

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 14 March 2024 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 6 of Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), a road map for the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and necessary steps for its closure. The road map has been developed in consultation with the Government of Iraq.

I would be grateful if the present letter and the road map 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



Road map for completion of the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

Summary

Pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), the present road map explains what will be achieved by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant before the conclusion of its mandate on 17 September 2024, while also clarifying what could have been achieved by the Team in the medium term had its mandate been extended for an additional year, until 17 September 2025. The purpose of doing so is to fully inform the Government of Iraq, the Security Council and the international community about the consequences of the conclusion of the Team's mandate on 17 September 2024. The Government of Iraq has been formally consulted on the substantive aspects in the development of the road map. The Team also engaged with civil society organizations.

The Team remains engaged with the Government of Iraq to ensure that its work ends in a meaningful way, to the extent possible, by 17 September 2024, so that that work can be utilized by the competent Iraqi authorities afterwards. To this end, the Government of Iraq has conveyed its intention to create a specialized national team and has named 17 specialized experts, led by a designated team leader from the Supreme Judicial Council. As requested by the Government of Iraq, the Team will continue to provide capacity-building for the specialized national experts until September 2024. The pillar areas in which work is being done to help achieve a smooth transition are evidence management, investigations, capacity-building and engagement with Member States. Critical to this effort are some key points that should be recognized:

(a) Evidence shared by the Team is only as good as the system Iraq has in place to manage it. Having a system in place ensures that Iraq can properly utilize evidence from the Team in an organized format; a searchability tool would enable Iraq to efficiently identify evidence relevant to their investigations;

(b) Preparing evidence for disclosure, which is coded with conditions of receipt and source consent, and which also often require redactions, is a time- and resource-consuming process that was built to serve a narrow purpose, namely, to support ongoing investigations and prosecutions;

(c) Work products developed by the Team contain an examination of the crimes of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. A domestic legal framework to investigate and prosecute such crimes would be needed in Iraq to utilize these products to their fullest potential;

(d) The funds that support virtually all the capacity-building delivered by the Team to Iraq are largely extrabudgetary and would need to be returned to the respective donors upon the conclusion of the mandate;

(e) Ongoing work on third State requests for assistance by the Team would terminate along with the mandate.

The work of the Team to fully implement resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) will not be completed by September 2024. The substantive and legal reasons for establishing the mandate remain as valid and applicable today as they were in 2017: ISIL members committed international crimes, these crimes need to be investigated and alleged perpetrators in Iraq and third States should be held criminally accountable for these crimes. The Team remains committed to fulfilling these objectives, in line with Security Council resolutions [2379 \(2017\)](#) and [2697 \(2023\)](#), as well as the terms of reference of the Team ([S/2018/118](#), annex), all in support of the Government of Iraq, Iraqi communities and victims who suffered the crimes of ISIL.

I. Introduction

1. Paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#) requests 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 to develop, in consultation with the Government of Iraq, a road map for the completion of the mandate of the Team and the necessary steps for the Team's closure. The present road map is respectfully submitted to the Security Council.

2. The Team was established by Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) to support domestic efforts to hold Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) accountable by collecting, preserving and storing evidence of its crimes in Iraq that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including investigations being carried out by competent authorities in Iraq and third States. In implementing its mandate, the Team operates according to the terms of reference ([S/2018/118](#), annex), as approved by the Security Council on 13 February 2018, as well as a range of internal standard operating procedures that it has developed. The Team further seeks to uphold the guiding principle of impartiality and independence throughout its work.

3. The Team has been operational in Iraq since October 2018. It has established six field investigative units and two thematic units focused on crimes perpetrated by ISIL against all victim communities and vulnerable groups in Iraq between 2014 and 2017. Through its investigative fieldwork and, more broadly, cooperation with the competent Iraqi authorities and other actors, the Team has accumulated millions of pieces of evidentiary material – documentary, forensic and digital – from a diverse range of sources, totalling roughly 40 TB of data. Investigators, lawyers and analysts on the Team have used this material as the evidentiary basis for a series of case assessments and analytical reports that determine whether the acts committed by ISIL amount to international crimes. The work of the Team and the evidence it collects is aimed at supporting ISIL-related national investigations and prosecutions in Iraq and throughout the world. In this regard, the Team has cooperated with Iraqi judicial counterparts in the joint preparation of case files on suspected perpetrators located outside Iraq.

