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Letter dated 7 November 2022 from the 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 3 of Security Council resolution [2651 \(2022\)](#), the ninth 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) Christian **Ritscher**
Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team



Ninth report of the 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 ninth 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 is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2651 \(2022\)](#).

The reporting period was marked by the advancement of investigations conducted by the Team into international crimes committed against all communities by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh). The investigations were carried out by investigative units of the Team based in Baghdad, Dahuk and Erbil.

In prioritizing case-building capacities focused on individual perpetrators, the Team worked collaboratively with Iraqi authorities, including Kurdish entities, as well as other Member States engaged in investigating and prosecuting ISIL perpetrators for their involvement in war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. During the reporting period, the Team expanded its added value through its engagement with Member States to access affected communities at the international level. A total of 16 Member States have requested assistance from the Team with respect to ongoing investigations and prosecutions.

The Team continued to benefit from constructive cooperation with Iraqi judicial authorities as well as international entities, including United Nations entities. As a result, further insight has been gained into investigative lines pertaining to crimes committed by ISIL against the Christian community as well as the development and use of chemical and biological weapons.

In line with its global approach to addressing the concerns of all Iraqi communities and minorities that were impacted by the destruction of cultural and religious sites by ISIL, the Team collected additional evidence on already identified sites and expanded its investigative activities within this thematic area.

With strong engagement and cooperation with the Mass Graves Directorate of the Martyrs Foundation and the Medico-Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Health, as well as field-based assistance from Kurdish authorities, the Team continued its support for the excavation of ISIL mass grave crime scenes in Iraq in line with the road map for prioritization and implementation of mass graves investigation activities in 2022.

The Team, driven by the evolving dynamic of its mandate, has now reached the next level of holding ISIL perpetrators responsible. The Team will now focus on dedicating its efforts to promoting evidence-based trials and the large-scale accountability of ISIL.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	4
II. Status of investigations	5
A. Progress in investigative priorities	5
B. Specialized thematic units: mainstreaming expertise on key aspects of investigations . .	11
C. Composition and facilities of the Investigative Team	14
III. Investigative activities: collection and storage of evidentiary material	15
A. Documentary, testimonial and digital evidence collection	15
B. Excavation of mass graves and recording of ISIL crime scenes	16
C. Storage, analysis and management of evidence	18
IV. Delivering accountability in collaboration with national actors	18
A. Engagement and cooperation with the Government of Iraq, including with the Kurdistan Regional Government	18
B. Strengthening the capacity of Iraqi authorities	19
C. Working in partnership with all elements of Iraqi society	22
V. Cooperation in support of the activities of the Investigative Team	22
A. Engaging Member States and providing support to ongoing national proceedings	22
B. Ensuring coherence with United Nations system entities	23
C. Cooperating with other entities	23
VI. Promoting accountability globally	24
VII. Funding and resources	25
VIII. Looking forward	25
IX. Conclusion	26

I. Introduction

1. The ninth 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 hereby submitted to the Security Council.
2. The work of the Investigative Team has been conducted in accordance with Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) and the terms of reference for the activities of the Team in Iraq ([S/2018/118](#), annex), as approved by the Security Council on 13 February 2018. To support implementation of the mandate, and in line with paragraph 3 of resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#), the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team engaged closely with a wide range of stakeholders during the reporting period, including survivor groups, national authorities, religious actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in order to promote, both in Iraq and globally, accountability for crimes committed by ISIL. Cooperation with survivors continues to be placed at the centre of the work being done by the Team to ensure that their interests in achieving accountability for ISIL are fully recognized.
3. An increased focus on transitioning from investigation to case-building defined the work of the Team during the reporting period. In November, the Team successfully delivered a one-week training course to 20 investigative judges across Iraq on international humanitarian and criminal law. The training course, which was built on modules delivered last year by the Team, was held in Nuremberg, Germany, and was implemented in partnership with the International Nuremberg Principles Academy. The Team also piloted a training course in October for 11 investigative judges and prosecutors from the Kurdistan Region focused on concrete case-building. The one-week training course, which is being delivered in Erbil, focuses on cases of alleged ISIL perpetrators abroad and assists participants in applying their theoretical training to develop real-world international crime cases. This modality complements work already being done on similar cases with individual investigative judges in Iraq.
4. The Team continued to find ways to further share information with Iraq in line with its terms of reference. In this regard, emphasis was placed on concluding a memorandum of understanding between the Team and the Government of Iraq, specifically the National Security Advisory Council, that would enable the Team to share information in support of the development of application packages by Iraq to have individuals added to the Security Council sanctions listings. Drafted jointly, the memorandum of understanding is awaiting final approval by the Council of Ministers. In anticipation of this approval, the Team held a series of meetings and a workshop to further familiarize relevant Iraqi experts with the listing and application process. The Team also continued to leverage a pre-existing modality whereby information linked to ISIL financing, held by the Team, was shared with select investigative judges.
5. While case-building and information-sharing marked a new phase of operational work for the Team, the reporting period was also marked by progress across all investigative lines of inquiry. Key outcomes have been achieved, including the completion of a first case assessment focused on crimes committed against the Christian community in Iraq and a more advanced case assessment on the development and use of chemical weapons by ISIL in Iraq. The Team also focused on collecting key evidence on the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL in Iraq, the ISIL leadership and hierarchical structure in Mosul and in Tall Afar and crimes committed by ISIL against other communities in and around Sinjar. The Team anticipates the completion of case assessments on those topics in the next few months. Furthermore, the initial investigative priorities of the Team – crimes against the Yazidi community, against the military cadets and personnel from Tikrit Air Academy and against Badush prisoners – have shifted towards the identification of the perpetrators most responsible for these crimes.

6. Key field-based, evidence-centric activities, such as the digitization and archiving of ISIL evidence and the excavation of mass graves, continued during the reporting period in support of all investigative lines, albeit with an increased focus on those for which the structural investigation was still being finalized. The improvement in evidence processing times, which was reported during the last reporting period, has rapidly increased the amount of evidence held by the Team.

7. The steadfast support of the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi judiciary and the authorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government have enabled the Team to effectively implement its mandate. Many ongoing initiatives, particularly on case-building and information-sharing, are collaborative efforts and have strengthened this partnership. The Team also appreciates the voluntary contributions that continue to be received from Member States, as well as the engagement of impacted communities, local and international NGOs and international partners, which have allowed the Team to advance its evidence collection and investigative work.

II. Status of investigations

A. Progress in investigative priorities

8. The Team continued to advance its investigations into international crimes committed by ISIL in Iraq. The six dedicated field investigation units and two thematic investigation units based in Baghdad, Dahuk and Erbil maintained their capacity to undertake investigations in relation to crimes committed against all communities, further strengthening an evidence base that is now being leveraged in support of national investigations and prosecutions.

9. One additional case assessment report on crimes committed by ISIL against the Christian community in Iraq was prepared during the reporting period. The report builds on the five case assessments completed during previous reporting periods, addressing crimes committed against the Yazidi community in Sinjar from August 2014; the mass killing of military cadets and personnel from Tikrit Air Academy in June 2014; crimes committed by ISIL in and around Badush prison near Mosul in June 2014; the al-Rawi network and the facilitation of ISIL financing; and the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL in Iraq. The Team anticipates that the case assessment reports on the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL in Iraq, the ISIL leadership and hierarchical structure in Mosul and in Tall Afar and the crimes committed by ISIL against other communities in and around Sinjar will be completed in the next few months.

10. The good cooperation that has been developed with the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq, and specifically with the Chief Justice and Head of the Supreme Judicial Council, has remained critical in supporting the investigative activities of the Team. Investigative judges and investigators from courts across Iraq played crucial roles and deserve recognition in this regard. Their contribution has continued to be an indispensable part of the investigative progress and achievements during the reporting period.

11. During the reporting period, the Team was grateful to receive extrabudgetary support provided to advance many of the investigative and thematic priorities from Denmark, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, the United States of America and the European Union.

