

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 24 May 2024 from the Acting Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), the twelfth report on the activities of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

I would be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Ana **Peyró Llopis**
Acting Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team



Twelfth report of the Acting Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

Summary

The twelfth report on the activities of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#).

In its resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), the Security Council requested that the Special Adviser continue to submit and present reports to the Council on the Team's activities every 180 days. In the same resolution, it extended the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Team until 17 September 2024 only. As the present report is currently the final mandated report prior to 17 September 2024, it includes the overall achievements of UNITAD and an update on its activities during the reporting period. An Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD was appointed by the Secretary-General for this final phase. She assumed her responsibilities on 1 April 2024.

In April 2024, the Team initiated its drawdown and liquidation plans for the purpose of ensuring an orderly withdrawal from Iraq by 17 September 2024. As part of this effort, the Team kept the Government of Iraq informed of its timeline, notably by sharing a calendar in May that detailed the remaining activities that would be conducted before 17 September. Liquidation, including the preservation and storage of evidentiary and non-evidentiary records and archives, is being undertaken in close coordination with relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat. In addition to open engagement with the National Coordinating Committee on the drawdown and liquidation, other Iraqi authorities and relevant stakeholders have been consulted regarding this final phase of the mandate.

The preparation of evidence, other materials and analyses for delivery to the competent Iraqi authorities, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2379 \(2017\)](#) and [2697 \(2023\)](#) and the Team's terms of reference ([S/2018/118](#)), has been the main priority of the Team in the drawdown phase. Findings from its investigations, detailed further in the present report, are based on the evidence it has collected through a diverse range of activities over the course of its mandate. Many of these activities have been undertaken alongside the competent Iraqi authorities within the framework of capacity-building and training in line with paragraph 39 of the terms of reference. Eighteen cases in third States that were under investigation and led to indictments were supported by the Team, with 15 ultimately resulting in convictions, including recent cases in Portugal and Germany.

The year 2024 marks the tenth anniversary since Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) declared itself a caliphate, the apex of its reign of terror in Iraq. The materials and analyses produced by the Team have allowed it to assess, in line with its mandate, that acts committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The evidence collected by the Team, primarily provided by the Iraqi authorities, has been consolidated into a single centralized digital archive and organized in a manner that makes it easily searchable, meaning its utility and effectiveness as an investigative asset can be retained. The chain of custody associated with this evidence has been maintained in accordance with international standards to maximize its utility in judicial proceedings. Support delivered by the Team to the Iraqi authorities has provided a

platform for them to take the next step in several relevant areas. Finally, the work of the Team with and for the survivors, families and affected communities needs to be acknowledged, in line with the survivor-centric approach that it has adopted and implemented throughout its mandate.

I. Introduction

1. The twelfth report on the activities of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#).

2. In its resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), the Security Council requested that the Special Adviser continue to submit and present reports to the Council on the Team's activities every 180 days. In this same resolution, it extended the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Team until 17 September 2024 only. As the present report is currently the final mandated report prior to 17 September 2024, it includes the overall achievements of the Team in addition to an update on its activities during the reporting period. A dedicated section addresses the drawdown and liquidation of the Team, as well as its engagement with the National Coordinating Committee as the designated representative of the Government of Iraq, and with other Iraqi authorities and relevant stakeholders for an orderly withdrawal from Iraq. An Acting Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team was appointed by the Secretary-General for this final phase. She assumed her responsibilities on 1 April 2024.

3. UNITAD remains grateful for the steadfast support of the Government of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Regional Government, in the implementation of its mandate and orderly withdrawal from Iraq. In line with paragraph 44 of the Team's terms of reference ([S/2018/118](#)), the competent Iraqi authorities have helped facilitate roughly 2,000 field missions by the Team to 71 locations in Iraq since the beginning of the mandate. The Team further appreciates the support it has received from Member States, many of which also contributed extrabudgetary resources and secondments to facilitate its work. Survivors and witnesses, community, tribal and religious leaders, and local civil society organizations in Iraq, as well a range of partners in the international community, also made invaluable contributions to the work and direction of the Team. These counterparts will forever remain a pillar of its achievements and legacy.

II. Drawdown and liquidation of the Investigative Team

4. In April 2024, the Team initiated its drawdown and liquidation plans for the purpose of ensuring an orderly withdrawal from Iraq by 17 September 2024. As part of this effort, the Team kept the Government of Iraq informed of its timeline, notably by sharing a calendar in May that detailed the remaining activities that would be conducted before 17 September. Liquidation, including the preservation and storage of evidentiary and non-evidentiary records and archives, is being undertaken in close coordination with relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat. In addition to open engagement with the National Coordinating Committee on the drawdown and liquidation, other Iraqi authorities and relevant stakeholders have been consulted regarding this final phase of the mandate.

A. Drawdown of the Investigative Team

5. The preparation of evidence, other materials and analyses for delivery to the competent Iraqi authorities, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2379 \(2017\)](#) and [2697 \(2023\)](#) and the Team's terms of reference, has been the main priority of the Team in the drawdown phase. Importantly, the terms of reference provide that the competent Iraqi authorities shall be the primary intended recipient of the evidence collected, preserved and stored by the Team, and that the Team shall share the

evidence in accordance with United Nations policies and best practice and relevant international law, including international human rights law, rules and standards (S/2018/118, paras. 27 and 28). The Iraqi judiciary continues to be the recipient designated by the Government of Iraq to receive evidence, other materials and analyses delivered by the Team. In April, the Team reassessed what remained for delivery, determined the expected delivery dates and incorporated them into the calendar that was shared with the Government of Iraq.

6. A body of materials and analyses, including case assessment reports and analytical reports, has been produced by the Team over the course of its investigations on the basis of the evidence it has collected. They detail factual and legal findings about certain acts committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) in Iraq, assessing them in line with the mandate, as acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. During its drawdown, the Team continued to prepare the delivery of these materials and analyses, in accordance with its terms of reference and the report of the Secretary-General of 15 January 2024 (S/2024/20), including with regard to informed consent. An analytical report on the Da'esh/ISIL treasury department (Diwan Bayt al-Mal), along with the underlying evidence, was delivered to the Iraqi judiciary in February. A case assessment report on the Tikrit Air Academy massacre and an analytical report on sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children against the Shia Turkmen have been prepared for delivery in early June, along with the underlying evidence. This builds upon the three reports delivered previously. While field missions were scaled down, select activities continued for the purpose of filling investigative gaps so that other materials and analyses could be delivered to the Iraqi judiciary by the dates indicated in the calendar. Further details about those materials and analyses, as well as about those shared during the reporting period and before, can be found in section III.

