

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand):

Let me begin by congratulating the President of the Government of Spain, Mr. Rajoy Brey, and the Spanish delegation for this most timely debate and for the successful adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) today.

Trafficking in persons, like slavery, with which it is closely associated, used to be regarded as a crime of an earlier era. Sadly, that is not so any more. Indeed, it can be found in many countries, including my own, as I shall note more fully in a moment. It has reinforced to my own country that all States Members of the United Nations must be vigilant in addressing the issue. The problems and effects of trafficking are exponentially and despicably worse in conflict situations. That reality has been brought home through today's briefing — and, if I may say so quite graphically and directly — to the Council in the testimony of Nadia Murad, the young Yazidi woman who addressed us last year (see S/PV.7585), as well as in the briefings of Zainab Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Under-Secretary-General Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, on the use of sexual violence in the conflicts in Syria and South Sudan, the Lake Chad region and elsewhere.

The callous barbarity of the treatment meted out to innocent people, most often women, girls and young men, is mind-numbing: being kidnapped, forced into marriage, raped, sexually molested and abused; sold into slavery, forced into prostitution; forced to be a suicide bomber, a combatant, a labourer; and even sent into battle with your baby strapped to your back. And, if by some fortunate chance you are able to get free, there is the risk of being rejected by your own family and community for the crimes that were done to you. Listening to those briefings last year were the most harrowing days I have spent at this table.

The Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1) and the briefings on specific conflicts on the Council's agenda illustrate the ways in which trafficking is both fuelled by and exacerbates conflict situations. However, the evidence presented today on how such phenomena interplay and reinforce each other is deeply troubling. Terrorist groups will, of course, use whatever means they can to pursue their objectives. For some, their motive is profit. In many cases, however, it is about terrorizing and controlling communities to eliminate resistance and, above all, to exercise power over people with no defences. In that regard, those perpetrators are in essence cowards.

In any event, we need a shared understanding of that phenomenon and an agreement on collective action to confront and defeat it. The fact that the issue is difficult, deeply distasteful and has social and economic dimensions should not deter the Council from

taking it up or be used as a pretext for leaving the issue for other bodies to address. The Council has a responsibility to

engage in the full spectrum of international security issues, in all their disturbing dimensions. New Zealand would like to highlight five aspects that we consider warrant particular attention.

First, the Council needs to integrate such issues into our work, wherever relevant. That means ensuring that the effects of trafficking and sexual violence against women, men, and children are appropriately reflected in our consideration of specific mandates and country situations. That should not depend on mandate prescriptiveness. Rather, when present, such aspects need to be considered. To that end, the Secretariat needs to ensure that such issues are adequately reflected in its advice to the Council, including its formal reports and the conflict assessments on which they are based.

Secondly, we need to make active and effective use of the other international tools at our disposal. As Ms. Bangura so clearly pointed out today, the effective use of the Islamic State in the Levant/Da'esh sanctions regime is an obvious point of engagement. It was disappointing that we were unable to reach an agreement for her to brief us and our Committee earlier this year.

As resolution 2331 (2016) adopted today underlines, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking provides an essential framework for such efforts, both in terms of international cooperation and State-level implementation. Within the Plan of Action, the terrorist financing framework has shown its effectiveness in following the flow of money to those responsible and cutting off sources of finance. Organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, INTERPOL, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units also have significant expertise and networks that we can and should be utilizing to their fullest extent.

As resolution 2223 (2016) adopted last week underlines, challenging cross-border issues such as this demand cohesion across lines of effort to be effective. It is important, therefore, that such international efforts are effectively coordinated. The United Nations system is well placed to assist. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons has a central role to play, as does the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. We look forward to engaging with Member States on options for how such coordination can be further strengthened.

Thirdly, regional cooperation has a vital role to play in efforts to confront such issues, given their cross-border nature and scope. New Zealand's experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of such approaches. In our own region, the Asia Pacific, the Bali

Process provides a valuable forum for addressing the complex challenges of trafficking in persons and related transnational crime.

Fourthly, States need to pursue those responsible for such acts at the domestic level. Traffickers profit from exploiting the weak and vulnerable. All States need to ensure that they have appropriate criminal offences that allow such individuals to be brought to justice. Just last week, a New Zealand court handed down the first conviction in New Zealand for people trafficking, imposing a sentence of almost 10 years in prison and ordering the payment of reparations to the victims.

Finally, we must not lose sight of the needs of those most affected by conflict-related trafficking and sexual violence — the victims and the survivors. In that regard, Nadia Murad laid down a very specific challenge to the Council today. To establish an effective mechanism to gather and protect evidence of the crimes that have been committed in Iraq and Syria. That is a challenge that New Zealand will not be able to take up as we leave the Council in 11 days, at least not in this organ, but we believe that it is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

In conclusion, we hope today's discussions will galvanize our collective efforts to combat and defeat those interrelated scourges by tackling them at their source, while bringing those responsible to justice and providing the necessary support to those affected.