



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

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Item 109: Measures to eliminate international terrorism
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Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Philippines is pleased to see you leading this Committee. You and the Bureau can count on our full support.

We align with the statements of the NAM delivered by Iran and of ASEAN delivered by Cambodia.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on this item.

I wish to tell you the story of Marawi. Last 23 May, hundreds of men belonging to a Daesh-inspired terrorist organization called the "Maute Group" attacked Marawi, a Muslim-majority city in central Mindanao.

They seized control of a considerable part of the city and took civilians as hostages. The attack is arguably the most destructive act of terrorism in my country's history. It caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with around 200,000 persons displaced by the fighting.

After over four months, the conflict has caused 146 deaths among military and police forces, while 673 terrorists have been killed. Still a bad ratio. The edge of security is dulled by the long peace we've enjoyed since democracy was restored. Civilian casualties number 47 dead. The civilian killings were mostly of non-Muslims in the terrorists' attempt spark sectarian violence in the expectation their co-religionists would join in the carnage. But the people of Marawi would have nothing to do with the terrorists. There are reports of Muslim residents hiding their Christian neighbors.

Our government demonstrated forbearance, taking care not to unleash a greater force to minimize civilian casualties even at the cost of more military and police casualties - in what became a slow, punishing, door-to-door, street-by-street fight.

Military operations were carefully calibrated to achieve this aim, consistent with International Humanitarian Law - even if the government lost face by the slow and deliberate progress of its forces.

We pushed for the establishment of a "peace corridor" through the city to allow the safe passage of trapped civilians and enable vital supplies to reach those unable to leave their protected positions within the battle zone. With regard to the tens of thousands displaced, the government addressed health and sanitation concerns in the evacuation centers; but most of the displaced quickly found safety and shelter with families and friends. A testament to the strength of the Filipino family system, the Philippine Foreign Secretary said.

Harmony and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims, in a climate understanding and trust, had long set Marawi apart as the center of religious tolerance in Mindanao. That is why the terrorists chose Marawi to stake out their first presence in my country.

If they succeed there, they will have better chances elsewhere.

Mr Chairman, through Marawi, we witness the collapse of Daesh in Iraq and Syria, only to see it claw back in our part of the world. In the Philippines, we have discovered the intimate and symbiotic relationship between terrorism, poverty and the illegal drug trade. Terrorists were able to gather a motley assortment of extremists, criminals, mercenaries, and foreign fighters to take control of Marawi and reestablish in our part of the world their shattered caliphate in the Middle East.

Many of our best and bravest soldiers died in Marawi. The nation is eternally grateful to them. But the Armed Forces of the Philippines are regaining full control of Marawi, which must now be rebuilt - not least upon the unshakeable foundation of its inhabitants' goodness.

Terrorism found no friends or sympathizers there. With our focus and determination, and continuing support and assistance from the international community - for which we are thankful, peace and order, human rights, and the rule of law will prevail again in Marawi.

The Philippines condemns terrorism anywhere in the world, however inspired - by religious madness or individual perversity, like that in Las Vegas. We abhor it in all its

manifestations, wherever, by whomever, and against whomsoever committed. We can only agree with the American president - as we must always make sure - that terrorism is only for losers.

Mr Chairman, terrorism is an evil so pure, it must be countered with means that are sure - a global effort against terror on every front by every society worthy to be called one and not a gang. Terrorism is a global problem no country can tackle alone. President Rodrigo Duterte understands this. Counterterrorism is a cornerstone of his national agenda, and this includes strengthening cooperation with our regional partners especially Indonesia, Malaysia, and the rest of ASEAN, and with Australia and the United States, so that the Philippines can have a more effective defense system to crush terrorism when it will not be deterred.

The Philippines addresses violent extremism through the "whole of nation" approach. We engage women, the youth, Muslim and Christian leaders and teachers, NGOs, the academe, and the private sector, as partners in counter-radicalization, and as a collective force for moderation, peace, democracy, and development.

We raise the security awareness of local communities, and implement community awareness and target hardening programs within the framework of the rule of law and human rights as the fundamental approach to fighting terrorism.

We continue to train law enforcement and security experts and increase their capacity, in partnership with grassroots efforts, to detect and stop threats from homegrown violent extremists.

We look forward to working with Undersecretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and his team at the new UN Counterterrorism Office to bring into a cohesive whole the work on counterterrorism by Member States and the UN.

Key areas of cooperation we wish to deepen with the UN and non-UN actors, and with regional and bilateral partners, include threats to commercial aviation, nuclear terrorism, cybercrime, terrorist financing, support for victims of terrorism, and capacity building.

Two years ago the Philippines adopted a landmark law, the Strategic Trade Management Act which seeks to support counterterrorism by preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This complements our legal regime against terrorism and extremism, showcased by our Human Security Act of 2007, and our Anti-Money Laundering Law and Anti-Terrorist Financing Law. Our Anti-Money Laundering Council,

in cooperation with the UNODC, has been conducting trainings on countering the financing of terrorism.

As Chairman of ASEAN this year, President Duterte engages ASEAN Leaders in redoubling cooperative regional efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism. He will do so again next month in Manila at the ASEAN Summit.

Mr Chairman, there can be no political accommodation with terrorism. We cannot buy safety from terrorism by yielding to any of its demands. We cannot live with terrorism because it will not let us live. Together, we remain undaunted and determined to fight terrorism and secure to all, within our borders and outside the blessings of peace and safety.

Thank you.