Crimes committed against the Christian community

12. Substantial progress was made in the development of a case assessment for the investigation into the crimes committed by ISIL against the Christian community in Iraq. The Team significantly widened its evidence base through the collection and review of digital and documentary evidence as well as through face-to-face interviews and screenings with witnesses and field missions in several priority locations, namely, Hamdanlyah, Bartalah, Karamlays and Mosul. The evidence collected thus far has strengthened preliminary findings that ISIL commissioned acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Christian community in Iraq, including, but not limited to, forcible transfer, persecution, pillage, sexual violence and slavery, and other inhumane acts such as forced conversions and intentional destruction of cultural heritage.

13. The field missions that were conducted during the reporting period enabled the Team to engage with communities and local religious leaders. This strengthened outreach and cooperation with highly regarded individuals within the Christian community, enabling access to larger groups of victims and potential witnesses and the corroboration of new and existing evidence. The testimonial evidence gathered confirmed that ISIL commissioned criminal acts such as the seizure of property, looting and the destruction of cultural heritage. The evidence also allowed the Team to investigate socially sensitive topics such as the commission of sexual violence and enslavement of members of the Christian community, as well as forcible religious conversions. The Team continued to strengthen its relationship with international and local interlocutors who were involved at an early stage in documenting the experiences of the Christian community under ISIL occupation and gathering testimonial, documentary and digital evidence on the destruction of Christian cultural heritage. Evidentiary material, such as propaganda magazines, publications, public speeches and fatwas, as well as internal directives, further indicated the intent of ISIL to target Christians, their religious sites and their properties.

14. In addition, the Team identified ISIL leaders and prominent members that participated in the attack and takeover of the three predominantly Christian towns located in the Ninawa plains – Hamdanlyah, Karamlays and Bartalah – in July and August 2014. ISIL documents and hard drives collected during witness interviews and/or seized during the liberation of the three cities have enabled the Team to map the identities of ISIL leaders in the Ninawa plains and confirm their involvement in crimes committed against the Christian community. The identities of these ISIL members were also corroborated by the analysis of case files provided by the Iraqi judiciary. More recently, testimonial evidence has further confirmed the identity of the Hamdanlyah and Bartalah ISIL leaders who facilitated the abduction and removal of Christian victims to Mosul. Preliminary analysis indicates that most ISIL members responsible for the attacks in the Ninawa plains originated from eastern Mosul and surrounding villages, with a few foreign fighters from Central Asia and Europe. The Team will continue to focus on identifying persons of interest directly implicated in the commission of these international crimes.

15. During the reporting period, the Team also began to broaden its investigation and collect evidence on the crimes committed against the Christian community in Mosul following its takeover by ISIL in June 2014. Several victims were identified and interviewed. Evidence suggests that the Christian community in Mosul was subjected to forced religious conversion, sexual and gender-based violence, murder, the seizure of property and valuables and looting, as well as the destruction of religious and cultural sites. The Team will continue to focus on certain neighbourhoods in Mosul where several ISIL leaders lived and will concentrate on Christian victims that were abducted in Hamdanlyah and Bartalah and later brought to Mosul.

Development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL

16. Investigations into the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL generated further insights, supporting the production of a substantive case assessment report. The Team attended incident sites, met with affected communities and Iraqi authorities and preserved substantial volumes of testimonial, digital and documentary evidence. Key lines of inquiry during this period concerned evidence of ISIL financial, procurement and logistical arrangements and linkages to command elements; an expanded understanding of suspected sites of manufacturing, production and weapon use across Iraq; further insight into the agents made by ISIL and delivery systems employed; analysis of longer-term consequences for victims of attacks; and the identification of and access to holdings and contemporaneous documentation by actors on the ground during relevant periods.

17. With respect to the attack against Tazah Khurmatu of 8 March 2016 specifically, the Team increased its efforts to detect potential chemical weapons made by ISIL and delivery systems used in the attack. Efforts were made to find technical experts to provide specialized insight about and analysis of munitions, remnants and materials recovered in the vicinity of Tazah Khurmatu. More broadly, the Team has identified a significant volume of battlefield evidence within its holdings, including ISIL payroll records and correspondence, as well as from judicial case files, which serve to link the activities of suspected senior persons of interest and their potential scope of authority, generating new timelines for their associated activities. Evidence of martyrdom payments to the families of ISIL members killed deploying chemical weapons and records of the provision by ISIL of training to senior operatives on the use of chemicals as weapons, including chemical dispersion devices, were examined. Evidence suggests that ISIL manufactured and produced chemical rockets and mortars, chemical ammunition for rocket-propelled grenades, chemical warheads and improvised explosive devices. Furthermore, the ISIL programme involved the development, testing, weaponization and deployment of a range of agents, including aluminium phosphide, chlorine, clostridium botulinum, cyanide, nicotine, ricin and thallium sulphate. The Team continues to assess evidence of the use of agents.

18. The Team continued its focused engagement and cooperation with Iraqi judicial authorities, who provided court records and case files to the Team. Expertise from the Iraqi judiciary provided valuable insight into localized activities and the presence and actions of specific ISIL military units in areas relevant to chemical weapon attacks. The Team also collaborated with international entities, including other parts of the United Nations, on the collection and analysis of potential evidence of chemical weapons remnants located in Iraq. The Team's engagement with medical experts concerning the evidence is likely to further contribute to the global understanding of the long-term effects of exposure to chemical warfare agents, specifically the ongoing health complications among the residents of Tazah Khurmatu, which include chronic diseases, cancers and reproductive complications.

19. Moving forward, the Team continues to synthesize and analyse newly identified data in its holdings, and especially ISIL battlefield records. The Team will also seek expert analysis and opinion regarding specific issues and evidence, in addition to developing a detailed legal analysis of linkages to persons of interest and the specific forms of criminality and liability associated with potential core crimes under international law.

Destruction of cultural and religious heritage

20. The Team expanded its investigations into the destruction by ISIL of cultural and religious sites of the different Iraqi communities and minorities. With the understanding that all Iraqi communities have been impacted, the Team adopted a

global approach and focused on several areas located in the Ninawa Governorate through a partnership framework with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

21. Investigative activities in the Ninawa plains and Mosul have led to a preliminary inventory of over 150 Kaka'i, Shabak and Shia Turkmen sites suspected of having been destroyed by ISIL, along with enforced displacements, disappearances and sometimes killings of members of those communities. Currently, 24 Shia Turkmen sites, 58 Shabak sites and 16 Kaka'i sites across eastern Ninawa have been prioritized for forthcoming inquiries. The Team has also identified numerous Yazidi sites and selected 63 for preliminary analysis and investigation, including the Sheikh Hasan and Sheikh Mand temples. Furthermore, the Team has registered over 90 Christian churches across the Ninawa plains that were potentially damaged or destroyed by ISIL during the mass displacement of the Christian community. First-hand witness testimonies were collected of the destruction of a number of Christian sites by ISIL, including Al-Tahira Church and Mar Gorgis Church in Hamdanlyah, Santa Barbara Church/Monastery in Karamlays, Mart Shmoni Church in Bartalah, Mar Bahnam and Mart Sarah Monastery in Khidr Ilyas and Al-Tahira Church and Al-Sa'aa Church in Mosul. The Team has also identified places of worship and heritage sites in Tikrit, such as the Sunni Shrine of 40, which were severely damaged or destroyed by ISIL. During this first phase of investigation, initial sites in and around Tall Afar were also prioritized by the Team, leading to the identification of numerous additional sites in the vicinity of the city not reported in previous allegations. Finally, the Team launched dedicated searches on the destruction of the Prophet Jonah's Tomb and the Mosul Museum.

22. Through field-based investigative work, the Team was able to collect additional evidence on already identified sites and expanded its activities to newly identified ones. Witness testimony, including that of site caretakers, along with records of local and international actors, as well as ISIL videos pertaining to specific attacks, were collected. Evidentiary material such as propaganda pamphlets with claims of intent and internal directives from ISIL leadership were also identified and secured. In addition, requests for satellite imagery were initiated, with leads and evidential contributions provided by national stakeholders, including key Iraqi authorities, civil society organizations, religious figures, site guardians and caretakers, and international actors. An in-depth analysis of the spatio-temporal patterns of ISIL attacks against cultural and religious heritage was conducted in the light of attacks reported against community members themselves and the high number of persons reported missing and those presumed to have been killed by ISIL. Wider community engagement and witness canvassing generated further lines of inquiry, and the identification and access to additional eyewitnesses will remain a focus for the forthcoming period.

