

**Statement by the Republic of Türkiye
on Agenda Item 74 entitled
“Criminal Accountability of UN Officials and Experts on Mission”
at the Sixth Committee
6 October 2022**

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Mr. Chair,

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for the two reports submitted under this agenda item.

We also greatly appreciate the annual briefings provided by the Secretariat to the Committee on this important issue and look forward to this year’s briefing.

Mr. Chair,

It is our firm conviction that we need to continue to work collectively in order to prevent the committing of crimes by UN officials and experts on mission, as well as to ensure accountability when this happens.

This first and foremost requires the adoption and enhancement as necessary by States of their national legislation to effectively exercise criminal jurisdiction over such crimes, including especially when they are committed by their own nationals.

Needless to say, constructive and efficient cooperation between States, as well as between the UN and States constitutes a crucial component of this collective endeavor.

We need not forget that this organization is evaluated by many on the basis of the observance in practice of the fundamental values, standards and norms that we champion, and the effective implementation around the world of the decisions and resolutions that we adopt on topics of global concern.

When officials and experts of this august organization commit serious crimes, and when those crimes are not addressed as appropriate in line with the applicable legal framework, this will inevitably have broader negative consequences. In this regard, we support the message given by the General Assembly annually on this topic, which honors the invaluable work of the tens of thousands of UN officials and experts on mission, while pointing to the risk that the actions of a few may disproportionately tarnish the reputation of the United Nations.

Mr. Chair,

As we have articulated in detail in our contributions to the Secretary-General’s reports of 2018, 2019 and 2020, Turkish legislation contains the necessary rules, procedures and safeguards to ensure that jurisdiction can be exercised over crimes committed by Turkish nationals aboard, including when serving as United Nations officials or experts, as well as crimes committed by third country nationals subject to the relevant legal requirements. We also have laws in place for the protection of victims and witnesses.

In this regard, we note the privileges and immunities enjoyed by UN officials and experts on mission in line with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as well as the conditions and considerations pertaining to waiver of such privileges and immunities by the Secretary-General.

In respect of cooperation, Türkiye is party to several international and bilateral agreements regulating legal cooperation on criminal matters and extradition. With respect to States with which we do not have an agreement, or which are not party to a convention to which Türkiye is a party, we undertake cooperation on the basis of reciprocity, in accordance with the Law on International Legal Cooperation in Criminal Matters.

As highlighted in our previous written contributions, there is also no obstacle in our legislation that would prevent our authorities from accepting information and material obtained from the United Nations for the purposes of criminal proceedings.

Mr. Chair,

We appreciate that the Secretary-General continues to bring to the attention of States credible allegations relating to crimes that may have been committed by UN officials and experts on mission, and appeals to States for them to provide appropriate updates on the status of their efforts in line with the annual resolution on this item, with due regard to national laws, the confidentiality of investigations, as well as the principle of protection of personal data.

We also appreciate that, with regard to military personnel deployed in UN field missions, immune from prosecution in host States, the Secretariat continues to follow up with troop-contributing countries concerning allegations of criminal conduct, as indicated in this year's report.

In order to ensure that our discussions in this forum are based on a more complete and comprehensive account of the relevant legal frameworks in place, we encourage all States to share information on their legislation and information that may relate to judicial cooperation with other States and with the UN.

With regard to vetting and training of UN personnel, we welcome the information provided by the Secretary-General in his report on UN practices as well as on the developments in this field, including the learning programme entitled "Pipeline to peacekeeping command" which is being prepared. Vetting and training are indeed critical elements in our efforts to prevent the committing of crimes, ensure accountability, and preserve the reputation of the United Nations.

As a dedicated troop and police-contributing country, Türkiye participates in seven UN operations from the Middle East and Africa to Europe. We also extend support to UN mandated operations conducted by other international and regional organizations. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that the Partnership for Peace Training Centre, established within the Turkish Armed Forces, is among the small number of training centres in the world that has competence in offering United Nations Military Observers Course. The successful completion of this training is mandatory for all Turkish military personnel who is expected to be assigned to peace operations.

Turkish authorities also organize educational programs on international humanitarian law that are open to international participation. In this context, the mentioned Centre continues to organize its course on the law of armed conflict annually, with participation from all over the world. Furthermore, as part of gender awareness courses and activities, this Centre conducted a course on “Gender Awareness in Peace Support Operations”, which was attended by 80 participants from 12 countries. The Centre also gave instructor support to the Gender Awareness Training of the Trainers course conducted in RACVIAC – Center for Security Cooperation (Croatia) last year.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to working with all States and the UN towards the goals that we have set under the topic of criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission.

Thank you.