



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**. U.S. Remarks at a Meeting of the Sixth Committee on Agenda Item 79:
Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission
Elizabeth Grosso, Attorney Adviser
October 6, 2022**

Thank you, Chair.

We are grateful to the officials and experts on mission who perform the essential work of the United Nations around the world.

We appreciate the high standards of integrity with which the vast majority of these officials and experts conduct their work. The United States reiterates its firmly held belief that, on the rare occasion when UN officials and experts on mission commit crimes, they should be held to account.

The United States thanks Secretary-General Guterres for his most recent reports on this issue, as well as the relevant UN agencies that contributed to them. These reports assist the United Nations and its Member States to remain vigilant in protecting the credibility of the United Nations in carrying out its work. We welcome UNOPS revisions to its Internal Audit and Investigations Charter, including the appointment of an outside oversight office in certain instances of credible allegations of conflicts of interests and misconduct. We also welcome WFP's production of more detailed internal procedures for referrals to national authorities when an investigation reveals credible evidence of criminal activity, and UNIDO's updates to its policies and procedures concerning national referrals. We also look forward to updates on the revisions of the UN's mandatory trainings, including with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse, and the development of a reinforcement training package, including for use in pre-deployment trainings conducted by contributing countries of uniformed personnel. We request that all UN programmes, specialized agencies, and related organizations continue to examine the issues addressed in the reports and revise internal rules and procedures, with the goal of greater accountability for criminal conduct, and sexual exploitation or abuse committed by UN officials and experts.

The United States notes the credible allegations of criminal conduct involving field personnel included in the reports. We welcome the United Nations' cooperation with Member States, and the continued implementation by the UN Office of Legal Affairs of the General Assembly's request for more follow up with Member States to which referrals of criminal

allegations have been made when no response has been received. Such referrals, or complaints made directly to national authorities, will only be meaningful when Member States can and do take action on them.

In this regard, we previously brought to the Committee's attention that the United States Department of Justice had charged Karim Elkorany, a U.S. national and former UN employee, with sexual assault, including against a fellow UN employee, while serving with the Organization on a UN mission in Iraq. In May 2022, Elkorany pled guilty to one count of sexual assault, while admitting to 19 other criminal acts, including at least 13 other sexual assaults. Elkorany is scheduled to be sentenced later this month. While we are pleased that Elkorany is being held accountable, more is needed from the UN and Member States. In particular, we need to investigate how Elkorany was able to commit so many assaults over an extended period of time while working for the UN, we need to establish measures to protect against cases like this, and we need to maintain clear accountability mechanisms that address not only the perpetrator's actions, but also management failures. The safety of both UN employees and UN beneficiaries depends on it.

We urge continued vigilance to prevent and respond to allegations of criminal conduct across the UN System, and look forward to continued engagement in this Committee and with the Secretariat on this important issue.

