

## The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

### Response to request for information on the implementation of resolution 77/98 concerning the criminal accountability of United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission

2 June 2023

1. This note provides the response of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to note LA/COD/50/1 from the Office of Legal Affairs dated 5 January 2023 in respect of General Assembly resolution 77/98 of 7 December 2022 and the request for States to provide information and observations on their implementation of that resolution, in particular paragraphs 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20 and 30 thereof, as well as any practical problems in the implementation of the resolution.
2. We are continuing to take forward key capability-building initiatives in this area. In particular, as mentioned in the 2022 return, Project Soteria and providing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence training for police.
3. Project Soteria: This £10m United Kingdom-funded safeguarding project <sup>[1]</sup>, has been operational since 2022. Project Soteria establishes an advanced level of global collaboration between law enforcement agencies and aid sector organisations to prevent sexual offenders from working undetected in the aid sector and to take action. While Project Soteria focuses on the aid sector, strengthening the capacity of law enforcement to investigate, prosecute and arrest perpetrators will have a positive impact in other areas as well, including greater accountability of UN officials and experts on mission who have committed crimes of this nature. In support of OP12(d) of General Assembly resolution 77/98, Project Soteria is assisting host States in enhancing their capacity to conduct effective investigations in respect of crimes of a serious nature and continues to explore how to build synergies with the UN Clear Check system and Misconduct Disclosure Scheme<sup>[2]</sup>. Project Soteria is scheduled to run until 2025 in selected countries in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia while also creating a framework for global collaboration across all countries.
4. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Training: The United Kingdom continues to run the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence investigations course it developed for police deploying into United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions focusing on Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centred investigation, and delivering specialist knowledge and skills for dealing with complex and traumatic investigations, enabling police officers to support the most vulnerable victims with the aim of bringing more perpetrators to justice. In this year alone, Zambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone are leading training with UK support, with training for Liberia planned for early 2024.
5. As previously mentioned, the United Kingdom's Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the Act) extends the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England

and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to additional violent and sexual offences, including rape, sexual assaults and other forms of non-consensual activity, as well as certain forms of harassment. Pertinent to OP10 of General Assembly resolution 77/98, in 2021 we have previously provided assistance on developing similar legal measures by sharing information about the Act with UN Member States to ensure British nationals/residents who commit relevant offences whilst serving with or on mission for the UN abroad can be brought to justice in the UK.

6. The UK Ministry of Defence introduced a new policy in 2022<sup>[3]</sup> to direct efforts to prevent and address sexual exploitation or abuse by service personnel and civilian employees conducting defence activity. The policy outlines the assistance and redress available to victims and includes a prohibition on transactional sex at all times when conducting defence activity outside of the UK.
7. The United Kingdom has no information or observations to provide in relation to the other paragraphs in General Assembly resolution 77/98