while contributing to the fight against impunity and ensuring the rule of law with respect to atrocity crimes, has the potential to contribute to deterrence with respect to fresh crimes.

Ms. Mogashoa (South Africa): I, too, join other Council members in paying tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in Mali.

I thank the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) for his informative briefing on

the work of UNITAD. We commend him and his team on their continued progress and significant achievements in their important task of seeking accountability for the grave crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)(Da'esh). I also thank Mr. Kachi for sharing his experiences with the Council.

It is clear from the detailed recent report (S/2019/878) on the activities of UNITAD, under the capable leadership of the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team, Mr. Khan, that significant progress has been made in establishing a fully-fledged, modern and professional investigative unit employing the latest technology and international best practices, and staffed by international experts from a wide range of relevant fields.

Importantly, as we went through the report, we deemed it impressive that the investigative capacity is already yielding results, with UNITAD having gathered large amounts of evidence in various forms, including digital evidence, witness testimonies and forensic evidence. It is clear to us that much thought and planning has gone into the strategic focus of UNITAD's present investigations in Iraq. We are also pleased about the close cooperation between UNITAD and the Iraqi authorities in developing mutually supportive mechanisms to ensure that the shared aim of prosecuting the perpetrators of ISIL's crimes in the country is achieved.

Although ISIL has suffered significant setbacks as a result of the military defeat of its self-declared caliphate as well as the recent death of its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, it is clear that the threat posed by the remaining elements, including affiliate groups that have taken root in Africa and elsewhere in the world, as well as the spread of the group's poisonous ideology by means of the Internet, are issues that we must continue to confront.

We also note with concern the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/612) indicating that despite the setbacks that it has suffered, ISIL remains a pervasive threat in Iraq. Clearly this poses a destabilizing threat not only to Iraq but also to the entire region.

In this context, having heard of the bravery that Mr. Kachi demonstrated, which is clear from his account of his experiences, we deem that the role of UNITAD remains vital in implementing other efforts to end the threat posed by ISIL, particularly in ensuring that justice is served for the terrible crimes for which

the group is responsible. In that regard, it is clear that UNITAD plays a vital role as an impartial, independent body operating within the United Nations Charter and employing United Nations best practices, in line with the relevant provisions of international law, including international human rights law, in supporting Iraqi authorities in the challenging and harrowing endeavour of seeking justice for the crimes committed.

While we are aware of the sensitive and challenging legal questions that UNITAD has addressed with the Iraqi authorities concerning the eventual sentencing of those convicted, we have full confidence that they will be resolved in a mutually satisfactory and cooperative manner, and we welcome the prevailing spirit of cooperation in that regard.

In conclusion, I would like to express South Africa's continued strong support for the important work that UNITAD is engaged in and to encourage Member States to continue supporting its efforts to close this painful chapter in history inflicted by ISIL on Iraqis and on humankind generally.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank Special Adviser Karim Khan and the representative of civil society, Mr. Kachi, for their briefings.

Iraq is currently actively committed to economic recovery, peace and stability and national reconstruction and reconciliation, all of which are at a critical stage. China hopes that the Iraqi Government will continue to pursue an inclusive political solution, further promote economic development, improve its people's livelihoods and speed up the reconstruction process, thereby achieving further progress in its efforts to bring lasting peace and security to Iraq.

The activities of terrorists in Iraq have caused large numbers of civilian casualties and seriously threatened national, regional and international peace and security. The problem of the large numbers of foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq, along with their families, and especially their resettlement, deserves the international community's urgent attention. China commends the tireless efforts of the Government and the people of Iraq to combat terrorism, and we support their efforts to bring terrorists to justice in accordance with the relevant domestic law. We take note of the third report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD)

(S/2019/878) and appreciate the Investigative Team's efforts in spite of all the difficulties it has encountered.

China supports close cooperation between UNITAD and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in order to provide support to the survivors and victims of terrorist acts. We hope that the Investigative Team will engage in close consultations with the Iraqi Government and the parties concerned, in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its mandate and terms of reference, as set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions. UNITAD should take comprehensive measures to strengthen its capacity for collecting evidence and conducting effective field investigations, and play an active role in the process of holding terrorists accountable and curbing the return and spread of terrorist forces and activities.

