



# Security Council

Seventieth year

*Provisional***7585<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Wednesday, 16 December 2015, 3 p.m.

New York

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*President:* Ms. Power . . . . . (United States of America)

*Members:*

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Chad . . . . .	Mr. Cherif
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Spain . . . . .	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Wilson
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) . . . . .	Mr. Suárez Moreno

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in situations of conflict

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

## **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

## **Maintenance of international peace and security**

### **Trafficking in persons in situations of conflict**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this important meeting: Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Mr. Nick Grono, Chief Executive Officer of the Freedom Fund; and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Fedotov, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Vienna.

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

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I now give him the floor.

**The Deputy Secretary-General:** I welcome the Security Council's focus on the practice of human trafficking in situations of conflict and displacement.

Let us first be clear on what we are discussing today: human trafficking is slavery in the modern age. Slavery is not just a past abomination; millions of people are living as slaves, or in slave-like conditions, even as we speak today, in this year of 2015, here at the United Nations, with the Charter of the United Nations in front of us, here at the horseshoe table.

Most of the victims of trafficking are vulnerable women and children, deceived or abducted into a life of suffering, exploitation, torture or servitude. This ruthless practice has become a global industry, and it must be stopped. I am heartened that in September Member States committed, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), to Goals 5, 8 and 16, to take action on human trafficking.

There are more people displaced today than at any time since the Second World War. Millions more are caught up in conflict and unable to flee. These human beings are exposed to a wide range of human

rights violations, not the least of which is trafficking. They are sold and trafficked for sexual enslavement, prostitution, illegal adoption, slave labour, purposes of criminality or recruitment as child soldiers.

The Council has heard reports on almost 20 countries engulfed in conflict, or trying to recover from conflict, where these practices are widespread. The victims are mainly women and girls, but also boys and men. Thousands of men and boys have been forcibly conscripted by the Lord's Resistance Army and other armed groups. The plight of women and girls held by groups such as Daesh and Boko Haram is, tragically, well known. The abduction of hundreds of schoolgirls from Chibok by Boko Haram captured global attention, and the memory of that incident still lingers in our minds.

Thousands of Yazidi women in Iraq have been abducted and enslaved by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. As the Secretary-General stated in his remarks to the Security Council on 13 October 2015,

"the systematic acts carried out by Daesh against the Yazidi community, which include killings, torture, rape and sexual slavery, may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We must ensure accountability." (S/PV.7533, p. 3)

I very much appreciate the presence here today of Nadia Murad Basee Taha, of the Yazidi community, as a witness to the cruel and grim realities.

Trafficking in persons is a crime and a violation of human rights and must be treated as such. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, provides a framework for action. With 169 States parties, the Protocol is close to universal adherence. I urge all countries to ratify and fully implement it.

Resolution 2195 (2014) recognizes the linkage between organized crime, including trafficking in persons, and terrorism; I am sure that Mr. Fedotov will touch on this. I urge all States to become parties to international treaties against trafficking in persons, the smuggling of migrants and corruption and slavery, as well as treaties that protect human rights, especially the rights of women and children. We also have the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which includes provisions on addressing

this problem in conflict settings. I already mentioned, of course, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where this subject is also brought up.

But we need to do more. We should more robustly implement the Plan of Action and the international Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, particularly international conflict settings and post-conflict reconstruction work, a subject on the Security Council's agenda. We should also support the important work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. Ending human trafficking also means committing to resolve the conflicts in which human trafficking thrives.

Horrifying tales have emerged of how women and children are treated in captivity. But even when captivity ends, the suffering continues. Last month, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, my friend and colleague Adama Dieng, met with several Yazidi victims of trafficking at the Khanke camp for internally displaced persons, near Dohuk, in northern Iraq. He asked me to convey his impressions briefly. He spoke to two girls who had managed to leave Daesh and reunite with their families. They were indeed free from Daesh, but, and he stated this very clearly, they were not free from fear and unbearable memories. Indeed, the scars of such violence last a lifetime. Victims fortunate enough to be freed need assistance to regain their rights and dignity and to reintegrate into society. They must be given a chance to take back their lives and build new futures. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, is there to work on their behalf. I encourage all, Member States and others, to contribute to the Fund. It is also crucially important to fight impunity by bringing traffickers to account and to justice.

In closing, human trafficking is often described as unthinkable and unspeakable. But it is our shared, serious and sincere responsibility to think deeply and speak clearly about the abuses to which innumerable and nameless victims are subjected. Human traffickers have no place in the world that we are striving to build. Let us make sure that they have no space and no way to operate.

**The President:** I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

**Mr. Fedotov:** The fact that criminals exploit situations of conflict and that transnational organized crime erodes the rule of law and can fuel insecurity is well known. The fact that the growing sophistication of the links between transnational criminal networks and terrorists in many regions of the world poses a grave threat to peace and security has been recognized many times over by the Council.

Now this important and timely debate can help draw attention to, and promote action on, a particularly appalling aspect of the crime-terrorism-conflict nexus that has, unfortunately, received too little attention, namely, that the most vulnerable — women, children and men caught in the crossfire of conflict; often impoverished and displaced; many on the move to escape desperate circumstances — are falling victim to the traffic in human beings.

Syria was primarily a country of destination for trafficking before 2011. However, according to information collected for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, since that time at least 10 countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East have detected Syrian victims.

Trafficking victims from Iraq have been more frequently detected in many parts of the world since the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started its insurgency in the north of the country. Trafficking victims from the Horn of Africa, including Somali citizens, are increasingly detected in Europe. While many are trafficked to other destinations, there are scores of victims bought, sold and exploited by groups like ISIL and Boko Haram in the territories where they operate.

Taking action in such a fluid environment clearly presents great challenges. This debate is a timely reminder to the international community that we in fact already possess strong frameworks that can enable joint responses against trafficking in persons. First and foremost among these is the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its landmark Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 and entering into force in 2003, the Protocol was the first international instrument calling for all acts of human trafficking to be criminalized.

The Protocol also laid the foundation for further groundbreaking steps, including the General Assembly's adoption in 2010 of a Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 64/293), which also mandated the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to conduct research on trafficking, and established the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Convention and Protocol provide a legal and practical framework under which countries can cooperate to address a crime that commonly involves multiple jurisdictions.

The good news is that most countries in the world are States parties to the Convention and the trafficking Protocol, and in recent years most of them have enacted relevant laws. The bad news is that not many countries fully use these laws — their own laws. Forty-one per cent reported no convictions at all or fewer than 10 convictions per year for the charge of human trafficking. Clearly, this impunity must end. I hope that this debate will further encourage States parties to fulfil their commitments and obligations under the Convention and Protocol. More can and should be done to foster cooperation among States affected by trafficking, whether they are countries of origin, transit or destination.

UNODC, as the guardian of the Convention and its Protocols, is assisting countries in these efforts. Over the past two years, UNODC has delivered assistance to more than 60 countries, through its global programme against human trafficking, to enable Governments to effectively implement the provisions of the Protocol. Dedicated programmes have also been set up in key regions affected by conflict.

In response to migrant smuggling through the Mediterranean — which to a large degree is the result of conflicts in Syria and Libya — UNODC has developed a plan to support Member States, encompassing research and analysis, national capacity-building, regional and interregional cooperation and enhanced protection for victims. By strengthening criminal justice capacities, as well as the regulatory frameworks for banks and other financial institutions, we also help to disrupt the illicit financial flows, corruption and money-laundering that enable criminal activities.

The interests of the victims remain at the heart of UNODC's efforts. Next year, we seek to bring together

practitioners from countries hosting large refugee populations to share experiences in addressing the vulnerability of refugees to trafficking and preventing victimization. Within the United Nations system, UNODC seeks a strong, coordinated and consistent response through its active participation in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). Established by the General Assembly, ICAT brings together 16 United Nations and other partners engaged in the fight against human trafficking. By harmonizing our approaches and taking advantage of each agency's added value, we can help to ensure that there are no gaps in the United Nations system's response. As the incoming chair of ICAT, I will invite UNODC's counterparts to follow-up the discussion in this meeting of the Security Council.

With the Convention and Protocol, we have a strong, agreed legal basis for international cooperation and concerted action against trafficking in persons, including in situations of conflict. Through ICAT, we have the structures in place to coordinate United Nations action to provide comprehensive assistance to Member States. We need to make the best use of these tools. UNODC stands ready to support Member States.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Grono.

**Mr. Grono:** I thank the Security Council for taking up the issue of human trafficking in conflict today. The reality is that armed conflict leaves civilians highly vulnerable to extreme forms of exploitation, such as forced labour, slavery and slavery-like practices. We are seeing that most starkly right now with the enslavement of Yazidi women and girls by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). The massive displacement of civilian populations that usually accompanies conflict also facilitates the movement of people into these highly exploitative situations. This movement for the purpose of exploitation is the very definition of human trafficking provided by the Palermo Protocol.

The connection between conflict and human trafficking is not new and often involves violations of other international norms against slavery, forced labour, torture and enforced disappearance. The historical context to all of this was set out in a report entitled *Unshackling Development*, authored by Dr. James Cockayne and issued by the Freedom Fund and United Nations University, which pointed out that for almost a century the League of Nations and the United Nations

system have addressed human trafficking, forced labour and traditional forms of slavery all together.

In the Second World War, there was widespread enslavement, forced labour and sexual slavery, and these crimes were prosecuted and condemned by the Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Tokyo Tribunal. More recently, Security Council-backed tribunals have found that human trafficking, sexual slavery and forced labour have all also played a role in conflicts in the Balkans, West Africa and Cambodia. The important work of these tribunals has helped to make it clear that there will be no impunity for slavery crimes.

