

Statement by:

H.E. Mr. Gholamali Khoshroo,

Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

Before the General Assembly

On Agenda item 117:

“The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy”

New York, 1 July 2016

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by commending Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Argentina and their colleagues for the hard work of facilitating the text of the fifth biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

As we convene today to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the CT strategy , and since two years ago when we adopted the last review in 2014, tens of thousands of innocent civilians including women and children have fallen victim of

terrorism worldwide. On the other hand, the number of foreign terrorist fighters has come to the highest record number of 31,000 individuals that pose a serious threat to the international and regional peace and security. There are still millions of people living under terrorists' domination in Iraq and Syria. Terrorism is a multi-dimensional issue and it can only be defeated if a comprehensive plan in place is implemented by various relevant stakeholder in a coordinated manner. There should also be certain level of cooperation among all actors genuinely committed to fight terrorism particularly at the regional level. The strategy provides such common platform for cooperation.

Mr. President,

This year we have before us the Plan of Action presented by the Secretary-General, which is also in response to the request made through “the World against Violence and Violent Extremism” or “WAVE” resolution initially proposed by President Rouhani that was adopted by consensus on 18

December 2013. President Rouhani initiated this idea while foreseeing the process of radicalization of extremist elements in the region and beyond, leading to more violence and terrorism.

Violent extremism is the most critical challenge that the world is currently facing. It is evident that the Takfiri ideology, which has nothing to do with Islam, lies at very core of the predicament of our time. The international community needs, first and foremost, to focus on this vicious ideology that seek to instill hatred and anger in the hearts and minds of the youth everywhere in the world. Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are the first so-called “achievement” of extremist ideology, and ISIS and al-Nusra and its affiliates are the latest.

As the consequence of extremist ideologies held by Takfiri groups, thousands of individuals from over a hundred countries have joined ISIS and Al-Qaeda and their affiliated networks mainly in Syria and Iraq committing terrorist and other heinous inhumane acts, threatening security, stability and well being of

the societies where they operate. We could have avoided the current situation should we had addressed this phenomenon apart from any political or short sighted considerations soon in advance.

That is why we should focus on prevention and address the conditions conducive to violent extremism and terrorism and in this regard we welcome our debate this year on addressing the provision of the UN Plan of Action on preventing violent extremism. It is imperative that Member States strive to also create their own national plans dealing comprehensively with all drivers leading to violent extremism including through countering extremist narratives that aim to incite mainly young individuals to violence and terrorism.

Mr. President,

For decades a number of root causes and factors have led or contributed to the spread of terrorism. Unlawful use of force against other States, foreign aggression and occupation as well as foreign interference in internal affairs of other States are among such causes and factors to name a few. Moreover, excessive and disproportionate use of military force in the name of countering terrorists creates fertile ground for vicious cycles of violence and terrorism.

We are of the view that countering terrorism should be done in full conformity with the United Nations Charter, international law, international human rights and humanitarian law. Use of force in combating terrorism by outside forces without the explicit consent of the state concerned would constitute a flagrant violation of the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which in its turn would endanger rule of law at the international level.

Iran opposes any attempt to equate the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation, for self-determination and national liberation, with terrorism. Such equation is aimed at prolonging occupation of the territories and oppression of their people. The use of State power for suppression and violence against peoples struggling in opposition to foreign occupation and in exercising their inalienable right to self-determination should continue to be condemned. My delegation rejects accusations made by representative of the Israeli regime, which itself was built on the basis of intimidation, terror and occupation. This regime is well known as the single most significant practitioner of "state terrorism" responsible for many terrorist acts. Its atrocities against Palestinian people over so many decades have fueled extremism and other crises in our region and beyond.

Mr. President,

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the target of terrorist acts under different forms and manifestations, including State sponsored terrorism for the entire post-revolution era. We have a high regard for the large number of Iranian victims of terrorism, almost 17,000 individuals, affected by numerous terrorist attacks over the last 36 years. The Government has taken all possible measures to address their needs and concerns properly in close cooperation with the relevant civil society organizations.

We strongly reject the unilateral preparation of lists accusing other States of so-called “sponsoring terrorism” and any consequences thereof, which is inconsistent with international law and is merely exploited as a political tool to advance other agendas and political goals of enlisting governments. Such unilateral acts including through misusing of judicial means, would not only violate certain principles of international law but also undermine urgently required joint efforts by all States to

counter terrorism. The recent political decision of the US courts to seize properties of the Central Bank of Iran is a clear example of abusing banking and financial networks for fake and unsubstantiated claims to pressure our nation. The Iranian Government is committed to use all possible means at its disposal, including recourse to the International Court of Justice to recover its properties illegally seized by the US authorities.

We must recognize that selective or double standards and simply categorizing good and bad terrorism based on the short term political interests would not help us to uproot terrorism. Such wrong approaches could only undermine international trust and cooperation in countering terrorism. The international community should have a unified approach in fighting this scourge in an indiscriminate manner. As we have successfully accomplished the fifth biennial review of the Strategy these days, we must carefully follow national, regional and global plans to implement the Strategy in a comprehensive way, with the

cooperation of all, in a balanced manner, with sufficient attention to the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism while avoiding double standards and discrimination for better and lasting results.

I thank you.