



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**By**

**Mr. Thomas Ramopoulos, First Secretary, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

**at the Sixth Committee**

**on the Agenda item 78:**

**"Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission"**

**United Nations**

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**– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –**

Mr. /Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Türkiye, Montenegro , Serbia , Albania , Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina , the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino align themselves with this statement.

United Nations officials and experts on mission are the face of the United Nations on the ground around the globe. They put their own lives at risk in order to maintain peace and security, to uphold the rule of law and to protect civilian populations, as well as to support development and international cooperation. We commend them for these efforts, which are often made in the face of adversity.

At the same time, there can be no excuse for acts of misconduct by the very same individuals who are meant to serve these noble goals. Even a single act of misconduct can cause suffering and have a detrimental effect on trust as well as the reputation and credibility of the United Nations. Officials and experts on mission must always maintain high professional and personal standards in their relations with local authorities and the host population, as well as with each other. There must be a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct and crimes committed by UN personnel on mission, especially sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

A comprehensive policy must be put in place in order to prevent acts of misconduct and, should this fail, ensure their investigation and



exchange information and coordinate their approach with regard to investigating and prosecuting.

The responsibility to act in cases of misconduct or crimes by UN personnel on mission does not end with their investigation and prosecution. It extends to the **protection and support of victims and witnesses**, including protection from retaliation. It also includes efforts to encourage victims to come forward and speak up. This is necessary to prevent re-victimisation and begin to re-establish a feeling of trust and justice among individuals and local communities.

Mr. /Madam Chair,

The EU and its Member States would like to express yet again their concern about the fact that the majority of cases of alleged misconduct and crimes referred to UN Member States by the Secretary-General remain unanswered. We call on all States to investigate the referrals and to provide the Secretary-General with regular updates on the status of their investigations or prosecutions.

In closing, Mr. /Madam Chair, the EU and its Member States reaffirm our readiness to consider a proposal for a comprehensive international legal framework, which would clarify the circumstances under which UN Member States can exercise jurisdiction for misconduct and crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission, as well as the categories of individuals and crimes subject to that jurisdiction. Nobody is above the law and we will continue to work towards ending impunity.

Thank you.