



United Nations General Assembly | Sixth Committee
Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission

5 October 2018

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered by El Salvador on behalf of CELAC and takes this opportunity to address some issues from a national perspective.

Brazil thanks the Secretary General for the three reports submitted this year about the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission. They provide a useful compilation of state practice on criminal jurisdiction over crimes committed by United Nations officials or experts on mission, thus facilitating the identification of jurisdictional gaps. Moreover, they contain updated information on the policies and procedures of the Secretariat on the matter, with proper focus on strengthening coordination and coherence within the system.

Mr. Chairman,

For years, United Nations personnel has been diligently performing their duties and working to make a positive impact in societies around the world. Every crime committed by UN officials or experts on mission taints the credibility of all other workers of the Organization, compromising their ability to cooperate and interact with governments and the population in the field. Most importantly, these crimes often affect the most vulnerable, who normally are the main beneficiaries of the activities performed by the Organization.

The United Nations helps to shape the global consciousness, through the activities it performs and the values it upholds. Therefore, there should be no margin for abuses and impunity. There is a clear need to ensure proper accountability for all crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission. We owe it to the victims, whose right to justice should be guaranteed, and we owe it to everyone who trusts the United Nations.

Brazil commends the Secretariat for the progress on addressing credible allegations of crimes that may have been committed by UN officials or experts on mission. We also note with satisfaction the measures put in place to expand the protection against retaliation of staff members, interns, volunteers, individual contractors and consultants. It is also praiseworthy the creation in 2017, by the Secretary-General, of the UN Chief Executives Board High Level Task Force on sexual harassment, whose objective is to strengthen prevention and investigation of sexual harassment as well as provide better protection and support to victims.

While significant progress has been made, we agree with the appeal by the Secretary General for the importance to address practical problems in the implementation, in specialized agencies and related organizations, of policies related to the reporting, investigation, referral and follow-up of credible crime allegations.

Mr. Chairman,

All Member States should strive to overcome remaining legal challenges to assert jurisdiction over crimes committed by their nationals when they serve as United Nations officials or experts on mission. Members States whose domestic law does not envisage extraterritorial jurisdiction should put in place mechanisms to promote accountability for those crimes committed by their nationals abroad so that they do not go unpunished.

Brazil expresses its serious concern over the instances of sexual violence, exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations reported by the Secretary General. It reiterates its support to the zero tolerance policy in the cases of sexual exploitation, abuse and other criminal conducts, while stressing the need for the observance of the rule of law.

In all scenarios, preventive and repressive measures should be combined to forestall these crimes. It is particularly relevant to ensure that victims of crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission receive adequate support and protection.

Brazil reiterates its steadfast support to measures aimed at fighting impunity for serious crimes, including those committed by United Nations officials and experts on mission. Ensuring that credible allegations are properly investigated, perpetrators are brought to justice and victims find justice and redress is key to uphold the values that inspire the work of the United Nations.

Thank you.