

Ms. Jarbussynova:

I wish to express my deep gratitude to the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council for convening this timely high-level debate.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as a comprehensive Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regional organization, sets the promotion and protection of human rights at the core of any viable security strategy. The OSCE pays considerable attention to the perilous links between crisis situations and the risks of trafficking. I wish, therefore, to concentrate today on the nexus between emergencies and human exploitation in the OSCE region and on much needed risk-mitigation and counter-trafficking programmes.

In 2016, my Office compiled a survey of selected aspects of the OSCE action plan against trafficking in persons, so as to better understand developments and challenges in their implementation. Although the data show some progress across the areas of prevention, prosecution and protection, they also reveal that considerable work remains to be done. That becomes all the more urgent if one considers the latest trends in the trafficking in human beings.

As immigration policies tighten, migration routes become longer and more hazardous. People on the move, especially women and children, are particularly at risk of falling into the hands of human traffickers. Very often what begins as a humanitarian crisis swiftly grows into a security crisis. The task facing us is formidable. Of the more than 1 million irregular migrants who surged into Europe in 2015, more than 90 per cent used services provided by 40,000 individuals operating in loose criminal networks and who continue to often exploit irregular migrants after arrival. Since 2014, more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine have been forced to leave their homes. How can we counteract that and meaningfully address the magnitude of those transnational challenges? How can we remedy the fact that, all too often, criminal networks flourish, perpetrators go unpunished, the level of convictions remains low worldwide and victims fail to be compensated for their material and moral damages? I believe that national efforts, however effective, cannot fully tackle the complexity of this crime. In the spirit in which Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations was forged, it is imperative that diverse actors and first responders engage in multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral and transnational efforts, wherein inclusion, collaboration and the sharing of best practices become watchwords in our combined endeavours towards ensuring more effective investigations, timely prosecutions and the prompt identification of victims.

Given the leverage of the OSCE and its multidimensional approach, my team and I have striven, since the onset of both the migration crisis and, indeed, the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, to counter the accompanying exploitation of human life by traffickers. It therefore gives me great pride to have piloted the OSCE project entitled Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes, in which we are training law-enforcement officials, prosecutors, labour inspectors, financial investigators and civil society representatives in an intensive simulation exercise. In that endeavour, I am extremely proud of our efficient cooperation with the United Nations family, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Organization for Migration, as well as the European Police Office and INTERPOL. Likewise, I remain committed to imparting best practices to the staff of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine on how to monitor and report trafficking-related trends in the context of a conflict situation. Such action is imperative given that, despite the seriousness of those crimes, human trafficking in the context of crisis-driven situations continues to go largely unnoticed by both governmental and non-governmental actors.

I sincerely hope that we at the OSCE can capitalize on those achievements in the upcoming regional consultations for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, thereby ensuring a human rights- centred approach.

Further guiding our work is the conviction that it is important to investigate the link between terrorism and trafficking. To that end, we are supporting a group of experts who are addressing that issue with a special focus on youth trafficked for terrorism.

We also recognize that it is important to take advantage of the collective purchasing power of Governments to eliminate the market for goods and services produced by trafficking labour. The second of our flagship projects in that regard seeks to prevent trafficking in human beings in supply chains through Government procurement and measures. To that end, I commend the Government of the United Kingdom for supporting our efforts in encouraging consumers, campaigners and investors to scrutinize businesses so as to end modern-day slavery.

Finally, given that children and unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, next month's seventeenth high-level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, to be held in Vienna, will focus on child trafficking. Given that almost one in five trafficking victims across the OSCE region is a child, the aim of the two-day conference is to enhance the coherence of international efforts and to develop more integrated, effective and expert recommendations to adequately respond to child trafficking in a manner that respects human rights.

We owe that to children, but also to men and women everywhere, regardless of age, status, origin or, indeed, whether they are fleeing crisis or not. Despite the scale and breadth of the challenges that we face, I am convinced that close cooperation with international and local partners will allow us to make a significant contribution to highlighting and mitigating the scourge of human trafficking.