

Statement by Turkey
at the Sixth Committee for the 71st Session of the General Assembly
under agenda item 108: “Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism”
(03.10.2016)

Mr. Chair,

Let me join other representatives in congratulating you on your election to the Bureau of the Sixth Committee.

Since the last session of the Sixth Committee, we have all been affected and wounded by acts of terrorism and so many lives were lost. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and pay respect to the memories of all the victims of terrorism.

Mr. Chair,

Turkey continues its counter-terrorism campaign against various terrorist organizations, most notably the Fethullah Gülen terrorist organization, or FETÖ, DEASH, PKK/PYD, as well as some left wing revolutionary groups.

The members of the international community have been well informed through the Turkish authorities, including our Permanent Mission, about the threat posed by FETÖ, a new generation of terrorist organizations, a clandestine cult, which dared to terrorize the Turkish people with a coup plot on the night of 15 July. We wish to express our gratitude to all who have stood by Turkey in that terrible ordeal; and those who cooperate with us in dealing with this threat.

Turkey, as a member of the Global Coalition against DEASH, actively contributes to the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions including by, preventing the travel of foreign terrorist fighters, enhancing border security, taking heightened measures to combat its finances and bringing to justice members of DAESH. The actions and steps taken in this respect have been shared on a regular basis with the relevant organs of the United Nations.

Horrendous attacks by the terrorist organization PKK have claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians in Turkey for the last 14 months. PKK is also active in Syria, Iraq and Europe with its affiliated entities, tries to exploit the developments in Syria and Iraq to try to portray itself as a legitimate group. We expect that our allies will maintain their stance and vigilance against PKK and affiliated groups. The counter-measures against PKK activities abroad are particularly important with a view to hindering financing, recruitment and propaganda activities.

Mr. Chair,

Our long and painful fight against terrorism has taught us that terrorism can only be addressed through international solidarity as well as effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation, due to the global and transnational character of terrorism. With this understanding in mind, our efforts to consolidate international solidarity

against terrorism are geared towards three main goals:

First, we actively contribute to international efforts in creating an international legal framework in countering terrorism. It is a necessity, in order to eliminate existing legal gaps between states, which are abused by terrorists. It is imperative that all states take necessary measures to ensure that members of terrorist organizations are brought to justice. In this context, implementation of the universal principle of “extradite or prosecute” is crucial. Turkey firmly believes that a clear message has to be given to terrorists: no act of terrorism should go unpunished. Members of terrorist organizations, including those targeting Turkey, should not be allowed to benefit from the right to asylum, so as to circumvent justice. Likewise, states should not turn a blind eye on propaganda, financial and recruitment activities of these terrorist organizations.

In this respect, all terrorist organizations ought to be fought with the same resolve. A selective approach with regard to terrorist organizations is unacceptable. In particular, a terrorist organization should not and cannot be legitimized, under the pretext that it is fighting another terrorist organization. Similarly, terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group.

Second, Turkey has long been advocating stronger operational cooperation, capacity building assistance and sharing of best practices between countries.

Last, but not the least, our painful experience has also taught us that we cannot succeed against terrorism unless we prevent the recruitment of new terrorists. This understanding is today termed as “countering/preventing violent extremism”. Turkey started implementing "countering violent extremism" programmes more than 20 years ago, and has been actively contributing to multilateral efforts in this regard, including in the framework of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), where important tools in the form of best practices and framework documents have been developed. More recently, Turkey has co-led the “Initiative to address the life cycle of radicalization” in the framework of the GCTF.

Mr. Chair,

Turkey sees the UN, by virtue of its universal representation and capacity to interlink various aspects in addressing terrorism, as the main platform for promoting a concerted approach against terrorism. The UN plays a role in leading international efforts in countering terrorism and addressing violent extremism at the global level, and guiding and assisting the member states in their own national efforts. The Plan of Action of the Secretary General on Preventing Violent Extremism is one of such useful initiatives.

Turkey is party to most of the UN conventions and protocols on terrorism. We actively contribute to capacity building efforts and work of the UN agencies such as the UN Counter-terrorism Centre and the Counter-terrorism Implementation Task Force. The UN Global Counter-terrorism Strategy provides guidance for all. We attach importance to its implementation across its four pillars. We welcome the Resolution on the outcome of the Fifth Review of the Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly on 1st July 2016, by which a strong message was sent to the

international community, and which reflected challenges such as that of foreign terrorist fighters. We continue to diligently implement relevant Security Council resolutions, notably 1373, 2178, 2199 and 2253.

On the other hand, sustained conflicts provide terrorist groups an opportunity for recruitment and safe havens. These facts compel us to enhance coherence and complementarity of our existing counter-terrorism measures by developing new approaches and tools.

Mr. Chair,

Our efforts to dismantle networks of recruitment, propaganda and finance of terrorist groups should continue, bearing in mind the close link between terrorism and organized crime, which is a primary source of terrorism financing. Our efforts should be sustained in order to prevent crimes such as drug trafficking, money-laundering and arms-smuggling.

Mr. Chair,

In concluding my remarks, I reaffirm Turkey's full commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The strong stance that ought to be taken against terrorism should be firmly grounded on democratic principles and the rule of law. We must bear in mind that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures, and are an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism strategy.

Thank you.