23. The evidence obtained thus far shows that religious and cultural sites were either intentionally destroyed or taken over and occupied by ISIL, sometimes for military purposes, which resulted in their severe damage or destruction. While the motives and methods adopted by ISIL are still being reviewed, it appears that explosives and heavy equipment were used to destroy many of the sites. While some ISIL members responsible for those criminal acts have been identified, the Team will strengthen its efforts and produce a case assessment report in the next reporting period.

Crimes committed against the Yazidi community

24. The Team continued to collect evidence with respect to attacks committed by ISIL against the Yazidi community in Sinjar, and updated the case brief in relation to those crimes. In addition, an in-depth review and analysis of the evidence collected in relation to crimes committed against other communities in and around Sinjar is in

progress. A special focus is given to those – predominantly of the Sunni community – who were targeted because of their previous work with the Iraqi police, army or other government body. A separate case assessment on those crimes should be completed during the next reporting period.

25. With respect to its investigations into crimes committed in and around Sinjar, the Team continued to update and expand its list of identified perpetrators, which currently consists of 2,181 individuals, including 156 foreign fighters. In-depth case files have been developed in relation to 30 primary persons of interest. The Team further developed its understanding of the ISIL perpetrator network behind the Sinjar attack and the subsequent killings, enslavement and other crimes committed against the Yazidi population of Sinjar. In prioritizing the case-building of individual perpetrators, the Team worked collaboratively with Iraqi authorities, including Kurdish entities, as well as Member States that are engaged in investigating and prosecuting ISIL perpetrators for their involvement in war crimes, crimes against humanity and/or genocide.

26. Furthermore, the Team continued its investigations into the crimes committed against the Yazidi community in Kuju, Solagh, Qani and the northern district of Sinjar, in Hardan. Additional forensic evidence that was collected following the excavations of mass graves in those four locations provided further leads, which are currently being investigated. In particular, the Team made significant progress in assessing the killings that took place in Hardan and Qeni and collected testimonial evidence that shed light on the events, including with respect to the victims, survivors and potential perpetrators. The Team expresses its gratitude to the NGOs that shared witness statements and information in relation to the crimes. The DNA identification of the victims also continued. It is anticipated that a third ceremony for the return of identified remains will take place in the next reporting period.

27. The Team also expanded its lines of inquiry regarding investigations into crimes committed against the Yazidi population in and around Tall Afar. It has begun a thorough analysis of ISIL leadership and the hierarchical structure in Tall Afar, recognizing that the ISIL base in Tall Afar played a central role in the commission of numerous criminal acts against the Yazidi community. These include the killings of Yazidi men at Bir Alu Antar, north of Tall Afar; the organization of the sexual slavery of Yazidi women and girls; training in the use of weapons for Yazidi boys and adolescent males; and leading the attack on Sinjar and the subsequent killing of Yazidis who tried to escape from 3 August 2014 onward. The excavation of Bir Alu Antar sink hole will take place in the next reporting period, and it is expected to provide valuable forensic evidence related to the crimes. It is anticipated that the remains of at least 400 to 500 Yazidi men who were reportedly killed there on or around 26 April 2015 will be recovered. To identify responsible ISIL leaders in Tall Afar, the Team continued to identify several key witnesses and sources for a complete review of the evidentiary material available. A dedicated task force was set up to investigate the crimes committed against different communities in and around Bir Alu Antar and Tall Afar. A case assessment reflecting the evidence related to these crimes, as well as the key ISIL perpetrators involved, is in preparation and should be completed during the next reporting period.

Crimes committed against the Sunni community

28. The Team expanded its investigation into crimes committed by ISIL against the Sunni community in Anbar. Notable progress was made in the investigation of crimes committed against members of the Albu Nimr tribe, specifically the execution of hundreds of members of the tribe during separate events in and around Hadithah, Ramadi and Lake Tharthar between 2014 and 2016. Additional evidence was gathered by the Team in relation to several incidents, including the circumstances of the crimes

and the identity of responsible ISIL members. The Team focused on two incidents in particular, namely, the execution of 15 members of the Albu Nimr tribe in the Tharthar desert before 20 October 2014 and the execution of approximately 46 members of tribe in the Bakr roundabout in Hit on 28 October 2014.

29. During the reporting period, new evidence was gained through interviews and screenings of victims and witnesses, which provided valuable information regarding the treatment of the Sunni population under ISIL, as well as specific criminal acts committed in Anbar Governorate. This included public executions, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and extensive destruction of property, including cultural heritage. Further engagement with civil society and representatives of the affected community led to the identification of additional victims and witnesses. The Team also enhanced its cooperation with judicial authorities, who shared new key information and evidence. In addition, digital and documentary evidence, such as fatwas and media material, was collected and analysed, providing a better understanding of the deliberate targeting by ISIL of individuals and communities in Anbar who opposed its ideology. A thorough analysis of ISIL command structures in place at the time allowed the Team to corroborate information on several ISIL members responsible for the crimes committed against the Sunni community in this area and to identify additional suspects. The Team also continued to collaborate with affected communities and local authorities to support the identification and excavation of mass graves in Anbar Governorate. The Team was made aware of a recently discovered mass grave and is currently investigating the location to try to identify the incident(s) associated with it.

30. During the next reporting period, the Team will focus on gathering additional evidence to close investigative gaps and to produce an initial investigation report outlining the main incidents under investigation, the nature of the criminal acts committed and the perpetrators identified. To that end, the Team will continue to gather witness testimonies, prioritizing survivors and witnesses who can provide first-hand testimony of ISIL crimes, while ensuring broad engagement and the inclusion of perspectives from all members of the community, including women and children. Furthermore, the Team plans to strengthen its collaboration with local partners, notably judicial authorities, NGOs and other organizations that have documented ISIL crimes in Anbar with a view to obtaining additional evidentiary material, including relevant court records.

Crimes committed in and around Mosul

31. During the reporting period, the investigation into the mass execution of detainees at Badush prison on 10 and 11 June 2014 continued, and an updated case brief in relation to this event is being developed. The Team interviewed a number of additional witnesses, including survivors of the event, which yielded new and corroborative evidence on the circumstances under which approximately 1,000 predominantly Shia prisoners were targeted and executed by ISIL members inside the prison and in various other locations. Witnesses were identified and located through statements from Badush prisoners obtained from the Iraqi judicial authorities, as well as the Team's own investigative activities. Outreach activities following the excavation of the main mass grave – located in a dry water ditch in the desert close to Badush prison – enabled the Team to identify additional family members of the victims, and their contributions have assisted in substantiating the circumstances surrounding the event.

32. Further evidence confirmed that smaller groups of predominantly Shia prisoners were killed in several other locations, including the execution of some on 11 June 2014. Most notably, the Team located and interviewed a victim believed to be the only survivor of the second largest Badush Shia prisoners mass execution site, located

south of Mosul. This area, which continues to witness hostile ISIL activities, is believed to contain the remains of approximately 85 Badush Shia prisoners, as well as members of the police and military executed by ISIL during the takeover of Mosul.

33. The Team will continue to focus on locating and interviewing victims and witnesses of the mass executions of predominantly Shia prisoners from Badush prison. More specifically, the Team will direct its investigative work towards the identification and confirmation of the remaining execution sites. It will also aim to identify the ISIL leaders accountable for those crimes, through the interview of already convicted ISIL members responsible for the Badush prison mass executions.

34. In parallel, the Team expanded its line of inquiries and proceeded with its investigation of targeted members of the police and military by ISIL during its occupation of Mosul. Witnesses and victims screened and interviewed, as well as good cooperation with non-governmental organizations and Iraqi authorities, enabled the Team to gather preliminary findings.

Crimes committed in and around Tikrit

35. During the reporting period, the Team continued to investigate the crimes committed by ISIL against the civilian population of Tikrit and Alam in 2014 and 2015, as well as gathering further evidence regarding the mass killing of unarmed military cadets and personnel from Tikrit Air Academy in June 2014.