7. Efforts have been made to return evidence to the competent Iraqi authorities in a digitized and organized format. In March, the Team returned 28 terabytes of evidence collected from the Iraqi judiciary, which represents the majority of the 40 terabytes held by the Team. Another tranche, consisting of evidence collected from a range of Iraqi authorities, has been prepared and will be delivered to the Iraqi judiciary shortly. The modality for these first and second tranches has centred on delivering evidence in its original, unaltered structure, as created and stored digitally, to protect their use and integrity in judicial proceedings. As the Team finalizes its evidence holdings, it will also deliver evidence collected from the Iraqi authorities in a file format that contains metadata for legal review, which can be imported into any e-discovery platform that Iraq chooses to adopt. Additional evidence collected by the Team will also be delivered in accordance with its terms of reference prior to the conclusion of the mandate.

8. In parallel with preparing and delivering evidence and other materials and analyses to the competent Iraqi authorities, the Team continued to cooperate with the authorities on building their capacity to effectively manage what had been delivered. In particular, the Iraqi judiciary has expressed a preference for developing its own e-discovery platform. As they may not be able to do this before the conclusion of the mandate, the Team has provided technical advice at their request on commercially available software and systems that can be tailored to their requirements. In addition, the Team anticipates providing training in June to a specialized team designated by the Government of Iraq, which will include members of the Iraqi judiciary, to help them to: (a) effectively utilize e-discovery platforms, adhere to legal protocols in evidence handling and implement best practices; and (b) maintain an e-discovery platform, including system maintenance, data security and troubleshooting.

9. The delivery of capacity-building and training in other relevant areas has continued with a view to cementing progress achieved over the course of the mandate while ensuring sustainability beyond it. A further 40 such activities are scheduled to be implemented prior to 17 September 2024. This includes the excavation of a complex mass grave site near Tall Afar; completing the digitization and archiving of Da'esh/ISIL-related records at three Iraqi criminal courts; undertaking digitization and archiving of Da'esh/ISIL-related records at relevant civil society organizations; providing training to four Iraqi criminal courts to support a mobile telephone data acquisition capacity; and providing training to relevant civil society organizations on trauma-informed approaches, problem management and witness protection. Many of these activities include the donation of equipment. Other ways the United Nations can support the competent Iraqi authorities in these areas, including after the conclusion of the mandate, are being discussed with the Government of Iraq and United Nations system entities based in Iraq.

10. Regarding the safety, security and well-being of witnesses who have given testimony, the Team has often been their first point of contact when reporting exposure to risk or trauma – an avenue that will no longer be available to them after the mandate concludes. The Team has accordingly sought to keep these witnesses, community and religious leaders and relevant civil society organizations updated on the drawdown so that they can prepare. The provision of additional training to the Iraqi authorities specialized in this area, including from the Kurdistan Region, is foreseen during the remainder of the drawdown. Another issue has been ensuring that the most vulnerable survivors and witnesses engaged by the Team will still be able to benefit from additional support organized for them through onward referrals. The Team has confirmed to its network that it would remain active in making referrals up until the conclusion of the mandate, notably through informing the psychosocial support services group of the Ministry of Health of Iraq.

11. A total of 67 requests from third-State jurisdictions for support to their national investigations and prosecutions have been prioritized by the Team with the intention of completing as many as possible before the mandate concludes. The Team stands ready to provide these jurisdictions with further details on how their pending requests will be completed and what will happen to incomplete requests. The Team has also informed the Government of Iraq about all the evidence it has shared with third States since its establishment, in accordance with its terms of reference and paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#).

B. Liquidation of the Investigative Team

12. A concept note has been developed by the Team, along with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), to address the liquidation of the mission support components with a view to its immediate implementation. A more detailed liquidation plan is currently in development. In parallel, steps have been taken to gradually close all offices of the Team in an orderly manner. The secure document review centre of the Team, located in offices near the Baghdad airport, was closed in May, while its office in Dahuk is scheduled to close by the end of June. Remaining offices in Erbil, New York and Baghdad are undergoing technical assessments prior to the determination of their exact closure dates. Assets from these offices will be relocated to UNAMI warehouses for receipt and inspection, and proper action, accordingly. Cooperation with UNAMI is ongoing with regard to identifying equipment to be handed over to the Government of Iraq and designated Iraqi authorities, including the Iraqi judiciary.

13. The preparation of the records and archives of the Team will start on 1 June 2024 for the purpose of initiating their transfer to the Secretariat by 17 September

2024, in line with paragraph 43 of the terms of reference and the report of the Secretary-General of 15 January 2024 (S/2024/20). This includes both digital and physical records as well as evidentiary and non-evidentiary records. To assist with the archiving process, some national personnel from the secure document review centre of the Team were shifted, mainly to assist with preparing the production of packages of evidence. This follows significant previous progress in refining the categorization and bibliographic coding of evidence within the holdings of the Team.

14. The Team has worked closely with the Archives and Records Management Section of the Secretariat, which is responsible for archiving the records of the Team upon its closure, in line with paragraph 43 of the terms of reference. Personnel from the Section visited Baghdad in March to assess the volume of these records, advise on the application of records-retention schedules and estimate what will require archiving. A detailed archiving plan is in development to ensure that all records are adequately preserved and stored. The transfer will be done in a manner that will, technologically, enable the evidentiary records to be integrated into an e-discovery solution in the future, so that the archive can become active. Reference is made in this regard in the report of the Secretary-General of 15 January 2024, which highlights the value of such an archive towards continued accountability. In any event, all raw digital records will be transferred using hard drives and the process is estimated to take approximately two months. It will be completed by 17 September 2024.

C. Engagement with the Government of Iraq and other stakeholders

15. The Acting Special Adviser held a series of meetings with the Chair of the National Coordinating Committee, who serves as the designated representative for the Government of Iraq. During these meetings, the open engagement and progress made in the drawdown and liquidation of the Team was acknowledged. The calendar shared by the Team outlining the remaining activities to be completed was welcomed as an example of clear and transparent planning on the intended way forward to ensure an orderly closure by 17 September 2024. The timeline included in the calendar was recognized as the guide for discussions between the two sides until the conclusion of the mandate.

16. The two sides recalled that the drawdown and liquidation must be conducted in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and terms of reference, and took particular note of the provisions related to the Team operating with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory. In this regard, the two sides acknowledged that the Team would share evidence originally collected and produced by the Team with the competent Iraqi authorities, in accordance with the terms of reference, which refer to the sharing of evidence in accordance with United Nations policies and best practice and relevant international law, including international human rights law, rules and standards.