4. The Team has worked closely with the competent Iraqi authorities in the implementation of its mandate and has provided extensive support to build their capacity through the provision of training, equipment and technical and substantive expertise. To date, the two sides have worked together to undertake 67 mass grave excavations, have acquired data from hundreds of seized ISIL phones and hard drives and have digitized roughly 15 million paper records linked to ISIL crimes. The Team continues to help to establish and train a specialized witness protection unit within the Ministry of the Interior and it works with the Ministry of Health and a range of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community and religious leaders to augment psychosocial support capacity and a referral network for victims of ISIL, witnesses and their families.

5. Security Council resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#) extended the mandate of the Team until 17 September 2024 only, on the basis of a request by the Government of Iraq. While this enabled the work of the Team to continue for an additional year, it introduced a timeline that places an abrupt end to that work. However, even though the mandate of the Team will conclude on 17 September 2024, its work will not be completed by then. According to the eleventh report of the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to the Security Council, completion of the mandate is not feasible within this time frame, which will ultimately affect the overall accountability efforts that the Team was created to support.

6. The objective of the present road map is to fully address this circumstance. On the one hand, the mandate of the Team will conclude on 17 September 2024, and, given this constraint, the road map explains what will be achieved regarding the Team's evidence management, investigations, capacity-building efforts and engagement with Member States. On the other hand, the road map also clarifies what could have been achieved by the Team in the medium term had its mandate been extended for an additional year, until 17 September 2025. The purpose is to fully inform the Government of Iraq, the Security Council and the international community about the consequences of the conclusion of the Team's mandate on 17 September 2024.

7. Since the adoption of resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), the Team has continued to work closely with all Iraqi counterparts towards its implementation. After the submission of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#) (S/2024/20) on 15 January 2024, the Team intensified its engagement to develop the road map. Between 30 January and 5 March 2024, the Team held formal consultations with the National Coordinating Committee – the designated government body facilitating the work of the Team in Iraq – to develop the road map. In addition, the Team engaged extensively with the Supreme Judicial Council, which has been identified by the Government of Iraq as the competent authority and the intended recipient of evidence collected by the Team. Input on the substantive aspects of the road map received from these counterparts has been reflected in the road map. Throughout these discussions, the Government of Iraq has continued to stress the importance of the conclusion of the mandate by 17 September 2024 and that this is the only scenario acceptable to it.

8. During the consultations, it was agreed that the main objective remains to ensure that the work of the Team is not lost and that Iraq is well positioned to receive and utilize this work in pursuit of ISIL accountability. This means that the end state at the conclusion of the mandate is critical for a proper transition. In this regard, on 11 March 2024, the National Coordinating Committee formally communicated to the Team its intention to create a specialized national team of 17 specialized experts, led by a designated lead from the Supreme Judicial Council. It also decided that this national team would receive training by technical experts from the Team on evidence management and digital archiving over the next six months.

9. In parallel, civil society organizations have also been consulted on the conclusion of the mandate, both in bilateral meetings and at the recent meeting of the UNITAD-NGO Dialogue Forum on 6 March 2024. At those meetings, they were informed on the outcome of the consultations with the Government of Iraq. Concerns were raised about the future of accountability for ISIL crimes and the way forward after the end of the mandate for trials in Iraq for ISIL perpetrators on charges of international crimes.

II. Conclusion of the mandate of the Investigative Team and closure of the mission on 17 September 2024

10. The Team remains committed to implementing Security Council resolutions [2379 \(2017\)](#) and [2697 \(2023\)](#) and, as agreed with the Government of Iraq, will continue its operations up to 17 September 2024. The Team has adjusted its priorities, pivoting towards a time-based delivery of its work on the basis of the requested date of closure of its mission. Throughout this shift, ensuring that the Team's work ends in a meaningful way has been an important principle so that it can be fully utilized by Iraq afterwards for the benefit of a smooth transition. The pillar areas in which work is being done to help to achieve this outcome are evidence management, investigations, capacity-building and engagement with Member States. It is important

to note that, after the end of the mandate and the conclusion of operations, a period of liquidation will be required in accordance with United Nations standard practice to resolve outstanding matters relating to administration and the handling of assets. In this regard, the Team has started to take the necessary steps towards its closure, engaging with all relevant counterparts within the Secretariat.

