

Speech: Addressing Acts of Terrorism

Thank you Mr President. And let me start by thanking very sincerely Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, and Assistant Secretary-General Michele Coninsx for your presentations, for your ongoing efforts to work with member states on strengthening counter-terrorism. And we also thank the monitoring team for their contributions. And it's pleasing as ever to hear from both of you how closely you are working together and we welcome that very much, and the example that you gave Michelle on the Lake Chad Basin which I thought was comprehensive and valuable.

Mr President, the UK is proud that as a leading member of the coalition we have made a key contribution to the progress made against Daesh. However, Daesh is still the most significant terrorist threat to the UK and therefore it remains a top counter-terrorism priority for my country. Even with the prospect of losing all territory, Daesh continues to pose a threat to international peace and security around the world. While they have transitioned into a more diffused and networked structure, they retain their leadership and capacity to inspire and encourage others to do great harm. Their attacks not only take innocent lives, they threaten the safety and cohesion of all of our communities. And I would just echo what the Russian Ambassador said about the importance of cutting terrorists off from sources of finance.

Mr President, we know this is a threat which moves fast and takes on different forms. Returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, frustrated travellers and individuals or small groups perpetrating attacks with little centralised direction all mean that we must ensure our prevention measures and responses are tailored to the current threat. No state can do all this alone and we have previously mentioned to this Council that we have invited CTED to conduct an assessment of the UK. It is not only because we hope that we have a good story to tell and good practices and experiences to share but because we also value the opportunity to learn from other states and engage in a dialogue. And we would encourage others to do the same and invite CTED to carry out assessments.

In the UK, Mr President, we have a new Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Bill going through our system which aims to ensure that law enforcement and intelligence agencies have the powers they need to help keep the country safe from the threat posed by terrorism and via hostile state activity. We are seeing increased concerns about violence perpetrated by groups ascribing themselves to extreme right wing ideologies. In 2016, 'National Action' became the first right wing group to be proscribed in the United Kingdom. At that time the Home Secretary said that 'National Action is a racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic organisation which stirs up hatred, glorifies violence and promotes a vile ideology. It has absolutely no place in a Britain which works for everyone.'

We've also seen the disruption that unmanned aerial systems or drones can cause and we are ramping up our efforts to ensure that our responses and the

tools we have at hand keep pace with the evolving challenges.

Mr President, the Secretary-General's report highlights the roles of women. We have seen in so many places women exploited to carry out attacks, taking advantage of cultural and gender stereotypes and operational loopholes. Women are also victims of horrific acts of terrorism including, infamously, sexual violence at the hands of Daesh. And this Council has taken efforts to ensure accountability for those through UNSCR 2379. At the same time women have also been key partners in prevention and response and we know that many women's organisations are at the front lines doing important work on early warning, building resilience and rehabilitation and reintegration. We were pleased to contribute to the recent report by UNDP and ICAN, 'Invisible Women' on gender dimensions of return, rehabilitation and reintegration. All of this underscores the importance of integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue. In the United Kingdom our National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security includes strategic targets on preventing violent extremism. And we have a cross cutting counter-terrorism gender strategy. At the United Nations, we encourage both CTED and UNOCT to focus on concrete actions in this regard as outlined in resolution 2242, the UN Global Strategy and CTED's recent mandate. I just want to reiterate: this is in response to a real threat and is therefore about delivering real world counter-terrorism effectiveness.

Mr President, this Council's counter-terrorism framework lays out a carefully negotiated set of obligations and mandates to ensure that states can most effectively prevent and counter the threat. Now member states, of course, bear the primary responsibility to do so and many of the obligations are for national actors. But where additional capacity building is needed we need CTED to identify gaps and OCT and other UN partners to support efforts to fill those gaps. In doing so they should work closely with civil society, the private sector, experts, specialised UN agencies and partners, taking advantage of respective expertise and capabilities. It is so important that all work closely together, and again let me welcome Under-Secretary General Voronkov and ASG Coninx's personal leadership on this. It is also important that there is no confusion over mandates in the eyes of member states.

We welcome the active United Nations responses to the threat outlined in this report. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Office for Counter-Terrorism for its work in developing the multi-year appeal and the comprehensive and detailed information shared with member states on capacity building activities.

We all have a complicated task before us. We have just agreed a very interesting and substantive programme of work and list of activities for the Counter-Terrorism Committee and we know it is key that we remain responsive to emerging trends and dynamics. Let me reiterate our support for Executive Director Coninx and her determination to ensure that CTED continues to fulfil its mandate – handed to it by this Council in a comprehensive manner which takes into account the full spectrum of counter-terrorism issues including prevention, human rights and gender, for example, as well as legal law enforcement border security and other such matters. As terrorism adapts so too must we ensure that our responses reflect contemporary realities. And let me also support what ASG Coninx said about the Madrid Guiding

Principles and the importance not only of those and themselves but also in the way they were developed in the inclusive fashion with a range of access. And of course this is also very pertinent to OCT through its strategy as endorsed by the General Assembly.

Mr President, we have much in common. We all want to protect our countries, our people and our communities and our values. All of which terrorists threaten. That threat requires a multi-dimensional response. It requires us all to work together. And we must use and improve all the tools at our disposal to meet our responsibilities and obligations.

Thank you Mr President.