But unfortunately, the connection between conflict, slavery and human trafficking only seems to be growing. This is most obviously the case with ISIS. In most conflicts slavery is relatively hidden because it is utterly taboo, but ISIS is directly challenging that taboo. Over 3,000 Yazidi women and girls are thought to be currently enslaved by ISIS, which is advocating for the revival of slavery through official policy and media outlets, organizing slave markets and contract registries, and even issuing official how-to manuals. ISIS has institutionalized slavery and sexual violence in order to increase recruitment, by promising male fighters access to women and girls, to populate a new caliphate through forced pregnancy, to terrorize communities into compliance, to displace populations from strategic areas, and to generate revenue through trafficking, the slave trade and ransoms. We shall be hearing shortly from Nadia Murad Basse Taha on the unconscionable reality of enslavement under ISIS.

We are also seeing enslavement in conflicts in Africa. In Nigeria, the militant group Boko Haram has a clear policy of enslavement, child recruitment, sexual slavery and forced marriage. It has abducted over 2,000 people. Its leader, Abubakar Shekau, has proclaimed that the hundreds of women and girls it has kidnapped will be forced into marriage with his fighters, or “be sold in the market”.

More broadly, conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Libya and the Sahel are displacing huge numbers of people and leaving them vulnerable to human trafficking and enslavement. Individuals displaced from these conflicts are also being exploited elsewhere, including in forced marriage, in domestic work, on construction sites and in commercial sexual exploitation, both in the Middle East and North Africa, and further afield. Increasingly closed borders and a growing unwillingness on the part

of wealthier States to accept refugees also exacerbate these problems, as does the failure of officials in States with a high incidence of trafficking to enforce the laws already in place.

Conflict is the source of that displacement and vulnerability. It is the engine that drives the growth of human trafficking networks. The same is true in South-East Asia, particularly in relation to the displacement from Myanmar, which is driving Rohingya into forced labour, including in the supply chains that provide seafood to Western supermarkets. Even if individuals set out on what they believe is voluntary migration, they may discover along the way or upon arrival that they are subject to illegal exploitation, and are thus the victims of human trafficking.

And sometimes human trafficking does not even involve crossing international borders. Many of the conflicts with which the Council is wrestling in Africa are also driven by industrial-scale exploitation of conflict resources, fuelled by forced labour. In that respect, it is worth noting that the Council has taken important steps to encourage corporate due diligence to prevent conflict resources from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea and Somalia from entering global supply chains.

In other cases, the human trafficking involved is the movement of children into forced labour for armed groups, as we have seen so gruesomely with the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and neighbouring countries.

Finally, it is also clear that, in at least one other situation already on the agenda of the Security Council, that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there are questions not about non-State armed groups, but State involvement in human trafficking. In his recent report to the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea claimed that up to 50,000 North Koreans had been sent to work abroad in conditions that amounted to forced labour and human trafficking, in order to circumvent United Nations sanctions and earn billions in foreign currency for the country.

There are several things the Security Council can do to address some of the most egregious abuses.

First, the Council should send a strong deterrent signal to armed groups by calling this widespread and systematic organized policy of human trafficking what



it legally is: a crime against humanity. That would signal that those responsible are subject to prosecution not just at the International Criminal Court, but by any State with jurisdiction.

Secondly, the Security Council should make clear that it wants all parts of the United Nations system to work more effectively together to help countries tackle modern slavery in conflict zones. At present, United Nations efforts are fragmented and poorly coordinated, and the peace operations and peacebuilding actors of the United Nations are hardly involved at all. The Security Council should call on the Secretary-General to appoint a time-bound Special Envoy for the next three years to develop system-wide guidance to help United Nations actors figure out how to work better together and establish a strong global partnership with the private sector and civil society.

Thirdly, the Security Council should tackle the drivers of the problem by asking the Special Envoy to develop effective supply-chain measures to ensure that legitimate businesses do not unwittingly encourage human trafficking from conflict zones. Such measures could draw on lessons learned from the corporate due diligence guidelines on conflict minerals, as well as recent legislation and regulation in some Member States on supply-chain transparency.

Let me conclude by again thanking the Security Council for taking up this critically important issue on which the United Nations has such an important leadership role to play. It is only with such leadership that slavery will truly become a relic of history.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Grono for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Taha. In advance of her statement, exceptionally, I want to thank her for her courage and for making the trip here to share her experience with the Council, which I know will not be easy.

**Ms. Taha** (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the delegation of the United States for having convened this meeting and for having invited me to speak to the Council.

It is with great sadness, gratitude and hope that I address the Security Council. As a Yazidi survivor, I am a descendant of one of the world's oldest religions, which is today threatened with extinction. I am here to talk about the practices against us by what is called the Islamic State/Daesh — trafficking in persons, sexual

enslavement of women, recruitment of children in war, displacement and the genocide of our society. I am here to tell the Council my story, of what happened to my society, which has lost hope for life and is now moving into unknown territory. I am also here to tell the Council about the more than 3,400 women and children who have been abducted. I am here to tell the Council about this global terrorist organization, the Islamic State, which is trying to destroy our culture and take away our freedom. I am here to talk about the nightmare that, just overnight, turned the life of an entire community upside-down.

Prior to 3 August 2014, I was living with my family, my brothers and sisters in the pretty, quiet village of Kocho. But then the Islamic State attacked our region, and we found ourselves facing a true genocide. A large number of those forces of evil had come from different States with weapons, equipment and uniforms. Their aim was to eliminate all Yazidi existence under the pretext that — according to them — we were infidels. The Islamic State did not just come to kill us, women and girls, but to take us as war booty and merchandise to be sold in markets for a bit of money, or even for free. Those crimes were not committed without design, they were part of a premeditated policy. The Islamic State came with the sole aim of destroying the Yazidi identity through force, rape, recruitment of children and destruction of all of our temples, which they took control of. All of this can be interpreted only as an act of genocide against our identity, in particular against Yazidi women. Rape was used to destroy women and girls and to ensure that they could never again lead a normal life.

On 15 August, elements from the Islamic State summoned us to the village school. They separated the men from the women and children. I saw them from the second floor of the school as they took away the men and killed them. Six of my brothers were killed, while three survived the mass killing. We, the women and children, were taken by bus from the school to another area. They humiliated us along the way and touched us in a shameful way. They took me to Mosul with more than 150 other Yazidi families. There were thousands of families in a building there, including children who were given away as gifts. One of the men came up to me. He wanted to take me. I looked down at the floor. I was absolutely terrified. When I looked up, I saw a huge man. He was like a monster. I cried out that I was too young and he was huge. He kicked and beat me. A few

minutes later, another man came up to me. I was still looking at the floor. I saw that he was a little smaller. I begged for him to take me. I was terribly afraid of the first man. The man who took me asked me to change my religion. I refused. One day, he came and asked me for my hand in what they called “marriage”. I said that I was ill; most women were menstruating because they were so scared. A few days later, this man forced me to get dressed and put on my makeup. Then, on that terrible night, he did it.

He forced me to serve in his military company. He humiliated me daily. He forced me to wear clothes that barely covered my body. I was not able to take any more rape and torture. I decided to flee, but one of the guards stopped me. That night he beat me. He asked me to take my clothes off. He put me in a room with guards, who proceeded to commit their crime until I fainted.

I was finally able to escape three months after my abduction. I currently live in Germany. Thankfully, Germany provided me with the necessary medical attention, for which I thank that country.

But this is not just about my suffering; it is about collective suffering. Daesh gave us two options: become a Muslim or die. And even men who agreed to become Muslims out of fear for their lives were killed, their women enslaved and their children recruited. Sixteen mass graves have been discovered so far. One of them contains the remains of 80 women — including my mother — whom they did not desire and so decided to kill. More than 400,000 thousand people have been displaced, and over 40 per cent of our land is still under the control of Daesh.

Our liberated areas are uninhabitable because of the devastation, and Yazidis have no confidence that they will ever live on their land again. Just last week, more than 70 Yazidis drowned during their perilous journey to Europe. Thousands are looking for a way out, and a great many see migration as their only option. The Islamic State has made Yazidi women fodder for human trafficking. To the Council today, I lay out our demands, and I very much hope that humanity has not yet come to an end.

First, we demand the liberation of the more than 3,400 women and children still suffering and living under the mercy of the merciless.

Secondly, we demand that the incidents that took place, including the murders, collective slavery and

human trafficking, be defined as genocide. I am asking the Council today to find solutions to the issue of genocide before the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, demand the liberation of all of our areas, including my own village of Kocho, so that we can bury our dead. We demand the establishment of international protection for the Yazidi areas and for the minorities under threat so that, one day, we can return to our regions and live in peace. I also request the allocation of an international budget, under international supervision, to compensate the victims and rebuild the region.

Fourthly, we ask that members open up their countries to my community. We are victims and we have the right to seek a safe country that safeguards our dignity. Every day, hundreds of people risk their lives. We entreat you today to consider the resettlement option for the Yazidis and the other minorities under threat, especially the victims of human trafficking, as Germany has done.

Fifthly, and finally, we ask the Council, please, to put an end to Daesh once and for all. I suffered the pain they inflicted on me. I saw their evil. All those who commit the crimes of human trafficking and genocide must be brought to justice so that women and children can live in peace — in Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Somalia and everywhere else in the world. These crimes against women and their freedom must be brought to an end today.

**The President:** Let me say that I have been in many Security Council meetings, and people do not clap. But they are clapping for a remarkable young woman.

Following consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

“The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

“The Security Council recalls the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which includes the first internationally agreed definition of the crime of trafficking in persons and provides a framework to effectively prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

“The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms reported instances of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict. The Security Council further notes that trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity.

“The Security Council deplores all acts of trafficking in persons undertaken by the “Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL, also known as Daesh), including of Yazidis, as well as all ISIL’s violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights, and deplores also any such trafficking in persons and violations and other abuses by the Lord’s Resistance Army and other terrorist or armed groups, including Boko Haram, for the purpose of sexual slavery, sexual exploitation and forced labour that may contribute to the funding and sustainment of such groups, and underscores that certain acts associated with trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict may constitute war crimes.

