Mr. President,

Distinguished Security Council members,

I have the honour to introduce the fourth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2299 (2016), as well as the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2017 (2013) on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and property.

Mr. President,

On 10 July, Prime Minister Abadi announced the completion of the operation to liberate Mosul, more than nine months after its launch. This is a historic victory on many levels. Speaking from inside the city, Prime Minister Abadi declared the end of Da’esh’s so-called Caliphate, attributing this victory to the Iraqi forces’ planning and execution as the only fighting force present on the ground. The Prime Minister specifically thanked Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani for his support to the fighters, who have made heroic sacrifices. The Prime Minister thereby affirmed al-Sistani’s critical role, foremost through his fatwa in 2014, which prompted tens of thousands of individuals to take up arms in defence of their country, and resulted in the creation of the Popular Mobilisation Forces. The Prime Minister noted that this “saved Iraq and paved the
road to victory”. He further praised al-Sistani’s call for societal peaceful coexistence, as a check against future sectarian conflict. The Prime Minister also expressed gratitude to all the countries that supported Iraq in the war on terrorism, providing training, advisors, logistics and air support.

Our prayers and thoughts go today to all the wounded security forces and civilians, and specially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives or those of their beloved ones. It is crucial now that the families of the martyrs and the wounded receive all the support they need.

And, as the war against terror continues worldwide, the battle for Mosul bears testimony to Iraq’s commitment not only to its own future, but also to the future of the region and international peace and stability. Ultimately, it is evidence of what the Iraqi people can achieve when they reach across sectarian and other divides, and join forces for their country and future.

Per Prime Minister Abadi’s explicit directives, the liberation operation was marked by an exceptional effort by the liberation forces and their international partners to save and protect the civilian population. By adopting an humanitarian concept of operation, they were able to reduce civilian losses and suffering. They also held themselves and others accountable for violations.

In stark contrast, Da’esh showed absolute disregard for human life. Shamelessly, the terrorists indiscriminately targeted civilians, shelling them in the liberated areas, using them as human shields, locking them in their homes, and using rooftop snipers to shoot those – women, children and men – attempting to flee to safety. They killed civilians using suicide bombers who included females and children who had been brainwashed. Between 1 and 3 June, Da’esh’ snipers shot
and killed more than 200 civilians, including women and children, who were fleeing the al-Shifa neighbourhood, in western Mosul, just north of the Old City. There are many other tragic examples – including a female terrorist who blew herself up in a refugee camp, and numerous cases of brainwashed children sent on similar suicidal missions.

The blowing up of the Great al-Nouri Mosque of Mosul and its iconic al-Hadba Minaret, on the verge of its defeat in Mosul, adds to Da’esh’s crimes against the Islamic, Iraqi and human civilization. The destruction of the very mosque – where Da’esh’s leader once declared its so-called Caliphate – is further proof of both Da’esh’s barbarism and desperation at the time of its collapse. The destruction of these two historic monuments of Iraq, symbols of identity and belonging, tragically also reminds us all that the protection of cultural heritage cannot be delinked from the protection of human lives.

Mr. President,

The fighting in Mosul has also claimed the lives of numerous local and international journalists, those who are there “to report the truth to the outside world”. Two Iraqi TV journalists, were killed while covering clashes between Iraqi security forces and Da’esh on 7 July while three other journalists – one Iraqi and two foreign – were killed in a bomb explosion while covering the fighting in June, and another foreign journalist was injured. In February, a prominent Iraqi female journalist from Kurdistan was killed in an explosion that also injured her cameraman while chasing a lead on an alleged Da’esh mass grave. These and other brave professionals faced dangers on the frontlines in the pursuit of their work – providing vital information to the public –
to shed light on the plight of civilians, and to portray the realities they saw in the fight against terrorism. The sacrifices of these journalists have, however, not been vain; a free and impartial media is essential to safeguard the public interest, to protect democracy, to ensure the necessary degree of transparency and accountability. Here, I also want to acknowledge the access that the Iraqi authorities, including those of the Kurdistan region have provided, for both national and international media during the Mosul campaign.

