

Mr. Mashkoor (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*):

My delegation would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for convening today's debate. We wish the United Kingdom every success in its presidency of the Security Council this month.

Trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and fuels transnational organized crime, which exacerbates insecurity. Iraq became party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2009 because it is a central pillar in the fight against international crimes. To comply with its obligations under the Convention, Iraq adopted Law No. 28 of 2012 on combating trafficking in persons, with a view to establishing mechanisms to assist victims of trafficking, put an end to the crime and punish such a reprehensible act. In addition, the Iraqi Constitution contains articles that prohibit forced labour, slavery and trafficking in women and children.

Trafficking in persons, slavery and forced labour are practices that help to finance terrorist groups. Da'esh criminal gangs have kidnapped thousands of Iraqi citizens, in particular Yazidi women and children and have exposed them to human trafficking and slavery. Such victims have been subjected to the worse forms of inhumane treatment. Iraq therefore requires support to liberate victims and restore their dignity. Iraq calls upon member States to implement the relevant resolutions, including resolutions 2195 (2014) and 2242 (2015). In those two resolutions, the Council indicated that sexual violence is a part of the strategic and ideological objectives advocated by terrorist groups.

In order to implement those two resolutions, Iraq started work with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and those efforts led to the signing of a joint statement with Ms. Zainab Bangura on 23 September 2016 at United Nations Headquarters. That agreement is the start of joint efforts between Iraq and the United Nations to address head-on such violations and barbaric acts perpetrated by Da'esh and other parties. Ms. Bangura, along with a group of legal experts, visited Iraq from 25 February to 3 March. During that visit, she spoke with the President of the Governing Council, religious leaders and the presidents of various institutions to explore the various legal options. Iraq calls upon all countries to honour their obligations and strengthen efforts to uncover trafficking in persons operations and put an end to them.