“The Security Council reiterates the critical importance of all Member States fully implementing relevant resolutions with respect to ISIL, including resolutions 2161 (2014), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2249 (2015). The Security Council further reiterates the critical importance of all Member States fully implementing relevant resolutions, including resolution 2195 (2014), which expresses concern that terrorists benefit from transnational organized crime in some regions, including from the trafficking of persons, as well as resolution 2242 (2015), which expresses concern that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups.

“The Security Council calls upon Member States to reinforce their political commitment to and improve their implementation of applicable legal obligations to criminalize, prevent and otherwise combat trafficking in persons, and to strengthen efforts to detect and disrupt trafficking in persons, including implementing robust victim identification mechanisms and providing access to protection and assistance for identified victims, particularly in relation to conflict. The Security Council underscores in this regard the importance of international law enforcement cooperation,

including with respect to investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, and in this regard calls for the continued support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in providing technical assistance upon request.

“The Security Council calls upon Member States to consider ratifying or acceding to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. The Security Council further calls upon States parties to this Convention and to the Protocol to redouble their efforts to implement them effectively.

“The Security Council takes note of the recommendations made by the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, established by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, since its inception, and calls upon States to strengthen their efforts in building the necessary political, economic and social conditions to tackle this crime.

“The Security Council notes the particular impact that trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict has on women and children, including increasing their vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence. The Security Council expresses its intention to continue to address this impact, including, as appropriate, in the context of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, within its mandate, and in the framework of its agenda to prevent and address sexual violence in armed conflict.

“The Security Council expresses solidarity with and compassion for victims of trafficking, including victims of trafficking related to armed conflicts worldwide, and underscores the need for Member States and the United Nations system to proactively identify trafficking victims amongst vulnerable populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and address comprehensively victims’ needs, including proactive victim identification and, as appropriate, the provision of or access to medical and psychosocial assistance, in the context of the United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, as well as ensure that victims of trafficking in persons



are treated as victims of crime and, in line with domestic legislation, not penalized or stigmatized for their involvement in any unlawful activities in which they have been compelled to engage.

“The Security Council calls upon Member States to hold accountable those who engage in trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict, especially their Government employees and officials, as well as any contractors and subcontractors, and urges Member States to take all appropriate steps to mitigate the risk that their public procurement and supply chains may contribute to trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict.

“The Security Council welcomes existing efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse in the context of United Nations peacekeeping missions, and requests the Secretary-General to identify and take additional steps to prevent and respond robustly to reports of trafficking in persons in United Nations peacekeeping operations, with the objective of ensuring accountability for exploitation.

“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps to reduce to the greatest extent possible the risk that the United Nations’s procurement and supply chains may contribute to the trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict.

“The Security Council urges relevant United Nations agencies operating in armed conflict and post-conflict situations to build their technical capacity to assess conflict situations for instances of trafficking in persons, proactively screen for potential victims of trafficking and facilitate access to needed services for identified victims.

“The Security Council expresses its intent to continue to address trafficking in persons with respect to the situations on its seizure list.

“The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General report back to the Council on progress made in 12 months to implement better existing mechanisms countering trafficking in persons and to carry out steps requested in this presidential statement.”

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2015/25.

Although that may sound a little bureaucratic for our guests here today, that is how we get the United Nations system to work and get things done. I would add that it is very important that the Security Council has spoken on these issues for the first time.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

**Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain)** (*spoke in Spanish*): If my voice sounds shaky, it is because I find it very difficult to speak in this Chamber after Nadia. The walk from my office to the Chamber today was a peaceful one. I am lucky not to live in a conflict situation. I am lucky not to know first-hand what human trafficking is. I am lucky not to know what sexual violence in conflict is.

The closest I have ever been to such situations was in March when the Secretary-General inaugurated the Permanent Memorial to Honour the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade at the entrance of United Nations Headquarters. And I remember that at that event he said clearly that the monument should lead us not to forget the past but should above all make us look to the future — and to take a look at the present and at human trafficking, which is nothing less than the modern form of slavery.

I therefore would begin by urging all representatives and Members of the Organization to look at the Memorial every time we enter United Nations Headquarters, and to think of people such as Nadia who have not had the life the rest of us have had and use all the tools we have within our reach to fight with greater steadfastness against human trafficking and sexual violence in conflict.

I believe the presidential statement adopted today (S/PRST/2015/25) is a good step in the right direction but it is certainly not enough. And I congratulate the Permanent Representative of the United States for having awakened our consciences this afternoon to the phenomenon of trafficking, which is something of which we should really be ashamed. It is probably one of the most deplorable phenomena currently being experienced by humankind.

I would like to share two preliminary observations with the Council, before attempting to propose some additional measures to fight effectively against human trafficking. My first observation is that sexual violence strategically exercised by Daesh and other terrorist

groups can considerably increase the likelihood that women and girls will be trafficked. I would like to reiterate the words of the President of the Spanish Government, who said a few weeks ago that it is more dangerous to be a woman in armed conflicts than to be a soldier. That is a very sobering remark.

My second observation is that it is unacceptable for trafficking in women and children to be a part of the political economy, or worse, the financial economy, of terrorist groups. We must fight against this phenomenon in an absolute and across-the-board manner.

Further, I would refer to two errors that we simply should not make. The first is believing that the phenomenon is limited only to Daesh; it is not limited to Daesh, as the Deputy Secretary-General also said. Let us keep in mind the 276 girls kidnapped from the secondary school in Chibok. I think it is important not to lose sight of that fact. The second is that human trafficking is not a phenomenon exclusively linked to terrorism. Rather, it is a phenomenon that is also linked to the major conflicts we are experiencing today and the huge number of refugees in the world. Refugees and displaced persons give rise to making trafficking a phenomenon that is easier to practice.

Turning now to the United Nations, I believe that, although the existing legal architecture was inadequate to help Nadia, and I completely understand that it was, we need to begin by implementing it much more effectively, in particular the Palermo Protocol and other instruments. I can say with pride that my country, Spain, recently approved a comprehensive plan of action to fight trafficking in women and children for the years 2015-2018, in order to ensure that there is no recurrence of cases such as Nadia's.

Secondly, in strengthening the role of United Nations and the Security Council in fighting human trafficking, we must think about incorporating in the mandates of sanctions committees such serious and humbling subjects for humankind as the trafficking in persons.

I would conclude by discussing the victims. Council members know that my country has been a standard-bearing country for defending the victims of terrorism. We organized an Arria Formula meeting of the Security Council at which, for the first time, victims of terrorism were able to express themselves. Today Ambassador Power made it possible for Nadia, a

victim of trafficking, to bravely take the floor and tell her truth in the Security Council.

Finally, if being a victim of terrorism is serious, one can imagine how much more serious it would be to be a victim of terrorism and trafficking at the same time. Accordingly, I would address Nadia personally and assure her that the delegation of Spain will continue to fight to keep experiences like hers from ever recurring. I hope that within a few years we will no longer need United Nations funds to help people whose lives have been as difficult as hers has been.

**The President:** I thank the representative of Spain for his leadership in pulling that Arria Formula meeting together, allowing the voices of the victims of terrorism to be heard. We need to do more of that type of work in the Security Council.

**Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*):** I thank the United States presidency for organizing today's meeting on a subject as important as it is topical — trafficking in situations of conflict.

I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. Nick Grono, Chief Executive Officer of the Freedom Fund, for their briefings, and Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha for her very moving testimony.

Trafficking in human beings is an extremely lucrative organized criminal activity that generates profits estimated at tens of billions of United States dollars a year. Millions of the people subject to trafficking, including women and children, are often sexually abused. There is no question that human trafficking is the new slavery of the twenty-first century against which humankind must now engage in a ruthless struggle.

In some regions of the world, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, thousands of men, women and children are victims of trafficking. Terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army and many others resort to various forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour or bondage, slavery or related practices, forced servitude or organ trafficking and other abominable crimes requiring urgent solutions.

Chad vigorously condemns all such criminal practices. Recognizing the close ties between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including human

trafficking, Chad initiated and ensured the adoption last December of resolution 2195 (2014), whose relevant provisions address the issue before the Council today. To that end, we recall that the resolution, *inter alia*, requests Member States to ratify as soon as possible the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000, also known as the Palermo Convention, and its additional Protocols. In that regard, Chad urges Member States to further pool their efforts to prevent and eliminate human trafficking, in line with the Additional Protocols of the Convention. The firm commitment of Member States and effective coordination of their actions are absolutely crucial to identifying and bringing to justice the perpetrators of those heinous crimes, wherever they may be.

The smuggling of migrants towards Europe is spiriting many thousands of young Africans across the Mediterranean Sea each year. This is a serious crime that Africa and the rest of the world must diligently oppose. However, despite efforts aimed at dismantling the illegal migration networks, including the use of coercive methods authorized by resolution 2240 (2015), the phenomenon does not seem to have abated. In that regard, Chad reiterates that the States of origin, transit and destination must firmly tackle the root causes of that evil. It is essential for the international community to place greater emphasis on the links between peace, security and economic development by financing programmes aimed at creating jobs for young people and women, particularly in the migrants' countries of origin.

Finding a lasting solution to the issue of human trafficking will require the Council's deep involvement in resolving the conflicts currently under way worldwide, particularly in Syria, Iraq, Libya and other African countries. To that end, the Council must be united in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in efforts to ban the supply of weapons and munitions to armed groups, regardless of their character or objectives. By the same token, the Council should work to end the destabilization of weak States, on the basis of any available pretext, in order to preserve peace and security throughout the world.

In conclusion, Chad underscores the importance of the universal implementation of the Palermo Convention and its two additional Protocols. The Convention is the fruit of a long consideration process and covers all aspects of human trafficking, which has grown at an alarming, unprecedented rate due to the evolution of

terrorism. The response to such crimes also calls for renewed commitment and determination on the part of all States Members of the United Nations.