Mr. President,

The historic liberation of Mosul should not conceal the fact that the road ahead is extremely challenging. Reclaiming the remaining territories still under Da’esh’s control in other parts of Ninawa and Anbar Governorates, in Hawija in Kirkuk Governorate, in pockets of other Governorates will not be easy. Moreover, Da’esh’s supporters continue their vicious terrorist activities against civilians in Iraq and beyond.

Since last month, ongoing military operations, often led by Popular Mobilisation Forces, have also focused on securing the Iraq-Syria border. Progress has been achieved, notably through the liberation of the strategic al-Walid border crossing, at the Iraqi-Syrian-Jordanian tri-point. In that regard, I note Prime Minister Abadi’s repeated stance that Iraqi forces would not take part in fighting across the Syrian border.

Mr. President,

Based on their effective cooperation during the liberation of Mosul, I urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to extend their cooperation and coordination
mechanisms between the Iraqi Security Forces and the Peshmerga. Such a measure will help address the urgent need to put in place inclusive and effective security arrangements in the liberated areas. I note with concern reports that indicate a possible proliferation of armed groups including from the local population in liberated areas, without proper government oversight.

Further, I call on the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, to develop an overall political and security strategy that facilitates the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced populations to their homes, prevents conflict over longstanding disputes, promotes justice and inter-communal understanding through inclusive dialogue, and promotes rule of law, security and good governance. Such a strategy should also correctly sequence the transfer of responsibility for security to local governance and security structures, including the police.

Mr. President,

Hand in hand with the liberation comes de-mining, stabilization and reconstruction to enable return of IDPs as well as elimination of the Da’esh cells, criminal gangs and militias operating outside of the control of the Government. The enforcement of law and order, rule of law, justice and accountability as well as reforms, good governance and development, including in the southern provinces, will be needed. To turn the gains of the military victory into stability, security, justice and development the Government will have to continue proving to its citizens that it cares, and do everything possible to give the people back their lives in security and dignity. To achieve this, Iraq will continue to need substantial regional and international support. The job is not yet done; the victory cannot be complete by supporting the military campaign alone. As Prime Minister Abadi said in his speech in Mosul, “The next stage is stabilization and reconstruction, return of IDPs, elimination of the Da’esh cells and stability which will require
immense effort”. Indeed, more than ever, Iraq will need continuous and substantial support from its partners, both international and regional. I am encouraged by the statements of solidarity and commitment for support expressed by a number of Iraq’s neighbouring countries. As evidenced during Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi regional tour between 19 and 22 June, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kuwait have confirmed their resolve to build on the existing cooperation and increase support, including for the much needed reconstruction of Iraq’s liberated areas. I also pay tribute to Iraq’s partners including those from the international anti-Da’esh coalition and urge them to stay on course, to stay with Iraq and its people, to continue providing support in the fight against terrorism, and in addressing Iraq’s humanitarian, stabilisation, and demining needs in post-conflict reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Mr. President,
Da’esh’s ultimate defeat can only be secured through inclusive solutions, addressing the grievances, needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people. National settlement and societal reconciliation are the indispensable paths of a broader comprehensive effort towards achieving long-term unity, stability and prosperity.

I applaud the position and guidance of the Marja’iya who in their victory statements and sermons stressed that Iraqis need to learn from what happened in the years before Da'esh and remedy the longstanding problems. Further, they stated that using violence, oppression, and sectarianism as a means to an end only causes destruction and leaves the country vulnerable to interference by regional and international actors, where there is no winner and Iraq first among the losers; that all those in positions of power and government have to work according to a principle that sees all citizens as equal in their rights and duties regardless of religion, sect, ethnicity, or nationality.
Were this approach implemented strictly, it would restore the people’s trust in government and its institutions. The Marja’iya’s statements also mentioned the need to combat financial and administrative corruption, and sect and party-linked quotas, and to ensure the standards of competence and professionalism in the appointment of government officials.

I praise the continued commitment of the Iraqi National Alliance to achieve a national settlement agreement. Further, I am encouraged by the ongoing efforts by different Sunni leaders and representatives, and other components, communities and groups, as well as common citizens, that show their commitment to the ideal of overcoming their mutual grievances and differences for the sake of the truly national and non-sectarian project of their shared future.