36. In June, the Team published, in cooperation with SITU Research, a video presenting its preliminary findings regarding the mass killings of military cadets and personnel from Tikrit Air Academy. This forensic digital support for the investigation builds on the brief produced last year regarding this event. The Team continues to investigate this mass killing and its links to the crimes committed against the civilian population in the area.

37. Thanks to several testimonial accounts, the Team was able to portray a clearer picture of life during the ISIL occupation. After ISIL began advancing towards Tikrit and Alam, Shia Muslim civilians who had the means fled, as they knew that ISIL would target them. Others had no choice but to stay. Of those who remained, many were arrested, and some were never seen or heard of again. Testimonial evidence shows that, from June 2014 to March 2015, civilians had their houses destroyed and their property seized, were forced to repent or pledge allegiance to ISIL and were forced to witness public executions. Women were not allowed to leave their houses alone, and men had to follow a strict dress code. Once ISIL leaders understood that a part of the population would never accept the ISIL ideology and regime of terror, they later issued an ultimatum threatening to kill all those who were not going to leave immediately.

38. During the reporting period, the Team identified ISIL units and members active in Tikrit and Alam and collected additional evidence about ISIL structure in that area, including the presence of underage militia fighters within ISIL ranks. The Team will continue to engage with national authorities, in particular judicial authorities, as well as local communities, to collect evidence regarding the perpetrators of the crimes committed against the civilian population of Tikrit and Alam.

B. Specialized thematic units: mainstreaming expertise on key aspects of investigations

39. In parallel with the core investigative work of its field investigation units, the Team has continued to build its capacity in specialized cross-sectional areas, ensuring that investigative activities are conducted in line with international standards.

Sexual and gender-based crimes and crimes against children

40. Owing to the scale of sexual and gender-based crimes committed against the Yazidi community, the Team continued to devote significant resources to this investigation during the reporting period. It interviewed several female survivors of sexual violence, some of whom were under the age of 10 when they were sexually enslaved by ISIL. These witnesses, who received support from UNITAD psychologists, confirmed previously identified patterns of sexual slavery and generated additional evidence of forced marriage of Yazidi women and girls. Interviews with survivors who spent several years in captivity have been particularly useful in identifying ISIL members, including foreign fighters. This information has been shared with third parties conducting their own investigations. In the coming months, the Team is planning to conduct interviews with survivors who spent eight years in captivity and are expected to provide additional information on persons of interest. In parallel, the Team is planning its first interviews with elderly Yazidi men who were enslaved, which would contribute to a broader understanding of the scope of gender violence inflicted by ISIL against the Yazidis.

41. ISIL committed gender-based violence and crimes against children of all communities, and the Team continued to gather significant testimonial evidence on the forced marriages of Shia Turkmen girls. From the evidence collected to date, the Team is currently conducting an analysis of patterns of gender violence and crimes against children from the Shia Turkmen community, which will guide future investigative activities. An analysis of factual and legal findings on ISIL patterns of forced marriage was completed and shared with a third party investigating an individual suspected of being involved in the forced marriage of a Sunni girl. In parallel, the Team followed up on leads provided by civil society organizations on the abduction of members of the Shabak community, including women and girls. Despite the challenges posed by cultural sensitivities and the underreporting of crimes against this community, these leads are expected to shed light on gender-based crimes against this minority group.

42. The Team has expanded its investigation on ISIL use of child soldiers to include boys from different communities. In addition to witness interviews conducted with Yazidi and Shia Turkmen boys, the Team has identified sources of information regarding the enlistment and use of Sunni boys. Analysis carried out to date shows how ISIL ideology and methodology for recruiting Sunni boys differed from methods used for boys from religious minorities, who were abducted and conscripted. Conversely, Sunni boys were the target of ISIL propaganda, and in some instances their families and communities were pressured into the enlistment of their sons. Having conducted an internal exercise to identify evidence gaps on the use of child soldiers, new investigative leads are being pursued to close these gaps, including as to how ISIL leadership was involved in those crimes. While ISIL crimes were often delineated by the gender and age of the victims, the Team has documented crimes against children that fall outside the recruitment of boys and sexual violence against girls. This includes instances in which children witnessed crimes against their family members and the impact of crimes against whole communities, such as forced displacement.

43. The Team has also significantly advanced its investigation into crimes committed by ISIL against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. In addition to gathering evidence on public executions of men and boys accused of being gay, additional information on ISIL structures involved in these crimes, as well as individual members of ISIL responsible for these executions, was gathered. As a result, an initial analysis of ISIL crimes against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community has been completed and covers crime

patterns, ideology, ISIL structures and persons of interest involved in these crimes. The support and assistance from NGOs, which have provided several valuable leads, has been indispensable. Moving forward, the Team will continue to work closely with civil society to further advance this investigation.

Financing of ISIL crimes

44. The Team greatly expanded the evidence base against those involved in the money service business networks that provided material support to ISIL and profited from its campaigns of violence. Substantive links between networks based in Mosul and Baghdad and the larger regional networks throughout the Middle East and the Gulf region have been made. The evidence shows that select money service businesses were closely associated with key ISIL members, and its local leadership, and that these businesses were complicit in extortion schemes to extract profit from the local population and manage and move looted and pillaged wealth. It further demonstrates that these networks operated under the rule and regulations set by its central treasury, Bayt al-Mal, and operated under the direct supervision of ISIL.

45. In parallel, the opening of a third line of inquiry on the takeover and exploitation of Iraqi oil by ISIL has provided a more in-depth understanding of how ISIL was financed, from revenue sources to the final disbursements of fund, to operation units. Building upon its inquiry into money service activities that operated in support of ISIL and the management of ISIL wealth via Bayt al-Mal, the Team has continued to develop the evidence base relevant to ISIL financing of the international crimes that it committed in Iraq. Connections between the different investigations, in particular ISIL oil revenues and the previously identified network of money service businesses, have also been established.

46. The Team has focused on the collection of witness testimonies from those with first-hand knowledge of ISIL financing activities. It has uncovered the scope of ISIL exploitation of currency markets, the use of stored value or prepaid card infrastructure to move money in and out of Mosul and details concerning ISIL control over all aspects of the economy during its occupation of territory. Evidence has revealed that ISIL took over and looted the local economies, specifically targeting property and wealth held by minority groups or those that ISIL deemed apostate. Testimonial evidence identified ISIL members responsible for the group's oil smuggling activity in Qayyarah and confirmed that ISIL was controlling the oil refinery located there and collecting and managing revenues derived from this takeover and control. Analysis of internal ISIL documents shows that persons involved in this activity made oil-related zakat payments to the ISIL zakat office, Diwan al-Zakat, in 2016, revealing the larger ISIL administration at work.

47. The Team has also embarked on an in-depth analysis of the ISIL department of soldiers, Diwan al-Jund, through a comprehensive review of evidentiary material available within the UNITAD evidence holdings. In this regard, the analysis of Bayt al-Mal was focused on Diwan al-Jund payrolls for ISIL fighters, with evidence showing that ISIL maintained a robust accounting system, as Bayt al-Mal prepared monthly budgets and account statements for ISIL entities – including Diwan al-Jund – providing information on the overall expenditure for each month, divided between personnel allocations and operational allocations. This analysis contributed to a better understanding of the ISIL military and command structure, including the roles and status of foreign fighters.

48. A thorough evidentiary review of letters and documents drafted by ISIL related to the delegated committee, one of the central governing bodies of ISIL, has also been initiated. To date, this analysis has revealed a very centralized, top-down approach to the administration of the territory that it held, notably in Iraq. As the primary decision-

making organ of ISIL, the delegated committee was involved in both administrative and military management of the ISIL so-called caliphate. Of particular interest to the Team's ongoing investigations is that the delegated committee closely oversaw the organization's finances and had authority over military disbursements, including battlefield bonuses for military achievements and for procurement of arms and supplies.

49. During the next phase, the Team will continue to explore the ISIL takeover, control and exploitation of Iraqi oil. The Team will continue to strengthen all lines of inquiry, map out the network of money service businesses that supported ISIL operations with the necessary financial architecture and develop an in-depth and evidence-based understanding of ISIL leadership structure and wealth management policies and processes, ultimately looking at the responsibility of ISIL senior leadership.