**Mr. Baublys:** (Lithuania): It is no news that armed conflict, the absence of the rule of law, rampant corruption, the abuse of ethnic and religious minorities and systematic gross violations of human rights all contribute to human displacement. Smuggling and trafficking networks feed on the human tragedies in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Human trafficking and smuggling is a multi-billion dollar business, in which the nexus linking criminals, traffickers and terrorists is well established. Increasing numbers of women and girls are turned into slaves and suffer sexual abuse and rape. Some are turned into suicide bombers — girls as young as eight and ten years old, as has been the case with some of Boko Haram's victims.

The Lords' Resistance Army is known to have abducted some 30,000 children — boys and girls alike. We cannot forget the thousands of women and children who remain captive in areas under Daesh control. We cannot forget the Yazidi women and girls who were abducted, sold at public auctions into sexual slavery and forcibly impregnated. Nor can we forget the hundreds of Yazidi boys who were abducted and marched out to the front under the Daesh banner wearing suicide belts, or as human shields. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham has targeted migrants and refugees in Libya.

Frankly, it is morally unacceptable for the Council to stand back and allow that evil alliance of traffickers, terrorists and armed groups to profit from human suffering. The least we can do is draw attention to the plight of the victims by adding our strong voice of condemnation. We can also rise to the challenge of solving conflicts that generate internal displacement, irregular migration and refugee flows, be it in the Middle East, the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin or the Horn of Africa. States have legal obligations to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to detect and disrupt trafficking networks. We all need to do more, work more with Interpol and other agencies, and boost international law enforcement cooperation.

As the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) just said, UNODC can provide technical assistance to Member States. It can do more to help implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized

Crime and its Protocols. Better coordination within the United Nations system, as some briefers have said, would help to proactively identify victims of trafficking. We need to look into what United Nations peacekeeping operations can do. The training of front-line officials — including law enforcement officers, judicial officials, border officers and social workers at the local level — needs to be improved. Governments, community and religious leaders and civil society should work together to ensure that victims are not stigmatized. Victims must have access to assistance, medical assistance, protection and support in order to prevent their re-trafficking.

Accountability for such crimes is the biggest challenge. We encourage Member States, regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations system to cooperate with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to explore ways to hold accountable the perpetrators of violent crimes committed by extremist groups and terrorists. We also need to step up prevention by improving coordination regarding early warning and analysis of potential conflicts. We look forward to the Secretary-General's new comprehensive strategy on preventing violent extremism.

A month ago, at the European Union-African Union Summit in Valletta, the leaders of the two continents pledged to scale up joint efforts in preventing and fighting migrant smuggling and eradicating human trafficking. They committed to beating back organized criminal networks, better managing borders and better coordinating and implementing agreements. The European Union and its States members are at the forefront of that fight in promoting global higher standards for addressing human trafficking, including through regional dialogue processes — such as the Khartoum and Rabat processes — with the countries along the East and West African migratory routes.

The elimination of the trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation stands as the priority for all European Union (EU) countries. The European Union has built a comprehensive legal and policy framework, guided by an anti-trafficking directive and an EU strategy. Actions are coordinated by an EU anti-trafficking coordinator. This is a good practice that could be shared with all interested regions and institutions.

In fact, a regional organization can play an absolutely critical role, as the Organization for Security

and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) does across Europe. The OSCE has become a major platform for cooperation and coordination in combating human trafficking. The high-level Alliance against Trafficking in Persons each year brings together top policymakers from OSCE participating States, the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation, United Nations international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and trade representatives.

In conclusion, presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, adopted today, calls for genuine action by all Member States, the United Nations system, regional organizations, civil society, religious leaders. It is time to make it happen.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to warmly thank our briefers, whose presentations and disturbing testimonies embody the Council's profound interest in addressing the issue of human trafficking in situations of conflict. The poignant testimony of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, who herself was a victim of atrocities committed by Daesh, was particularly gripping and will remain fresh in our memories.

The actions committed by Daesh in the Middle East or by Boko Haram in Africa dramatically illustrate the ongoing links between international peace and security and human trafficking. Worldwide, trafficking in human beings is, along with the traffic in drugs and counterfeit goods, one of the most profitable forms of trafficking. Its so-called turnover is estimated at \$32 billion dollars annually — if figures make any sense — and it is one of the most widespread kinds of trafficking. Forced labour, sexual servitude, kidnapping for purposes of forced prostitution, rape — the list of atrocities committed by terrorist groups, in particular in situations of armed conflict, is unfortunately very long. While the international community has invested heavily in the issue since the turn of the century, more efforts are crucial to defeat this scourge. I therefore commend the initiative of the United States presidency of the Council and to thank its delegation for giving us the opportunity to exchange views on this issue.

For these terrorist groups, whose main victims are usually women and children, trafficking in human beings is not simply a means of spreading terror among civilian populations; it is also used as a source of financing. In Syria, women suffer the worst atrocities. Rape, forced marriage and prostitution are



everyday occurrences in regions controlled by Daesh. In Iraq, Daesh has established a veritable market where women from minority groups, such as Yazidis and Christians, are sold to serve as sex slaves. The international commission of inquiry on human rights in Iraq describes a system that transcends borders, where we find Yazidi women, and even girls, with price tags on their foreheads, for sale in the markets of Raqqa, in Syria. In Nigeria, Boko Haram tortures, rapes and holds prisoner hundreds of women and children.

Those acts are not only intolerable from a moral point of view; they may also constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and even genocide in the case of certain communities. These crimes must not go unpunished. The terrorist groups that commit such atrocities are pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human. Faced with this, we are called to act — and to act in the sense of protection. The need to protect civilians is obvious, but so is the need to protect the law and its principles.

On numerous occasions, the Council has debated subjects closely linked with the phenomenon of human trafficking — on the occasion of the adoption of resolution 2195 (2014), for example, on links between terrorism and organized crime, or more recently of resolution 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security. But our words must now be translated into action. Prevention, the protection of victims and the fight against impunity must be our priorities.

Combating human trafficking is a key priority for France. The three pillars that I have described guide the national action plan that France adopted in 2014 in order to curb this scourge. At the international level, we have at our disposal pertinent international instruments, such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, known as the Palermo Convention, and its Protocols, including that specifically dedicated to the fight against trafficking in persons. But we need to strengthen them and ensure their full implementation by the entire international community. It is to that end that France argues especially for the establishment of a review mechanism to verify and facilitate the implementation of these instruments. We also contribute to the Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, whose remarkable work I commend.

Finally, as it did at the International Conference on the Victims of Ethnic and Religious Violence in

the Middle East, held in Paris on 8 September, France will continue to mobilize the international community each time it has opportunity to do so. When we learn of crimes as horrific as the ones we have heard testimony about today, we have a collective responsibility to act to end them and to prosecute their perpetrators. The Council can be assured that France will be fully mobilized to that end.

**Mr. Zagaynov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we thank the briefers for their informative statements and assessments of the threat of human trafficking in situations of conflict. It is important for us to focus our attention at this meeting on the crimes of the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) and other terrorist groups, and on their consequences.

Against the backdrop of an unprecedented upsurge in terrorist activity in the Middle East and North Africa, we are particularly dismayed by the ongoing atrocities committed by the insurgents of ISIS against representatives of religious, national and ethno-confessional minorities: Christians, Kurds, Yazidis and others. In recent months, thousands of Yazidis have been seized by terrorists and became live merchandise. Women and children are sold into slavery, forced into marriage or subject to sexual violence. Fleeing oppression and the atrocities of terrorists, many Yazidis and other minorities have been forced to leave their homes, and many have died.

We strongly condemn the criminal practices perpetrated by terrorists. We call on States to step up their efforts to combat this activity, to streamline the exchange of relevant information, and to cooperate in identifying channels for the financing of terrorist activities. It is well known that individuals and organizations involved in providing financial support for terrorists, including through human trafficking, are subject to Security Council sanctions.

The crimes of ISIS are part of a global problem. Such crimes are also committed by Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army and other terrorist organizations and groups. They occur in situations of armed conflict in various parts of the world. International human trafficking is managed by well-organized criminal groups. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people, having been lured by deceit, sold or forced or subjected to other violence, fall into the grip of sexual or economic exploitation and become merchandise that generates multimillion dollar profits.

Harsh measures are needed against the criminal groups that organize or intermediate illicit transactions with live merchandise. Solely by adopting a comprehensive approach — and not merely, for example, a more strict migration policy — can we achieve an effective outcome in combating human trafficking. We advocate strengthening the role of the United Nations and its Office on Drugs and Crime in pooling the efforts of the international and national bodies involved in the work on eradicating modern slavery. We welcome the work in this area. Given the division of labour within the United Nations, the Security Council can make an important contribution in combating human trafficking perpetrated by terrorists and in the course of armed conflict. That is particularly relevant when the scale and urgency of the situation threaten the international peace and security.

We believe that an important guide for our work in this area remains the Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, adopted in General Assembly resolution 64/293. We are convinced that its implementation would help raise awareness of this issue around the world and mark a significant improvement in the cooperation of all stakeholders. Human trafficking in persons, including its most horrific forms in regions under terrorist control, can be eliminated only through the coordinated efforts of all States and specialized international organizations and by making full use of the existing international legal framework.

**Mr. Wang Min** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the convening of this open meeting. I wish to thank all the briefers for their statements.

In areas of armed conflict, women and children are always vulnerable and subject to all kinds of violence, harm and isolation. The international community is urgently called on to provide them with assistance. Recently, terrorist organizations, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Boko Haram, are carrying out criminal activities, such as human trafficking in the Middle East and Africa, further jeopardizing the rights and interests of women and children, and leading to the deterioration of their living environment. The international community should closely coordinate and carry out joint efforts to step up the protection of women and children in conflicts. I should like to highlight the following points.

First, the sovereignty of the countries involved should be respected and their role should be leveraged. The countries involved have the primary responsibility to protect women and children in their countries and to combat human trafficking. The international community should, on the basis of respecting the sovereignty of countries involved, provide constructive support and assist the countries involved in stepping up their capacity-building in counter-terrorism and border control so as to maintain stability and tranquillity in the country and the region.