The UN is committed to further facilitate processes of national settlement and grassroots societal reconciliation, in full coordination with the Government of Iraq and in cooperation with all Iraqi stakeholders, including women and youth, to address the concerns of all components, communities, groups and citizens in a just and fair manner. I encourage all national, regional and international partners to engage in supporting this process. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq will now enter a new phase focused on providing its good offices for national settlement and reconciliation through consultations with the Iraqi stakeholders on the way forward. This will be based on a comprehensive mapping and analysis of the different proposals and visions received by the UN, which will be used to identify common ground leading towards a common vision of national settlement and societal reconciliation.

UNAMI also commenced consultations with Iraqi female Members of the Parliament and Provincial councils as well as civil society, to gauge their perspectives on their vision on
reconciliation. On 9 July UNAMI, jointly with UNWOMEN, organised two forums with civil society organisations and women leaders from Kirkuk and Hawija, engaged in political processes. The consultations aimed to identify the current challenges hindering women’s participation and representation in national reconciliation processes as well as to enhance their participation. The discussions also focused on women political representation in the upcoming elections and decision-making, as well as on ways to strengthen the capacity of women to advance peace and security for the stability of Iraq. At the end of forum, participants adopted a set of recommendations that will be taken into account in pursuing national settlement and reconciliation. Further meetings will be organised in different governorates including the liberated areas on strengthening the role of women in national reconciliation through the women, peace and security agenda.

Mr. President,

At a meeting on 7 June 2017, the leaders of political parties in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), which was chaired by the Kurdistan Regional Government’s President Massoud Barzani, a decision was made to hold a referendum on 25 September 2017 with the question: “Do you want the Kurdistan region and the Kurdistani areas (disputed areas) outside the administration of Kurdistan region to become an independent state?” On 11 July, President Barzani reiterated, during his address to the European Parliament in Brussels, the KR-I’s determination to hold the referendum as planned, while maintaining that no country had clearly opposed it. It is important to note that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Change Movement (Gorran) have demanded that the regional parliament of Kurdistan should be reactivated before the referendum.
Such an important issue ought not to be pursued without understanding between the federal government and that of the Kurdistan Regional Government. I, therefore, urge both parties to enter into negotiations without further delay, in the spirit of genuine partnership and based on the Constitution, to urgently find common ground and a roadmap to address this and other critical topics, notably implementation of Article 140 of the Constitution on disputed territories, including the status of Kirkuk, budgetary issues, oil and revenue sharing, and other areas and principles that determine the relations between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The absence of meaningful political dialogue could turn a conflict of interests into a different kind of conflict. Prime Minister Abadi’s and President’s Barzani call for dialogue, should be followed by meetings of negotiation teams as a matter of urgency.

In regards to internal politics in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, I further urge as a matter of priority, the reactivation of a functional democratic administration, notably the regional parliament as the primary democratic institution to ensure unity and the functioning of democracy in the region. The reopening of the regional parliament, which has been inactive since October 2015, should be based on the principles of democracy and inclusiveness, without preconditions.

Mr. President,
Complex electoral processes loom in Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, this and next year. On 21 June, the Independent High Electoral Commission submitted an official letter to the three presidencies of Iraq; the President, Prime Minister and Council of Representatives’ Speaker, stating that the Commission will not be able to conduct the Governorate Councils Elections as scheduled on 16 September 2017. The letter cited legal, technical and security
reasons, including the failure of the Council of Representatives to pass amendments to the electoral legal framework in a timely manner, lack of political parties’ interest to nominate candidates, and the unstable security situation in the governorates of Ninawa, Anbar and Kirkuk. This is the second time that Governorate Councils Elections are being postponed. Per the legal requirements, the elections were supposed to be held in April 2017, but were postponed to 16 September the same year. Unfortunately, the latter date is no longer tenable.

