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> UNSC Briefing on Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) (2 December 2021; 1000 hrs)

> > Statement by Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President.

I welcome Special Adviser Christian Ritscher and thank him for his briefing. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the meeting.

2. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has carried out inhuman atrocities against the people of Iraq. Victims of ISIL's horrific crimes in Iraq also include 39 Indian nationals. ISIL has deliberately and indiscriminately targeted innocent civilians, including women and children. They have systematically committed genocide, torture, rape, slavery and kidnapping throughout the territory under its control in Iraq and Syria. The Seventh Report of Special adviser and Head of UNITAD again brings out the horrific crimes committed by ISIL.

3. UNITAD is contributing towards fighting this impunity of terror and ensuring accountability for these crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. Accountability for these crimes, including those against minority communities in Iraq, is critical for achieving smooth reconciliation and sustained peace in Iraq. The ongoing investigations on attacks against the Christian, Sunni, Kakai, Shabak and Shia Turkmen communities and the strengthening of the initial case-briefs in the attacks against the Yazidi community will support the Iraqi government's efforts aimed at national reconciliation.

4. The close partnership and cooperation between the Iraqi authorities and UNITAD is commendable. This is central to the effective delivery of UNITAD's mandate. Joint work by the experts of Iraq Government and UNITAD – in investigations, mass excavations and development of case-files – will ensure that capacities are strengthened within the national investigative and prosecutorial system to ensure accountability in the long-term for the heinous crimes perpetrated by the ISIL. This holds true for the extensive support provided by UNITAD to the digitization of evidence in the possession of the Iraqi authorities and the ISIL-related case-files of the Iraqi judiciary.

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5. The Secretary General's recent biannual report on the threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security has highlighted the continuous expansion of the terrorist group and its affiliates in many parts of Africa and Asia, including in our neighbourhood. Therefore, we believe that UNITAD's investigations will bolster our efforts in the fight against ISIL and terrorism. Especially, UNITAD's investigations into the internal administration of the ISIL Treasury can provide valuable insights into revenue streams of ISIL and in preventing flows to ISIL and its affiliates in other parts of the world. UNITAD's widening of the scope of financial investigations must also include the external sources of funding for ISIL.

6. We take note of UNITAD's proactive efforts to share its findings with the Iraqi authorities on ISIL's financial crimes. This must extend to other evidence and information collected by the Investigative Team as well. It is unfortunate that despite a lapse of more than three years, UNITAD has been unable to fully service the evidentiary requirements of the Government of Iraq due to a different interpretation of UNITAD's mandate. We hope this will be rectified soon.

7. We welcome UNITAD's continued investigation into the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL in Iraq. India firmly condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances. ISIL's use of the Mosul University for a systematic program for producing and weaponizing chemical and biological substances is of particular concern. India has been highlighting the serious threat to international peace and security emanating from the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by ISIL and other terrorist groups. The international community needs to pay closer attention to this issue, since such a template could be replicated by terrorist groups in other places.

Mr. President,

8. Last week, the victims of the dastardly 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks were remembered in India and several other countries.

9. Be it Mumbai or Mosul, India strongly believes that the credibility of our collective fight against terrorism can be strengthened only when we can ensure accountability for the grave and inhuman acts of terror committed by terrorists. We need to take strong measures against those who encourage, support and finance terrorism.

10. The people of Iraq have made immense sacrifices in Iraq's fight against ISIL. Justice should be delivered to the victims of ISIL's crimes, and their families. This cannot happen until those responsible for the atrocities are held accountable. The full and timely implementation of UNITAD's mandate would contribute to securing justice for those affected. I once again reiterate that India stands ready to offer its support to UNITAD in this regard.

I thank you Mr. President.

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