Evidence management

11. All evidence collected by the Team is recorded in its evidence management system,¹ stored and then processed for uploading to an electronic discovery platform for analysis. There are other specialized analytical, forensic and mapping software that the Team deploys to further structure, utilize and compare data. Most of the evidence received by the Team is digital. Any evidence received in a physical format (e.g. paper, compact discs or hard drives), which are usually copies of original evidence, are securely stored at its offices in Baghdad and Erbil. The total evidence holdings of the Team rests at roughly 40 TB of data.

12. The Team has briefed technical counterparts from the competent Iraqi authorities, specifically the Supreme Judicial Council, on this evidence management system, which is required in order to utilize the volume of evidence that will be provided in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [2697 \(2023\) \(S/2024/20\)](#). The Team has communicated that it is not in a position to provide the system and the software that it has been using. However, experts will extend all possible support to ensure that Iraq is able to assume responsibility for procuring or developing its own system, while bearing in mind the time required for such lengthy processes of procurement or system development. It was agreed with the Government of Iraq that, to this end, regular engagement between technical counterparts will continue over the next six months and up to September 2024 to provide technical support and capacity-building to the best of the Team's ability.

13. Recognizing this framework and the time frame ahead, the Team and the competent Iraqi authorities have been focused on beginning the process and demonstrating progress on disclosing evidence held by the Team. On 13 March 2024, in agreement with the National Coordinating Committee, the Team completed the provision to the Supreme Judicial Council of a first tranche of compiled evidence that individual counterparts from the judiciary had previously shared with the Team. The Team is actively working on planning subsequent disclosures, in particular in relation to other types of evidence, and examining more closely the issues of conditions of receipt and source consent. The Team remains committed to working constructively with the Iraqi authorities on this issue over the next six months. However, it cannot be guaranteed that the tranche of evidence that requires case-by-case review for conditions of receipt and consent would be handed over by 17 September 2024.

14. In parallel to this disclosure effort, the Team is continuing to help the competent Iraqi authorities to systematically preserve evidence that they already hold in relation to ISIL crimes. Such support has been ongoing for more than three years and is aimed at ensuring that the relevant criminal courts in Iraq possess fully organized, digitized and archived ISIL-related records. This will be completed at six courts – Karkh (Baghdad), Anbar, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Karmiyan and Dahuk – by the conclusion of the mandate, while remaining partially completed at five courts: Rusafah (Baghdad), Tikrit, Mosul, Kirkuk and Nasiriyah. The technical equipment (such as laptops, software and scanners) required to continue this work after 17 September 2024 has

¹ An evidence management system provides advanced search capabilities for a given evidence repository and features such as chain of custody tracking, detailed metadata for evidence categorization and integration with legal processes, ensuring the integrity and admissibility of evidence in court.

already been provided, but each location would need to dedicate personnel to take over from local consultants hired by the Team to do the work.

15. In addition, the Team has launched a project to establish a central archive for ISIL records, which was meant to be a comprehensive database of all the digitized ISIL documents and records at the Supreme Judicial Council (Baghdad) and in the document management system.² While this archive was originally planned to encompass the relevant holdings of 16 courts in Iraq, the scope has been reduced to 3 courts, including 2 of the largest court archives – at Karkh and Rusafah (Baghdad) – to help with more efficient utilization and accessing of digitized records in the judiciary’s day-to-day work.

16. The putting in place of the proper archival processes for the storage and preservation of the evidence holdings of the Team after 17 September 2024 has also been identified as a priority pursuant to paragraph 10 of the terms of reference and as elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2697 (2023) (S/2024/20). The report in particular addresses the future responsibilities of the Secretariat. Experts on the Team have been in regular contact with the relevant components of the Secretariat charged with following up on these responsibilities, including the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Archives and Records Management Section. A focus of these discussions has been on the transfer of technical knowledge and systems from the Team to the Secretariat, to enable possible continuity in the management of evidence collected by the Team and the application of standards. From the standpoint of supporting ISIL accountability efforts, it would be desirable for a managed “live” archive of what has been collected and delivered by the Team, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, to be established and made accessible to all institutions dealing with this issue. In accordance with the terms of reference, this remains subject to ongoing discussion with all those concerned, including the Government of Iraq.

