

Daesh Accountability should be a truly international effort

Excellencies,

I welcome Special Advisor Karim Khan's report on the continued progress made by The UN Investigative Team for the Accountability of Daesh in recent months, and the first report since the Team's mandate was extended for a year in September 2020. To underline that this is extremely important work and we continue to support efforts to ensure accountability for Daesh victims.

The United Kingdom notes UNITAD's flexibility in implementing their mandate while responding to challenges posed by COVID-19, and particularly to limitations on field-based investigative activities. The fact that six dedicated investigation units are now in place is to be commended. And we welcome the addition of thematic units; particularly in the area of gender-based crimes.

The United Kingdom will continue to support the Investigative Team to ensure that the team is able to fulfil its mandate. This is why the UK has provided assistance to minority-focused investigations, as well as supporting the development of Shuhud, a digital platform allowing witnesses and survivors to submit information remotely, securely, and confidentially in relation to Daesh crimes.

We welcome contributions from other countries; Daesh Accountability should be a truly international effort, just as the Global Coalition to defeat Daesh was.

The United Kingdom is seized of the enormity of the task ahead to find a solution that enables UNITAD's evidence to be used effectively to bring those responsible to account in Iraq. We welcome progress on draft legislation to provide the domestic legal basis for the prosecution of Daesh members for international crimes in Iraq. But we urge close collaboration between the Team, the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to agree a way forward and secure an evidence sharing mechanism that provides assurances on use of the death penalty. And we welcome continued collaboration with the Iraqi judicial authorities.

Justice also means assisting the victims of Daesh to rebuild their lives. We welcome the Team's expanded capacities for assisting with witness protection and support, including psycho-social care and gender-attuned services for survivors and family members.

Regular updates to the UN Security Council, Mr President, are key in allowing us to see the progress the Team is making. The Team must seek to engage both with us at the United Nations and with individual member states who are providing staffing, funding and support.

The United Kingdom continues to support the work of the UN Investigative Team; this is why we have contributed £2 million and continue to engage in New York, London, Baghdad and Erbil. The work undertaken by the Team is unique; we must ensure it continues to provide a sustainable and internationally supported mechanism in the future. The United Kingdom welcomes continued support for the Team from UNSC members through funding, staffing and engagement to demonstrate UNSC commitment and ensure evidence is gathered to hold Daesh to account.