

UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement at the 78th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 76: Criminal Accountability of UN Officials and Experts on Mission
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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 of July 26 and August 1 on this issue. We thank the UN Secretariat, specialized agencies and related organizations as well as Member States that contributed to 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.

In particular, we were encouraged to read about the ongoing work of the Food and Agriculture Organization to establish an internal policy for the referral of credible allegations that a crime may have been committed by its personnel. We also welcome the efforts of the International Telecommunication Union to introduce mandatory training, including on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and prevention of sexual harassment, as well as to introduce tools to facilitate the reporting of misconduct. We also appreciate the efforts in this reporting period by the UN to strengthen existing deployment training and vetting measures for all UN personnel, including the launch of a revised mandate on sexual exploitation and abuse.

The United States also thanks the Secretary-General

States welcomes also the work of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and was pleased to contribute to the Trust Fund that provides critical support to survivors.

We request that all UN programmes, specialized agencies, and related organizations continue to examine the issues addressed in these reports and revise internal rules and procedures, with the goals of further mitigating the risks of sexual misconduct and increasing greater accountability for criminal conduct, sexual exploitation or abuse committed by UN officials and experts.

Finally, the United States would like to provide an update on our accountability efforts in the case of Karim Elkorany. As noted in our statement in this Committee last year, the United States Department of Justice had charged Elkorany, a U.S. national, former State Department contractor, and former UN employee with sexual assault, including against a fellow UN employee, while serving with the Organization on a UN mission in Iraq. Elkorany pled guilty to one count of sexual assault, while admitting 19 other criminal acts, including at least 13 other sexual assaults. On October 27, 2022, Elkorany was sentenced to 15 years in prison for the drugging and sexual assault of one of the victims and making false statements to cover up another sexual assault.

The United States urges continued vigilance to prevent and respond to allegations of criminal conduct across the UN System and looks forward to continued engagement in this Committee and with the Secretariat on this important issue.

Thank you, Chair.