Investigations

17. Security Council resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference provide a basis for the conduct of independent investigations by the Team in Iraq with full respect for Iraqi sovereignty and in close cooperation with the competent Iraqi authorities. The initiation of field investigations has been an incremental process, starting with three main investigations in 2019, covering crimes committed in Sinjar, Tikrit and Mosul, and growing to six field investigative units and two thematic units by 2022 with the addition of a cross-cutting investigation into the destruction of cultural heritage by ISIL. Aside from having varying start dates, each investigation has progressed at its own pace in accordance with unique factors and circumstances, including the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on all operations.

18. Since 2017, the Team has been able to finalize several case assessments and analytical reports linked to its investigations and to disclose these work products to Iraqi judicial counterparts, in particular those on the financial structures of ISIL, the use and development of chemical weapons by ISIL and sexual violence perpetrated by ISIL against women and girls from all Iraqi communities. In addition, the Team has worked to disclose the underlying evidence supporting these work products, in line with the conditions of receipt and consent of sources. These work products and evidence are disclosed to specific judicial counterparts and provide the factual and legal findings of the core crimes investigated.

² A document management system provides advanced search capabilities for a given evidence repository. However, it lacks the specialized and advanced features of an evidence management system, notably chain of custody tracking, detailed metadata for evidence categorization and integration with legal processes.

19. The Team has intensified its work to ensure that most active investigations conclude in an orderly manner prior to 17 September 2024 so that a body of meaningful work products produced by the Team can be delivered. The Team has shifted resources to work products that can be ready for disclosure to Iraq prior to that date. This includes disclosure of finalized case assessments and analytical reports from four of its investigations: Sinjar (Yazidi community), Tikrit Air Academy/Camp Speicher,³ the Badush prison attack and crimes against the Christian community. Many of these have been finalized for some time but not disclosed. Preliminary case assessments and analytical reports will be disclosed for two other investigations: Kaka'i/Shabak/Shia Turkmen communities and Anbar (Sunni Abu Nimr community). Finally, three thematic analytical reports, on the ISIL delegated committee, Diwan al-Jund and sexual and gender-based crimes against all affected communities,⁴ as well as 10 relevant forensic reports and other technical products, such as cartographic, planimetric and orthomosaic information in various formats (e.g. maps, digital files and images), will be disclosed. All work products to be disclosed will be accompanied by the underlying evidence and will be redacted as necessary.

20. The Government of Iraq has expressed its commitment to adopting national legislation on international crimes, namely war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, which would allow ISIL perpetrators to be held criminally accountable on such charges in Iraq. At the request of Iraq, the Team has provided technical assistance to the competent Iraqi authorities in the development of a draft law in the context of a joint working group established in March 2023. Such a law is required as a legal basis in order to maximize the utility of the work products disclosed by the Team, as they predominantly contain findings relating to international crimes and the evidentiary basis on which they were reached. For example, case assessments, which outline evidence-based contextual elements of the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide, are required in order to properly adjudicate large-scale atrocities in which multiple perpetrators participated in a single incident (e.g. the crimes committed in Kuju village and at Tikrit Air Academy/Camp Speicher and Badush Prison).

21. In parallel, the Team, in cooperation with the Iraqi judiciary, has identified an increasing number of persons of interest residing in third States who may be linked to various international crimes and events committed by ISIL in Iraq. The Team has worked with competent Iraqi judges to build joint case files on such perpetrators residing abroad, providing crucial support for the closure of safe havens for ISIL perpetrators who have fled Iraq.

Capacity-building

22. Since its inception, the Team has been working closely with the competent Iraqi authorities to accomplish its investigative objectives. This collaboration includes building the capacity of the authorities through the provision of training, equipment and technical and substantive expertise. The Team, aware that its mandate would not be indefinite, has prioritized sustainability in the capacity that it delivers. Most areas in which the Team provides support are dependent on extrabudgetary funds. Some areas, such as digital forensics and mass grave excavations, are intensive from both a financial and human resources perspective and require significant expertise to execute.

³ This version of the case assessment is more developed than the initial one produced by the Team in 2021 and includes additional factual findings and updated legal findings. More specifically, it will include indicators for genocidal intent against the Shia community. However, more investigation is needed to establish the complex crime of genocide. This means that what the Team aims to disclose falls between a finalized and a preliminary case assessment.

