

Statement by
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On:
"Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism"
(Agenda Item 108)

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At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement made earlier on this item on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We have gathered here to talk about measures to eliminate international terrorism at a time when hundreds of innocent civilians including women and children are being terrorized on a daily basis and parts of sovereign territories are being controlled by violent extremist groups. Unspeakable crimes are being committed by foreign terrorist fighters – now as many as 31,000 in South Western Asia- whose domination over the lands they rampantly "conquer" [!] has added an elusive feature to the notion of terrorism. Yet, the problem is further complicated by terrorist acts sparked and fueled by sectarian violent extremism and its frequent ugly manifestations around the globe.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the target of terrorist acts in different forms and manifestations including state-sponsored terrorism. Over the past three decades, around 17,000 individuals have been affected by terrorist attacks whose perpetrators have constantly received support from some States. Yet, ironically these States have purported to unilaterally accuse other States of sponsoring terrorism on no justifiable grounds and in flagrant violation of international law. Such unilateral acts, including through misusing

judicial means, would not only violate certain principles of international law but also undermine efforts by all States to counter terrorism. The political decision of the US courts to seize properties of the Central Bank of Iran in the past year is a clear example of abusing national banking and financial networks for fake and unsubstantiated claims to pressure our nation. The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to use all its legal arsenal including through recourse to the International Court of Justice to recover its properties illegally seized by the US authorities.

In line with its international commitments, the Islamic Republic of Iran finalized its national legislation concerning suppression of the financing of terrorism on 3 March 2016 and remains to be a forerunner in the regional efforts to combat terrorism. The law criminalizes any financial contribution to terrorists, whether individuals or organizations, involved in the commission of a wide range of acts including, *inter alia*, killing or serious bodily injury, hostage-taking, sabotage, damage to environment, smuggling materials with nuclear, chemical, biological or microbiological elements, dangerous acts against the safety and security of aviation and piracy. Yet, on the international plane, we are of the view that any action in countering the financing of terrorism should be taken through collective action, void of double standards, partiality and discrimination. Financing of terrorism cannot be fought unless through an objective, technical and non-political approach put into effect through constructive mutual cooperation.

We express our deep concern over provision of training, weaponry and explosives by certain countries to some terrorist groups as part of a plan to fight ISIS. One of these terrorist groups is known for carrying out several terrorist attacks in Iran and has openly declared its intention to continue its operations. We also witness that another notorious terrorist group responsible for several terrorist attacks in Iran has been delisted by some Member States in pursuit of their political agenda. This is indicative of the fact that some governments support and utilize terrorism to further their political goals despite their obligation, under numerous treaties and relevant UN resolutions, to fight terrorism and are therefore responsible for any terrorist attack carried out in Iran by these terrorist groups which have received financial and logistical support from them.

Violent extremism and terrorism are interlinked and pose a real challenge that plagues not only our region but the whole world. As our world increasingly recognizes no borders, all parts of the world are being more or less threatened by this spreading scourge. Many countries in our region, starting with Syria and Iraq, are among those that bear the brunt of the savagery and atrocities of extremist groups. At the same time, brutalities of Daesh, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabab and the like and their affiliates are witnessed in different parts of the world as diverse as Nigeria, Somali, Lebanon, Kenya, Tunisia, Libya, France, USA, Belgium and other areas, evidence of the global nature of the threat.

In the backdrop of these heinous crimes, the international community needs, first and foremost, to find the major drivers of violent extremism. While we agree that such scourges as dictatorship, poverty, corruption and discrimination could serve as contributing factors under certain circumstances, however, abundant experience and facts have clearly shown that only a destructive ideology could turn an otherwise peaceful human into a destructive being. The Takfiri ideology, which is alien to and incompatible with Islam, is the one that dehumanizes vulnerable individuals and drives them towards unthinkable criminal acts. The proponents of this ideology promote the excommunication of people and seek to mark as "unbelievers" those who do not believe and behave exactly like them and work towards their elimination.

Violent extremism is conducive to terrorism; and as a multi-dimensional issue, it can only be defeated if a comprehensive plan is put in place and implemented by various relevant stakeholders in a coordinated manner. As it cannot be eliminated only through military, political, or economic means, any effective strategy against it must entail in the first place a major cultural and ideological component. It is very encouraging that community leaders, including religious scholars from all denominations everywhere, defy violent extremist and the Takfiri ideology, denounce and reject it.

While we need to focus on the immediate and most important driver that promotes violent extremism, we must not lose sight of the role of foreign interventions and aggressions in our region, especially those in Iraq and Syria, on the formation and growth of current violent extremist groups. On the one hand, different kinds of interventions in South Western Asia, especially in the past decade, have led to the aggravation of the

situation and have created a breeding ground for extremists to grow. This is concurrent with the regrettable abusive invocation of article 51 of the UN Charter primarily designed to guarantee the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in case of an armed attack against a Member State, and now incurred to launch offensive attacks against Member States in clear violation of their sovereignty and territorial integrity in the name of fight against terrorism.

The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism as presented by the Secretary-General in follow-up to resolution 68/127 entitled “the World against Violence and Violent Extremism” or “WAVE” resolution initially proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran adopted by consensus on 18 December 2013 came as a step to fight violent extremism. ISIS and other affiliates of Al-Qaeda continue to attract youths from around the globe and collective coordinated efforts are needed at the international and regional levels to eradicate them.

Last but not least, legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation for self-determination and national liberation cannot be equated with terrorism. We oppose any efforts aimed at prolonging occupation of territories and oppression of their people. We also strongly condemn use of force for suppression and violence against peoples struggling in opposition to foreign occupation and in exercising their inalienable right to self-determination.