C. Composition and facilities of the Investigative Team

50. The Team now has a total of 254 personnel, including 172 staff members, 11 government-provided personnel and 18 United Nations Volunteers. Ensuring gender and geographical balance has remained a priority, with women presently accounting for 50 per cent of substantive and support staff, including a gender balance in senior management positions in the Team.

51. An extensive workforce planning exercise was concluded within the reporting period in which the current workforce of the Team and their skills were mapped, future skill demands identified and discussions triggered on how to best bridge gaps within the existing staffing structure and/or through additional, extrabudgetary support. The exercise took into consideration non-staff personnel and staff hired through extrabudgetary funding, which the Team deemed essential to be included in an expanded version of the gender parity statistics. The Team has progressed significantly in achieving gender parity for posts funded through extrabudgetary funding, and currently 50 per cent of all such posts are occupied by women. Gender parity continues to be promoted across all parts of its structure through the gender parity working group, which addresses gender-related issues with regard to recruitment, staff retention and the overall working environment.

52. In consultation with the Government of Iraq, the number of national experts appointed to the Team has further increased. By using extrabudgetary funding and filling remaining regular budget posts, it is anticipated that an additional 6 national experts will be appointed, taking the total number of Iraqi national experts serving with the Team to 27.

53. While isolated incidents of COVID-19 continue to affect both UNITAD staff and national interlocutors, UNITAD operations are no longer significantly impacted by the pandemic and all necessary preventive measures remain in place.

Provision of expert personnel by Member States

54. Member States have continued their support for the Team through the provision of expert personnel in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#). Currently, a total of 11 experts are provided by the national authorities of Egypt, Jordan, the Russian Federation and Sweden. Contributions of expert personnel were previously provided by Finland, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

55. The Team continues to welcome the nomination of national experts by Member States for secondment in support of its work. In September, a call for nominations was circulated by the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, launching a

new campaign for the recruitment of expert personnel to a role viewed as particularly critical in supporting field investigations, evidence analysis and exploitation, e-Discovery and forensic science.

III. Investigative activities: collection and storage of evidentiary material

A. Documentary, testimonial and digital evidence collection

56. The collection of documentary evidence by the Team is guided by the need to help close evidentiary gaps identified in its investigations. The comprehensive, continuous and coherent approach to the landscape of potentially relevant evidentiary material that has been adopted to date has enabled the Team to create a detailed mapping of government and civil society collections of evidence.

57. To date, the Team has preserved and converted to usable digital formats, in line with international standards, a total of more than 5.5 million physical pages of documentary evidence at courts throughout Iraq. This effort has included the digitization and subsequent acquisition of digital copies or inventories of 15 different collections. During the reporting period, the Team completed the digitization and acquisition of copies stemming from a civil society organization. This contributed significantly to the progress made in the preparation of the case brief on crimes committed against the Christian community.

58. UNITAD also continued the digitization of case files from courts in Tazah Khurmatu, Baghdad, Mosul and Tikrit, as well as in the Kurdistan Region. At present, the Team is supporting digitization activities at six different sites and is processing approximately 100,000 pages per week. To support this work, the Team has recruited more than 30 local individual contractors and trained them in evidence collection, preservation and archiving best practices.

59. The Team has continued to apply rigorous investigative and analytical approaches to large-scale collections of documentary evidence. During the reporting period, the Team undertook an additional round of assessment missions in the above-mentioned locations to further its understanding and mapping of potentially available and relevant materials and to align its digitization activities more effectively and efficiently with prioritized lines of enquiries.

60. It is anticipated that, by the end of 2022, the Team will have supported the digitization of more than 7 million pages of available paper documentary evidence in Iraq. The Team is grateful for the renewed trust and financial contribution from the European Union in support of this effort. The Team would also like to thank the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the United States Department of State for its financial support for the work of the Team with civil society organizations.

61. In parallel, and in cooperation with Iraqi authorities, the Team has initiated several capacity enhancement projects with judges in Dahuk and in Erbil to exploit evidentiary material that has been organized, digitized and integrated into a searchable database. The provision of training to judges on international criminal law is critical to help build a sustainable capacity to investigate and prosecute ISIL members in fair and evidence-based trials that are in line with international standards.

62. Open-source materials continue to provide a rich seam of relevant information and evidence of probative value to the Team, with terabytes of data chronicling ISIL propaganda campaigns and activities. Building on the Team's approach to harnessing and leveraging technological advancements and emerging technologies during its

investigations, an internal cross-training programme in open source investigations continues to optimize the efficient and effective exploitation of these digital resources. Some 70 personnel across the Team's three offices benefited from this one-day training, focused on legal and cybersecurity considerations, user anonymization and investigative steps and methodologies in accordance with forensic best practice. Notably, the training is an abridged version, offered to national authorities to mirror the capacity and capability of the Team in Iraq. Augmenting this internal training initiative was the purchase of software user licences that enable the full use of the web without risk of exploit, data leak or resource misuse. The Silo environment enables data collection in a secure environment that protects the user or analyst when conducting investigations across the surface, deep and dark web.

B. Excavation of mass graves and recording of ISIL crime scenes

63. During the reporting period, the Team continued its support for the excavation of mass grave crime scenes in Iraq, with field-based forensic excavation work conducted around Qani, Sinjar, and preliminary recording of a mass grave in Tall Afar at the base of a large geological sinkhole, linked to the systematic and episodic use by ISIL during its occupation of the town as the scene of executions and the disposal of dozens of victims from multiple ethnic groups. The reporting period also saw the expanded employment of the UNITAD technological toolkit to record multiple alleged crime scenes relating to the captivity of victims of the ISIL enslavement campaign and ISIL bases of operations in previously occupied villages in and around Sinjar.

64. Forensic evidence obtained from these sites, combined with key visual assets such as 3D mapping produced through terrestrial laser scans, continue to play an important role in corroborating testimonial and documentary evidence obtained by the Team. In addition, it has acted on new information received on the location of potential new ISIL mass grave sites for forensic assessment in Anbar and Salah al-Din. The Team wishes to recognize the extrabudgetary support from the United States that enables the implementation of this priority activity, including the expansion of the forensic portfolio to include a diverse range of crime scenes relating to crimes against minorities.

65. Strong engagement and partnership with the Mass Graves Directorate of the Martyrs Foundation and the Medico-Legal Directorate of the Ministry of Health remains central to the Team's investigations work, in addition to field-based support from Kurdish authorities. The joint mass grave investigations strategy agreed between the Team and the Government of Iraq, coupled with joint planning initiatives in late 2021, continue to provide the framework and road map for prioritization and implementation of mass graves investigations activities in 2022. The reporting period has witnessed the successful implementation of this common forensic strategy with the Government of Iraq, with several key milestones accomplished.

66. Excavations at five mass grave locations west of Qani village, in the foothills of Mount Sinjar were completed in late June and early July 2022. Qani is the alleged location of executions by ISIL of members of the Yazidi community fleeing areas seized by ISIL in early August 2014, including male villagers abducted from Tall al-Banat, Tall al-Qasr and Kujju. More than 45 bodies, additional commingled human remains and associated evidence were recovered at this site through the joint efforts of a team of field experts from the Mass Graves Directorate, the Medico-Legal Directorate and the Kurdistan Regional Government. This brings the number of grave sites holding Yazidi victims of ISIL investigated in close collaboration with the national authorities to 31.

67. The Team created comprehensive 3D maps throughout the excavation, which, when combined with the detailed digital recording of human remains and evidence in situ led by the Mass Graves Directorate will enable accurate digital reconstruction of the crime scene. Advance desk-based temporal change detection evaluation of open-source dated satellite imagery and data mining of the Team's evidence holdings together with real-time interrogation of the forensic landscape at the time of excavation elucidated the human and environmental impact on the site. This approach is essential to understanding the nature of these legacy crime scenes and relevant lines of inquiry to be pursued by the Team.

