



**Statement on  
behalf of South Africa  
by**

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**at the**

**Department of International Relations and  
Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa in  
the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly**

**under Agenda Item**

**“Criminal accountability of United Nations  
Officials and Experts on Mission”**

**6 October 2017**

## **Mr Chairman**

At the outset, let me associate myself with the statement delivered by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Algeria speaking on behalf of the African Group.

The criminal accountability of United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission is a matter that is of significant importance for South Africa. United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission are persons who are, in almost all circumstances, deployed to locations wherein the most vulnerable groups of persons are left with the least protection, and it is essential that States and the United Nations take all necessary steps to ensure that the most vulnerable groups of persons are provided with the greatest measure of protection from criminal exploitation and abuse. It is also essential that the good work done by professional and compliant Officials and Experts on Mission not be tainted by the indiscretion and ill-discipline of a minority of Officials and Experts on Mission, and swift and direct accountability of the guilty will support the achievement of both objectives mentioned.

## **Mr Chairman**

As a responsible member of the international community, South Africa subscribes to the Rule-of-Law and the holding accountable of United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission where serious crimes have been committed, and South Africa remains supportive of the creation of a multilateral Convention to regulate the matter as a means of ensuring accountability and also a means of prevention of future reoccurrences. Pending the implementation of such a long-term solution as the Convention, South Africa reiterates its call to States to continue to close the 'jurisdictional gap', and also to continue to develop domestic legislation that vests local courts with the requisite jurisdiction over United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission in order to prosecute and punish perpetrators of serious crimes under domestic law.

## **Mr Chairman**

South Africa has also taken note of the three reports of the Secretary General of the United Nations that were dated 29 June 2017 (reflecting existing policies and procedures within the United Nations organisation), 12 July 2017 (reflecting a summary of national provisions, including those of South Africa) and 28 July 2017 (regarding the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 71/134). The last report is also commended in its openness and its transparent statement of the prevalence of the scourge of criminal activities by United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission. And South Africa strongly supports the further practical measures mentioned therein. In particular, States are encouraged to strengthen pre-deployment vetting procedures, and continue to improve pre-deployment training and orientation interventions aimed at aligning the values and conduct of persons to

those of the mission they are being deployed to. Furthermore, the prompt reporting, investigation and punishment of offenders must, as pragmatic and legal measure, not be underestimated.

**Mr Chairman**

South Africa thanks the Secretary General for the comprehensive reports, and we recognise the continued efforts of all contributing States and the United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission who continue to fulfil their duties diligently and professionally, without breaking the law. We also welcome the varied and focussed practical measures that have been adopted at United Nations Missions to deal with the matter, but wish to encourage all States and the United Nations to redouble efforts for the sake of the vulnerable and weak who rely on the protection that United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission are tasked to provide.

**Mr Chairman**

South Africa encourages the Sixth-Committee to continue its important work on this matter, and South Africa has already pledged, and continues to pledge, its support for the combatting of criminal activities by United Nations Officials and Experts on Mission.

**I thank you for your attention.**