

Mr. Marzooq (Iraq) (spoke in Arabic):

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Council this month and for the transparent manner in which it conducts the work of the Security Council. I would also like to thank New Zealand for its tremendous efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

Iraq is one of the earliest countries to be implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Notwithstanding the challenges and difficulties that the country faces and the terrorist attacks of Da'esh, Iraq is developing an effective national action plan to implement the resolution. A special operations room has been established in the Prime Minister's Office to implement resolution-related plans, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Iraq is working to ensure women's participation in public life and raises awareness among the population about women's social, economic and political rights, promotes gender equality through an equal opportunities policy and encourages women to take up posts and participate in decision-making processes. Women taking up high-ranking positions has increased since 2003. We now have 83 women parliamentarians, three women ambassadors and 86 judges and Iraqi women are now the presidents and deans of 75 universities and colleges and cabinet ministers in an Iraqi State inhabited by 7 million people. Sustainable development can be achieved only when there is an environment of peace and security.

Iraq is witnessing the most violent terrorist attacks in the world perpetrated by lethal terrorist groups. The people in the areas under the control of such gangs have experienced the most savage and horrendous criminal practices committed against, in particular, women and children. Such gangs and groups have kidnapped a huge number of Yazidi women and people from other ethnicities of all ages in Iraq, who have been sold as chattel in the areas between Iraq and Syria. Their dignities have been humiliated. They have been raped, enslaved and tortured psychologically, physically and sexually. We therefore call on the international community to make further efforts to support Iraq, free these women, return them to their families and reintegrate them into society.

My Government, in coordination with international organizations, is monitoring and addressing violations taking place during counterterrorism operations. It is training women and involving them in all steps of the war against terrorism. Collective efforts undertaken by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations led to the signing of a joint statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, on 23 September, on the sidelines of the high-level meetings of the General Assembly.

The advancement of women is a huge step towards achieving peace and security. Iraq is continuously cooperating with international organizations to promote women's advancement, to expand women's role and empowerment, and to enable women to assume their role in society. The Government is cooperating with the Gender Unit of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to enhance the role of women in national reconciliation and to raise awareness about the importance of resolution 1325 (2000).