It is of primary importance that all necessary measures be taken, as a matter of priority, to ensure first, that the Council of Representatives elections be held latest in May 2018 as required by the constitution and second, that the Governorate Councils Elections be re-scheduled. Respect for constitutional timelines in holding elections is essential to Iraq’s democratic progress, particularly at this crucial juncture. Similarly, I urge the Council of Representatives to accelerate the passing of the relevant legislations to facilitate the timely conduct of the elections in 2018. In that regard, I welcome Prime Minister Abadi’s and Speaker Jubouri’s statements respectively on 30 May and 20 June, confirming the Council of Representatives’ elections will be held in 2018 per the Constitution.

The selection process of a new Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Board of Commissioners is ongoing and expected to be complete prior to the expiration of the term of the current Board of Commissioners, in September 2017. The Council of Representatives committee tasked with the selection process sent 109 candidates, including 7 women, to various ministries and commissions for vetting, and commenced interviews on 8 July 2017. I call on the Committee to ensure that the process is completed on time, is inclusive, and guarantees the selection of women as prescribed in the 2007 IHEC law.
I welcome the ongoing cooperation and coordination between the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission and the Kurdistan Region’s Independent High Electoral Commission, in line with the memorandum of cooperation signed between the two institutions, and facilitated by UNAMI. I encourage this spirit of cooperation between the two institutions.

UNAMI will continue to provide technical advisory support to Independent High Electoral Commission, the Council of Representatives’ expert committee and other Iraqi institutions involved in the elections.

Mr. President,
The initial planning assumptions that Mosul would become one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world in 2017 have materialized. The cumulative number of people displaced since military operations began in October now approximates 1 million individuals, although the rate at which people are fleeing the fighting has slowed in recent weeks. Furthermore, Da’esh still holds territory in Tal Afar, Hawija and western Anbar, where hundreds of thousands of civilians are trapped. The estimated displacement as a result of military campaigns to retake these areas, is lower than Mosul in terms of absolute numbers, but is nevertheless considerable as a percentage of the population of these areas. Under the cover of seasonal sandstorms, 22,000 people have fled western Anbar for camps and informal displacement sites by mid-June. In a worst-case scenario, up to 50,000 more could flee.

The challenges faced by humanitarian partners, especially with regard to humanitarian access, are, and will remain, tremendous. Additionally, return movements across Iraq have slowed, as
displaced people increasingly fear collective punishment and retribution in their areas of origin. The humanitarian needs are thus expected to continue until families can re-establish their livelihoods and consolidate their households. In many sectors, humanitarian needs will remain high well into 2018.

Mr. President,

While the magnitude of the crisis has put partners to the test, I want to assure you that every effort is being made to provide the most effective support for the Government-led response. Under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Funding Facility for Stabilization by July 2017, more than 1,050 projects were under way or had been completed in 23 liberated towns and districts in Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk Governorates. This includes more than 230 projects approved or underway in eastern Mosul, including the rehabilitation of water systems and the electricity grid. More than 4,000 citizens of eastern Mosul are participating in cash-for-work projects, helping clean the city and earning incomes to support their families. In western Mosul, over 50 projects are in preparation to clean debris, repair water treatment plants, and support the health sector, including the critically important West Mosul General Hospital. An electric line was connected from eastern Mosul across the Tigris River to provide power to the key New Water Treatment Plant in western Mosul. Now that Mosul has been fully liberated, the scope of projects is expected to increase exponentially in the coming weeks.

The stabilization response in Mosul and other locations in Iraq is complicated by the presence of explosive hazards. UNMAS continues to support the coordination of a civilian response in Mosul to complement that of the Iraqi Security Forces. UNMAS is also working with the Government
of Iraq to increase the number of civilian operators and maintain dialogue regarding access challenges. In light of Mosul’s liberation and the upcoming military operations countrywide, it will be critical that more financial and expert resources be made available to support operators, and I advocate before the Council, for the increased availability of qualified operators to appropriately respond to the probability of dense contamination.

Mr. President,

Of particular great concern is the rising popular sentiment in favour of collective punishment of families perceived to be associated with Da’esh. Countrywide, Iraqis perceived to have links with Da’esh are being increasingly subjected to evictions, confiscation of homes and other retribution and revenge measures. In May and June 2017, leaflets demanding that such families vacate their homes or suffer the consequences, including death, were distributed in areas of Anbar, Diyala, Ninawa, and Salah al-Din Governorates, leading to reports of the fleeing or the eviction of hundreds of families from Heet, Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul cities. Even without such “declared” intent in many places that were liberated earlier, inhabitants and returnees are often subject to violence and extra judicial arrests by armed groups, such as in Jurf al-Sakhr in Babil Governorate or in other locations in Diyala, Salah al-Din or Anbar Governorates.