Secondly, an integrated approach should be taken to addressing both the symptoms and the root causes. The international community should strengthen its cooperation in effectively combating criminal activities, such as human trafficking, and in providing comprehensive security guarantees and humanitarian assistance to women and children in conflict areas. It should also vigorously advance political processes and promote national reconciliation and resolve differences through dialogue and consultation so as to eradicate the root causes of armed conflicts and create a stable external environment for the protection of women and children.

Thirdly, priority should be given to further counter-terrorism efforts. Terrorism is a grave security threat to the international community. Human trafficking has become a source of financing for terrorist organizations. The international community should fully implement the Council's counter-terrorism resolutions, strengthen coordination and cooperation to form synergy in combating terrorism, fully cut off the financing channels of terrorist organizations and stop the cross-border movements of terrorists, and resolutely combat any terrorist and criminal activities that challenge the foundation of human civilization.

Fourthly, we should strengthen cooperation to create synergy among various mechanisms. The United Nations, the Security Council, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN-Women should leverage their strengths and enhance their coordination, based on their respective mandates, so as to form international synergy in combatting criminal activities, including human trafficking, and provide comprehensive protection for the rights of women and children in conflicts.

**Mrs. Ogwu** (Nigeria): We want to thank you, Madam President, for taking the initiative to convene

this seminal briefing and for the concept note that you provided to guide our deliberations. We want to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for setting the tone for our debate this afternoon. Our appreciation also goes to Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yuri Fedotov, and Mr. Grono for sharing their perspectives on an issue of grave concern and considerable contemporary significance.

The testimony of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha is heartrending, to say the least. It is better imagined than experienced. We appreciate her courage.

In an increasingly evil international environment, conflict situations expose civilians to very grave risks. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are some of those risks. Terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and Boko Haram, operating with total disregard for international humanitarian law, have brazenly introduced a new dimension to trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of women and girls in conflict situations. Those groups have committed outrageous horrifying acts of depravity that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Nigerian State assures the international community of its unwavering determination to contain, degrade and defeat Boko Haram with the support of our contiguous neighbours: Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Benin. Indeed, the military establishment has rescued a significant number of women and girls held hostage by Boko Haram and will not rest on its laurels. We are assured that all hostages will ultimately be rescued.

In very broad terms, eradicating human trafficking and other forms of modern day slavery is beyond the capacity of any single State. It requires concerted international action by a broad range of stakeholders, including nation States, international organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations and community leaders. We appreciate the efforts of humanitarian actors that are undertaking advocacy campaigns to publicize the risks of trafficking, the tactics employed to coerce and traffick victims, and what victims could do to protect themselves.

In addition to taking preventive measures, States must engage in the protection of victims. The Palermo Protocol specifically requires States to protect the human rights of victims and to provide measures for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking. Laws and procedures that protect victims will encourage them to come forward, as Nadia

has done today, and testify against traffickers and their organizations.

Protection is also an integral part of the process of rehabilitation and the reintegration of the victims. In this connection, there is a need to support the laudable work of various stakeholders, including national and international non-governmental organizations, striving to provide rehabilitation for victims of trafficking.

The fight against human trafficking is a national priority for Nigeria. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, which was established in 2003 — I think Nigeria was one of the first States in the world to establish an organization of that nature — is the principal institution charged with the responsibility of leading this fight. Since its inception, the Agency has provided an effective and comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, persecution and punishment of crimes of human trafficking. The Agency, with the active collaboration of international partners, has made very significant contributions to the fight against human trafficking.

Some of the achievements of the Agency include securing convictions against human traffickers and facilitating the rescue and reintegration of trafficked persons. In recognition of the new trends in human trafficking and the need to further strengthen the institutional framework. The Trafficking in Persons Prohibition, Enforcement and Administration Act 2015 was enacted by the legislature. That underscores the unwavering commitment of the Nigerian Government to the fight against human trafficking.

We believe the Security Council, for its part, should play a more central role in the global fight against human trafficking. One way to achieve this would be for the Council to specify the trafficking in persons in the context of conflicts as a stand-alone thematic issue on its agenda. I believe you mentioned this, Madam President, at lunch this afternoon. The Council should also strengthen and enhance its engagement with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration and other relevant actors with experience in counter-trafficking activities. Regular briefings by those agencies would permit the Council to stay abreast of developments in conflict zones as they concern trafficking in persons.

The Council should also consider expanding the protection of civilians mandate of peacekeeping

missions to include a counter-trafficking dimension. That could be particularly helpful in conflict situations where displaced persons are at great risk of being trafficked. That would, of course, involve the specialized training of peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel to work with victims and potential victims of trafficking. In post-conflict situations, initiatives aimed at the rehabilitation of victims should be integrated into United Nations-led transitional justice and accountability processes.

The link between human trafficking and international peace and security is evident from what I have heard today, and what needs to be done to combat human trafficking is clear. States must meet their obligations under the Palermo Protocol. The Security Council must demonstrate greater leadership. Indeed, all hands must be on deck. On our part, we remain committed to collaborating with all actors at the national, regional and international levels in our common fight against trafficking in human persons.

**Mr. Wilson** (United Kingdom): Normally at these meetings, it is traditional to thank the briefers for their statements, and I do so very strongly. I particularly want to thank Nadia Taha for her testimony before the Council today. I believe that it is hard to overestimate the extent of the impact when somebody who has suffered what she has suffered has the bravery to share her experiences with us today. It may seem strange to us sitting in a Chamber like this, which is so formal, to hear something brought so directly before us.

Her bravery inspires us to take the kind of action that Ms. Taha has been calling for and the discussion that has taken place around this table today. Specifically, with regard to Daesh, she said that we need to get rid of it completely. Of course, my Government agrees with that, and I believe that everybody and every Government represented around this table agrees. The brutality and the inhumanity of Daesh truly disgust us. We heard today one story — Ms. Taha's story — of such inhumanity, and it is extraordinary for us to hear it in such a direct manner, sitting in this Chamber, but what is even more shocking is that hers is not the only story. There are countless more stories of abduction, rape, forced marriage, forced conversion and slavery.

Sadly, Daesh is not alone in its practice of human trafficking. It is prevalent throughout the world, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Afghanistan and from Burma to Somalia. The International Labour

Organization estimates that 21 million people are the victims of trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery. Others studies put the number at 35 million. That figure represents half the number of the population of my country. It simply cannot continue.

I therefore welcome the leadership shown by Ambassador Power in bringing this issue to the Council's attention, and I think that there are three ways in which we should be looking at tackling that scourge. First, the international community needs to show leadership to give that issue the priority that it deserves, which is what is happening here today. Secondly, we need to do more to support at-risk groups, particularly minority groups that are vulnerable to trafficking. Thirdly, the Council needs to do all it can to end the instability and insecurity that allow trafficking to thrive.

Through the Sustainable Development Goals, as the Deputy Secretary-General has just reminded us, the international community made an unambiguous pledge to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour and end modern slavery and human trafficking. We now need to turn that goal into a reality. To do that, every member of the international community needs to show political leadership in making this issue a priority. That is my first point. That will require confronting hard truths. In my country, the United Kingdom, there are up to 13,000 people in modern slavery. That is the United Kingdom. The issue is not confined to groups such as Daesh or Boko Haram, but in recognizing our own problems, we can all show the leadership needed to take action. Earlier this year, the United Kingdom Parliament passed a modern slavery act. It gives our law enforcement authority improved tools to tackle that scourge. It ensures that perpetrators can receive a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and, crucially, it enhances the support and protection provided to the victims of slavery.

Legislation is only part of the answer. We also need to look to international organizations, businesses and civil society for leadership. The United Kingdom is working with the European Union, the Commonwealth, the Santa Marta Group and the United Nations to establish a global consensus on this issue. That means greater coordination of effort, but also requires ensuring that those organizations are in no way connected to the practices associated with trafficking. That means United Nations peacekeepers strictly complying with zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse; international financial institutions completing



thorough due diligence in granting project funding to avoid inadvertently supporting forced labour; and corporations holding themselves accountable through transparency in their supply chain.

With regard to my second point — support for at-risk groups — we have heard today of the disproportionate impact that trafficking has on certain groups, whether women and girls or members of minority communities; whether Christian, Muslim, Mandaean, Yazidi or any other faith. It is therefore incumbent on all Governments to ensure that minority groups are protected, and it is incumbent on all Council members to assist them in their efforts.

The United Kingdom is supporting the Government of Iraq's efforts to protect all minorities, promote human rights and reassert the rule of law. Through our development assistance, we are funding activities to protect vulnerable civilians, including through legal assistance and support groups for women. We are also working around the world to combat violence against women and girls, which is so often a consequence of trafficking. The United Kingdom is funding organizations that offer care to survivors. We are combating impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence by supporting cases brought before national courts, and we are funding programmes that focus on attitude changes to prevent violence against women and girls. That includes training 800 Peshmerga forces on how to respond sensitively to victims of sexual violence in the fight against Daesh. I hope that all other Council members will do what they can to support those types of efforts.

Let me close with my third point. The most effective way for the Security Council to prevent the gross abuses of human rights about which we have heard today is by ensuring stability and security. That means taking back the territory held by Daesh. It means ensuring that there is a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and it means using all of the Council's conflict-prevention tools to prevent future instability. Ultimately, as Mr. Grono has just reminded us, it is about addressing the root causes of trafficking, supporting normative changes so that that behaviour is no longer tolerated, governance is inclusive and the plurality of religions, cultures and perspectives are not just tolerated but embraced and celebrated.

**Mr. Van Bohemen** (New Zealand): We thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Fedotov and Mr. Grono

for their briefings. And I pay tribute to Nadia in the same spirit as others have today. Her testimony is very confronting because of its reality, but it is also confronting to us in our reality in the Council.

When I came to this place 35 years ago, we spent a lot of time elaborating and increasing the intricate array of documents to protect human rights. Thirty-five years later, we are dealing with the reality that slavery is alive, well and living in our world. We have made some progress in normative instruments, and we have gone backwards in our practices. That is the horrible reality that we are facing today. We therefore thank the United States for bringing the Council's attention to this issue. We thank Nadia for her bravery in having shared with us, in harrowing detail, the horrors that have been visited upon her, her family and her people. We are reminded that similar treatment has been meted out by Boko Haram and to the women caught up in the conflicts in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and elsewhere.

