

Mr. Braun (Germany):

At the outset, allow me to express my thanks to His Excellency the President of the Government of Spain, in his capacity of President of the Security Council, for his expression of condolences following yesterday's terrorist attack in the German capital, Berlin. I would also like to thank the members of the Council for their statements today of solidarity with my country. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all other Member States and colleagues who have sent messages of sympathy and solidarity, which are much appreciated.

On the topic of this meeting, while aligning myself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union, I would like to thank Spain for initiating this debate, and the briefers for their input and their substantive reports.

Germany co-sponsored resolution 2331 (2016), just adopted. I would like to underscore three aspects in particular

First, armed conflict often enables or aggravates the crime of human trafficking through the breakdown of law and order, weakened or non-existing Government structures and increasing levels of violence, for example. Human trafficking can constitute a war crime and is often connected to sexual violence as a method of warfare against civilians. Displaced persons are particularly vulnerable and prone to becoming the prey of criminals specializing in human trafficking for labour or sexual exploitation. It is a shame that civilian populations are viewed by some armed groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as a resource or commodity to be trafficked, thereby lining their pockets and ultimately prolonging conflicts. Going after the proceeds of human trafficking will lead us to those commissioning these crimes. We therefore welcome that the Monitoring Team is mandated to investigate the cross-cutting issue of human trafficking in its threat assessments.

Secondly, I would like to underscore the importance of one of the questions that you, Mr. President, have raised in the concept note (S/2016/1031, annex) for this debate, namely, the risk of procurement and supply chains contributing to trafficking in persons. Much of what we all consume every day has come a long way and has gone through many hands. All of us have a responsibility to make sure that what we enjoy is not the end product of the abuse of slave labour and victims of human trafficking. Germany has placed this issue at the top of the agenda of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during its chairmanship in 2016, hosting a conference in Berlin on the issue in September. In close collaboration with the OSCE's coordinator, we strengthen the role of the OSCE as mediator and pioneer for an internationally coordinated approach against human trafficking.

Thirdly, people falling prey to human trafficking in conflict are already among the most vulnerable in their societies. Those who reach a safe destination often have lost all their belongings. Their bodies and souls have endured unspeakable horrors. Minors lose their parents and are in particular need of responsible care. The risks of vulnerable persons becoming victims of traffickers can be reduced by establishing legal and safe routes. Resettlement and relocation programmes are a good means to achieve that. Germany's programme for Yazidi refugees from Iraq, for example, has reached a 1,000 victims of the terrorism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The victims and their families have found a safe refuge in Germany.

The group's most recognized face and their loudest voice is Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and winner of the Sakharov Prize of the European Parliament. I am glad to see that Ms. Taha is present in the Chamber. She speaks out against the horrors the people who endured and calls for the dignified treatment to which every victim of human trafficking is entitled. Let us not forget: every bit of help for the victims is also one step ahead in the long struggle against human trafficking.

Let us spare no national or international effort to drain the swamp of human trafficking, both in conflict situations and beyond. Let us step up efforts to address conflict and instability as key push factors for human trafficking and migration. Human trafficking is an abuse of the human rights of the victims. Let us be mindful of the victims' human rights at every stage of their horrific journeys.