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Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries
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of Foreign Affairs

Mr./Madam. Chair,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden – and my own country, Norway.

We greatly appreciate the work of UN officials and experts on missions which contribute to maintaining peace and security globally. It is essential that these officials and experts hold high standards of integrity, which the vast majority of them do.

Unfortunately, criminal actions carried out by UN officials and experts persist to be a critical issue. These crimes must be investigated and prosecuted, both for the sake of the victims of the crimes and for the credibility and integrity of the UN System. The UN and its Member States must maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards such crimes, through preventive measures, legislation, and action.

The Nordic countries welcome the Secretary General's latest reports under this topic (A/80/239 and A/80/270). In line with the Secretary General's recommendation, the Nordic countries continue to encourage the distinct legislative bodies of the United Nations system and related organizations to help ensure the coherence and coordination of relevant policies and procedures.

We remain deeply concerned by the continued reports of criminal conduct by UN officials and experts on mission. The overview of all reported cases since 2007 currently shows 394 allegations of serious criminal offences committed by UN officials or experts on mission referred to the Member States. 27 of these cases, were reported during the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

The Nordic countries express particular concern about allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2025, 34 credible allegations of such crimes committed by United Nations officials and experts on mission were referred to their States of nationality. We cannot rule out the possibility of a significant number of unreported cases. These numbers underscore the continued importance of focusing on this matter. They also demonstrate the significance of the measures initiated over the past years by the UN, including the Secretary General, to root out sexual exploitation and abuse in UN structures and operations.

The Nordic countries are also concerned by the high number of crimes for profit, such as fraud, corruption, and theft. We condemn these despicable crimes that exploit and undermine efforts to assist those in critical need. These crimes ultimately exploit some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

Mr./Madam. Chair,

The primary responsibility for addressing this serious issue, lies with the Member States. Too many Member States fail to respond adequately to cases of misconduct and crimes referred to them. The list of referred cases lengthens, and a lack of response is unacceptable. The Nordic countries strongly encourage States that have not provided the required information regarding these cases to do so.

We also underline the need for all Member States to take the necessary legislative steps to establish jurisdiction over crimes committed by their nationals while serving as UN officials or experts on mission. We urge all Member States that have not yet done so to submit relevant information to the Secretary-General regarding the status of their domestic legislation on this matter, in accordance with paragraphs 28 and 29 of resolution 79/116.

All Member States must uphold the principles of due process and the rule of law when investigating and prosecuting these cases. It is equally important that all Member States ensure the effective protection of victims, witnesses, and whistle-blowers. As for Member States' willingness and ability to hold their own nationals accountable for crimes committed while in UN service, nothing less than full transparency is acceptable.

Mr./Madam Chair,

In closing, the Nordic countries would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring accountability for crimes committed while in service for the UN.

We would once again like to thank the Group of Legal Experts for the Draft Convention. We look forward to a constructive debate in the future on a comprehensive international legal framework to address criminal conduct of UN officials and experts on mission. This could be an important step towards fighting impunity. We remain ready to consider all measures that can be taken to ensure accountability, fight impunity and strengthen the follow-up of these cases.

Thank you.