We share the revulsion at the violations perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) against thousands of Yazidis, in particular women and children, and the institution of what is apparently a programme of mass slavery. As Nadia has reminded us, some women and girls are simply given away as gifts. What is particularly concerning about this issue is that it can be self-perpetuating. Trafficking exacerbates conflict and conflict exacerbates trafficking. Trafficking, as we have heard, comes in many forms and has many purposes. It is also prevalent in the Western world. It often has a gender dimension, disproportionately affecting women as well as children. Trafficked victims are used as combatants and sex slaves, forced into marriage, or used as forced labour on land and at sea. People become chattel and a source of revenue that funds conflict or terrorism.

We recognize the difficulty of dealing effectively with this phenomenon, particularly in the context of conflicts that are themselves intractable and deeply resistant to international intervention. This is particularly so in areas where the rule of the State is ineffective, as is the case in the worst instances we have heard today. However, it is a phenomenon that we must address, including through more effective conflict prevention. Investigation and accountability are paramount. Acts associated with trafficking, including those committed by ISIL, may constitute crimes under the Rome Statute of the International

Criminal Court. Such acts can amount to crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes. Investigation and accountability measures should be taken at both the domestic and international levels, and there should be an increased readiness to work together when trafficking crosses borders. Member States must also ensure that appropriate services are in place to address both physical and psychological trauma experienced by victims and their families.

Like others, we urge States to join the Palermo Protocol, which sets out a comprehensive framework to prevent and address trafficking in persons. We also encourage support for political-level initiatives like the recently established International Parliamentary Coalition for Victims of Sexual Slavery. New Zealand Member of Parliament Melissa Lee is one of the five founding members of that initiative. Such initiatives send a powerful message to perpetrators and victims that there is political attention on and condemnation of such acts.

We wish to acknowledge the value of civil society actors, who play a vital role in disseminating information to populations about their human rights and who engage with Governments on the ground. As others have said, we need to ensure that the United Nations itself does not fuel trafficking in persons. Our presence should provide an assurance of protection, and our ability to do that is vital to the success of our operations. We support the continued implementation of the Human Rights Up Front initiative, the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, and the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Finally, we believe that there is scope to explore how the Council can better address this issue in the context of improved situational awareness and the protection of civilians. The Council should continue to monitor this issue, acknowledge it as an increasingly important dimension of conflict, and be ready to take action to prevent it when it is possible to do so.

**Mr. Lucas** (Angola): First, we would like to thank the briefers for their comprehensive presentations. Our special gratitude goes to Nadia Taha. We praise Nadia for her courage and strength in sharing with us a painful experience. Nadia's testimony and plea raise the fundamental issue of the victims of trafficking and enslavement, and how to repair the immense injustice to which they were subjected.

We thank the United States presidency for organizing this debate, an initiative that expresses the need to strengthen collective awareness of the gravity of this phenomenon, which arises from conflict situations — although not exclusively, it should be stressed — and to step up efforts, both legal and operational, to counter trafficking in persons, their exploitation and enslavement.

It is well known that, as a result of ongoing conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, but also of situations not derived from conflicts, modern slavery has attained a new and disturbing dimension. Thousands of people have been enslaved by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab in central Africa and elsewhere, while millions of displaced persons and refugees are easy prey to human traffickers. A situation has emerged in which States are totally unable to protect their citizens from egregious violations of their basic human rights; they are trafficked, sold like cattle and enslaved in a life of misery and horror.

The idealistic responsibility to protect agenda has become irrelevant in the face of crimes committed against vulnerable people caught in the middle of horrendous conflicts. The estimated number of people living in slavery worldwide is staggering, making a mockery of the general and universal prohibition against that repugnant form of human exploitation. The situation calls for strengthened global efforts against human trafficking and slavery, which, when taking into account the organic connection between the two, parallels the fight against terrorism.

It is well documented that ISIL promotes slavery in the regions under its control in Syria and in Iraq. Its actions against the Yazidis, Christians and other minorities are consummate examples of the most backward obscurantism and surely meet the requirements to be deemed crimes against humanity and even genocide. Boko Haram has been pursuing despicable actions, including kidnapping women and girls for enslavement and sexual exploitation, forcibly recruiting children as soldiers and feeding sexual exploitation markets. Like ISIL's, the actions of Boko Haram may qualify as crimes against humanity, and call for an energetic response from national authorities to uphold their responsibility to protect their citizens. Sexual violence against women, girls, boys and men is a common war tactic used by all terrorist organizations. By inflicting unbearable humiliation and destroying

their sense of humanity, terrorists seek to obtain total compliance from their victims and to make them accomplices to their heinous crimes.

The central issue in combating such trends is a solid common framework of measures to counter trafficking in persons. The most outstanding tool is the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which provide a legal and operational framework for international cooperation. The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) contains provisions for a commitment on the part of United Nations Member States to ending modern slavery and human trafficking. The Security Council recently authorized European countries to use force to disrupt human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean. Such instances demonstrate the international community's commitment to ending to this modern-day scourge, which is not an outdated abomination but a shameful stain on the contemporary human conscience.

The Security Council must, as it is doing today through this debate and the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, continue to send a strong message by qualifying human trafficking and ensuing enslavement as war crimes and crimes against humanity and, in so doing, enlarging the jurisdiction covering this type of crime. Additionally, the entire United Nations system should be mobilized and coordinate efforts to tackle modern slavery in conflict situations. The approach adopted so far in dealing with conflict situations has been to emphasize immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance over efforts to counter trafficking in persons. However, with the escalation of this phenomenon increasingly affecting the lives of vulnerable children, women and men, it has become imperative to consider this issue a matter related to international peace and security, in particular — as the Security Council points out in the presidential statement adopted today — since trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity.

In conclusion, the international community must step up its collective efforts to combat and destroy the terrorist groups, strengthen the international legal framework related to the fight against human trafficking, stress the critical importance of States implementing

the relevant Security Council resolutions, and develop international cooperation to eradicate poverty and promote economic opportunities as a means to prevent and eradicate the expansion of this heinous practice.

While important efforts are being pursued to break up terrorist organizations such as ISIL or Boko Haram, it is critical that we unite our efforts to protect vulnerable populations from trafficking, enslavement and exploitation — the greatest civilizational step backwards that the contemporary world is experiencing in terms of respect for human rights and the dignity of the human being.

**Mr. Hmoud** (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank the delegation of the United States of America for this initiative and for having convened this very important meeting. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson; Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and Mr. Nick Grono, Chief Executive Officer of the Freedom Fund, for their briefings. We would also like to thank Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha for participating in this debate. We thank her for her courage in speaking about her personal tragedy and the tragedy being experienced by the Yazidi community at the hands of the despicable criminals of Daesh — which is neither an “Islamic State” or any other kind of State: it is merely a band of criminals, which the international community must overcome.

Undeniably, combating trafficking in persons has always been something that has enjoyed the attention of the international community because trafficking undermines the dignity of human beings and their fundamental rights and freedoms. Recently, however, terrorist groups have been carrying out the worst forms of modern slavery — as we heard today, for example. Such terrorist groups are committing crimes systematically and on a large scale against various ethnic groups and religions. That means that the international community must show leadership and deal effectively with this issue. Moreover, we must take into consideration the fact that such acts fuel inter-communal and inter-ethnic conflict and serve to reinforce stereotypes and fuel the cycle of violence.

Terrorist groups such as the criminals of Daesh, Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army are deliberately abducting women and children, who are then forced to serve as human shields and suicide

bombers or forced into sexual slavery or forced labour. Such acts committed during armed conflict fall under the international definition of trafficking in persons, as established by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Furthermore, when carried out in war zones, they can constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, which are punishable under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Large-scale trafficking in persons by terrorist groups is of major importance, and the Security Council must therefore rise to the challenge, especially given the fact that such acts are usually committed in areas that are not under State control. Jordan supports today's presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, the first of its kind, which should enable us to meet the challenge posed by trafficking in persons by terrorist groups.

Jordan believes that there is a need to step up our efforts to combat trafficking in persons, in particular trafficking committed by terrorist groups. That requires efforts at both the regional and international levels.

On the national level, States should expand national awareness-raising campaigns concerning the victims of trafficking and mass displacement during armed conflict, including through education and social media. All segments of society need to be informed about the legal repercussions of such acts. It is also very important for States to adopt pertinent legislation and undertake the necessary legal and administrative reforms in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are brought to justice, including by transferring them to countries with jurisdiction or to specialized international criminal tribunals. Similarly, States should provide medical and psychological assistance and establish programmes to reintegrate people into their societies, in particular in the case of persons who become refugees as a result of armed conflict.

At the international level, there is a need for cooperation to boost the capacity of States that require technical, material and logistical support, in particular fragile States that are unable to protect the victims of trafficking. That must be done through cooperation with the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, including, among others, UNODC, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization. All bodies need to work in this area. We should also strengthen the role played by peacekeepers, who must be provided with the necessary resources to assist victims of trafficking by terrorist groups. Specialized advisers should also be appointed.

In the context of combating impunity, we believe it is very important that the Secretary-General submit a report that includes proposals to implement strategies and mechanisms to meet the challenges posed by trafficking in persons committed by terrorist groups, who do not respect the rules of international law or human rights. That will enable us to implement action plans to combat trafficking in persons, including the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Along the same lines, we should support the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which should be given the necessary legal and other assistance, along with the appropriate United Nations agencies and bodies.

Trafficking in persons is a crime under Jordanian law. In addition, the Kingdom of Jordan has ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Jordanian officials are seriously addressing the fight against trafficking in persons, with a view to providing assistance and health care to victims in order that they can rebuild their lives. In cooperation with non-governmental organizations and United Nations specialized agencies, Jordan has set up a health-care centre for Syrian refugees. In addition, in collaboration with UNICEF, we have established an educational centre for children, where they are also provided psychological and social services.