68. Forensic assessment and 3D recording of a mass grave in Tall Afar was conducted in mid-October, as part of UNITAD coordinated efforts with the national authorities to establish the scope and extent of this mass grave. The site is set within a naturally occurring geological sinkhole, over 20 metres in depth and over 30 metres in diameter at its base. This mass grave is purported to have been used as an execution and body disposal location throughout the ISIL occupation of the town of Tall Afar, associated with episodes of targeted killings of minorities, including Yazidi and Shia Turkmen. The mass grave presents a unique set of challenges due to the nature and complexity of the site. The Team will continue its extensive planning in collaboration with the Iraqi authorities, to enable full-scale excavation in the coming months. Notably, during the reporting period, the Iraqi authorities conducted a large data collection campaign in Tall Afar, a required component to enable future DNA-based identifications of the victims.

69. A victim-centred approach is central to the work of the Team in the investigation of ISIL crimes, enabling equitable access to the Iraqi authorities responsible for ISIL victim registration, and DNA-based identification is a component within this framework. In addition to support already provided to the Medico-Legal Directorate and Mass Graves Directorate in their efforts to collect data and DNA reference samples from next of kin residing in Iraq, the Team has brokered the support of the federal authorities of Germany under its mutual legal assistance agreement, to enable, in the next reporting period, the conduct of a data and DNA reference sample collection from the Yazidi community residing in Germany, with the support of the Iraqi authorities. As part of this programme, psychosocial support training was provided to the national authorities to ensure the application of international best practice when dealing with victims and survivors. In addition, the Team has mined its evidentiary holdings to establish a comprehensive list of Yazidis missing as a consequence of ISIL crimes, and officially disclosed this body of evidence to the authorities (the Medico-Legal Directorate and the Mass Graves Directorate) responsible for identifying ISIL victims recovered in mass graves in Iraq. Notably, more than 90 unregistered missing persons and over 200 relatives prepared to provide DNA reference samples for the purpose of identification, who have yet to come forward to the national authorities, have been determined to date. This ongoing scope of work is a clear and tangible indicator of the existing partnership with the Government of Iraq and of added value for accessing the affected community at the international level.

70. The Team has continued to work with the Medico-Legal Directorate in the implementation of a state-of-the-art software platform in its dedicated DNA identification laboratory, with the project scheduled for full handover and implementation by the national authorities by the end of 2022.

71. The recording of ISIL crime scenes with the terrestrial laser scanner, in addition to mass graves, took on an increased impetus during the reporting period. This led to the creation of accurate 3D models of alleged ISIL captivity houses where kidnapped or enslaved victims were held, and ISIL headquarters or bases of operations in the villages of Tall al-Banat, Rambusi and Qataniyah. With the purpose of corroborating

testimonial, documentary and open-source evidence obtained by the Team, this builds on geospatial intelligence expertise, incorporating additional geospatial assets to develop new lines of inquiry.

C. Storage, analysis and management of evidence

72. The Team continues to optimize its automation of the processing of digital evidence and is currently adding an average of 350,000 documents to its review database per month. Leveraging assisted-review and predictive-coding technologies, the Team is addressing the challenges of the ever-increasing volumes of digital evidence by identifying and classifying documents into identified document groups to help focus investigator review and analysis of the documents of the greatest relevance to their lines of inquiry.

73. An existing automated digital evidence processing workflow was enhanced to maintain message digests (“hashes”) of all identified non-responsive files, in a master hash list synchronized across all processing servers to optimize the filtering and culling of non-responsive data from forensic images, further reducing processing times.

74. Further improvements to machine translation capabilities allow support for translation of additional document types and interface improvements, including retaining more of the original documents’ formats, the ability to translate into multiple languages and the ability for reviewers to toggle languages in the interface without having to navigate to a separate record or review unformatted text.

75. The Zeteo project is in full production, enriching multimedia evidence with object identification, face detection and matching, sentiment analysis, speech-to-text machine transcription and machine translation. This allows investigators to search audio, video and image files for concepts and persons of interest relevant to their lines of inquiry. Further development of Zeteo’s capabilities are currently focused on identifying groups of videos with similar content and the detection and identification of stamps and seals on documents.

IV. Delivering accountability in collaboration with national actors

A. Engagement and cooperation with the Government of Iraq, including with the Kurdistan Regional Government

76. In October, the Special Adviser met with the President of Iraq, Abdullatif Jamal Rashid, and the Prime Minister designate, Mohammed al-Sudani, as well as the National Security Adviser, Qassim al-Araji. Throughout the reporting period, the Special Adviser met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and maintained regular contact with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in his capacity as Chair of the National Coordinating Committee. All expressed their continued support for the work of the Team and their commitment to building upon the already strong cooperation.

77. The Special Adviser also continued to engage with the Chief Justice and Head of the Supreme Judicial Council in regular meetings with the aim of advancing the Team’s investigative and operational work. This engagement included close collaboration in planning the training on international criminal and humanitarian law provided in Nuremberg to the Iraqi judiciary. The Special Adviser also met with the heads of the Investigative Court of Karkh and the Counter-Terrorism Court of Ninawa to thank them for supporting the Team’s investigative work.

78. The National Coordinating Committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, continued to help to facilitate the work of the Team, in line with its terms of reference and the outcome of the strategic discussions workshop held in January. Iraqi counterparts who are members of the Committee, notably the National Security Advisory Council, played a key role in facilitating major accomplishments during the reporting period, including the digitization and archiving of records, as well as the provision of briefings to security service officials. Currently, the Team and the Committee hold joint meetings on a monthly basis to review progress on the priorities agreed at the workshop.

79. The Team appreciated the continuous support of representatives of the Kurdistan Regional Government. To increase cooperation on case-building with regard to core international crimes, the Special Adviser and members of the Team held meetings with the Head of the High Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region and the Deputy Prosecutor General. Important contributions were made to the investigative work of the Team, in particular by the Ministry of Interior, the Office of Rescued Yazidi Affairs and the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence. The Team remains regularly engaged with the Coordinator for International Advocacy and his Office and is particularly grateful for their daily support in facilitating the strategic and operational cooperation between the Team and Kurdistan Region authorities.

80. During the reporting period, the Special Adviser visited the office and laboratories of the Medico-Legal Directorate of Iraq and met with its head. The visit was an opportunity to view the work that is being done in relation to human remains that have been excavated from mass graves and to identify victims of ISIL. The Team has advanced its partnership with both Medico-Legal Directorate and the Mass Graves Directorate to support the process of excavation and identification, which is crucial in collecting forensic evidence related to the Team's mandate and, significantly, in supporting the families of the victims and offering them a dignified burial.

81. During the reporting period, the Special Adviser placed particular emphasis on improving information-sharing with the Government of Iraq, in line with the Team's terms of reference. The Team continued to expand and deepen pre-existing arrangements made with select members of the judiciary in 2021 that allowed for the sharing of information relevant to financial crimes committed in connection with ISIL activities in Iraq. Key findings of its investigations into the use and development of chemical weapons were presented to members of the National Coordinating Committee during the latest in a series of sessions planned by the Team to better convey the results of its investigative work. In the reporting period, the Team worked closely with the National Security Advisory Council to finalize a draft arrangement that would enable the Team to share information in support of the development of application packages by Iraq to have individuals added to Security Council sanctions listings, and in support of asset freezing at the national level.

B. Strengthening the capacity of Iraqi authorities

82. The Team has continued to build on the significant gains made in the previous reporting period with the donation of a laboratory information system with DNA matching software to the DNA identification laboratory of the Medico-Legal Directorate. The scientists in the DNA laboratory have received additional training on the implementation of this critical piece of software, working in tandem with the Directorate and the system vendor. In that regard, a software customization package has been established to ensure that the system meets the laboratory's specific daily running requirements of Iraq in the light of the high throughput of missing persons to be identified. The initiative enables the automated tracking of reagent use and

maintenance of instruments, strengthening the laboratory's capability to budget and plan ahead, with a firm grounding in its requirements and expected workload based on the expected number of samples from priority mass grave excavations.

83. The Team provided technical support to the Directorate in the automation of DNA matching and other processes, such as the preparation of sample processing logs, reports on methods employed and personnel involved, reassociation reports, retesting requests and reports on failed samples. This has enabled the Directorate to track and document the entire DNA testing process in accordance with international standards and chain-of-custody procedures. The laboratory information system will enter full production mode, with the DNA laboratory at the helm, during the next reporting period. The Directorate's DNA scientists continue to drive the implementation of the project, ever mindful of the challenge it faces to scientifically identify the victims of ISIL crimes in Iraq.

