



SIXTH COMMITTEE

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by

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Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

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Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election and thank you and the bureau of the Sixth Committee for your efforts. As always, I wish to convey my delegation's fullest support and pledge of cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The State of Israel is, unfortunately, no stranger to terrorism. Our small State faces daily threats from various terrorist groups and actors that aim to sow terror and fear in the hearts of all of our civilians. These terrorists and terrorist groups use a variety of tactics and methods that challenge law-abiding nations, including the notorious and ubiquitous practice of employing human shields from behind which they stockpile weapons and perpetrate heinous acts of terrorism. This *modus operandi* employed by terrorists seeks to set a trap for law-abiding states. Terrorists regularly hide amongst and launch attacks from the civilian population, endangering their lives, while at the same time targeting civilians on the other side of the equation, perpetrating a double war crime. Too often, however, the international community, focuses not upon terrorists' human shield tactics, but rather upon the response of the state threatened by these terrorists. When human shields lose their lives or are harmed and injured, the international community should focus first upon the actions and methodologies of the terrorists and place the blame squarely on **their** shoulders, rather than point an accusatory finger at the state trying to deal with this despicable tactic. When more outrage is directed at the state responding to terrorism, rather than at the terrorists themselves, terrorists become emboldened, this tactic spreads, and more civilians are endangered or harmed.

Recently, the international community came together and condemned this abhorrent practice, while reviewing and affirming the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. While this important condemnation is certainly commendable and worth noting, it is only a first step.

Mr. Chairperson,

In our fight against terrorism, Israel remains committed to the rule of law and the value of life. We seek legal tools that are in line with our domestic and international obligations to combat terrorism effectively, while upholding these principles. This is true even when faced with an enemy that has no regard for such obligations and even views our commitment to such principles as a weakness that is to be used and manipulated to create a strategic and public relations advantage.

One way we do this is through our domestic laws, which we hope will serve as a model for other States grappling with this threat. In this vein, it is important to refer to our comprehensive counterterrorism law, adopted in 2016, which offers a holistic approach to fighting terrorism in accordance with the law. This relatively new law not only offers clearer and more precise definitions of terrorist acts, but also addresses and criminalizes the circles of influence that provide material and other support to terrorists and terrorist acts. At the same time this law provides new and additional layers of due process protections, including the creation of mechanisms for challenging terror designations in legal proceedings.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have also made strides in recent years to combat the financing of terrorism, which has become a serious transnational and global challenge, and requires appropriate responses. Two years ago, Israel gained observer status with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and is currently undergoing review with the goal of becoming a full member. Israel is eager to cooperate with other states to help put an end to the financing of terrorism including in a variety of ways – be it by collaborating on specific cases or by exchanging views and sharing best practices.

As terror financing becomes more sophisticated and coordinated, the international community must employ more advanced methodologies and tools to combat this phenomenon. We urge all states to remember that terror financing can manifest itself in many forms. For example, funds, originally intended for social services or charity, may be transferred to an organization that diverts the monies to support terrorist activities. Alternatively, governments may monetarily reward or payroll those who

carry out attacks, or offer stipends to their families, fueling terrorism by providing both means and incentives.

Nations that are committed to combatting terrorism must constantly review both their counter-terrorism legislation and their criteria for foreign and humanitarian assistance, in order to ensure that they are not giving a hand - oftentimes unknowingly and inadvertently - to the financing of terrorism.

In this context, an Israeli delegation participated in the International Conference to Combat the Financing of Daesh and Al-Qaeda that took place in Paris this April. The conference allowed us to bring to the table the various actors who are combating and monitoring terror financing, and the forum served as a valuable venue for the exchange of information and positions. We remain ready to continue this important exchange in other contexts.

Mr. Chairperson,

Another major threat that we and others throughout the world face is that of incitement to violence, hate speech, and the glorification of terrorism. We have seen the internet and social media, which have the potential to be used to spread good and bring us closer together in this global village, being used increasingly to spread violence and hatred and recruit terrorists.

We, as a community of legal professionals, must work to develop tools that prevent and protect against incitement on the one hand, while never losing sight of the importance of freedom of expression and safeguarding that basic right.

Mr. Chairperson,

In addition to our efforts to prevent and foil terrorist attacks, we all must focus on supporting our citizens and fostering resilience, particularly when it comes to the victims of terrorism, their families and communities. Beyond our more formal efforts on the domestic legal plane and outreach to global partners, Israel and its citizens have much to offer in terms of sharing best practices to support victims of

terror and foster resilience. One stellar example of an Israeli NGO that specializes in this very kind of work is NATAL – the Israel Trauma Center for Victims of Terror. NATAL provides multidisciplinary treatment and support to direct and indirect victims of trauma due to terror and war in Israel and works to advance the resiliency of Israeli society through treatment, prevention, public awareness and research. NATAL is one of the many Israeli non-profit organizations that invests critical resources to ensure that families of terror victims are not alone grieving and coping with the immense tragedy that has befallen them. Israel is committed to continue to share its experience, best practices, knowledge and expertise in this area with other victims of terrorism and with States grappling with these issues worldwide. Israel is willing to be a liaison between interested States and relevant Israeli organizations.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is not enough to combat the global challenge of terrorism solely by means of domestic measures. We recognize the central role that both international cooperation and the United Nations must continue to play in this effort.

This is why Israel has always been and remains a full partner in global efforts and initiatives to fight terrorism and is a party to the core international conventions and instruments in the field of counterterrorism.

This is why we were a full partner and supported the recently adopted United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review.

And this is also why we recognize the need for and support a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that would adopt a “zero tolerance” approach to terrorism in all forms and would underline the fact that - without exception – no cause or grievance could ever justify or excuse terrorism in any form or manifestation.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we gather annually to discuss the global threat to security and peace, we must then turn these gatherings into action, and unite as one community of nations to combat terrorism. As it is the Sixth Committee that is tasked with focusing on legal issues, we must redouble our efforts both domestically and internationally to ensure that we develop and foster the best and most effective legal tools and remedies that will make a meaningful contribution to fight terrorism within the law. This includes ensuring, as lawyers committed to the rule of law, that we avoid confusing law and politics, as we so often do in the context of terrorism, and not allow for the selective application of legal principles in instances of terrorism, or for a clearly terrorist act to be misrepresented in “noble terms” based on pre-existing political leanings rather than the law. Terrorism is terrorism, and the victims of these horrific acts should be able to rely on us to rise to the challenge and ensure that these acts of indiscriminate violence are not distorted to serve narrow political purposes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.