In conclusion, Jordan will continue to make further efforts to combat the crime of trafficking in persons committed by terrorist groups. We are prepared to cooperate with all national and international organizations to combat this scourge and to address its root causes in order to prevent it.

**Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia):** I join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to you, Madam President, and to the United States delegation for convening this meeting, which my delegation supports. The initiative is timely and appropriate in seeking to shine a light on the heinous practice of human trafficking, increasingly perpetrated by violent extremist groups such as Daesh, Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army, among others.

The fact that such deplorable acts occur increasingly frequently in conflict situations constitutes a clear and present threat to international peace and security. As such, it merits closer scrutiny and concerted action not only by the Security Council but by the United Nations



system and, more generally, by the international community. In that connection, I would like to thank today's briefers — Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Mr. Yury Fedotov and Mr. Nick Grono for their invaluable insights and perspectives, which have greatly enriched our discussions. I have also listened intently to Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha's presentation and am humbled by her grace, courage and perseverance in the face of such adversity. My delegation and I were deeply moved by her account of her experiences and suffering, which I am sure holds true for all the victims. We greatly appreciate her presence here today.

Malaysia would like to emphasize its complete condemnation of every act of intolerance, intimidation or violence in situations of armed conflict perpetrated by terrorists and violent extremist groups, particularly acts of human trafficking in which victims are subjected to slavery, torture and even murder. We unequivocally reject any connection that such groups as Daesh and Boko Haram seek to establish between such heinous practices and the precepts of Islam, which is a religion founded on peace and the dignity of the human person, whether woman, man or child. On that note, Malaysia is pleased to join the Council's consensus in welcoming the adoption of today's presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25. We believe the presidential statement represents a concrete first step on the part of the Council in recognizing the international peace and security dimension of human trafficking, while at the same time underscoring the need to take coordinated, sustained and decisive action against its perpetrators.

It also sits well with the Council's ongoing efforts to better coordinate the implementation of its own policies and positions in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. While we emphasize the centrality and importance of respect for and adherence to the precepts of international human rights and humanitarian law in that regard, another equally key component is improved integration and coordination of efforts undertaken within the framework of international criminal law, specifically the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocols.

In responding to the call in the concept note for concrete, action-oriented discussion, I would like to share the following three proposals.

With a view to addressing the scourge of human trafficking in a comprehensive and holistic manner, we

stress the importance of putting in place reintegration activities and programmes, especially for women and children who have been freed, not only to protect them from re-victimization and stigmatization, but also to enable them to believe that there is hope after victimhood. While mindful of the context of conflict in which the kind of human trafficking we are discussing today occurs, we would like to stress how important it is that States subscribe to and implement instruments such as the Palermo Protocols, which include provisions on measures aimed at achieving the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of human trafficking.

Improving coordination with existing initiatives, for example, means introducing the outcomes and visions outlined in the presidential statement into the work of the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which, based on resolution 2225 (2015), is also paying greater attention to the issue of the abduction and kidnapping of children in conflict situations. Further linkages could be made with the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1999 (2011), concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, and other relevant sanctions committees.

In conclusion, Malaysia believes that trafficking in persons poses a real threat to many countries, not just those in conflict situations. Indeed, due to its location and relative political and economic stability, Malaysia has had to contend with the issue for quite some time now. It is a multifaceted problem that requires extensive coordination and cooperation from all sides, including Governments, multilateral partners, civil society and other relevant interlocutors. Given the complexity and cross-cutting nature of human trafficking and related issues, political will at the national, regional and international levels is a major factor in determining whether tangible and sustained results and improvement can be achieved. In that regard, the Council is well placed to continue making strong, unified pronouncements backed up by equally effective policy decisions and measures that unequivocally demand accountability and deny impunity for perpetrators.

**Mr. Barros Melet (Chile)** (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the United States for convening this meeting. We are also grateful for the briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mr. Nick Grono, Director of the

Freedom Fund, as well as for the invaluable testimony of Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha. We commend the representatives of civil society who are with us today and thank them for their contribution to this meeting.

The presidential statement we adopted today (S/PRST/2015/25) sends a united message from the Council on the need to address human trafficking in conflict situations. We appreciate the text's emphasis on the complementarity that should exist within the United Nations system.

Millions of people worldwide are victims of trafficking, and in one way or another every State is affected by this scourge. Reporting, exposing and prosecuting this crime is complicated in situations of armed conflict owing to States' inability to control their own territory and protect their civilian population. Currently this activity, from which criminal organizations have traditionally benefited, has been aggravated by the emergence of terrorist and armed groups that profit from trafficking in persons in order to sustain their illegal activities. Denouncing such activities is not enough; it requires collective action.

The abduction, exploitation and trafficking of persons by terrorists and armed groups is being used not only for economic purposes but, far more seriously, as a strategy for sowing terror among those who do not share their ideas and aims. The situation is aggravated by the incidence of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, whose victims are mostly women and children — a phenomenon experienced by vulnerable populations in a number of conflict situations that the Council is considering. The situation of the Yazidi people is particularly serious, due to the sectarian persecution they have suffered over the past decade and that they are enduring today as victims of terrorist groups. It is urgent that we improve the mechanisms for protecting such populations, take concrete steps to prevent abductions, and prosecute the perpetrators of human trafficking and everyone involved in it. In that regard, we urge the Council to ensure that implementation of resolution 2225 (2015) provides measures for preventing the abduction of children in situations of conflict.

Improving medical and psychological support to victims of trafficking is also an urgent matter. We need cultural efforts that change existing perceptions of women and girls who have been abducted and abused so they can reintegrate into their communities and the

cycle of exclusion is not perpetuated. The actions taken should avoid making victims of these people a second time and should protect their dignity and rights. We must strengthen capacities to prevent and act in crisis and post-conflict situations. This type of illicit activity should be more closely investigated. We believe it is important to expand reports in the United Nations system on this subject in order to take appropriate measures for protecting civilian populations. It is also vital that the Organization's peacekeeping operations be able to expand their work on protecting civilians in this area. That will require that peacekeepers and civilian personnel be better trained in order to enable them to identify such illicit activity and improve the protection of vulnerable populations and victims.

Unless States provide the impetus for the political, economic and social transformations needed to combat the factors that increase the vulnerability of victims, including, among others, inequality, poverty, lack of information, and discrimination at all levels, we will not see the structural changes that will prevent trafficking and lead to punishment for the perpetrators.

**Mr. Suárez Moreno** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela is grateful for the presence and briefings of Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Mr. Nick Grono, Chief Executive Officer of the Freedom Fund; and, especially, Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, whose statement, I dare say, expresses the silenced voices of thousands of women and girls who even today are the victims of such despicable and abominable acts.

Human trafficking is a transborder crime that spares no country or region of the world. The different causes and motivations that favour that crime have been exacerbated in recent years as a result of situations of armed conflict in various parts of the planet, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. The mass displacements of civilian populations affected by situations of armed conflict increase people's vulnerability to this reprehensible crime, especially that of women, girls, boys and adolescents. In addition, it has been observed that human trafficking is being used by extremist groups and terrorists as part of their strategy for financing their criminal activities.

According to the *2014 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, published by UNODC, according to

information compiled in the course of the preparation of the report, between 2011 and 2013 eight countries around the world reported human trafficking victims from Syria, while it was recognized that prior to 2011, when the conflict in that country began, it was extremely rare to find Syrian victims of that crime.

From that we should be able to conclude that, unfortunately, the training, outfitting and encouragement of non-State actors whose actions are based in violent extremism aimed at dismantling States for politically motivated reasons serve to promote the activities of groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and the Army of Conquest. As such, they lead to the perpetration of a range of atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially aimed at those most vulnerable, such as women and children.

In that regard, we again reiterate our call to all actors of the international community to fully respect the provisions of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council concerning the prohibition of supplying weapons and financial and logistical support to such armed groups, in order for there to be an effective decrease in the capacity of those non-State actors, and therefore a decline in the likelihood of human trafficking and the exploitation of populations at risk.

The grave humanitarian situation of the refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants who are the product of the tragedy of war, political destabilization, poverty, terrorism and the generalized violence that is lashing so many regions of Africa and the Middle East makes them potential victims of human trafficking. Another aspect that, in our view, furthers the activities of criminal groups that profit from human trafficking, concerns increasingly restrictive and exclusive immigration policies and the lack of channels for regulated migration and family reunification, as well as the lack of regulated access to the labour markets for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. As Nadia asked the international community: please do not close the doors to migrants fleeing the wars besetting various countries in Africa and the Middle East. Migrants fleeing violence are not the cause of terrorism, as some politicians think, but rather the result of this despicable political and military practice.

While we welcome the initiative of convening this debate in the Security Council, we nonetheless

believe that efforts aimed at the effective prevention and eradication of this crime require broad, democratic spaces that ensure the full participation of all Member States, in order to achieve coordination and synergy across all the relevant United Nations agencies with expertise in this area, along with the various regional and subregional mechanisms.

We consider it of particular importance to help States in situations of conflict and post-conflict to strengthen their institutional capacities in order to fulfil their legal commitments and obligations to prevent and combat human trafficking. In that regard, we recognize the important role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Inter-agency Coordinating Group against Trafficking Persons in fostering coordination and cooperation in the global fight to combat human trafficking, as well as that of other entities in the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations in line with their respective mandates.

Finally, Venezuela reiterates its commitment to meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons and other international legal instruments concerning this issue.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the United States.

Let me join others in thanking our guest briefers — Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Executive Director Fedotov and Mr. Grono — both for their briefings and for their efforts in the real world to combat human trafficking.

Nadia, I cannot imagine how painful it must be every time you are asked to recount your experience. No human being should be forced to endure what you and your family have gone through — ever. Your being here and speaking so bravely to all of us is a testament to your resilience and your dignity, and is of course the most powerful rejection of what the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) stands for.