84. The Team has continued to deploy with the national authorities to conduct forensic assessments of and to excavate ISIL mass grave crime scenes in Iraq. The joint assessment mission to the sink hole mass grave in Tall Afar is of particular note. The complex site requires robust joint planning and coordination to optimize the recovery of forensic evidence and human remains while safeguarding the safety of the excavation team.

85. Through effective coordination with the National Coordinating Committee and the National Security Advisory Council, the Team has also extended digitization support to relevant Iraqi security services. The Team also delivered two additional training sessions, on the topics of digital forensics and open-source investigation, at its premises. The training sessions were hands-on, using the state-of-the-art digital laboratory built there. Two security services enrolled a total of six experts in the initiative. The Team will now deploy and donate forensic equipment to these security services with the aim of building sustainable capacity in Iraq.

86. In the Kurdistan Region, with renewed support from the European Union and in collaboration with the Coordinator for International Advocacy, the Team has continued its work with eight local authorities to advance the collection, organization, digitization and archiving of ISIL-related material. The evidence of ISIL crimes consists of documents, witness testimonies, judiciary cases, videos, photos and voice recordings.

87. The Team has already completed four rounds of record collection from the Commission for Investigation and Gathering Evidence in Dahuk, the Office of Rescued Yazidi Affairs, the Peshmerga Zeravani and the Peshmerga Asayish. It has also started the digitization of the records of the Public Prosecution Office in Erbil, which include 250,000 pages of records related to more than 3,000 ISIL cases.

88. In late June and early July, three follow-up digital forensics training sessions and workplace mentoring on equipment previously provided under the Team's pilot project were delivered to the judicial authorities of the Counter-Terrorism Court of Ninawa. The successes and lesson learned under the above-mentioned pilot project laid the groundwork for the expansion of this portfolio of expertise to other Iraqi authorities. In its forensic laboratory in Baghdad, the Team delivered a comprehensive three-day theoretical and practical training session on open-source investigation to three separate groups of investigators, from the Investigative Court of Karkh, the Central Investigative Court of Rusafah and the National Security Advisory Council, who are all key partners working on the investigation of ISIL crimes. In addition, a comprehensive needs assessment, conducted in August, led to a tailored training programme on the theory and practice of digital forensics, delivered to the Council over two sessions of two days each, in August and October. Mirroring the approach taken with the Counter-Terrorism Court of Ninawa, the Team will deliver in the next

reporting period dedicated forensic equipment to three of the Baghdad-based investigation entities to which it has provided digital forensics training. This effort is aimed at harmonizing an Iraq-wide approach to the forensic acquisition and analysis of battlefield evidence with a view to creating a community of practice, working on ISIL crime investigations, that spans the geographical scope of ISIL crimes committed in Iraq.

89. Support for Iraqi investigative judges and investigators in the development of case files for the prosecution of ISIL members for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide continued in the reporting period. The Team works regularly with the Investigative Court of Karkh, the Central Investigative Court of Rusafah and the Criminal Court of Ninawa, as well as judicial and prosecutorial authorities in the Kurdistan Region, to build cases against alleged perpetrators who are known to be outside Iraq and still at large. The identification of a set of key perpetrator candidates has led to a breakthrough in the Team's ability to move forward in its work, in line with its terms of reference, and to provide support to Iraq to enable it to support third State cases at a meaningful operational level.

90. In partnership with the National Security Advisory Council, the Team initiated a framework to cooperate on areas of Security Council sanctions listing with dedicated Iraqi entities. A workshop on sanctions and ISIL accountability was organized for relevant members of the Government of Iraq. The event served as a first step in the Team's support for the authorities in the sanctions listing process. In parallel, the Team, together with the authorities, started to identify individuals who could be presented for sanctions. Further discussions and reviews of those profiles are under way to ensure their compliance with the listing criteria. Over the next period, the Team aims to provide additional technical support to the authorities to enable the submission of a number of profiles to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

91. The Team has also continued its support with regard to the establishment of a dedicated witness protection department within the Government of Iraq. At the request of the National Coordinating Committee and the Ministry of Interior, and in close coordination with the witness protection department, the European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq and the United Nations Development Programme, the Team developed a five-day pilot witness protection train-the-trainer course during the reporting period. The course was successfully delivered in June. The Team is in discussions with the Kurdistan Regional Government regarding the delivery of a similar witness protection capacity-building course tailored to their authorities.

92. At the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Team has developed a three-phase training programme covering basic psychosocial skills, programme management and train-the-trainer skills targeting up to 80 social workers and psychologists in the Psychosocial Department and the Women's Social Welfare and Protection Department. The delivery of training started during the reporting period and is scheduled to be completed by December. Furthermore, at the request of the Ministry of Justice, the Team is in the process of developing another package to train prison staff who work with detainees in the provision of psychosocial support.

93. Similarly, the Team delivered trauma-informed teaching in August and October to 24 representatives from the Mass Graves Directorate and the Medico-Legal Directorate to guide the provision of a victim-centred approach in the ante mortem data and DNA reference sample collection campaign to be implemented in the near future, notably in Germany. The aim is to connect this information to crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq and to provide equitable access to relatives who wish to

register missing persons and give DNA samples with a view to identifying human remains recovered from mass graves there.

C. Working in partnership with all elements of Iraqi society

94. To ensure that its investigative work is informed by the knowledge and experience of all affected communities in Iraq, the Team has continued to prioritize its engagement with religious actors, survivor groups, NGOs and community leaders.

95. The UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum continues to serve as an important platform for knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practices with Iraqi and international NGOs in areas relevant to the investigative work of the Team.

96. In October 2022, the fourth biannual plenary round-table meeting of the Forum convened in person for the first time. The Forum has been holding its meetings virtually since its launch in December 2020. The meeting brought members of the Team together with 50 participants from both Iraqi and international NGOs for half a day, during which they shared insights and engaged in a lively discussion on areas of cooperation with the NGO community. The Team and the NGO representatives discussed UNITAD investigative priorities and how their organizations could contribute to the investigations in conducting outreach to victims and survivors. In addition, a speaker from the Shabak community made remarks, reflecting the Forum's commitment to dedicating space for different voices of affected communities to be heard.

V. Cooperation in support of the activities of the Investigative Team

A. Engaging Member States and providing support to ongoing national proceedings

97. Pursuant to its mandate and terms of reference, the Team has continued to engage with Member States to foster ISIL accountability and support a growing number of national jurisdictions.

98. In the second phase of its work to strengthen the technical skills of the Iraqi judiciary with regard to core international crimes, the Team, in coordination with the International Nuremberg Principles Academy, held a training course on international humanitarian law and international criminal law in Germany in November. The aim of the course was to help the Iraqi judges to enhance their practical investigative and prosecutorial skills related to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by ISIL in Iraq. The course was a follow-up step aimed at deepening the knowledge, practical skills and expertise of key members of the judiciary who had previously taken basic and advanced training courses in international humanitarian law and international criminal law.

99. The Team has constantly reiterated its readiness to provide its expertise, in full compliance with its mandate, to support and guide any national initiative aimed at adopting Iraqi legislation on core international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as a legal basis for the prosecution of ISIL members in Iraq for international crimes.

100. In parallel, the Team has continued to strengthen its ability to provide support for ongoing national proceedings in Member States. A total of 16 Member States have requested assistance from the Team with respect to ongoing investigations and

prosecutions. The ability of the Team to collect testimonial evidence from witnesses in direct response to requests for assistance, combined with its capacity to identify corroborating internal ISIL documentation from digital battlefield evidence, has been of significant assistance in supporting investigations by national authorities. During the reporting period, the Team has provided support for several investigations that are expected to lead to judicial proceedings.

101. Specifically, the Team has continued to conduct interviews of witnesses upon the request of third States in the context of ongoing investigations against ISIL members residing in foreign jurisdictions who were predominantly involved in crimes against the Yazidi community. Furthermore, the Team is analysing evidence, which was collected in response to specific requests made by a number of Member States and which is linked to joint investigations of ISIL networks involved in sexual slavery, with a view to developing a case brief on the identified ISIL members.

