



Statement by H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza  
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Agenda item 111: **Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism**  
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Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to extend to you and to the other members of the bureau my heartfelt congratulations on your election and assure you of my Delegation's continued collaboration in your important work.

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as no ideological, political, philosophical, racial, ethnic or religious reasons can justify or excuse the resort to terrorist acts. Indeed, terrorist acts violate human dignity, human rights and international humanitarian law; endanger the stability and cohesion of society; jeopardize human development and threaten international peace and security. Consequently, it is indispensable that effective measures be adopted by all to prevent the recruiting, training and financing of potential terrorists as well as the commission of terrorist acts. Particular attention must be given to preclude the radicalization and self-radicalization of the youth through the media and cyber technologies.

It should not be forgotten though that terrorism is a crime and it must be fought taking full advantage of the well-honed mechanisms of criminal law and international mutual assistance among police and judicial authorities. Security or military means are never sufficient to contrast terrorism and are rarely appropriate. The importance of the counter-terrorism conventions adopted by this Committee in ensuring international judicial cooperation should therefore not be underestimated.

The United Nations may play a key role in assisting Member States in preventing terrorist activities before they become threats to international peace and security. The United Nations' Counter-Terrorism Office is in fact uniquely placed to provide strategic leadership and centralized coordination so that States may focus their resources in those regions where counter-terrorism efforts are most need.

On the other hand, measures to combat terrorism must scrupulously respect human rights, international humanitarian law and due process. The drive to combat against terrorism must not let us lose sight of our principles: while it is critical to ensure that wrongdoers are held accountable for their actions, the rule of law is one of society's highest achievements and it must be preserved at all cost. Therefore, the fight against terrorism cannot justify policies or measures that sacrifice due process and human dignity in the name of security and, in particular, it can never justify the adoption of discriminatory or repressive measures against ethnic or religious minorities.

Only by respecting the fundamental principles of justice, it will be possible to gain the trust of those communities where terror organizations are pervasive. Conversely, an arbitrary

application of repressive measures, a selective approach to human rights and a brazen disregard for cultures and religions – especially if those practices are perceived to be blatant demonstrations of superiority or deliberate acts of provocation – will fail to win hearts and minds of the people.

Moreover, there can be no conflict between the effective implementation of measures to contrast terrorism and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Quite the contrary, as recognized by the Financial Actions Task Force (FATF-GAFI), legitimate humanitarian activities by charitable organizations, including by religiously inspired organizations, contribute positively to the prevention of terrorism. We must thus ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not limit nor inhibit the capacity of non-governmental and charitable organizations to provide humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups or persons, such as emergency relief to refugees and displaced persons and medical services to the wounded.

Mr. Chair,

Integral human development is key to preventing terrorism in the long term. Economic and social development may fulfill the many underlying grievances that lead to violent actions. States must therefore work together with local authorities, civil society and international organizations with a view to promoting development, protecting human rights and preventing the spread of those ideologies that foster terrorism. Local governments and grassroots organizations may play an essential role in supporting those strategies that keep youth from being radicalized by terrorist propaganda.

While human and economic development are indispensable to prevent terrorism, even fully developed societies may be susceptible to terrorism if terrorist propaganda and indoctrination are readily available online. Heightened international solidarity and coordinated response are needed to deny terrorist organizations access to the cyber technologies used in their recruitment and radicalization efforts.

Tolerance and dialogue among civilizations and the enhancement of interfaith and intercultural understanding are also conducive to the prevention of terrorism. Each and every person must be able to worship freely and openly, while religious leaders should encourage social cohesion and dialogue. Religious leaders must thus take the lead in rejecting the narratives and ideologies that engender radicalization, hatred and extremism. Consequently, the Holy See is deeply committed to promoting dialogue among religious and cultures with a view to creating a more peaceful society. To deter violence within the civil society, it is also indispensable to foster the expression of dissent and grievances through democratic channels. Respect for the rights of free assembly and freedom of speech are thus vital to defeat extremism.

Mr. Chair,

The Holy See encourages the continued efforts by this Committee to conclude the draft Comprehensive Convention on international terrorism as well as the negotiations on the possibility of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations. The conclusion of such a Comprehensive Convention would indeed restore to the General Assembly its rightful place in the development of universally agreed counter-terrorism norms.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.