⁴ The report on sexual and gender-based crimes will be an updated version of the report already disclosed to Iraqi judicial counterparts.

National counterparts who lead this work will potentially bear this burden alone following the conclusion of the mandate, as the extrabudgetary resources provided to the Team to support this work would need to be returned to the respective donors.

23. Jointly with Iraqi counterparts, the Team has identified a set of benchmarks in forensics that can be reached prior to the conclusion of the mandate. Collaboration with the Mass Graves Directorate and the Medico-Legal Directorate will continue in line with a previously agreed two-year strategy for ISIL-related mass grave sites. This includes one excavation of Bir Alu Antar – a large, complex sinkhole near Tall Afar – where preparatory work has been ongoing for months. For the purposes of identifying victims, the Team will continue to work closely with the Medico-Legal Directorate to prepare its DNA laboratory for International Organization for Standardization accreditation, which is a recognized standard for such laboratories worldwide that is both costly and time-consuming to secure. While progress will be made in the interim, the Medico-Legal Directorate will likely need to find another avenue of support for accreditation after the conclusion of the mandate.

24. Basic digital forensic laboratories have been established by the Team at five counter-terrorism courts in Iraq, enabling trained Iraqi personnel to acquire, manage and verify digital evidence. The provision of additional equipment and training, in line with the needs of the laboratories, will continue at these locations until the conclusion of the mandate. Specifically, the Team will support trained personnel at four courts to utilize software that facilitates the acquisition of data from seized ISIL mobile phones in their holdings, which is similar to the approach employed by the Team to seized ISIL hard drives. It is projected that the evidentiary value of the data extracted from between 50 and 100 mobile phones will be assessed in collaboration with Iraq while forensics experts from the Team are in place. Whenever possible, the Team provides multi-year licences for all donated software to ensure the continuity of laboratory operations after the Team's departure.

25. The Team has been actively working with the competent Iraqi authorities to augment existing measures that provide security, safety, privacy and the well-being of witnesses, victims and survivors who have shared their accounts with the Team. This support involved the conducting of a needs assessment of the witness protection unit within the Ministry of the Interior and includes working with it to establish procedures to ensure the confidentiality of details related to any witness interview; explanations to witnesses regarding the confidentiality of information and the voluntary nature of the process; psychosocial assessment and related support during the interview process; and trauma-informed interviewing techniques and special measures applicable to vulnerable witnesses. The two sides, acknowledging that there is more work to do, have agreed that the Team will provide training to 160 participants across eight sessions on witness protection and psychosocial best practices in Baghdad, Dahuk and Erbil. Furthermore, a two-week capacity-building workshop will be delivered to a maximum of 100 staff from the specialized witness protection unit in the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior.

Engagement with Member States: providing support to ongoing national proceedings

26. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) and the terms of reference, the Team provides assistance to jurisdictions of third States in furtherance of their investigations and prosecutions of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide committed by ISIL in Iraq. Support to national proceedings in third States in this manner has been, and continues to be, essential to advancing accountability for international crimes worldwide, recognizing the suffering of the victims and allowing for their voices to be heard through evidence-based trials in line with international criminal justice standards. This support also reflects the will of Iraq

to ensure that ISIL perpetrators who have fled the country do not find safe havens elsewhere.

27. Since the start of its work, a total of 20 third States – and 45 competent authorities within these third States – have requested assistance from the Team. Of the 229 requests received, the Team is currently working on 67, while 120 have been either completed or put on hold pending additional information from the national authorities. As at the date of submission of the present report, the Team has supported 17 cases in third States that were under investigation and that led to indictments; 15 ended up in convictions.

28. The Team is determined to provide support to as many third State investigations and prosecutions as possible prior to the conclusion of its mandate. Most requests for assistance remain open for an extended period, as the respective national authorities require support over several phases (i.e. investigation, trial and appeal). As stated in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2697 (2023) (S/2024/20), the Team is bound to respect the consent of any provider of information. This applies to third States that have made a request to the Team and provided information to that end. Once the mandate ends, this support, which has been provided in the context of the mandate and in accordance with the terms of reference, will consequently stop. The Team is not in a position to transmit requests that remain open on 17 September 2024 to any other authority. It will be up to third-State jurisdictions to decide whether or how they wish to make a request to Iraq directly, while bearing in mind their own respective legal systems, procedures and processes.

