

Mr. Winid (Poland):

Let me begin by expressing our condolences to our German and Russian colleagues following the tragic terrorist attack in Berlin and the tragic assassination of Ambassador Andrey Karlov in Ankara. We ask them to accept our sympathy and words of condolence.

We thank Spain for organizing today's important open debate and for facilitating the adoption of the ambitious resolution 2331 (2016) on trafficking of persons in conflict situations, which Poland proudly co-sponsored.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, but I would like to add some further comments in my national capacity.

The findings in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of measures to counter trafficking in persons (S/2016/949), released in November this year, are worrisome and alarming. The report acknowledges various instances of human trafficking, both within and beyond conflict zones. Civilian populations, notably women and often children, often war refugees and migrants, are subjected to a wide range of forms of exploitation, including sexual violence, forced and compulsory labour, enslavement, as well as forcible recruitment into armed services.

Particularly disturbing is the nexus between conflict-related sexual violence and human trafficking, acknowledged earlier in the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361/Rev.1). Abductions of women and children, systematic and widespread exploitation and abuse, including rape, sexual violence, forced marriages and sex slavery, perpetrated by Da'esh, Boko Haram and other terrorist and armed groups, are horrifying and deeply deplorable, and demand our immediate response. We are also alarmed by the widespread practice of the recruitment of children by parties to conflicts, including in Syria. In that context, I wish to reiterate the primary responsibility of State authorities for ensuring the safety of its population, especially members of ethnic and religious minorities.

Twenty years ago, at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, Poland submitted the first draft of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted by the Assembly in 2000 (resolution 55/25). We subsequently also ratified its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We are also a State party to the International Labour Organization's Forced Labour Convention and its Protocol and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention. We join the Council in urging countries that have not yet done so to embrace the international legal framework for preventing and combating trafficking in persons. Adopting appropriate measures within national legal systems is the first step in

efforts to combat and prosecute such crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

We must also accelerate the international response to that dangerous and inhumane phenomenon, which undermines fundamental human rights and gravely impacts the lives of victims and affects whole communities. We appreciate the work of international bodies such as the International Criminal Police Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. We urge Member States to cooperate even more closely on that common challenge.

Apart from governmental cooperation, building partnerships with civil society and the private sector should foster information sharing and the identification and protection of victims, with the goal of dismantling criminal networks involved in trafficking in persons. Cooperation with the private sector is especially important, so as to cut off funding sources to terrorist and violent extremist groups, which often profit from human trafficking. Fighting sexual and gender- based violence must be better reflected in counter- terrorist efforts.

Last but not least, we must ensure that the stories of trafficking not fall into dehumanizing silence by making the voices of survivors well heard. To conclude, we once again applaud Spain's initiative to discuss this topic in this forum, and we appreciate Spain's work on resolution 2331 (2016), which complements the existing framework aimed at fighting human trafficking in conflict situations.