



STATEMENT

by

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**On Behalf of the Caribbean Community
(CARICOM)**

on

**Agenda Item 79: Criminal Accountability of United Nations Officials and
Experts on Mission**

Sixth Committee (Legal Committee)

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**Trusteeship Council Chamber
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(10am - 1pm)

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM also aligns itself with the statements delivered by El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

We also thank the Secretary General for the three reports contained in documents A/72/205, A/72/121 and A/72/127, which were produced pursuant to resolution 71/134. We are particularly grateful for these reports which contain very useful information from governments on the extent of their jurisdiction over crimes of a serious nature committed by their nationals while serving as UN officials and experts on mission, as well as the handling of allegations and cooperation between the UN and States in the exchange of information and the facilitations of investigations and prosecution of individuals

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, CARICOM reiterates its deep appreciation for those UN officials and experts on mission who have worked sacrificially and tirelessly for the good of humanity and toward the fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN. We recognize the valuable contributions of these officers in managing complex crises that pose a threat of peace and security, preventing and managing violent conflict between and within States, and in facilitating the political process through promoting dialogue and reconciliation and supporting the establishment of legitimate and effective institutions of governance.

In our very region, the CARICOM Member State of Haiti has benefitted immensely from the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which has assisted Haitian authorities in such areas as electoral support, strengthening the rule of law and further development of the National Police, as well as human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis.

Mr. Chairman,

However, CARICOM underlines the importance of promoting and ensuring respect for the principles and rules of international law, consistent with resolution 71/134. We firmly believe that the privileges and immunities afforded to UN officers on mission are primarily for their protection and certainly not to be used as license to commit crimes with immunity. We therefore reiterate the need for their accountability which requires the cooperation of Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM, once again, expresses its deep concern and abhorrence over cases of misconduct and sexual abuse, especially those committed against women and children, by UN officials and experts on mission. We find such occurrences extremely appalling and are contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN. The UN has been mandated to provide assistance to States which are in the process of rehabilitation in the aftermath of conflicts. The exploitation of the most vulnerable by persons sent to protect them is a fundamental betrayal of trust, which is further compounded when the perpetrators are not brought to justice.

We welcome the commitment made by the UN Secretary General at the UN High Level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in September 2017, to “not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse and to not allowing anyone to cover up such crimes under the UN flag”. Consistent with resolution 71/134, we also urge the Secretary General to continue to ensure that his zero-tolerance policy for criminal activities such as sexual exploitation is fully implemented in a coherent and coordinated manner throughout the UN system.

With a view to ensuring that those accused of committing such offenses are brought to justice, it is important for States, which have not yet done so, to establish jurisdiction over crimes committed by nationals while serving at missions. We would also like to take this opportunity to urge States to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that internal disciplinary mechanisms are in place and are harmonized with UN standards of investigation in order to support greater action by local authorities. Perpetrators of such heinous crimes should be held accountable for their actions.

Without the cooperation of States, it would be very difficult for the UN to ensure that perpetrators of serious offences are brought to justice. CARICOM therefore urges all States to cooperate, where necessary, in providing assistance with criminal investigations or extradition proceedings with respect to crimes of a serious nature committed by UN officials and experts on mission as well as in ensuring the protection of victims. Furthermore, all suspected cases of misconduct or criminal offences must be thoroughly investigated.

In this regard, we commend those States which have cooperated with the UN in the exchange of information, the facilitation of investigations and prosecution of individuals accused of committing serious crimes as well as in ensuring the protection of witnesses and victims, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary General on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

Consistent with resolution 71/134, we underline the need to ensure that all personnel are properly vetted by contributing States and the UN for any prior cases of misconduct while serving on previous missions. It is also important to provide appropriate training and sensitization to UN personnel on the need to respect the national laws of the host State and UN standards of conduct. Further, all UN officials and experts on mission should be made aware of possible consequences should such laws and standards not be obeyed. We wish to commend the UN for its efforts in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, we reiterate the importance of abiding by the principles of international law, due process and applicable UN rules and regulations, when dealing with any allegation of misconduct or criminal offense committed by UN personnel on mission.

I thank you.