As the Secretary-General's report points out, UNITAD's capacity for tackling new challenges will depend on its unique position as an impartial and independent entity, as well as on the continued support of the Iraqi people. UNITAD should fully respect Iraq's national sovereignty and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on Iraqi territory and should play an active role in strengthening the capacity-building of the Iraqi Government so that it can hold terrorist organizations accountable.

Terrorism remains a grave threat to international peace and security, and combating international terrorism is still an arduous task. The activities of terrorist forces, including their attempts to spread extremist ideology, pose major challenges to the social stability and development of Member States. The international community should continue to strengthen cooperation, adopt unified standards and take effective measures to resolutely crack down on all terrorist organizations listed by the Security Council. All parties, as well as the United Nations, should pay close attention to the issue of foreign terrorist fighters in Iraq and elsewhere. The Secretariat should follow the situation closely and collect information effectively. China stands ready to work with the international community to achieve further progress in international cooperation to combat terrorism.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, let me join others in expressing Indonesia's condolences to the Government and the people of France and to the families of the soldiers who lost their lives in Mali.

We once again thank Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), for his briefing today. My appreciation also goes to Mr. Kachi for his briefing and, most importantly, for his support to UNITAD's work despite his difficult experiences on the ground. I would like to make three brief points.

First, we are delighted to note that the Investigative Team is now fully operational, and especially to hear that progress has been made in the collection, preservation and storage of evidentiary material in Iraq. Despite all the challenges on the ground, we are pleased that the Investigative Team has made significant progress on its evidence-collecting activities in Sinjar, Mosul and Tikrit.

Secondly, we underline the importance of evidence- and witness-based investigations. Protecting and supporting the survivors and the communities affected should be at the centre of UNITAD's work. We are encouraged to learn from UNITAD's third report (S/2019/878) that through its investigative and witness-protection strategy, the Investigative Team has been able to ensure a victim-centred approach to its interviews with survivors and is engaging with the communities that have been affected.

Thirdly, Indonesia continues to believe that the primary jurisdiction for holding accountable those responsible for the atrocities committed within Iraqi borders should lie with the Iraqi national authorities. We are therefore absolutely delighted to hear that the Investigative Team has been cooperating fully with the relevant authorities and supporting Iraq in strengthening its judicial system to bring perpetrators to justice. We hope that this cooperation will be maintained. Indonesia continues to support the work of the Investigative Team and wishes Mr. Khan and his team much courage and success in the challenging task entrusted to them.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank Mr. Karim Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), for his valuable briefing this morning. We also thank Mr. Kachi, the representative of civil society, for his heart-wrenching and moving testimony.

We would also like to express our deepest condolences to the French delegation for the death of 13 French soldiers last night in Mali during a helicopter operation as part of their mission to fight terrorism.

In the light of the briefings and the third report of UNITAD (S/2019/878), we welcome all the significant progress that has been made on the investigation strategy, the collection, preservation and storage of evidence in Iraq, the strengthening of the modalities for cooperation with the Government of Iraq, the Supreme Judicial Council, survivors, victims and affected communities, and Iraqi capacity-building. There can be no doubt that maintaining the cooperation and commitment of all stakeholders will help to achieve the aim of holding the members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Iraq.

We have also noted the fact that gender balance and geographical distribution were observed in the selection of staff for the Investigation Team, that work is being carried out in teams and that victims of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by ISIL are being involved in investigations on the ground. ISIL is one of the main perpetrators of the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that have taken place in Iraq, and despite the numerous efforts to combat it, the threat remains clear. We firmly believe that the success of the Investigative Team will facilitate the fight against impunity and thereby foster a resilient society. In that context, my country encourages and urges Mr. Khan and his team to continue working in this direction as an independent, credible and impartial entity. We reiterate that it is vital to ensure that the collection, preservation and storage of evidence is carried out in strict observance of United Nations policies and good practices, as well as international law, and without forgetting the importance of full respect for the sovereignty of the Iraqi people.

In conclusion, we encourage the Iraqi authorities and the United Nations to continue to intensify their operational cooperation with the Investigative Team. At the same time, we assure the Investigative Team of our Government's support for its mandate.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Dominican Republic also wishes to express its sincere condolences to France following the loss of 13 of its soldiers in Mali.

We thank Mr. Khan for his detailed report (S/2019/878) and his commendable performance in leading the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), which we strongly support. We would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Kachi for sharing his moving story with us and for the valuable support he provides to UNITAD in its investigation processes.