17. The Acting Special Adviser and the Government of Iraq referred to the importance of preserving the legacy of the Team in these meetings, and to its contribution towards identifying that acts committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq may amount to international crimes, as mandated by the Security Council. It was noted specifically that the Team and the competent Iraqi authorities have been working closely since April to implement the relevant Council resolutions, ensuring optimal use of the work and legacy of the Team to achieve accountability for the international crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq. The two sides also recalled the central role of the Iraqi judiciary as the main provider of evidence to the Team and the designated recipient of the evidence, other materials and analyses to be returned by the Team to the competent Iraqi authorities. They also acknowledged the central role played by Iraq in supporting national judicial cooperation on crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL,

including through the sharing of evidence by the Iraqi judiciary to relevant authorities of third States.

18. The importance of maintaining, preserving and managing the archives of the Team was also acknowledged during these meetings. The two sides further acknowledged that the Iraqi authorities would retain custody and preserve, store and manage the original evidence in Iraq, which would be delivered by the Team to the relevant Iraqi authorities in line with the terms of reference, for use in domestic criminal proceedings and achieving accountability at the national level. They acknowledged that a copy of this original evidence would be kept by the United Nations as part of its records and archives, together with other materials originally collected by the Team, in line with the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, as recalled in paragraph 43 of the terms of reference. They further acknowledged that the United Nations records and archives would be preserved and stored in a manner that would ensure that they remained protected and accessible, in accordance with United Nations policies on classification and access. They also recalled that informed consent should be respected, including with regard to United Nations copies of the original Iraqi evidence, which could only be used with the consent of Iraq.

19. In the context of engagement with the Iraqi authorities, the progress made by the Team in sharing its knowledge with and providing technical assistance to the specialized team designated by the Government of Iraq for the purpose of building its capacity was also welcomed, and the two upcoming training sessions in June were noted. The challenges in providing capacity-building during the drawdown were also acknowledged, in particular the departure of the experts of the Team who were qualified to provide technical assistance and training. The opportunity to explore options for the United Nations to provide support in the future, within existing mandates, in areas of specific interest to Iraq was also acknowledged, with the goal of building on what had been previously provided by the Team.

20. At these meetings, the Acting Special Adviser underlined the importance accorded by the Government of Iraq for the full respect of the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory. She further noted the request of the Government of Iraq that the Team provide more detailed information about its activities and evidentiary holdings, specifically regarding that which could not be delivered to the Iraqi authorities and would be kept as part of the United Nations archive. A request for more detailed information on the role of the Team in achieving its mandate to support domestic efforts to hold Da'esh/ISIL accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq was also noted.

21. Other critical meetings were held between the Acting Special Adviser and Iraqi authorities, including with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Government and other representatives from the judiciary for the purpose of providing an update on the drawdown and liquidation of the Team and its departure from Iraq. The Acting Special Adviser acknowledged the support provided by these authorities since the establishment of the Team and recognized the major contribution Iraq has made to its evidence holdings.

22. Civil society organizations were also consulted more broadly on the conclusion of the mandate at the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum in March, and by the Acting Special Adviser at specific meetings organized in Erbil and Dahuk for this purpose in May. These organizations continued to raise concerns about the future of accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL and were eager to intensify cooperation with the Team in the remaining months ahead, while understanding its

limitations considering the drawdown and liquidation. They further expressed the hope that the legacy of UNITAD would not be forgotten and that accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq would continue through other means.

III. Consolidation and delivery of investigative results

23. Over the past five years, six field-based and two thematic investigative units have been working closely with the Iraqi authorities, including those from the Kurdistan Region, as well as with affected communities and civil society organizations, to investigate a wide range of crimes perpetrated by Da'esh/ISIL between 2014 and 2017. The field-based nature of these investigations has made the Team uniquely effective, empowering it with the ability to deploy to relevant crime scenes, meet survivors and witnesses where they reside and collect a diverse range of evidence that would otherwise be out of reach. Members recruited by the Team to act as liaisons, who come from all types of communities in Iraq, have added immense value, helping investigative units build close relationships with those most deeply affected by these crimes. Internal standard operating procedures, developed by the Team, were implemented to ensure consistency across investigative activities and conformity with international standards, as were witness protection and support measures, which reflect the survivor-centric nature of the Team and its work.

24. The factual and legal findings made by the Team, and detailed below, are based on the evidence in its holdings and reflect the current stage of its investigations. All investigations have relied on a range of testimonial, documentary and digital evidence, such as witness statements; expert testimony and analysis; judicial case files; photographs, videos and audio recordings; and original Da'esh/ISIL materials. Most of this has been provided by the Iraqi authorities, particularly the Iraqi judiciary. These investigations have also benefited from physical and forensic evidence collected through the excavation of mass graves and the subsequent identification of the victims. Regular engagement with community representatives, including religious leaders, was central to facilitating the collection of evidence. Several civil society organizations in Iraq and international community partners – non-governmental organizations, foundations, think tanks, universities and other United Nations agencies – contributed to the investigations of the Team as well.

Crimes committed against the Christian community

25. The investigation into crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL against the Christian community focused on the treatment of Christians after the takeover of Mosul in June 2014 and in the predominantly Christian towns of the Ninawa plains in the months that followed. This led to the development of a case assessment report presenting preliminary factual and legal findings in 2022. The Team has worked to update and finalize this report during the reporting period with the intention of delivering it to the Iraqi judiciary prior to the conclusion of the mandate.

26. On 10 June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL took over the city of Mosul, where many Christian families resided, and began confiscating and destroying Christian property, religious symbols and cultural heritage. Many Christians fled the city. A planned meeting called by Da'esh/ISIL with Christian leaders did not take place, and Da'esh/ISIL leadership issued an ultimatum shortly after, in July 2014, ordering the remaining Christians to leave their territory or be killed. Although uncertain, the planned meeting could have addressed the option of converting to Islam or paying a religious tax (jizyah) to receive protected-person status. Da'esh/ISIL expanded its takeover of Mosul to surrounding neighbourhoods and villages in the subsequent months, including key areas in the Hamdaniyah district (Qaraqosh, Karamlays and

Bartalah). Christians there were presented with the same ultimatum as those in Mosul; property, religious symbols and cultural heritage were likewise confiscated, co-opted or destroyed. Several women from these areas were subjected to sexual violence while in detention, and later brought to Mosul to be enslaved. Publications, public speeches and fatwas issued by Da'esh/ISIL at the time point to internal directives sanctioning the systematic targeting of Christians.