29. The number of investigations and, consequently, needs of third-State jurisdictions could increase, as many of those jurisdictions have only recently commenced their investigative work into international crimes committed by ISIL. In addition, given that no statute of limitations exists for the most serious crimes under international law, jurisdictions may initiate such investigations years from now. The Team, as it is based in Iraq and works closely with all concerned actors, has played a unique role and has brought significant added value as a facilitator of justice and a liaison among third-State jurisdictions, Iraqi authorities, witnesses and survivors and local NGOs, which will not continue after 17 September 2024. It is likely that this will be a setback to ongoing accountability efforts in many third States that have relied on support from the Team.

30. At the request of the Government of Iraq and the National Coordinating Committee, the Team will provide an additional list that aggregates evidence facilitated by Iraqi authorities that the Team has provided, with the consent of Iraq, to support third-State investigations and prosecutions.

III. A medium-term perspective for improved mandate implementation and orderly completion by 17 September 2025

31. The conclusion of the mandate on 17 September 2024 does not mean the completion of the mandate. Therefore, the Team seeks to better articulate what the proper completion of its mandate would mean and what could have been achieved in the medium term, represented by a hypothetical extension of its mandate until 17 September 2025. The purpose in doing so is to fully inform the Government of Iraq, the Security Council and the international community about forward-looking benchmarks that the Team has identified for itself until that date and the consequences of concluding the mandate before those benchmarks are reached. Furthermore, this

exercise provides Iraq with a proposed guide for possible next steps it could take to continue the work of the Team after 17 September 2024.

32. An additional year would have enabled the Team to conclude its work in a form that more closely aligns with the requests set out in Security Council resolutions [2379 \(2017\)](#) and [2697 \(2023\)](#). In summary, this would mean time to ensure that Iraq has an evidence management system in place with greater support from the Team, and it would give the Team more time to prepare its evidence holdings for systematic disclosure to Iraq in a usable format. The focus of investigations that have finalized case assessments could be shifted to delivering additional work products, notably perpetrator profiles, for disclosure to Iraq. The implementation of ongoing capacity-building efforts would occur along intended project timelines, fully exhausting the resources allocated for this purpose. Ongoing requests from third States for assistance have a greater chance of being completed

Evidence management

33. The Team could support the installation of an evidence management system within the central archive for ISIL records, which it has been working to establish as part of its digitization and archiving work at the Supreme Judicial Council. While the establishment of such a centralized database system would otherwise be left up to Iraq, an extended time frame would enable the Team to actively support the competent authorities in setting it up. That would ensure that Iraq would acquire the technical capacity to receive and utilize a processed version of the data, offering improved evidence management capacity overall. Both sides would also be able to explore, review and identify a searchability tool for Iraq that was tailored to the specific needs and objectives of the competent authorities. In terms of the evidence holdings, the Team would be able to fully code evidence with conditions of receipt and source consent, as well as undertake all necessary redactions for disclosure. This is both a time- and resource-intensive process that is currently being applied to a large volume of evidence. Time would offer greater certainty that all evidence held by the Team could be disclosed, and it would enable the Team to identify additional resources that could expedite the process.

34. The original objectives identified by Iraq and the Team related to digitization and archiving could be realized within the project timeline. With funding in place, digitization and archiving work at all the current active locations would conclude, and the Team could help to establish a document management system, with an evidence management function, that is linked to the central archive at 16 courts. That would be more than four times as many locations than it could accomplish by 17 September 2024. In a related project, the number of civil society organizations in Iraq that receive similar support to the courts would increase from 8 to as many as 15.

Investigations

35. A key evolution that could take place in the Team's investigative work over an additional year is the development of perpetrator-focused case files. The Team would be able to produce comprehensive lists of persons of interest and, based on these lists and the priorities of Iraqi judicial counterparts, produce and disclose up to 20 case files linked to those most likely to be held accountable. The Team would be able to finalize case assessment reports on the Kaka'i/Shabak/Shia Turkmen communities and Anbar (Sunni Abu Nimur community) – which will otherwise be issued as preliminary reports in 2024 – and finalize certain components identified as preliminary in the Tikrit Air Academy (Camp Speicher) case assessment. Other investigations and lines of inquiry, including Tikrit (Alam), Mosul (ISIL leadership/crimes against Iraqi security forces) and the destruction of cultural heritage, would be developed into preliminary case assessments as well. An analytical report on oil pillaging and smuggling, which

has been deprioritized in favour of other work products, could also be finalized. The Team had previously been increasing its work in relation to alleged ISIL affiliates who have been repatriated from Hawl camp. This work could continue to be of great value, both in dealing with witness testimonies of returnees and in supporting prosecutions of alleged perpetrators, especially foreign fighters.