Unlawful acts like forced evictions, without any evidence that the individuals subjected to eviction orders committed any crime or wrongdoing, are in clear contravention of the Constitution of Iraq and Iraq’s obligations under international law. UNAMI has recommended that the Prime Minister take urgent steps, within his prerogative to maintain the rule of law and order, to halt evictions and vindictive acts.
The return of displaced persons holds the key to rebuilding Iraq’s societal fabric and it is part of the national settlement and societal reconciliation processes. It must also be a top priority for the Government of Iraq and supported by the regional and international community. The rehabilitation of infrastructure, provision of basic services and employment opportunities throughout Iraq, including the southern Governorates, is equally important to restore confidence in the Government of Iraq and local authorities.

Mr. President,

UNAMI has prioritized accountability to provide justice to individuals affected by human rights violations and abuses committed in the ongoing armed conflict, in particular serious crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly genocide. Given the large-scale of serious crimes, UNAMI is pursuing a strategy at the national level with a view to allowing domestic courts to have jurisdiction over international crimes.

This would include legal reforms to introduce definitions of international crimes and penalties into legislation, as well as the establishment of a specialized court with a national jurisdiction to try perpetrators in conformity with international criminal law principles. Such legal reform would complement the criminal legal framework and provide for the establishment of the specialized courts with international principles. This initiative would also complement international initiatives to gather evidence on the most serious crimes committed by ISIL.

Similarly, it is fundamental to ensure that crimes and human rights violations and abuses are properly documented to support possible prosecutions where perpetrators can be identified and
apprehended. Preserving the evidence of crimes committed by Da’esh is important to ensure that justice will be done.

UNAMI remains concerned by the need to increase the capacity of the federal Government and the Government of the Kurdistan region to protect and systematically investigate crime sites, including mass graves. In the whole of Iraq, since June 2014, at least 70 mass graves have been discovered. Systematic preservation and excavation of these sites remains critical, given that they may contain evidence of the perpetrators of these crimes, but also important evidence of the identities of the victims.

Mr. President,

I would also like to mention the announcement by the Iraqi High Judicial Council, on 12 June, of the formation of a judicial committee, based in al-Shamal sub-district, Sinjar, to collect evidence with a view to fighting impunity for crimes committed against Yezidis. While the committee does not have a mandate to conduct prosecutions, the information gathered by the committee will play an important role in prosecutions by relevant Iraqi authorities.

Mr. President,

UNAMI continues to advocate for and provide technical support to legislative reform on minority rights issues in Iraq. On 26 April 2017, UNAMI supported the Iraqi Council of Representatives’ Human Rights Committee in conducting a public hearing on potential amendments to the draft Law on the Protection of Diversity and the Prevention of Discrimination [the Anti-Discrimination Bill]. UNAMI continues to engage with relevant Iraqi civil society groups and the Government on the final text of the bill to ensure that it is consistent with
international standards. UNAMI also continues to address information received on allegations of ill-treatment of minorities and violations of minorities’ rights.

UNAMI also continues with developing capacity of law enforcement personnel on the respect and protection of human rights and the rule of law. This aims at reforming law enforcement institutions in Iraq, including those in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, by providing specialized training courses for security forces to articulate and communicate a culture of human rights values as well as providing the necessary technical skills that are needed to uphold human rights while countering terrorism.

Mr. President,

On 19 June, on the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, I issued a statement urging the Government of Iraq to pursue accountability for the perpetrators of sexual violence and to deliver justice to victims. I emphasized the importance for the survivors of sexual violence to get an opportunity to tell their stories, observe the sentencing of offenders, and benefit from the solidarity and support of their communities.