First and foremost, we want to commend the effective and expeditious way in which the Investigative Team reached its fully operational phase, as well as the spirit of collaboration that has characterized its work, thanks to the direct participation of various stakeholders, especially the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government and local communities, including victims and witnesses of the crimes perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Dominican Republic supports Iraq's efforts to fight terrorism and work closely with the Investigation Team to establish accountability and bring to justice those responsible for the crimes committed by the Islamic State on its territory. We also welcome the fact that Iraq has taken significant steps towards the introduction of legislation that will enable the prosecution of acts committed by the Islamic State such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

On another aspect, we take note of the progress that has been made through the excavation of graves and the collection of evidence and testimonies in Sinjar, Mosul and Tikrit, as well as of the fact that the framework of research priorities has been expanded, which is enabling such activities to be carried out in other communities directly affected by terrorism. We also encourage the Investigative Team to continue to attach particular importance to survivors of sexual crimes and gender-based violence through its special unit, as well as the witness support and protection unit, which helps to ensure witnesses' rights, integrity and confidentiality.

Finally, we reiterate that the Investigative Team must maintain its independence and impartiality in working with other United Nations mechanisms and in consultation with the authorities of Iraq, while always respecting the country's sovereignty and jurisdiction. We believe that Iraq's collaboration is essential to ensuring the effective performance of the Investigative Team and the achievement of its agreed objectives, in line with the mandate established for it in resolution

2379 (2017). We therefore hope that this existing cooperation will continue to be encouraged.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I was intending to speak during our informal consultations, but I will also say a few words here.

I would first like to thank Special Adviser Karim Khan for his report (S/2019/878), and for the work that has been done and the progress made in recent months. I would of course also like to pay tribute to Mr. Kachi's very poignant testimony, and I would like to commend his courage, which demands our respect and admiration. I think it reminds us of the importance of responding to survivors' expectations so that the crimes committed are recognized, those responsible are brought to justice and the country's reconciliation and reconstruction is made possible.

I would also like to highlight the close cooperation that has developed between the Iraqi authorities and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD). Mr. Khan described that cooperation as exemplary and remarkable, which is very good to hear. I would also like to pay particular tribute to the bill introduced by the Iraqi Parliament to enable the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We encourage UNITAD to collaborate with the Iraqi authorities and other United Nations bodies in order to ensure that the bill becomes law, taking into account the policies and good practices of the United Nations and international law. Belgium remains fully committed to supporting UNITAD in its work.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank the Special Adviser for his report (S/2019/878) and his work in Iraq, which he continues to carry out so skilfully. We would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Kachi for his briefing and his work and tireless engagement in documenting the unlawful activities of Da'esh, which represents a significant contribution to bringing all those responsible to justice. We welcome the contributions of the Special Adviser and the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) to accountability efforts by collecting, preserving and storing evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We are particularly encouraged

by the advances being made in operationalizing the Investigative Team's mandate, including the development of its investigative strategy, and the activities being undertaken by UNITAD in line with its priorities, which include the collection of testimonial evidence and the protection of witnesses.

The establishment of trust and the safeguarding of cooperation between the Government of Iraq and the authorities of a number of other States, as well as Iraqi regional and local authorities and representatives from various sectors of society, including survivors, are equally commendable. We look forward to seeing the Investigative Team develop that cooperation, further increase its operational capabilities and make progress in its substantive work, in line with its mandate. The efforts to ensure geographical diversity as well as a gender, ethnic and religious balance in appointing the Iraqi members of the Investigative Team deserve our high appreciation. Its composition should reflect the diversity of the Iraqi population and also increase the Team's capabilities in collecting evidence in the various communities affected by Da'esh. We commend the victim-centred approach adopted by UNITAD and the steps taken to ensure that in particular victims of sexual and gender-based crimes are provided with support when engaging with the Team.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Poland fully supports UNITAD, its impartiality and its independence, while welcoming the cooperation of the different stakeholders with the Special Adviser and the Investigative Team. Allow me to once again acknowledge the crucial contribution of the Special Adviser and his team to promoting accountability and reconciliation in Iraq and to encourage them to continue to effectively carry out their mission.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Khan and Mr. Kachi. Our country has consistently supported strengthening stability and security in Iraq. The main role in that process lies of course with the Iraqi people and Government. We are interested in eradicating the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and terrorism in general and are convinced that countering that threat is possible only through the broadest possible coordination among counter-terrorism efforts.

