



**United Nations General Assembly | Sixth Committee (item 108)  
Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

3 October 2016

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau for your appointments. Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Dominican Republic on behalf of CELAC. I take this opportunity to address some issues from a national perspective.

Terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and manifestations. Repudiation of terrorism is enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution as a guiding principle of our foreign policy. My country is signatory to fourteen international legal instruments against terrorism negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as to the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism.

Our commitment to fighting terrorism and its financing has been translated into domestic legislation. In 2015, Brazil passed a bill to facilitate the implementation of Security Council resolutions concerning sanctions against individuals and entities affiliated with terrorist groups. Earlier this year, legislation was adopted defining the crime of terrorism.

In July, the General Assembly consensually concluded the fifth review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. As a defender of the centrality of the UN in the coordination of efforts against terrorism, Brazil attaches great importance to keeping the Strategy relevant and contemporary. It is equally crucial to continue enhancing coordination within the UN system so that this Organization remains effective in dealing with this challenge. A reform of the Security Council, in its composition and working methods, would also be beneficial for the UN's ability to prevent and counter this threat.

Mr. Chairman,

While the goal of eliminating international terrorism brings us together, some of the measures implemented in this realm have been divisive, due to their questionable legality. Terrorist organizations aim at provoking us into overreaction, so as to explore narratives of abuse and oppression. Unfortunately, many are falling into their trap. Counterterrorism will only be effective to the extent that it is consistent with the UN Charter and other norms of international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee laws. Any measure taken outside such parameters not only betrays the values it seeks to uphold, but also generates additional extremism conducive to terrorism.

The use of new communications technologies by terrorist organizations illustrates the evolving nature of the challenge. Internet and social media are being misused for inciting hatred and enabling recruitment. While acting against this, we must simultaneously guard against transgressions of the freedom of expression and the right to privacy. Brazil echoes CELAC's concern with the negative impact that State surveillance and/or interception of communications, including extraterritorially, may have on the enjoyment of human rights.

We have noted an increase in the number of letters submitted to the Security Council under Article 51 of the Charter seeking to justify resort to military action in the context of counterterrorism, most of the times “ex post facto”. At the most recent Security Council open debate on working methods, Brazil stressed the need for a follow-up of such communications and for assessing whether the obligations laid out in the Charter are being fulfilled. However difficult, we should not shy away from discussing fundamental legal issues involving the use of force.

Mr. Chairman,

The current absence of a universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism is detrimental to our shared goal of eliminating it. I reiterate the call made by CELAC regarding the need to overcome, with a sense of urgency, the current stalemate in the processes leading to the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism (CCIT) and to the convening of a high-level conference under the auspices of the UN. Both initiatives would contribute to direct our joint efforts in a more coordinated way and to create improved conditions for ensuring due process and compliance with human rights.

In the context of evolving trends of international terrorism, it is important to properly understand the linkages between the “terrorism”, “radicalism” and “violent extremism”. These phenomena may be linked in certain contexts, such as is the recruitment for the so-called “Islamic State”, but they are not intrinsically correlated. Racism, xenophobia and homophobia, for example, can lead to expressions of violent extremism that are heinous in themselves, but not necessarily related to the commission of terrorist acts. Brazil concurs with the Secretary-General in his assessment that conflating these concepts “may lead to the justification of an overly broad application of counter-terrorism measures, including against forms of conduct that should not qualify as terrorist acts”<sup>1</sup>.

Terrorism does not have universal or automatic linkages with transnational organized crime. Even in the specific circumstances in which a relationship between these phenomena might arise, different spheres of responsibility are involved – to which different remedies should be applied. While terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security, transnational organized crime remains an issue within the realm of public security.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country with no history of terrorist acts, Brazil has been attentive to prevention not only domestically, but also at the multilateral and regional levels. This scourge can only be countered through approaches that address its underlying causes, in particular those associated with protracted conflicts and social, political, economic and cultural exclusion. When legitimate grievances are tackled, improved conditions for a unified front against a common enemy are created.

Terrorist groups have been attracting recruits by offering them a false sense of purpose, belonging and identity that they probably failed to acquire elsewhere. Promoting inclusion should therefore be at the basis of efforts. It is crucial to dispel the stereotypes that associate terrorism with specific cultures, religions or ethnicities. There cannot be room for discriminatory laws, prejudice or xenophobia. Responses to the refugee crisis should decrease rather than increase the risks associated with violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

Let me reaffirm the Brazilian position, according to which there are no excuses for terrorist acts. We remain convinced that cooperation and dialogue within the United Nations will enhance our capacity to counter this plight – and that concluding the CCIT is pivotal in this endeavor.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).