102. The Team continued to support the Portuguese national counter-terrorism police in a case against two Iraqi brothers from Mosul. As previously reported, the Team, in cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary, located and interviewed several witnesses. Their statements were shared with the Portuguese authorities, and the Team facilitated additional witness interviews with them via video link. These investigative activities led to the recent indictment of the two suspects for ISIL membership and war crimes committed in Mosul, including acts against persons wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement. The trial is expected to begin in early 2023.

B. Ensuring coherence with United Nations system entities

103. During the reporting period, the Team demonstrated its willingness to work as one United Nations by strengthening cooperative modalities with well-established partners within the United Nations system while also putting in place new channels for collaboration.

104. Since April 2022, the Team has become active as a member of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. The Team continues to be a member of the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq Third Country National Returnees. It is active in the technical coordinating committee in Iraq set up to give effect to that Framework, and in the joint scoping exercise and technical talks between the European Union and the United Nations under the Framework. As part of these discussions, the Team continues to propose priority issues that will set the stage for specific recommendations in terms of the accountability and prosecution of ISIL members.

105. The Investigative Team is exploring partnerships with the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict with regard to the possible deployment of an expert, embedded in the Investigative Team, to support enhanced capacities and knowledge to investigate and prosecute sexual and gender-based violence crimes.

C. Cooperating with other entities

106. Engagement with academic institutions, private sector entities and other partners in the work of the Team continued during the reporting period.

107. Joint efforts between the Team and the Human Rights in Trauma Mental Health programme at Stanford University led to the completion of the *Trauma-Informed Investigations Field Reference Manual*, which is now in print and complements the

Trauma-Informed Investigations Field Guide published in 2021. In addition, the Witness Protection and Support Unit maintained close cooperation with a range of organizations for psychosocial capacity-building training sessions delivered between May and September 2022.

108. With the European Union, the Team has remained highly involved in the network of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation for the prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes and participated in its most recent session, held in The Hague in November, thereby demonstrating its commitment to supporting judicial authorities throughout Europe and beyond. The Team maintained its crucial role as the analytical and investigative platform for the joint investigation team created by the national prosecution authorities of France and Sweden to investigate core international crimes committed by ISIL members against the Yazidi community.

VI. Promoting accountability globally

109. In line with his mandate pursuant to paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#), the Special Adviser has continued his efforts to promote, throughout the world, accountability for crimes committed by ISIL and to work with survivors to ensure that their interests in achieving accountability for ISIL are fully recognized. Continuing the approach from previous reporting periods, the Special Adviser has sought to draw on the lessons learned from the investigative work of the Team in Iraq in order to promote good practice globally with respect to the investigation and prosecution of ISIL crimes.

110. In Stuttgart, Germany, in August 2022, the Special Adviser participated with the founder and President of Nadia's Initiative, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Nadia Murad, in the commemoration of the eighth anniversary of the Yazidi genocide. The event provided a space of mourning and commemoration for survivors, their families and other community members. Simultaneously, several UNITAD representatives attended similar commemorations in Dahuk and in Frankfurt, Germany.

111. In September, on the margins of the General Assembly, UNITAD participated in a high-level discussion organized by the Atlantic Council on the theme "Safeguarding victims and witnesses in atrocity crime trials: a call to courts and Governments". The Team discussed and shared its best practices and efforts to protect victims and witnesses of massive violations of human rights. In October, the Team attended a meeting of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security to discuss the situation in Iraq. The fate of Yazidi women and the ongoing accountability processes were discussed, as were the "do no harm" principle and efforts to avoid the retraumatization of young girls and women from the Yazidi community. In addition, it was reiterated that the adoption of adequate legislation on core international crimes in Iraq was necessary for the prosecution of such crimes.

112. The Team attended a high-level international conference on international and regional border security and management cooperation to counter terrorism and prevent the movement of terrorists, held in Dushanbe in October as part of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and as the third milestone in a series of such events.

113. In Cairo in November, UNITAD, the Embassy of Iraq in Egypt and the League of Arab States hosted a special event on command responsibility, identifying leaders and the role of ISIL foreign fighters in Cairo. A crucial step towards achieving accountability for crimes committed by ISIL is to hold accountable not only low-

ranking perpetrators but also those who orchestrated or enabled the commission of such crimes, including the top ISIL leadership, which can include regional or mid-level commanders. Therefore, the legal definition of command responsibility has been identified as a key judicial topic of interest for regional jurisdictions and Iraqi members of the judiciary.

114. Lastly, during the reporting period, the Team embarked on a new partnership activity with SITU Research to initiate the production of a multimedia supplement to a video on the crimes committed in and around Badush prison.

VII. Funding and resources

115. The Team has progressed in pursuing the core functions of its mandate through regular budget funding, notably for core mission staffing, which accounts for the most significant part of its funding requirements.

116. Extrabudgetary resources have allowed the Team to expand its specialized activities and to support accountability processes and progress towards mandate implementation. By complementing regular budget funding, extrabudgetary resources ensured the sustainability of field investigations and thematic investigations, as well as unfunded investigative areas, such as the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL, the Witness Protection and Support Unit, overseas ante mortem data collection initiatives, and the development and use of chemical and biological weapons by ISIL.

117. During the reporting period, the Team welcomed further financial contributions to its trust fund from France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and the European Union. Resource mobilization activities remained challenged owing to the continued economic impact of COVID-19 and the reprioritization of earmarked funding to address other global crises.

118. Dialogue with donors continues on the critical role of sustained funds in ensuring progress towards ISIL accountability. There are positive indications that extrabudgetary funding will continue at similar levels into 2023. The Team continues to encourage further contributions of funds, equipment and services from Member States, as well as from regional and intergovernmental organizations, in support of the implementation of its mandate, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#).

VIII. Looking forward

119. The Team plans to continue to implement its strategic vision and provisional completion strategy, as outlined in section VIII of its previous report. In this regard, the Team will be prioritizing the following areas during the next reporting period:

- Completion of case assessment reports with respect to the following priority areas of investigation:
 - Crimes against cultural and religious heritage in Iraq;
 - ISIL leadership and hierarchical structure in Mosul and in Tall Afar;
 - Crimes committed against other communities in and around Sinjar;
- Completion of initial findings in support of new lines of inquiry within existing investigations:
 - Crimes committed against the Sunni community;
 - Crimes committed against Kaka'i, Shabak and Shia Turkmen communities;

- Crimes committed by ISIL against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community;
- Role of the ISIL diwan for natural and underground resources (Diwan al-Rikaz);
- Supporting additional mass grave excavations and continuing the evidence digitization and archiving project, with the goal of broadening the availability of evidence to support the investigative work of the Team;
- Further advancing efforts to share information with Iraqi authorities, such as through the conclusion and implementation of the agreement of Security Council sanctions listing; the Team will also continue to keep Iraqi authorities, including the Kurdistan Regional Government, informed of the key findings of investigations conducted by the Team;
- Further strengthening the assistance provided to national proceedings globally, in cooperation with Iraqi authorities.

120. The Team will continue to implement these priorities in close cooperation with the Government of Iraq, including the National Coordinating Committee and the Kurdish Regional Government, and key partners across the country, including survivor groups, affected communities and religious leaders.

IX. Conclusion

121. The transition towards case-building and information-sharing with Iraq was a key priority of the Team during the reporting period. Progress in these areas will continue to help to link the evidence collected by the Team to other types of evidence and facilitate the use of that evidence in national investigations and prosecutions. An increasing amount of time and resources continues to be allocated to these two areas and will increase over the course of the next reporting period to advance delivery of the mandate. Investigations by the Team nevertheless remained at the forefront during the reporting period and met some key milestones, including the case assessment on crimes committed against the Christian community. This progress reflects the continued commitment of the Team to delivering justice for the victims and survivors of ISIL crimes in Iraq and around the world.

122. The Team's focus will shift during the upcoming reporting periods from investigation to the promotion of accountability. There is a strong need for visibility of the Team's work and products, not only at the national level in Iraq but beyond. UNITAD will dedicate its efforts to promoting evidence-based trials on charges of international crimes throughout the world at conferences, events and meetings. The next step is to move from collecting evidence to building cases and distributing adequate knowledge wherever it is needed.