We have been here now for two hours and 15 minutes. It is worth remembering that, in that time, women and kids and others are living in circumstances just like those that Nadia have described. As we sit here, they are being terrorized. And they are dreaming of their escape, desperate to get out but trapped by

brute force and nothing more. We have been talking about ISIL in the Security Council since at least early 2014. But Nadia, you have humanized the stakes in a way that I think has been extremely important for people to hear. I do not think that anyone who was able to hear you will ever forget what they heard and what you have been through. We are truly in awe of your courage. I also agree with the comment that was just made that, at a time when refugee admissions and the flight of individuals is being politicized and refugees are being caricatured in different ways, your experience and your testimony is a powerful rebuke to those who would caricature this whole population, when people are fleeing for their lives, fleeing terror and conflict and sexual violence. We should never forget that.

Today we as a Council are meeting for the first time on the issue of human trafficking in conflict. Historic as this is, it is a bit baffling that the Council has not taken on this issue before. We have up to now met on trafficking in arms, oil, antiquities, natural resources and wildlife, but this was our first meeting on the trafficking in human beings. Almost everywhere we see conflict in the world, as others have said, we see human trafficking. Human trafficking thrives in conflict, and conflict is exacerbated by human trafficking.

It is no coincidence that the illicit trade in weapons, drugs, stolen antiquities and other illegal goods tend to follow routes similar to those used by human traffickers and be carried out by the same criminal networks. These illicit activities sustain armed groups, terrorists and criminal networks and threaten international peace and security. In addition, traffickers often force their own victims to commit crimes, such as participating in terrorist acts, transporting illegal weapons and producing illegal drugs, and these crimes themselves, of course, further undermine our shared security.

We have seen how the Governments, armed groups and terrorists that treat people as property often show similar disdain for the rules and norms that ensure our shared security. Yet, despite persistent efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons by the United Nations and other international bodies, Governments and civil-society groups, this crime persists. The statistics, as others have noted, are staggering. According to the International Labour Organization, at least 20 million people worldwide are victims of forced labour. An estimated 5.5 million of them are children — 5.5 million children. Making matters worse, as Mr. Grono observed, the taboo against slavery is being actively and

willfully challenged by ISIL and Boko Haram, which do not just carry out widespread human trafficking; they brag about it on social media and in propaganda materials. ISIL distributes women and girls to fighters as spoils of war, systematically rapes them and sells them in markets like cattle. Boys as young as 4 years old are forced into cub training camps, where they are reportedly given dolls on which to practice beheadings. It is barbaric.

ISIL has even gone so far as to issue guidelines to its followers on how to treat their slaves, providing a twisted justification for the most depraved acts. The guidelines state: “It is permissible to buy, sell or give as a gift female captives and slaves, for they are merely property which can be disposed of”. And they tell followers, “It is permissible to have intercourse with a female slave who has not reached puberty”. In other words, raping female slaves is authorized; it is acceptable; it is encouraged. When we try to describe evil like this, we find ourselves groping for language; words fail us. We are amazed that Nadia was able to speak about the unspeakable and find words, and we thank her for that.

The stories of Boko Haram’s depravity are also shocking. On 2 October, the group reportedly forced four girls and a boy to blow themselves up in the Nigerian city of Maiduguri. Three of them attacked a mosque during evening prayers. Fifteen people, including these kids, were killed, and more than 35 were injured. Witnesses estimated that the bombers were as young as 9 years old.

Martha, age 14, was abducted by Boko Haram along with her two sisters in September 2014. She was taken to one of the group’s camps, and she later told a reporter, “They told me not to walk around outside, and when I did they would beat me. They told me not to talk, and I would talk, so they would beat me. They told me not to sing, I would sing, and they would beat me”. She was forced to convert to Islam, assigned a new name and married against her will to a fighter. Martha said she was forced to carry extra ammunition for Boko Haram fighters on two of their operations. “They wanted me to kill people,” she said, “but I could never bring myself to kill anyone”. She said, “Boko Haram members tried to force my sister to kill an old man. When she refused, they shot her instead.” One night, Martha and two of the girls escaped into the bush. “I am still struggling with the memories”, she said.



For groups such as ISIL and Boko Haram, slavery has become one of their most versatile weapons of war, used to instil fear, to inflict suffering, to recruit followers, reward fighters, convert people of other faiths, reward combatants and generate revenue, and they are learning from one another's worst practices. It is a grotesque race to the bottom.

So what can we, and by we I mean all States Members of the United Nations, all civilized communities, what can we do to root out this scourge? Of course, we must condemn these vile crimes and those who commit them, and we must continue to document the horrors, so that one day those responsible can be held accountable. We must also commit ourselves to ending the conflicts that provide an ideal climate for human traffickers, and of course we must commit ourselves to eradicating the groups that use human trafficking as a weapon of war.

To that end, under President Obama's leadership, the United States has organized a coalition of 65 countries to degrade and destroy ISIL and spurred efforts in the Security Council to curb the flows of foreign terrorist fighters and the illicit funds that extremist groups use to fuel their terror. The session that United States Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew will chair tomorrow, when many other Council finance ministers will join him, will aim to strengthen Member States' efforts to cut off ISIL's financing.

Similarly, we continue to provide security and counter-terrorism assistance to the Governments of Chad, Nigeria, the Niger, Cameroon and Benin to aid their fight against Boko Haram. We are also continuing to partner with African countries to take on the Lord's Resistance Army and Joseph Kony, who remains at large. The Lord's resistance Army has been decimated in recent years, but every day it exists and Joseph Kony is at large is a day in which children, women and civilian communities everywhere are at risk of abduction, and the abductees, as all here know, are then forced themselves into abducting others. In some cases you have children being asked to abduct and kill other children. It is monstrous. So that effort, too, is essential.

Beyond these efforts to end conflicts, in which human trafficking thrives, and to go after the worst perpetrators, we must also ask what each of our Governments can do to ensure that we are not ourselves helping to fuel the crime of human trafficking.

First, we must work to ensure that our own practices, from procurement to distribution, do not themselves

contribute to human trafficking. This means taking steps to require Government contractors and subcontractors to prohibit activities known to contribute to trafficking, such as making it illegal to charge workers recruitment fees that can lead to debt bondage. By putting in place such requirements and protections, Governments can show that they are practicing what they preach when it comes to cutting modern slavery out of supply chains, and we can each model best practices for the private sector.

Secondly, we have to teach people how to actually see the victims of trafficking. This can be extremely challenging. Some victims of trafficking go out of their way to avoid being identified, out of fear for their safety or that of their loved ones, out of fear of being deported or otherwise criminalized. And when the victims of trafficking are seen, they are seen too often as criminals. People see only the crime that these individuals have committed and not the force, fraud, coercion and terror that led them to do so. Learning to see trafficking victims demands sensitizing people at all levels of Government and across the spectrum of agencies, and it demands engaging partners outside of Governments such as faith-based organizations, business owners, teachers, health-care providers — those that are most likely to come into contact with victims.

Consider one of the populations at highest risk of trafficking: internationally displaced persons, namely, refugees fleeing conflict areas. As we all know, nearly 60 million people are currently displaced by conflicts, more than at any other time since the Second World War. Yet aid workers, peacekeepers and other groups that come into close contact with these vulnerable individuals often lack the training to spot the signs of trafficking, and even those with the training often have extremely limited resources to assist the victims who are identified. This is a massive gap, and we must all work to fill it. I credit Jordan, which has taken in more than 628,000 Syrian refugees, as we all know, but Jordan also recently built its first shelter dedicated exclusively to housing and assisting trafficking victims.

To give another example, in the United States, the Department of Transportation and Homeland Security have teamed up to train some 50,000 airline employees in how to safely identify suspected instances of human trafficking and alert law-enforcement authorities in real time.

Thirdly, we need to spur more robust and innovative solutions. Others have rightly highlighted the enormous disparity between the \$150 billion in profits estimated to be generated annually by forced labour and the amount spent by countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development annually on anti-trafficking development assistance, which is less than one tenth of a 1 per cent of the amount the traffickers are taking in.

But we do not just need more resources; we need resources to be more victim- and survivor-centred. Time and again, we have seen that incorporating victims and survivors into the policymaking process yields better solutions, and they can offer the kind of perspective that Nadia offered us here today. To that end, the United States Government will soon be launching the first-ever United States advisory council on human trafficking, made up exclusively of survivors, to help inform and guide our federal policies and programmes to combat trafficking and empower victims.

On 6 December 1865, the United States adopted the Thirteenth Amendment to our Constitution, which abolished slavery. Before it was adopted, generations of men, women and children were enslaved in this country in the most deplorable conditions. People were born, lived and died in chains. It took fighting a brutal civil war in which more than 600,000 lost their lives — one out of every 50 Americans — for this practice to be abolished. Even after the war ended and the Amendment was adopted, the practice of forced labour endured in other forms, as we know, and the legacy of slavery is still acutely felt in our nation to this day.

Speaking on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Amendment's adoption, President Obama appropriately quoted President Abraham Lincoln:

“In giving freedom to the slave we ensure freedom to the free — honourable alike in what we give, and what we preserve.”

Lincoln was referring to efforts to emancipate slaves in this country, but his words can just as easily be applied to the Security Council today. Right now we find victims of human trafficking in every one of our countries. We eat food that they harvest. We speak on telephones built from minerals that they mine. We wear clothes that they make. The Security Council is built on the premise that the peace and security of our nations is bound up in one another's. But as Lincoln understood, so are human rights.

Everyone of us here knows in our core that human trafficking is wrong. We know that modern slavery is inhuman. We know that no one should ever have to endure what Nadia and so many women and girls and others are enduring right here as we sit and as we discuss. If we know that, then what Lincoln told Americans so many years ago also holds true for us here on this day: our freedom and our dignity are bound up with the fates of millions of victims of trafficking, such as Nadia, victims who possess tremendous dignity and courage. We ensure our freedom by fighting to give them their freedom.

*The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.*