27. There are reasonable grounds to believe that Da'esh/ISIL members committed a wide range of acts that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Christian community, including but not limited to forcible transfer, persecution, pillage, sexual violence and slavery, and other inhumane acts such as forced conversions and the intentional destruction of cultural heritage.

Crimes committed against the Kaka'i, Shabak and Shia Turkmen communities

28. The investigation into the crimes committed against the Kaka'i, Shabak, and Shia Turkmen focused on Da'esh/ISIL-occupied towns and villages in Ninawa, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk provinces populated by members of these communities. Three separate case assessment reports with preliminary findings, one dedicated to each community, are in the process of being finalized. This investigation remains incomplete overall owing to the conclusion of the mandate.

29. As Da'esh/ISIL extended its control over northern Iraq in 2014, overtaking towns and villages one after another, it sought to attack Kaka'i, Shabak and Shia Turkmen communities from these areas based on its ideology and policies, forcing thousands from their homes. In every area where Da'esh/ISIL gained control, it systematically destroyed cultural heritage sites and looted property. Those who did not manage to flee in time were subjected to killing or abduction.

30. Although the Team has not reached the point of being able to make legal findings, the crimes investigated included Da'esh/ISIL campaigns of forced displacement, killings, enforced disappearance, torture and mistreatment, forced conversion, starvation, the destruction of cultural heritage and the use of prohibited weapons targeting community members.

Crimes committed in Mosul

31. The investigation in and around Mosul initially focused on Badush prison, which was attacked by Da'esh/ISIL on 10 June 2014, and later expanded to include crimes committed against former members of the Iraqi security forces and civilians perceived to be their allies. The Team made progress in finalizing its case assessment report on Badush prison during the reporting period for the purpose of delivery to the Iraqi judiciary by the end of June 2024. An analysis to support preliminary findings for the crimes committed against security forces in Mosul has been developed but will remain incomplete owing to prioritization.

32. On 10 June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL launched a multi-faceted attack on Badush prison, a concrete complex just west of Mosul that housed approximately 3,000 prisoners. Following the takeover, some prisoners escaped. Da'esh/ISIL grouped those remaining outside the prison, separated them on the basis of their religion and subsequently executed approximately 1,000, predominantly Shia, prisoners at multiple locations in the surrounding area on 10 and 11 June 2014. Many of the other prisoners with extremist backgrounds, predominantly members of the Islamic Army in Iraq, Al-Qaeda and other jihadist movements, went on to join Da'esh/ISIL. Significant planning and preparation preceded the attack, which was ultimately commanded by a select number of key Da'esh/ISIL leadership figures. Evidence indicates that Da'esh/ISIL planned to use the attack as an opportunity to fill its ranks with additional members.

33. There are reasonable grounds to believe the acts committed in the attack and against Shia prisoners may have amounted to multiple war crimes and crimes against humanity. Discriminatory intent on the part of Da'esh/ISIL leadership could be determined against the Shia prisoners, amounting to persecution as a crime against humanity. In the context of other mass killings of Shias, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the attack was undertaken with a genocidal intent against Shia males, as part of the Da'esh/ISIL genocidal policy against the Shias of Iraq. To reach a finding of genocide having been committed by Da'esh/ISIL against the Shia as a group, however, other killings of Shia males committed in the territory under Da'esh/ISIL control need to be taken into consideration.

34. In Mosul, former members of the Iraqi security forces and perceived allies (e.g. civilians) were targeted by Da'esh/ISIL differently during three distinct phases between 2014 and 2017: (a) the attack on Mosul and its immediate aftermath; (b) following the city's complete occupation; and (c) during the liberation war, when many civilians who were considered disloyal were punished, killed and used as human shields. Several of the former security forces included in this targeting were Sunnis from the south of Mosul. They were deemed traitors because of their government affiliation, publicly denounced, and executed in the most atrocious ways. The Team has been able to collect evidence indicating that acts committed by Da'esh/ISIL may amount to international crimes against former members of the Iraqi security forces, but will not be able to consolidate this evidence in time to issue preliminary findings.

Crimes committed against the Sunni community

35. The investigation into crimes committed against the Sunni community predominantly focused on Anbar, initially examining crimes against the Albu Nimr tribe between 2014 and 2016, and recently expanding to include those that were coerced by Da'esh/ISIL to repent (Al-Mustatabin) from the al-Karbouli, al-Mahalawi, al-Salmani Sunni tribes, among others. Over the reporting period, the Team worked to finalize a case assessment report on the crimes against the Albu Nimr, which will be delivered to the Iraqi judiciary in June. A preliminary case assessment report on crimes committed against Al-Mustatabin victims has been developed but will remain incomplete due to prioritization.

36. Da'esh/ISIL conducted attacks in the Albu Nimr area of Anbar from the end of 2013 until 23 and 24 October 2014, when the area was captured entirely. During this period, Da'esh/ISIL was opposed by members of the Albu Nimr, one of the many Sunni tribes in Anbar that mainly lived in the area. The Albu Nimr fought against Al-Qaida in 2007 as part of the Sunni Awakening movement and opposed Da'esh/ISIL occupation. Da'esh/ISIL was aware of this history and regarded Sunnis who fought against them as apostates. Following the complete takeover of the area in late October 2014, Da'esh/ISIL proceeded to capture and execute members of the tribe across different parts of Anbar, including Hit, Ramadi, Tharthar and Hadithah. The majority of those captured, tortured and killed were part of, or associated with, the Iraqi security forces, the Sunni Awakening movement, or their family members. In many cases, Da'esh/ISIL prohibited family members of victims from recovering the bodies and denied them the possibility of appropriate burial. Surviving members of the tribe, including women and children, were forcibly displaced and had their property confiscated or destroyed.

37. There are reasonable grounds to believe that Da'esh/ISIL committed acts that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Sunni community, including murder, outrages upon personal dignity, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, displacement, forcible transfer and persecution on political and religious grounds.

Crimes committed in Tikrit

38. The investigation into crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL in and around Tikrit initially focused on the massacre of Tikrit Air Academy personnel from 12 to 14 June 2014, and expanded to crimes committed in Tikrit, Alam and the surrounding areas between June 2014 and March 2015. A case assessment report for the Tikrit Air Academy massacre was finalized during the reporting period and prepared for delivery to the Iraqi judiciary in early June 2024. Progress has been made in finalizing the case assessment report for Tikrit and Alam, which is scheduled to be shared with the Iraqi judiciary by the conclusion of the mandate.

