



Kingdom of Belgium

Speech by H.E. Mr Philippe Kridelka, Ambassador, Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

Information Session and Consultations

United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

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Mr President,

I would like to start by thanking the Special Adviser Mr. Karim Khan for his written report, and also for the once again highly informative briefing which he has just presented to the Council.

Today, I would like to address three issues: the need to bring justice to the victims of all atrocity crimes as part of the reconstruction and reconciliation process in Iraq; the contribution of the Investigation Team to national judicial proceedings in Iraq and abroad; and, lastly, support for efforts to comply with United Nations policies and best practices and international law.

First of all, Belgium congratulates Mr Khan and his team on the considerable progress made in the implementation of their mandate. Thanks in particular to its exchanges with all components of Iraqi society, the Investigation Team has deepened and diversified its lines of investigation by taking care to focus on the different communities that have been victims of crimes by IS, be they Christians, Sunnis, women or soon the members of the LGBTI community. It has also moved an increasing number of its priority cases to the evidence consolidation and legal analysis phase.

All this, coupled with work to rigorously structure the results of its investigations, will ultimately enable UNITAD to promote the opening of many criminal proceedings. In doing so, this transitional justice mechanism will contribute to reconstruction and reconciliation between the different communities in Iraq. The fight against impunity for all the crimes committed there must be an essential

component of that process. In this regard, the greater cooperation with the Investigation Team by the Iraqi authorities is a very encouraging sign which Belgium welcomes.

Secondly, my country notes with satisfaction that the Investigation Team has strengthened its support to the national authorities of third States in response to their requests for assistance. This support is essential for two reasons. On the one hand, because of the many procedures underway there, particularly in Europe. On the other hand, because the resulting cooperation between the Iraqi judicial authorities and those of third countries will most certainly contribute in the longer term to the opening of specific cases in Iraq.

This brings me to my third and last point: In accordance with Resolution 2379 of this Council, which created the Investigation Team, the Iraqi authorities must remain the primary beneficiary of the evidence collected by UNITAD. To this end, Mr Khan and his team have developed several cooperative activities with Iraq. Belgium particularly welcomes the support of the Investigation Team for the legislative work aimed at enabling the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as well as the assistance provided to Iraqi investigating judges so that they can compile dossiers that will make it possible to initiate such prosecutions.

My country also welcomes the continued collaboration with the Iraqi authorities to define modalities for sharing evidence that take into account United Nations policies and good practices, the terms of UNITAD's mandate and international law in general. This concerns procedural safeguards, the protection of victims and witnesses and the non-application of the death penalty. In addition, I also recall the importance that Belgium attaches to ensuring that the perpetrators of all the most serious crimes are prosecuted, regardless of their affiliation.

In conclusion, Mr President, I would like to stress that my country will remain fully committed to supporting UNITAD once it leaves the Security Council. Belgium will continue to support a mechanism that is vital for bringing justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed in Iraq. Thank you.