

**Mr. Eloumni** (Morocco) (*spoke in French*):

Allow me to extend the heartfelt condolences of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation, as well as to the family of the deceased, Ambassador Andrey Karlov, and to express our outrage against the despicable criminal terrorist attack of which he was the victim, in flagrant and unacceptable violation of human values.

Morocco also condemns the attack yesterday in Berlin, the cowardly 11 December terrorist bombing of a Coptic cathedral in Cairo, as well as the 18 December terrorist attack in the Karak province of Jordan. The Kingdom of Morocco strongly denounces terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, and reaffirms its unswerving commitment to fighting that scourge.

Allow me to thank Spain for having convened today's debate on this topic, which is a dire one but is timely and topical. Human trafficking is one of the gravest attacks on humankind and a phenomenon that undermines the dignity and value of the human being. It occurs not only during tragedy and disaster, although it is a direct consequence of such events, which also lead to damage to infrastructure, loss of life and lack of food, consequences that receive more attention.

Armed conflict is a breeding ground for human trafficking. During conflict, traffickers take advantage of the lack of normalcy and the rule of law to exploit the existing vulnerabilities of people and act with impunity to finance war, provide sexual services and reduce, if not eliminate, ethnic or religious minorities. Despite efforts deployed to curb the phenomenon, it has reached alarming dimensions in past years. Indeed, well-structured groups run human trafficking using networks that are often hard to dismantle, profiting from the vulnerability and fragility of its victims, most frequently women and children.

While it is true that non-State armed groups have long exploited vulnerable people for sexual purposes, military service and forced labour, those groups, particularly Da'esh and Boko Haram, encourage and run a slave trade of unprecedented dimensions. They openly organize slave markets, using the most modern and sophisticated techniques, notably electronic social networks, to auction off the victims of their trafficking.

In December 2015, the members of the Security Council made human trafficking one of its concerns, under the presidency of the United States of America. Members heard, for the first time, the poignant testimony of Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a Yezidi survivor of sexual slavery at the hands of Da'esh. Today, we should heed her distress call and her appeal for concrete actions to be taken.

The December 2015 presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 was an important step in that regard. Resolution 2331 (2016), submitted by Spain and adopted this morning and co-sponsored by Morocco, is a historic step for the Council. The Council now has powerful means to reverse that pernicious trend and to help States punish such crimes. We must continue to work on identifying individuals and groups that fund terrorist groups through their sexual trafficking and violence. Recognizing the need to combat that type of crime, Morocco has ratified several international conventions on the subject, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In the meantime, the Government of Morocco has undertaken a number of legislative and institutional reforms aimed at providing the Kingdom with a legal arsenal and specific means for strengthening its actions aimed at combating various forms of organized crime, particularly human trafficking, illegal immigration and terrorism. Morocco recently adopted a law on human trafficking, with the aim of adapting national legislation to international standards, particularly the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. That law includes sentence guidelines and preventive measures to protect victims, as well as provisions on institutional measures aimed at combating the phenomenon through the creation of an advisory commission to the Head of Government.

On the other hand, the Kingdom was one of the few countries to have pursued a courageous and proactive policy aimed at regularizing the status of clandestine migrants fleeing conflicts or precarious economic situations. Its policy, based on an integrated and comprehensive humanitarian approach, made it possible for more than 25,000 migrants to integrate socially and economically in Morocco over the past year. On 12 December, King Mohammed VI ordered the immediate launch of the second phase of the efforts to integrate undocumented migrants.

In conclusion, allow me to emphasize the following points. First of all, an effective response to human trafficking must include preventive measures to limit the potential pool of victims. Secondly, we must identify measures to prevent trafficking in persons fleeing conflicts, including the establishment of regular migration channels, respect for the principle of non-refoulement and, where appropriate, a study of their ability to access the labour market in the host country. Thirdly, we must create a human registry, including for those living in camps for displaced persons and refugees, as a means of combating the risks of human trafficking. Finally, we must effectively implement relevant commitments under Goals 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