39. On 11 June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL entered Tikrit, quickly defeated the few remaining security personnel who resisted, released prisoners from prisons and ransacked governmental and civilian buildings. The next day, a long column of soldiers and volunteers left Tikrit Air Academy, heading on foot towards Baghdad. The column was intercepted by Da'esh/ISIL at various points along the Baghdad–Mosul highway. Captives were loaded into trucks and transferred to the presidential palace complex back in Tikrit. Sunnis were separated from Shias. Upon consulting senior Da'esh/ISIL leadership, the Wali of Salah al-Din ordered that Sunnis were to be offered repentance while Shias were to be killed, resulting in around 1,700 captives being assembled into groups and shot at close range. Bodies were either buried in mass graves in the complex or thrown into the nearby river. The killing operation lasted for at least three days with the active involvement of an estimated 100 to 150 Da'esh/ISIL members. In the months following, Da'esh/ISIL established control over Tikrit, Alam and surrounding areas, and apprehended, detained and/or publicly executed police and security officers as well as anyone perceived as opposing their rule.

40. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the massacre was undertaken with a genocidal intent against Shia males, as part of the Da'esh/ISIL genocidal policy against Shias of Iraq. To reach a finding of genocide having been committed by Da'esh/ISIL against the Shia as a group, however, other killings of Shia males committed in the territory under Da'esh/ISIL control need to be taken into consideration. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the publication of Da'esh/ISIL videos related to these attacks may amount to the crime of direct and public incitement to commit genocide against Shias. The same killings may also amount to the crimes against humanity of murder, extermination, imprisonment, other inhumane acts, torture and persecution, as well as to the war crimes of murder, arbitrary detention, cruel treatment and torture.

Crimes committed against the Yazidi community

41. The investigation into the crimes committed against the Yazidi community covered the systematic and multi-faceted attack by Da'esh/ISIL in the Sinjar region. Geographically, the Team started in Kuju, Sulaqah, Hardan, Khanah Sur and Sinuni, and, following the production of its initial case assessment in 2021, further widened its scope to include more settlements in the province, such as Hamadan, Qeni, Gir Zerik, Siba Sheikh Khuder, Khro Farm and Tel Azir. The Team has worked to update the initial case assessment over the course of the reporting period for the purpose of including additional evidence and investigative findings, collected in part as a result of its expanded scope. It is anticipated for delivery to the Iraqi judiciary prior to the conclusion of the mandate.

42. Having taken control of Mosul on 10 June 2014 and Tall Afar on 16 June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL closed in on the town of Sinjar and its neighbouring villages. A coordinated attack across the region was launched on 3 August, targeting its civilian Yazidi population. An estimated 35,000 to 50,000 Yazidis fled towards the Sinjar Mountains. Once Da'esh/ISIL controlled the area, it besieged the mountains and cut

off all escape routes, leaving those hiding there without adequate access to water or food. This resulted in death, mostly of children and the elderly. Others who had not reached the mountains, or had and tried to flee, were captured. Upon capture, Da'esh/ISIL separated Yazidi men from women and children. Men and older boys were forced to convert to the Da'esh/ISIL interpretation of Islam. Those who refused were immediately executed in mass killings. The ones who converted were reunited with their families and allowed to live in captivity under Da'esh/ISIL, but this policy gradually changed and eventually most of the forcibly converted men and older boys were also executed.

43. The separation of the captives by gender marked the beginning of efforts by Da'esh/ISIL to establish a systematic and organized slave trade and enslavement system of Yazidis. While in Sulaqah, a group of older women and mothers were separated from the other captives and executed; girls and younger unmarried women, often separated from women with children, were distributed to Da'esh/ISIL members. In captivity, these girls and younger unmarried women were sold and passed along, subjected to continuous sexual abuse and forced to undertake domestic work. Older women were less likely to be sexually abused but were made to perform domestic and agricultural work for Da'esh/ISIL families. These crimes continued for months and years, as thousands of women and girls were kept in continuous detention. Younger boys, on the other hand, were forcibly conscripted into the ranks of Da'esh/ISIL, where nearly all were subjected to forced labour, including for military operations.

44. There are reasonable grounds to believe Da'esh/ISIL committed acts that may amount to genocide against the Yazidi community as a religious group, as well as to war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, sexual violence, torture, enslavement, sexual slavery and the conscription of children into an armed group.

Destruction of cultural heritage

45. Through its various investigations, the Team has been actively collecting evidence linked to the destruction by Da'esh/ISIL of cultural heritage sites that belong to all communities in Iraq. Investigative resources of the Team were shifted in early 2022 to consolidate this evidence and form a clearer picture of the scope and scale of this destruction. Investigations initially focused on Yazidi and Christian sites in Ninawa province, and recently expanded to include Shia Turkmen, Kaka'i, Shabak and Sunni sites in Salah al-Din and Anbar provinces. The finalization of a case assessment report continued during the reporting period for delivery to the Iraqi judiciary prior to the conclusion of the mandate.

46. As it worked its way across northern Iraq, Da'esh/ISIL systematically targeted cultural heritage sites it perceived as being non-compliant with its interpretation of Islam. Accordingly, Da'esh/ISIL targeted mosques and shrines built over tombs or graves as well as statues, images and ornaments perceived as material manifestations of idolatry or polytheism. Several hundred Yazidi, Christian, Kaka'i, Shabak, Shia Turkmen and Sunni sites were thus damaged or destroyed by Da'esh/ISIL. The systematic nature of the destruction was apparent from the timing and method of these sites' destruction, meaning most were blown up with explosives or levelled to the ground with heavy equipment soon after Da'esh/ISIL took over a particular area. Certain sites would be used, sometimes for military purposes, resulting in their severe damage or destruction over time. Several Da'esh/ISIL entities, including the morality department (Hisbah), the department of natural and buried resources (Diwan al-Rikaz) and the department of proselytization and mosques (Diwan al-Da'wah wal-Masajid), played an administrative or operational role in these acts, as did key Da'esh/ISIL decision-making authorities, including the Walis of Ninawa and the Da'esh/ISIL delegated committee.

Development and use of chemical and biological weapons

47. The Team's investigation into the use and development of chemical and biological weapons by Da'esh/ISIL began with the attack against the Shia Turkmen town of Tazah Khurmatu, which occurred in March 2016, and expanded to an investigation into the takeover of the University of Mosul by Da'esh/ISIL in June 2014, which had been repurposed to support its weapons development programme. The Team focused on updating the case assessment report during the reporting period in anticipation of delivery to the Iraqi judiciary prior to the conclusion of the mandate. A previous version of the report was shared with the Iraqi judiciary in October 2023.