I further commended the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, for taking positive steps to initiate the implementation the Joint Communiqué on Prevention and Response by appointing high-level focal points to serve as points of contacts with the United Nations and the international community. I am glad to report that discussions on the establishment of a mechanism to coordinate implementation of the Joint Communiqué have begun.
As the fight to eliminate Da’esh from Iraq comes to a close, the United Nations is repositioning its responses to sexual violence and prevention work within the framework of the Joint Communiqué in partnership with the Government and other key stakeholders including religious leaders and civil society, with a focus on supporting survivors of sexual violence reintegrate back to their communities.

I welcome the renewed commitment of the Government of Iraq towards ensuring the implementation of the Joint Communiqué, as affirmed by Prime Minister Abadi in his statement to mark the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual violence. He further confirmed the Government’s determination to move forward with the implementation of the National Action Plan, pursuant to the Iraqi Constitution, the Government’s Programme and human rights principles, and in accordance with international instruments and covenants.

Mr. President,
The UN, at the highest levels, has engaged with senior Iraqi officials on the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Grave Child Rights Violations. This Committee is expected to provide a forum to coordinate a response by the Iraqi authorities in regards to issues pertaining to children in armed conflict including occasional reports of recruitment and use of children, including by pro-government forces, and to discuss improved protection modalities with the UN. Furthermore, we urge the Government of Iraq to ensure that children arrested by security forces, including for terrorism-related charges, are transferred to juvenile institutions. The UN also intends to strengthen the engagement with religious leaders to seek their commitment in ending recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.
Mr. President,
Advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda remains one of our priorities. The Mission continues to work with the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government towards the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on UN Council Resolution 1325. On 12 June, the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security convened its third meeting on Iraq to assess the progress and challenges in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The Expert Group has stressed the imperative, in the post-Da’esh phase, to strengthen women’s representation in decision-making both in the liberated areas and at the national level, and ensure their participation in stabilization and recovery efforts, peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives and including prevention of violent extremism. The Expert Group has also recommended political, legal and financial support to women’s civil society organizations in order to bolster their work.

As noted by the Expert Group, funding limitations have impeded the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325. I call on international partners to pledge support to specialized programmes for women and female-headed households as well as earmark allocations for the integration of a gender perspective in all relevant UN coordinated programmes. I would like to advocate before the Council for the increased financial and technical support to the government, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr. President,
Allow me to now turn to the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the National Archives.
Close and friendly relations between Iraq and Kuwait were evident throughout the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi to Kuwait on 21 June, as part of his regional tour. In a meeting with the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the parties discussed means to settle all outstanding issues stemming from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Following the visit, Prime Minister Abadi underlined close cooperation, excellent relations, and progress that has been made between the two countries, further reaffirming his Government’s commitment to finalize all pending files with Kuwait. I would like to commend both Governments for fostering mutual respect, good will and collaboration over the years.

On 22 and 24 May, Iraq, for the first time in fourteen years, successfully hosted in Baghdad the ninety-ninth session of the Technical Sub-Committee of the tripartite mechanism, and the forty-fourth session of the Tripartite Commission, marking another positive step towards a steady and continuous strengthening of the bilateral relations with Kuwait. During the meeting the Iraqi delegation reiterated a full commitment of Iraq’s highest authorities to this international and humanitarian obligation and expressed its intent to continue working on the file until it reaches positive results.

Over the past year, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence has proven to be a dependable and reliable partner in this important humanitarian process. Unfortunately, lack of positive outcomes in finding the remains of missing persons remains a source of disappointment and frustration to both countries, and particularly to the families of the missing. I therefore encourage the Government of Iraq to continue working with the same resolve and determination to bring closure to the families who have lost loved ones. I further echo the statement issued by this
Security Council on 14 June 2017, calling on Iraq and Kuwait to continue their cooperation through the tripartite mechanism and to depend on steadfast commitment, action and adoption of new and innovative ways to push this file forward.

The same also applies to the missing property file, on which the Government of Iraq should utilize positive dynamics of its relationship with Kuwait, while redoubling its efforts to find missing Kuwaiti patrimony.

Being mindful of considerable challenges facing the Government of Iraq in its quest to achieve peace and stability, I would like to commend its resolve to work on the missing file, while welcoming support shown by the State of Kuwait and the international community throughout the years.