



**Permanent Mission of India to the UN**  
New York

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**UNSC meeting on UNITAD  
(June 8, 2022; 1500 hrs)**

**INDIA STATEMENT**

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank Special Adviser Christian Ritscher for his briefing. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the meeting.

2. UNITAD was set-up by this Council to assist the Government and the people of Iraq in their pursuit for justice against the heinous crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Victims of ISIL's horrific crimes in Iraq also include 39 Indian nationals.

3. The implementation of UNITAD's mandate, which includes collection and timely sharing of evidence against ISIL crimes perpetrated in Iraq, will contribute towards ensuring accountability for these crimes and fighting the impunity of terror. Ensuring accountability for ISIL crimes, especially those against minority communities in Iraq, is also 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 Government of Iraq's efforts aimed at national reconciliation and delivering justice.

4. We strongly believe 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 and against those who foment, support and finance terrorism. India's financial support to UNITAD for these two key areas of its investigation will further strengthen this objective.

5. We welcome the completion of an initial case brief on the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL in Iraq. The preliminary observations in the report are deeply concerning as they reveal that a terrorist group with considerable territory under its control can develop and deploy these deadly weapons within a short period of time by misusing the State's educational, financial and commercial infrastructure. The international community needs to pay closer attention to this issue, since such a template could be replicated by other terrorist groups, which enjoy considerable territorial control. We encourage UNITAD to share their findings of this investigation with the 1540 Committee, which has the mandate to assist countries in preventing the acquisition of WMDs by non-State actors.

6. ISIL's destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq is widely known. In its preliminary investigations, UNITAD has identified a number of such crimes, including destruction of shrines and culturally significant sites of Iraq's minority communities. India's financial contribution to UNITAD will strengthen the Team's investigations in this important area and enable prosecutions for such crimes.

Mr. President,

7. UNITAD's work in Iraq must continue to be underpinned by close co-operation and coordination with Iraqi authorities and their capacity building. We commend the Team's joint work with the Iraqi judiciary and its assistance projects in the areas of digitisation of records, DNA forensics and mass grave excavations. We note the increase in the number of Iraqi experts, who are part of UNITAD. Augmenting the capacities of Iraqi agencies and experts is crucial from a long term perspective and we encourage UNITAD to continue its good work in this area.

8. We are also happy to note that the evidence collected and shared by UNITAD with third countries have resulted in the prosecution and conviction of ISIL terrorists. Similar evidence sharing with Iraqi authorities should happen at the earliest to support trials and prosecutions in Iraqi courts. 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 differing interpretation of UNITAD's mandate. This needs to be rectified soon.

Mr. President,

9. The people of Iraq have made immense sacrifices in Iraq's fight against terrorism. As a country which has been a victim of terrorism for many decades, we share their pain and grief. Justice should be delivered to the victims of ISIL's crimes and their families. It 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 thank you.

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