48. As part of its takeover of Mosul in June 2014, Da'esh/ISIL occupied the University of Mosul and deliberately misappropriated its financial, commercial and public sector infrastructure for the purpose of establishing a centre of operations to produce chemical weapons. Laboratories, specialized equipment, chemicals and other stores were seized and used by scientific experts working for Da'esh/ISIL. This programme produced chemical rockets and mortars, chemical ammunition for rocket-propelled grenades, chemical warheads and improvised explosive devices. Critically, it developed at least eight toxic chemical substances – notably aluminium phosphide, botulinum toxin, chlorine, cyanide ions, nicotine, ricin, sulfur mustard and thallium sulfate – and successfully weaponized two of them. In the act of doing so, toxic chemicals, such as nicotine and thallium sulfate, were tested on prisoners to determine lethal dosages. Operatives within the organization explored at least the possibility of developing anthrax, a biological agent.

49. On 8 March 2016, Da'esh/ISIL attacked the civilian Shia Turkmen population of Tazah Khurmatu, a small town south of Kirkuk, with chemical weapons that they had produced. At least 27 rockets used in the attack contained sulfur mustard, a schedule 1 chemical under the Chemical Weapons Convention. As a result of the attack, two children died and thousands of residents sought medical treatment for symptoms consistent with exposure to a blistering agent. The use of chemical weapons was authorized and incentivized at the highest levels of Da'esh/ISIL, and included the provision of specific financial rewards to forces deploying such weapons. In addition to the attack against Tazah Khurmatu, information collected indicates Da'esh/ISIL deployed chemical weapons using chlorine and sulfur mustard against military and civilian targets at least 12 more times across four separate provinces in Iraq between 2014 and 2017. In addition, four attempts to deploy chemical weapons in Baghdad may have been stopped by the authorities between June and August 2016.

50. There are reasonable grounds to believe that the Da'esh/ISIL chemical weapons programme, its use of chemical weapons against the civilian population in Tazah Khurmatu and the testing of chemical agents on prisoners were acts that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, the use of chemical weapons against Shia Turkmen victims in Tazah Khurmatu may constitute a genocidal act in terms of killing members of a protected group as well as causing serious physical and mental injuries to a protected group. To reach a finding of genocide having been committed by Da'esh/ISIL against the Shia as a group, however, other killings of Shia committed in the territory under Da'esh/ISIL control would need to be taken into consideration.

Financing of crimes committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

51. A dedicated thematic unit was established to help the Team develop deeper insight into core Da'esh/ISIL structures, the financial incentives driving these structures and their linkages to the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This led to the examination of several key Da'esh/ISIL

decision-making, administrative and operational entities, including the delegated committee and select departments and money service businesses. A case assessment on the treasury department (Diwan Bayt al-Mal) was finalized during the reporting period and shared with the Iraqi judiciary in February, while others – the delegated committee and the department of soldiers (Diwan al-Jund) – were prepared for sharing by the conclusion of the mandate.

52. After the takeover of Mosul in June 2014, the core leadership and decision-making structure of the organization consisted of two so-called delegated committees – one in the Syrian Arab Republic and the other in Iraq – that counted among its members the highest-ranking Da'esh/ISIL figures. These two committees coexisted for years, combined into one in mid-2017, and dissolved in September 2017. The delegated committee set the religious and ideological path of the organization, which informed all its decisions, including the decision to launch targeted and systematic campaigns against specific ethnic and religious groups in Iraq, notably members of the Yazidi and Shia communities. Equally as important, the delegated committee was involved in both administrative and military management of the territory under its control, and accordingly oversaw finances and military disbursements, including the procurement of arms and supplies and battlefield bonuses for military achievements.

53. As part of its aspiration to function as a State, Da'esh/ISIL established State-like structures, including departments to help govern its territory and the citizens within it. One of the most important of these was Diwan Bayt al-Mal, which functioned to support the expansion and military operations of the organization through the safekeeping, storage, management and disbursement of its funds. Da'esh/ISIL primarily relied on the exploitation of oil to generate revenue, but also generated funds through acts of confiscations, taxation, and pillaging and looting. Da'esh/ISIL controlled all aspects of the local economy, specifically targeting property and wealth held by those that they deemed apostate. Reflecting its hierarchical approach to governance, Diwan Bayt al-Mal implemented decisions made by Da'esh/ISIL leadership, disseminating their policies to entities under their authority. Funds were used to pay military personnel under the department of soldiers (Diwan al-Jund) and finance their operations.

54. Under the oversight of Diwan Bayt al-Mal, money service businesses, which were operated by civilians, were allowed to continue, but were required to pay a commission fee on all transactions. Some of the money service businesses operating in Mosul, as well as in other locations in Iraq, raised, transferred and disbursed funds in Iraq and abroad. This financial architecture enabled Da'esh/ISIL to recruit and pay fighters, purchase weapons and circumvent sanctions to gain access to licit financial systems. Furthermore, Da'esh/ISIL exploited currency markets and used stored-value or prepaid card systems to move money in and out of the territory under its control.

Sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children

55. A dedicated thematic unit was established to focus on sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children committed by Da'esh/ISIL, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. All affected communities and geographic areas were included. Members of this unit had expertise that enabled the Team to engage some of the most vulnerable and traumatized survivors and witnesses, augmenting its ability to employ a survivor-centric approach in its work. Efforts to finalize an analytical report focused on sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children committed by Da'esh/ISIL against the Shia Turkmen community continued during the reporting period, with the intention of finalizing the report for delivery to the Iraqi judiciary in June. This follows a report published in 2023 and delivered to the Iraqi authorities on sexual violence against women and girls.

56. Gender and age were key factors in determining the crimes Da'esh/ISIL perpetrated against targeted victims, and in-depth analyses were undertaken that helped to shed light on the extent and nature of this relationship. For example, under the Da'esh/ISIL ideological framework, Yazidis were considered pagans and targeted for destruction. As such, men and older boys were systematically killed as soon as they were captured, while women and girls older than 9 were sexually enslaved. Boys and girls who had not reached puberty remained in captivity with their mothers. Many of the women and girls were also forced to convert and sometimes forcibly married to Da'esh/ISIL members. Boys who had reached puberty were conscripted, indoctrinated in training camps and sometimes used in hostilities.

57. In addition to Yazidis, Da'esh/ISIL targeted other minorities. This included forced marriages of Shia Turkmen girls from Tall Afar who were captured when they fled to Sinjar, as well as the rape in detention of Shabak women across the territory controlled by Da'esh/ISIL. Several Christians were subjected to sexual violence while in detention and were later brought to Mosul to be enslaved. Shia Turkmen boys, some as young as 6 years old, were conscripted, and Sunni boys enlisted.

