

Mr. Danon (Israel):

Israel joins the many delegations here that have condemned the terrible terror attacks in Berlin and in Turkey on the Russian Ambassador. Terror is terror, and we are united with the rest of the international community in condemning and opposing such terrible crimes.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women and children, are trafficked across borders worldwide, in a crime of humankind against humankind. It should outrage every person because it debases our fellow human beings. It should outrage every community because it erodes societies. And it should outrage every nation because it funds organized crime and terrorist groups and threatens international peace and security. It is worth emphasizing that human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar industry. While in the past trafficking in persons, like drug and arms trafficking, was mostly run by organized criminal groups, in today's world we are witnessing an alarming increase in the involvement of terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Boko Haram.

A year ago, we all had the chance to hear in person the horrific story of Nadia Murad, a Yazidi refugee and victim of trafficking, in the first-ever Security Council debate dedicated to trafficking in persons (see S/PV.7585). In October, in an effort to raise awareness of the dire situation of Yazidi women and girls, the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations hosted an event focused on trauma treatment for refugees who manage to escape the bloodshed in Syria and Iraq. At that event, we had the opportunity to hear from a young woman named Marwa Al Aliko, a Yazidi refugee from Iraq who was captured and trafficked by Da'esh and forced into slavery before she was able to escape. In that meeting, Marwa said that "the Da'esh fighters took us captive and put us in a small room. Every night the men would come to us and do as they pleased. After a few days one of the men bought me and my two sisters and took us to

Syria. Ten days later, they separated us and I was all alone."

Unfortunately, it seems that the international community has failed Marwa and her family and friends.

In recent years the Syrian conflict has turned the Middle East into a breeding ground for human traffickers. Unfortunately, that is not limited to Da'esh alone but also extends to the Syrian regime. According to the 2016 report of the United States Department of State on trafficking in persons, the actions of the Syrian Government, as well as Hizbullah, continue to worsen the problem of human trafficking crimes. We must condemn those acts and demand that the Syrian Government uphold its international obligations by refraining from using child soldiers, protecting women who have been sold as sex slaves and prosecuting traffickers, whether they are Government officials or terrorists.

Israel shares fully in the global concern about this issue and in the commitment to continuing to fight to eliminate trafficking in persons. Combating human trafficking is a high priority for our Government. We are a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol on trafficking in persons. In fact, we are fully engaged in the fight against trafficking in persons through all four Ps — prevention, prosecution, protection and partnership.

The first is prevention. We introduced a comprehensive anti-trafficking law in 2006 and adopted national plans of action. Eradicating the plague of trafficking and slavery requires partnership at all levels. To achieve that, we appointed a national anti-trafficking coordinator to coordinate efforts between the Government and non-governmental organizations. The second is prosecution. We have invested in our intelligence and law enforcement agencies in order to identify trafficking networks, prosecute perpetrators and enforce tough sentences. The third is protection. We have introduced a network of services to help locate trafficked persons and provide victims with support. They are given a safe place to stay in a Government- funded shelter, free legal aid, a work visa and the medical and psychological support they so desperately need to begin rehabilitation. Recently, the special forfeiture fund for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking was activated and allocated funds to more than 45 victims and five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for various rehabilitation purposes, including recovery and reintegration. And the fourth, and last, is partnership among all stakeholders, namely, Government, civil society and the private sector. Our success is largely due to the valuable partnerships we have formed with NGOs. They are critical in every phase of the process.

Each one of us has a responsibility. Every nation must take action by adopting strong anti-trafficking laws, strengthening enforcement mechanisms and introducing tougher penalties. Trafficking preys on those without a voice, and therefore we must be the voice ourselves. We must be the voice of the man who is lured by the promise of a higher-paying job, but ends up toiling in hard labour in horrific conditions under the threat of violence. We must be the voice of the child who is told she would have a better life, but is raped and forced into prostitution. We must be the voice of women such as Marwa and Nadia and so many others. We must show them through our actions that they are not alone.