

Speech: The need to secure justice for victims of Da'esh crimes

Thank you very much indeed Mr President and let me begin by repeating in the chamber what I said in the consultations room: our congratulations to you and your mission on assuming the Presidency. We look forward very much to working with you and supporting you. And our congratulations to our Chinese colleagues for the way they conducted the Presidency last month. And I would also like again in the chamber to repeat my condolences to the United States of America on the death of President George H.W. Bush who I had the honour of meeting in the UN some ten years ago.

Mr President turning to today, obviously I would like to thank the Special Advisor to UNITAD for what is his first briefing to the Council since their deployment on the 29th of October. I think the team has made a very good start if I may say so and we look forward to your future work and future briefings.

You said Special Advisor that we really ought to pay tribute to the suffering and the indefatigable courage of the survivors of Daesh violence and I think that's absolutely right. Justice and accountability for the victims needs to be at the centre of our approach. And I want to commend the government of Iraq, the new government, for their commitment to support UNITAD's work. We welcome also UNAMI's continued support to the team. And I would like to recognise UNAMI's efforts to facilitate the deployment of the UNITAD team to Baghdad.

It's important that all efforts on the ground are complementary and avoid duplication. And we're very pleased that UNITAD's budget proposal reflects the importance of all efforts complementing each other. We're encouraged to see not just the work of the team so far but the fact that there have been contributions from the government of Iraq, from UNAMI, from allied nations and other UN bodies in supporting UNITAD.

Mr President, I think it's crucial that we get these early stages right, including by establishing the mechanism for cooperation between UNITAD and the government of Iraq. This is important for a swift and thorough evidence collection but it also helps ensure that evidence is in a fit state to be used before the courts. And it will, of course, rely on a cooperative and mutually respectful relationship which we are sure will be present.

We very much as the United Kingdom Mr President agree with the strategic vision in the guiding principles regarding lifting these immediate priorities. We were pleased to see a very strong focus on engagement with the government of Iraq. This is obviously going to be crucial to the success of the team's work. And we encourage the steering committee to meet on a regular basis with UNITAD particularly during these early stages of implementation.

The Special Advisor mentioned the importance of voluntary contributions to

the trust fund. And I would just want to tell you that we think this should have a voluntary contributions to the investigative team in the form of expertise and skills as well. And I would like to pay tribute to Qatar but also to our Dutch colleagues for their generous contributions. We ourselves have already donated to the trust fund and we remain committed to supporting UNITAD as it fulfils its mandate.

Mr President coming back to where I started, justice for victims remains at the heart of this resolution. It's vital that UNITAD helps to secure accountability for the victims of Daesh's terrible crimes to bring closure to those who still suffer. And this of course includes women and children and minority communities. Thank you very much.