At the same time, we are convinced that there is a need for all those involved in combating terrorism in

Iraq to respect the sovereignty of the Government and to coordinate their efforts with Iraq. Their actions must be in line with the stated objectives, namely, combating terrorism and assisting the Iraqi Government in stabilizing the situation. For its part, politically and in practice Russia will continue to support the efforts of the Iraqi leadership to combat terrorism and to ensure the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

We see the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to collect evidence of crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq to be one of the most elements of the overall counter-terrorism strategy in the region.

I would also like to add a few more practical comments to our statement in our closed consultations.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the members of the Council for their condolences on the tragic loss of French soldiers in Mali.

I am still moved by the poignant testimony of Mr. Kachi, which reminds us of the importance of our collective commitment. I sincerely thank him for his briefing and express my deepest appreciation to him. I also wish to thank the Special Adviser, Mr. Karim Khan, for his briefing and I commend the work that he has done. To date, some 100 people, more than half of whom are women, have been recruited in order to enable the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to effectively implement its mandate. Lastly, I welcome the presence of the Iraqi Ambassador here among us, which shows that the international community and Iraq are working hand in hand to fight impunity for crimes committed by Da'esh in response to Iraq's request to the Security Council.

First, I wish to return to the progress made by the Investigative Team since its establishment. The Team is now fully able to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Council under resolution 2379 (2017), namely, to collect, preserve and store evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The analytical work that Mr. Khan and the Team have begun doing concerning mass graves is essential in order to fully investigate the facts and to establish under Iraqi or third-country jurisdictions accountability for those who committed crimes. We

will continue to support him in enabling victims to obtain justice. It is vital that the role of victims, their suffering and their needs be fully acknowledged. In that context, the setting up of a witness interview facility in northern Iraq is an important step forward that will allow survivors to engage with investigators in a safe environment. It is important that the highest standards of witness and victim protection be applied.

Next, I wish to commend the close cooperation between the Investigative Team and judicial authorities, in particular the Iraqi judicial system. I congratulate it on its close dialogue with the Iraqi authorities, which is very positive and which, we hope, will allow it to enhance its data sets. The end goal is to use the evidence in proceedings against members of Da'esh with full respect for the principles and best practices of the United Nations. In that regard, it is important to recall the unwavering position of the United Nations with regard to not transferring any evidence in the context of judicial cases where the death penalty could be imposed in any place under any circumstances. Cooperation is also essential with the relevant United Nations mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which has a significantly expanded mandate to combat impunity and protect human rights.

Finally, I wish to once again welcome the determination of the Iraqi authorities to incorporate combating impunity for all crimes into efforts to stabilize, rebuild and reconcile all components of Iraqi society, which is key to preventing any resurgence of Da'esh. As the Council knows, France is committed to working with the Iraqis in combating Da'esh in all its aspects. That message of solidarity was delivered by Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Foreign Affairs, during his visit to Iraq last month. France has allocated more than €70 million to humanitarian assistance and stabilization efforts in Iraq in direct support for victims of Da'esh. In 2019, France also set up a programme to host 100 Yazidi women, who were victims of Da'esh, and their families in line with the commitments made by the President of the Republic.

France will continue to support women victims of Da'esh through its support to the reparations fund for victims of sexual violence launched by Mr. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, to which we have allocated €6.2 million. Lastly, France contributes to training Iraqi magistrates. We are convinced that combating ISIL on the ground is just one aspect of that fight. Establishing

the truth about crimes committed by ISIL and punishing the perpetrators in judicial proceedings that meet the highest international standards are equally essential to restoring lasting peace.

In conclusion, the Council must remain mobilized to prevent the resurgence of Da'esh in all its aspects. We must continue to support the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to overcome those challenges and help UNITAD to further enhance its work and sustain it. In that way, the objectives of justice and reconciliation sought through resolution 2379 (2017) can be achieved.