Capacity-building

36. The Team would continue to assist the Mass Graves Directorate and the Medico-Legal Directorate in excavating 10 to 16 mass grave sites, ultimately completing the original two-year mass graves strategy. This would include providing the necessary technical planning and assistance for the excavation of the sinkhole site at Khafsah. Additional forensic equipment and training would also be provided with extrabudgetary funding of roughly \$1.2 million to \$1.4 million, which has already been secured and allocated for this purpose. For the Mass Graves Directorate, this would include training on remote sensing techniques; archaeological prospection; satellite image data acquisition and processing; advanced open-source exploitation; and intelligence-led planning. Training for the Medico-Legal Directorate would target securing accreditation for its DNA laboratory and include advanced forensic anthropology. Training for both the Mass Graves Directorate and the Medico-Legal Directorate could be done in partnership with leading institutions and universities.

37. In terms of ongoing support to digital forensics laboratories, the Team would continue to prioritize the provision of mobile phone extraction software and would expand training from four court locations to nine. This would significantly help to address a particular challenge, which is that many seized ISIL mobile phones remain unprocessed. The approach of deploying one-off, software-based solutions for which three-year licences could be secured would ensure that the capacity would become readily available across Iraq. If implemented successfully, this would address the backlog and enable the Team and the laboratories to determine the evidentiary value of roughly 1,600 mobile phones instead of 50 to 100. Information gathered through this process would facilitate robust forensic analysis of the organizational structure, chain of command and geographical presence of ISIL.

38. Following the same approach taken with digital forensics, the Team would seek to expand and deepen its ongoing support to Iraq in the area of witness protection and psychological support, with specific objectives in mind. The Team would be able to increase training in these areas from 160 to 300 participants and from 8 to 20 sessions. The training of personnel working at the specialized witness protection unit at the Ministry of the Interior, slated for delivery in 2024, could be extended to judges and other designated protection providers.

Engagement with Member States: providing support to ongoing national proceedings

39. The Team would continue to support open and future requests for assistance from third-State jurisdictions that would otherwise have to be terminated upon conclusion of the mandate. In doing so, it would continue to liaise between these jurisdictions, Iraqi authorities, witnesses and survivors and local NGOs.

40. The Team, building on the successful model of developing case files with Iraqi judicial counterparts to share with third States where alleged ISIL perpetrators reside, would work more closely with other counterparts in Iraq to extend that effort to returnees from Hawl. This would directly support Iraqi efforts to repatriate foreign terrorist fighters by producing evidence packages linked to the specific crimes of alleged perpetrators. These packages could then be shared with the relevant third-

State jurisdictions, which could use them to hold perpetrators accountable once they are repatriated.

IV. Conclusion

41. The substantive and legal reasons for establishing the mandate of the Team remain as valid and applicable today as in 2017: ISIL members committed international crimes, these crimes need to be investigated and alleged perpetrators in Iraq and in third States should be held criminally accountable for their actions in impartial, independent and credible proceedings consistent with the terms of reference, the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations best practices and relevant international law, including international human rights law. Since October 2018, the Team has worked closely with Iraqi counterparts to support these objectives by establishing field investigations, collecting evidence and providing capacity-building. Since its inception, the Team has placed victims at the centre of its work, ensuring that their voices, along with their calls for ISIL to be held accountable for international crimes, are heard. The road map clarifies the additional steps that need to be taken by 17 September 2024 to move closer to fulfilling these objectives. The goal in doing so is to fully inform the Government of Iraq, the Security Council and the international community about the forward-looking benchmarks that the Team has identified for itself up until that date; the consequences of concluding the mandate ahead of reaching the benchmarks; and a possible path that Iraq could follow as it works to carry on the work of the Team in holding ISIL perpetrators accountable and in the pursuit of evidence-based justice that establishes the truth and fulfils the demands of victim communities in Iraq.
