

*** CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY ***



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

Agenda item 141

Proposed Programme budget for 2021

Request for Subvention to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (A/75/763)

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Statement by

**Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan
Controller**

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General, entitled “Request for a subvention to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon”, contained in document A/75/763. The Special Tribunal was established following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1757 (2007) to prosecute persons responsible for the attack of 14 February 2005 resulting in the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and in the death or injury of other persons. Under resolution 1757 (2007), 51 per cent of the expenses of the Special Tribunal shall be borne by voluntary contribution from States, while the remaining 49 per cent be borne by the Government of Lebanon.

2. The Government of Lebanon continues to underscore its support to the Special Tribunal but has indicated that the country faces an unprecedented socio-

economic and financial crisis, exacerbated by the 4 August 2020 explosion in Beirut and the COVID-19 pandemic. The level and timing of its contribution for 2021 to the Special Tribunal is uncertain.

3. In a letter addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2021/149), the Secretary-General informed the Council of the financial difficulties faced by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and of his intention to bring the matter to the attention of the General Assembly with a view to seeking a subvention for the Tribunal. In her reply (S/2021/150), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council had taken note of the intention expressed in his letter.

4. The Secretary-General's report sets out the overall level of resources required to support the Tribunal's activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 and requests a subvention of up to \$24,741,900 to supplement voluntary contributions, including pledges that are yet to be collected. The proposal is based on a Strategic Plan and follows a substantial institutional restructuring that has reduced costs by 37%.

5. Key milestones were achieved in 2020, including the delivery of the trial judgment in the main *Ayyash et al.* case (STL-11-01) on 18 August, followed by the sentencing judgment on 11 December. The judgments stand as a signal of what is possible for those that have demanded an end to impunity, and as a beacon of hope to victims of terrorist crimes that they will know the truth.

6. Currently, there are pending appellate proceedings in the *Ayyash et al.* case (STL-11-01), and the "connected" *Ayyash case* (STL-18-10) is proceeding through the pre-trial phase. As a result, the Tribunal enters a new phase as it moves towards completing its pending caseload.

7. Following the landmark delivery of the *Ayyash et al.* (STL-11-01) trial judgment, and with the support and input of the Tribunal's Management Committee and the Office of Legal Affairs, the Tribunal has reviewed and restructured its operations for the upcoming phases of its work, reducing resources requirements to fit the remaining judicial activities. The result is a leaner, and adaptable institution, poised to complete the remaining trials and appeals expeditiously.

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Delegates

8. In February 2021, the Tribunal's Management Committee approved a budget for 2021 in the amount of \$42,186,000 (€34,761,270) for the Tribunal. At the time of writing, the Tribunal had in confirmed pledges an amount of \$3.6 million payable in 2021, while anticipated voluntary funding is projected to amount to \$11.1 million. These pledges, together with the unused fund balance of \$2.7 million from 2020, would amount to a total projected funding of \$17.4 million, and a shortfall of \$24.7 million. The Tribunal's regular voluntary donors have indicated their inability to cover the resulting shortfall. Furthermore, several donors have indicated that their contributions will be lower for 2021 than in previous years.

9. In light of the foregoing, the Secretary-General seeks the approval of the General Assembly of an appropriation in the amount of \$24,741,900 under the programme budget for 2021, by way of a subvention for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to supplement its financial resources.

10. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, I thank you for your consideration of the proposal and we look forward to supporting you in addressing any questions you may have.

Thank you.