

**UNITED NATIONS  
PRESS RELEASE**



*For immediate release*

**Statement by Adama Dieng, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, on the situation in and around Mosul (Iraq)**

(New York, 1 November 2016) The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, condemns in the strongest terms the continued, absolute disregard for international human rights and international humanitarian law by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), demonstrated most recently by ISIL's actions in the context of ongoing military operations in and around Mosul.

Recent reports cite the abduction and execution by ISIL of large numbers of civilians, the use of civilians as human shields and incitement to violence by ISIL's leaders. There have also been reports of use of chemical weapons and collective punishment of members of Iraqi Security Forces and their relatives.

On 31 October, according to local reports, ISIL attempted to forcefully transfer as many as 25,000 people from the town of Hamam al-Alil to Talafar District, Mosul District and Abusaif town, the location of a military base where ISIL has reportedly carried out mass killings of civilians. The Special Adviser expresses grave concern for the safety of these civilians and the tens of thousands of others who have reportedly been forcibly relocated to be used as human shields. ISIL is likely to increase such tactics as the military operation progresses.

The Special Adviser stresses the importance of accountability for crimes committed by ISIL, noting that existing allegations are sufficiently strong for action to be taken immediately. He reiterates his call for all evidence of criminal activity to be properly documented and secured for future consideration by a court of justice.

He also reminds the Government of Iraq that its military operations must be conducted with full respect for international law and that all allegations of retaliatory violence by the security forces or by armed militias associated with them should be addressed effectively and without delay. "Under international law, command responsibility means that those in authority will be held accountable for the actions of forces under their control."

Special Adviser Dieng also expresses his concern at the increasing risk that armed groups acting on behalf of ethnic and religious communities could carry out retaliatory violence against members of the Sunni community. "Any kind of retaliatory violence against individuals on the basis of their membership of a specific group is unacceptable and will undermine the legitimate calls of these communities for their own protection and for their long-standing grievances to be addressed."

The Special Adviser acknowledges statements by the Government and by religious authorities calling for the protection of civilians. He expresses his strong support for ongoing humanitarian efforts and reiterates the right of all displaced persons to return to their places

of origin in dignity and safety. He encourages those in leadership positions to actively work to repair the existing rift among and within communities “Iraq is facing challenges that, if adequately addressed, provide an opportunity to plant the seeds for future peace. It is imperative that all Iraqi and international actors make their contribution to this just and critical effort today.”

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