The President: I will now make a brief statement in my national capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I begin by extending our condolences to France on the helicopter crash in Mali. I wanted to put clearly on the record our support for the Special Adviser and for the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD). As the French representative just said, it is vital that the Council continues to follow this very important issue closely. I think that we all bear witness to Mr. Kachi's very sombre and moving briefing today. It is a powerful reminder of the devastation that Da'esh unleashed. I thank him for briefing the Council, while offering him my deepest sympathies and those of the United Kingdom for his suffering. I do not believe that there is a more compelling issue question that we have heard this month of why the Council has important work to do than the story he told us, for which I thank him.

I would like to add our voice to thanking the Government of Iraq. Its support continues to be instrumental to UNITAD's ability to do its work, and we welcome the steps the Government has taken to introduce legislation to allow for the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes that may amount to genocide committed by Da'esh.

Returning to UNITAD, I thank Mr. Khan for getting the Team up and running. It is very good to hear that it is now fully operational, as well as the impressive statistics about gender parity along with the vital work UNITAD is doing on accountability on the ground.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our condolences to the delegation, the people and the Government of France following the loss of 13 of their soldiers in Mali.

I would also like to congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of November. We thank Mr. Karim Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), for his valuable briefing and excellent efforts.

We also thank Mr. Kachi for his briefing on behalf of the Yazidis and the rest of components of the Iraqi people.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2490 (2019), approving the request of the Iraqi Government to extend the UNITAD mandate for an additional year, until 21 September 2020. We look forward to further efforts to expedite work to identify perpetrators and hold them accountable so that we can do justice for the victims of the crimes perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Following the military defeat of Da'esh in my country, we need intensive and tireless efforts, as well as international cooperation, to rebuild what the terrorists destroyed; to ensure the prosecution of perpetrators, supporter and financiers of terrorist acts through international legal mechanisms so as to guarantee the complete elimination of these terrorist groups; and to thwart any terrorist schemes aimed at destabilizing international peace and security. Such international cooperation shall include measures and procedures to coordinate the efforts of countries and international organizations in an efficient way, monitor airports, cut off sources of terrorist financing, track and exchange information on the movement of terrorists and identify their nationalities, control borders to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and monitor and dismantle means and networks used by terrorist groups.

We also look forward to concluding the appointment of Iraqi experts to UNITAD in order to facilitate its work and allow it to carry out its functions fully, as well as well as to build the technical capacities of Iraqi experts.

The Government of Iraq reiterates its commitment to cooperating with and providing all possible assistance

to UNITAD through the relevant Iraqi authorities, and to supporting and assisting it in implementing its mandate, provided that the work of UNITAD is based on full respect for Iraqi sovereignty and its jurisdiction over crimes perpetrated on its territory and against its people. The Investigative Team should collect evidence and deal with this matter from a purely legal perspective with the exclusive purpose of submitting evidence that Iraqi courts in accordance with Iraqi law and jurisprudence. Any use of this evidence outside Iraqi jurisdiction must be pursued in coordination with and following the approval of the Iraqi Government and judiciary on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the Iraqi judiciary, pursuant to paragraph five of Security Council resolution 2379 (2017).

We also refer to the need for continuing coordination with the Iraqi Government and its competent authorities. Evidence must be submitted to relevant Iraqi authorities to complete judicial proceedings.

Justice must be swift to redress the victims of the crimes committed by ISIL. Ensuring that those terrorists will be held accountable and providing criminal evidence to the Iraqi judiciary will reassure the families of the victims of crimes that are tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, perpetrated by that brutal terrorist group.

Prolonging the duration of investigations would have a negative impact on the condition and clarity of evidence from crime scenes due to natural factors or reconstruction efforts in the liberated areas or other factors. The passage of time could thus lead to the disappearance or destruction of evidence. This could undermine UNITAD and the joint efforts of the Iraqi Government to do justice to the victims.

My country looks forward to positive change and reconstruction following the dark chapter of Da'esh. We must turn this page as soon as possible by identifying the perpetrators of these heinous crimes against the Iraqi people and bringing them to justice.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the need to fully respect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Iraq. We also call on the international community to provide all the support and assistance to UNITAD so it can carry out its functions fully.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of November, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of my delegation to the members of the Council and to the Secretariat for all the support they have given us. It has been a busy month. We have been able to rally to consensus on several important issues on the agenda. We could not have done it without the hard work, support and positive contributions of all members, their delegations, representatives of the Secretariat, conferences services officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the entire Council in wishing the delegation of the United States good luck in the month of December.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.