

Mr. Stewart (United Kingdom):

Allow me to begin by putting on record our deep condolences to the family of the Russian Ambassador for the terrible tragedy in Turkey.

The testimony that we heard from Ms. Nadia Murad Basee Taha has really brought home to us, through the specificity of her experience, the horror of what she experienced: her six brothers killed, the stories of what happened to Catherine or indeed to her nephew, Malik. The story that she has shared with us is not simply a story of violence, but in everything that she said she underscored the way in which these are forms of violence, of coercion, of slavery and, in their systematic and deliberate nature, forms of war.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Spanish delegation for bringing resolution 2331 (2016) forward, and to the analytical clarity with which Ms. Zainab Bangura in particular, and the Spanish Government in drafting the resolution, has brought to our analysis this problem, by which I mean specifically the ways in which, in paragraphs 8 and 9, we focused on the mechanics of human trafficking in conflict — on the ways in which it is used for recruitment, for financing, for destroying communities, for displacing communities, for gathering intelligence, for advancing ideology; the ways in which this violence can be perpetrated through rape, through sexual slavery, through forced prostitution and pregnancy. This detailed, rigorous and analytical description does not minimize or distract from, in fact it amplifies, the horror of what we are witnessing.

Personally, having been in Iraq in 2014 immediately after the situation in Sinjar and having seen directly Yazidi families struggling in those immediate first few days with the death of family members who had been kidnapped and removed from them, I could not believe, as someone who had been working in Iraq since 2013, the depth of that horror. Indeed, on my trip to Iraq just two and a half weeks ago I saw how permanent the scars of what the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham has done within refugee camps — the damage it has done to communities, to countries and, above all, to a civilization.

However, today we are really at this meeting to focus on practical action, so I just want to take a little time to make three brief observations on practical action: the first is about our approach, the second is about implementation and the third is about bureaucracy. Humility needs to be fundamental to our approach. We must take into account how difficult it is to operate in a conflict environment; how difficult it is to access; to provide protection; how difficult it is to protect and to prosecute; how honest we have to be about the gaps in our knowledge; how much we need to learn from what the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) does in other areas — in counter narcotics, illegal wildlife trade and terrorism. However, we must also consider the ways in which this can be quite specific, both in the nature of the violence but also in the context in which it

operates, whether it is in Mosul, in Nigeria or with Boko Haram or with Da'esh.

On implementation, I would like to pay tribute to the Spanish Government, particularly for two elements, the focus in paragraph 2 (d) on victim identification and the focus in paragraphs 19 and 20 on training, in particular that of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers. At the heart of our response there needs to be not just an understanding of what we ought to do, but what we can do, in particular an understanding of our own bureaucracies and the impediments and problems in those bureaucracies. Therefore, we have been very clear on the challenges around predeployment training, readiness standards, needs assessments and technical capacity. But the next stage needs to be to really understand our agencies — to really understand what reform will mean within UNODC, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration — and the ways in which that connects to what civil society is doing and to what officials in the countries concerned are doing. It is very easy to sit around a table like this and talk in the abstract about coordination, but this is fundamentally about resources, institutional culture and about training in the broader sense.

Within the United Kingdom, we are focusing on two things. We are focusing, as Nadia said, on the issue of accountability in Iraq and with the Iraqi Government. Our Prime Minister has set up a task force on modern-day slavery, whose focus is above all on practical learning, on coordination and on implementation.

In conclusion, this meeting today is in many ways an optimistic moment. It is exactly the kind of thing that the Council should be focused on — because of its transnational nature and the non-State actors involved. We owe huge thanks both to the Spanish leadership and the multilateral Organization we exist within and for the way that is being connected with the analytical rigor, which is being provided by the officials and by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and also the way in which that connects to the human testimony from Ms. Ameena Saeed Hasan and Nadia, which connects the rhetoric of this Chamber to the reality on the ground. However, we are not just at this meeting to describe the world, we are here to change it. That is going to involve some very difficult conversations within our own bureaucracies and agencies on reform — reform that is needed because this relates to our deepest moral intuitions and our deepest moral obligations.