



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza
Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See

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Agenda Item 109: Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism
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Mr. Chair,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Sixth Committee. My delegation looks forward to collaborating with you during this session.

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See honors and remembers the victims of terrorism, as well as the communities and individuals who continue to suffer the effects of terrorism. Their memory and pain, as well as the desire not to subject anyone else to such pain, spur us on to work even harder to eliminate international terrorism.

Terrorism is unjustifiable and unacceptable. Combatting it requires worldwide cooperation and international solidarity to promote peace and security for all. Terrorism and the efforts to combat it draw attention to the four pillars at the foundation of the United Nations—peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, and sustainable, integral development.

As a threat to the United Nations' first pillar, global peace and security, terrorism knows no borders and requires multilateral efforts to counter it. The United Nations — and each Member State — have a responsibility to protect all from the threat of terrorism. The United Nations can uniquely and effectively facilitate the negotiation and adoption of multilateral policies and strategies to combat international terrorism.

The Holy See applauds the General Assembly's decision to establish a Working Group in this Committee that can foster more cohesive measures at the international level by finalizing the process on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, as well as by considering convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

Such heightened international cohesion is necessary in order to deny terrorists access to cyber technologies, a key element in recruiting new adherents from many parts of the world, in financing their activities, and in coordinating their terror attacks. International cooperation also ensures there is no safe harbor for those who perform acts of terrorism, abet violent extremism, or otherwise shelter terrorist group members. Peace and global security demand our putting aside our differences to combat the scourge of terrorism.

Terrorism is an affront to human rights and the rule of law, two other pillars of the United Nations. Simply put, no ideological, political, philosophical, racial, ethnic, or religious reasons can justify or excuse terrorism, as it violates fundamental human dignity and rights. Indeed, all too often, terrorism targets the most vulnerable and defenseless, the civilians, including women and children, thereby increasing the urgency of the international mandate to end it.

That urgency, however, cannot justify policies and measures that sacrifice the rule of law and human dignity in the name of security. It is imperative to uphold the rule of law, adhere strictly to the UN Charter and to international law, and respect fundamental human rights; otherwise, we risk corroding the very values that we seek to protect, alienating large parts of the world population, and diminishing the moral strength of such a strategy. An arbitrary application of unilateral measures, a selective approach to human rights and a disregard for cultures and religions, cannot win hearts and minds, particularly if they appear to be brazen demonstrations of superiority and deliberate acts of provocation.

The United Nation's fourth pillar, development, holds the long-term key to ending terrorism, by allowing us to address the underlying issues that cause it. International conventions serve to buttress that support the walls of fair and just societies. Good governance, social integration of marginalized populations, inclusive education, policies that address economic injustice, including job opportunities for those most susceptible to terrorist propaganda, and peacebuilding efforts that promote peaceful and inclusive societies all serve to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. If all governments address the challenges faced by those individuals and communities most at risk of radicalization and recruitment, with a view to fostering their social integration, the lies behind the distorted terrorist narrative and ideologies will be unmasked.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.