IV. Collection, management and use of evidentiary material

58. A diverse range of evidence collection activities have been used by the Team throughout its mandate to support its investigations. More targeted activities, usually meant to yield evidence relevant to specific investigations, have included the collection of witness testimony, the collection of physical evidence from excavations of mass graves and the identification of victims, requests for information to Iraqi and international partners, and open-source intelligence. Other activities have deployed a more broad-based approach, such as the digitization of physical records linked to Da'esh/ISIL and its crimes, or data acquisition from seized Da'esh/ISIL digital devices, whereby evidence is collected, processed and queried by the Team to identify what could be relevant to specific investigations. Many of these activities have been undertaken alongside the competent Iraqi authorities within the framework of capacity-building and training in line with paragraph 39 of the terms of reference of the Team.

A. Testimonial, documentary and digital evidence collection

59. Close engagement with affected communities has helped to foster trust and encourage those affected to come forward to tell their story, resulting in the collection of hundreds of witness statements. Through its specialized unit, the Team has ensured that the collection of this evidence has followed a systematic and deliberate planning process, in a manner limiting potential exposure to identified threats, in line with paragraph 44 (f) of the terms of reference. Facilities to accommodate interviews by investigators in line with international standards were built at its premises in Baghdad, Erbil and Dahuk. In addition, an in-house psychosocial support capacity was established to support the most vulnerable witnesses interviewed by the Team, including women and children, to reduce the risk of further traumatization and offer onward referrals to health services within its network.

60. The transfer of knowledge to augment existing witness protection and support measures in Iraq has been a priority of the Team, and has focused on Iraqi authorities, civil society organizations and health service providers. Since 2020, and at the request of the Government of Iraq, the Team has supported the implementation of domestic witness protection legislation by working with the Ministry of Interior to support the development of its specialized unit. This has included the initial delivery of week-

long training-the-trainer courses by experts from the Team, the development of internal procedures and a suggested organigramme and bespoke training to managers and practitioners on best practices. Significantly, a dedicated needs assessment was conducted during the reporting period to determine areas of additional support. Along the same lines, the Team has provided training to a diverse range of psychological support actors in Iraq, resulting in the delivery of 110 training sessions to roughly 700 participants, including psychologists, social workers, humanitarian workers and religious leaders. Capacity-building in this area, focused on trauma-informed approaches and mental health, continued during the reporting period.

61. Efforts to systematically preserve documentary evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh/ISIL already collected by the competent Iraqi authorities has led to the digitization of more than 18 million pages and the creation of state-of-the-art archiving rooms at three Iraqi criminal courts. More than a hundred local contractors, a dozen computer servers, numerous heavy-duty scanners, hundreds of laptops, thousands of archiving shelves and hundreds of thousands of acid-free folders and boxes have been deployed. Digitization and archiving projects continued at eight sites during the reporting period, some of which are nearing completion. In addition, the Team shared software tailored to the specifications of the Supreme Judicial Council, providing it with the technical support needed for centralizing and managing these archived and digitized records. The capacity of civil society organizations to systematically preserve documentary evidence has also been strengthened during the reporting period through the delivery of workshops and equipment.

62. Collaboration with specialized Iraqi authorities has resulted in the acquisition of data from a significant number of seized Da'esh/ISIL mobile telephones and other digital storage devices (e.g. hard drives), providing access to previously inaccessible Da'esh/ISIL-related evidence stored on these devices. Digital forensic laboratories have been established by the Team at four Iraqi criminal courts, facilitated by the donation of equipment and software licences. This has enabled the capacity of Iraqi personnel trained by the Team to acquire, manage and verify digital evidence, including through the forensic retrieval from online sources utilizing advanced open-source intelligence techniques. The provision of additional equipment and training in line with the needs of these laboratories has continued since the previous reporting period, and has focused in particular on data acquisition from mobile telephones. These efforts have helped to support the objective of the Iraqi judiciary with regard to completing a full forensic analysis of Da'esh/ISIL and its organizational structure, chain of command and geographical presence.

B. Mass grave excavations and collection of forensic evidence

63. In partnership with the Mass Graves Directorate and the Medico-Legal Directorate, the Team has provided technical expertise with regard to the excavation of 67 mass graves related to Da'esh/ISIL, following the agreed strategy that considered the investigative priorities of the Team. Forensic and physical evidence from these sites has been retained and stored by the two Directorates in line with international standards. Support by the Team to the Directorates has extended to the provision of approximately \$2.4 million in equipment and training to enhance evidence collection mechanisms, including digital surveying and crime scene reconstruction; security arrangements for the excavation sites; facilities for the storage of biological material; and victim identification processes. Planning and preparation for the excavation and recovery of the remains of Yazidi and Shia victims from a complex site – Bir Alu Antar, near the town of Tall Afar – was the focus of its excavation activities during the reporting period.

64. Identified victims from these excavations, notably from sites in and around Sinjar and Mosul, have been returned to grieving communities and families through various ceremonies organized by the Government of Iraq. The Team has played an active role throughout the returns process, including at the pre-burial stage – the delicate and essential preparation of the remains for burial, and their transfer from a forensic repository to assigned coffins – and through the provision of logistical support, such as the procurement of funerary paraphernalia. In some cases, outreach events, organized by the Government of Iraq and supported by the Team, ensured the views of families and community leaders were placed at the centre of the planning process. Clinical psychologists from the Team were deployed during the ceremonies to provide effective psychological and emotional support. The most recent return of remains took place in January and consisted of 41 Yazidi victims. Ceremonies were held in Baghdad and Sulaqah (Sinjar). These victims were from a mass grave excavated in 2020 with support from the Team.

C. Evidence management and analysis

65. Technological innovation has been at the heart of helping the Team manage the sizable and diverse range of evidence it has collected and address a range of related complexities. Based on an internal set of standard operating procedures drafted during its initial months, an electronic evidence life-cycle management system and e-discovery suite (Relativity) was implemented by the Team to ensure its evidence collection followed international standards and maintained a clear chain of custody. This system has constantly evolved over time to accommodate the demands placed on it by the investigative process, and software has been deployed as part of the solution. For example, Rampiva has been used to clear backlogs and reduce the processing times for collected evidence, making it available for review by investigators and analysts within days instead of weeks. Passware, working at a rate of more than 250,000 passwords per second, was introduced to help decrypt key Da'esh/ISIL files of high evidentiary value to investigations.

66. Gleaning insight and drawing meaningful conclusions from this evidence has also been facilitated by technological innovation. The e-discovery suite has made the content of documentary evidence searchable through optical character recognition, enabling the processing and analysis of handwritten documents, including in Arabic. A platform, known as Zateo, was developed to filter and analyse the content of images and videos without significant human intervention, a process that would otherwise be highly time-consuming and resource intensive. This incorporated the use of cutting-edge capacities, including facial recognition and sentiment analysis, the detection of stamps and seals (e.g. Da'esh/ISIL stamps and seals) and the detection of near-duplicate videos and images. More traditional analytical software, such as i2 Analyst's Notebook and i2 iBase, were used to map and unearth linkages between individuals, entities and objects associated with investigations and the evidence collected.

D. Engaging Member States: supporting national investigations and prosecutions

67. Responding to requests from third-State jurisdictions in support of their national investigations and prosecutions has been an integral task of the Team in order to ensure the broadest possible use of the evidence it has collected. A total of 20 third States and 45 competent authorities within them have requested assistance over the course of the mandate, with 246 requests received overall. Eighteen cases in third States that were under investigation and led to indictments were supported by the Team, with 15 ultimately resulting in convictions. Thirty more cases are currently under investigation

in third-State jurisdictions and may soon go to court. The Team produced its first joint case file with Iraqi investigative judges in 2023, which was shared with the third State where the alleged perpetrator resides, representing a model of cooperation between the Team and the Iraqi authorities in support of third-State jurisdictions.

68. The support provided by the Team to national investigations and prosecutions, including locating and interviewing witnesses, disclosing evidence in its holdings and providing expert testimony, has been instrumental in bringing Da'esh/ISIL members to justice. In January, the Central Criminal Court in Lisbon convicted an Iraqi Da'esh/ISIL member for committing war crimes in Mosul, largely based on evidence provided by the Team in close cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary, which included the testimonies of 13 victims and witnesses, who testified by videoconference from Iraq, and copies of a case pending before a court in Mosul. Another example is the support provided by the Team to the German prosecution authorities in June of 2023, which led to the conviction of a female member of Da'esh/ISIL for terrorism-related charges and international crimes, including aiding and abetting genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The support provided in this case included identifying and interviewing the key witness, a Yazidi woman who was held as a slave for three years by the defendant and her husband.

V. Legacy and contribution of the Investigative Team

69. This year marks the tenth anniversary since Da'esh/ISIL declared itself a caliphate, the apex of its reign of terror in Iraq. Towns and villages were razed, livelihoods were ruined and families were torn apart, left to bear immense loss. Commencing its investigative work in 2018, and with fundamental support from the Iraqi authorities, the Team began working to tell the story of this terror through the evidence it collected, heeding the calls by all affected communities in Iraq to hold those responsible for international crimes accountable. These calls have not subsided and are just as loud as a decade ago. This is why preserving the legacy of the Team is important, and why accountability efforts for the crimes of Da'esh/ISIL should continue globally, with survivors and affected communities at the centre.

70. The materials and analyses produced by the Team represent its work to legally assess the acts committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq as acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, consistent with Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) and the Team's terms of reference. Those materials and analyses serve to consolidate and deliver a set of factual and legal findings that Member States, including Iraq, and their competent authorities can consider as they work domestically to hold Da'esh/ISIL members accountable for crimes committed in Iraq. Repeatedly, the scope and content of these materials and analyses have proved to be of use to several competent authorities. The role played by the Team in supporting such accountability efforts globally, in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities, is a concrete measure of its success. More broadly, the work of the Team has contributed to a detailed description of the acts committed by Da'esh/ISIL in Iraq and, through analysis and cutting-edge tools, has permitted the Team to assess them as acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

71. The evidentiary holdings of the Team is one of its single most important assets. It represents the plurality of sources from which the Team has collected evidence. The sources include the Iraqi authorities and notably the Iraqi judiciary, which has been the main contributor, as well as survivors, witnesses and civil society organizations in Iraq, among others. Evidence of Da'esh/ISIL crimes may have otherwise remained inaccessible if not for this cooperation. This evidence has been consolidated into a single centralized digital archive and organized in a manner that makes it easily searchable,

meaning its utility and effectiveness as an investigative asset will be retained. More importantly, the chain of custody associated with this evidence has been maintained in accordance with international standards to maximize its utility in judicial proceedings. These benefits have been safeguarded for Iraq, which retains custody of the evidence as delivered by the Team, in accordance with the Team's terms of reference.

72. The inclusion of Iraqi nationals in the staffing profile of the Team, on an equal footing with international staff and in line with paragraph 14 of the Team's terms of reference, has been a priority of the Team since arriving in Iraq. Currently, one half of all staff members are national personnel (i.e. full-time staff and independent contractors) and efforts have been made to strike a balance in terms of gender, ethnicity and religion in a way that reflects the diversity of Iraq itself. These personnel have been indispensable in advancing the implementation of the mandate, occupying critical roles in community outreach, investigations, forensics, evidence management, language services, human resources, premise security, field operations and mission support. Training has been provided in areas relevant to their work to aid in their professional development so that the specialized skills acquired during their time with the Team can be utilized going forward.

73. Capacity-building support delivered by the Team to the Iraqi authorities has provided a platform for them to take the next step in the excavation of mass graves and the identification of victims, archiving and digitization, digital forensics, and witness protection and psychosocial support. The provision of equipment and training to the Medico-Legal Directorate, for example, has paved the way for their DNA laboratory to pursue ISO accreditation, a recognized worldwide standard among such laboratories. The provision of support related to the archiving and digitization of millions of paper records related to Da'esh/ISIL means beneficiary Iraqi criminal courts can now implement a system of digital document management to preserve their holdings and expedite their work, while positioning the Supreme Judicial Council to develop a centralized database of these digital records. Installing a foundational, but long-term, digital forensic capacity at some of these same courts also increases their capacity to process certain evidence. The Ministry of Interior has moved closer to fully establishing its witness protection and support unit.

74. Finally, the work of the Team with and for the survivors, families and affected communities needs to be acknowledged, in line with the survivor-centric approach it has adopted and implemented throughout its mandate. Excavations and the identification of victims, supported by the Team, have had deep emotional, cultural and religious significance for many Iraqis, and have provided clarity on the fate of loved ones for those most intimately affected. Through its field-based presence and engagement, the Team has given survivors and witnesses the opportunity to come forward to share their stories and be heard, contributing meaningfully not only to the accountability process but also to their own healing and that of their communities. Their stories will not be forgotten, nor will the memories of the victims who perished. Rather, they are the essence and foundation of accountability for the crimes of Da'esh/ISIL on which truth and history both depend.
