

*Translated from Arabic*

Egypt takes a holistic approach to countering terrorism. It addresses not only the security aspects of the problem, but also its economic, social, cultural, educational and development dimensions, as well as its ideological and intellectual root causes.

States and their national institutions bear the primary responsibility for combating terrorism. Therefore, Egypt is conducting numerous awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes, development projects and related activities through ministries, specialized councils and a diverse range of mechanisms.

In 2014, the President of the Republic called for religious discourse to be reinvigorated and rectified. In response, religious institutions, in particular the Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism and Dar al-Ifta', have been playing an important role in countering extremist ideas and refuting takfirist fatwas, radical views and warped and erroneous interpretations that are based on the takfirist ideology promoted by terrorist organizations. Moreover, those institutions are promoting an alternative discourse that is based on a sound understanding of true religion.

Egyptian counter-terrorism laws have been drafted in keeping with United Nations resolutions and relevant regional and international agreements to which Egypt is a party, and in line with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with a view to combating terrorism effectively and fully in all its aspects. The laws are designed to enhance instruments for tackling the latest terrorist funding techniques.

Special mechanisms to implement Security Council resolutions on combating the financing of terrorism, in particular resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001) and subsequent related resolutions, need to be put in place and activated. Egypt has set up such mechanisms, underpinned by laws governing their operation, and put in place special measures for adding terrorists and terrorist entities to sanctions lists and freezing and managing their assets, lifting or adjusting the scope of such freezes in line with sanctions lists and proposing names for inclusion in those lists. The measures that Egypt has taken to meet its commitments on combating the financing of terrorism pursuant to international standards are adequate and consistent with the frameworks established by international organizations. The results of the questionnaire on combating the financing of terrorism that States submitted to the Financial Action Task Force clearly showed that Egypt meets those standards. The Egyptian Unit for Combating Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism (financial investigation unit) also won praise in an assessment report by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for its effective role domestically and abroad.

At the behest of the President, the first annual National Youth Conference was held in 2016 and the first annual World Youth Forum in 2017. Those events provide a unique opportunity for youth and political leaders to engage in an interactive dialogue and discuss topical issues, the most important of which is countering terrorism. One of the meetings that took place at the eighth National Youth Conference, which was held on 14 September 2019, was devoted to assessing local and regional experiences in countering terrorism. Participants reviewed how terror threats in the region and the world were evolving and discussed innovative ways of responding to the challenges posed by terrorism. In addition, one of the meetings that took place at the second World Youth Forum, which was held on 4 November 2018 in Sharm el-Sheikh, was devoted to the role of soft power in countering radical ideology and terrorism.

Egypt held the presidency of the African Union in 2019 and countering terrorism and extremism was one of the top priorities on its agenda. In that connection, the President of Egypt announced that the Aswan Forum for Peace and Sustainable Development would be launched on 11 and 12 December 2019 as a permanent platform, at the level of the region and the continent, for dialogue and interaction among political and intellectual leaders, peacemakers, development partners and experts from all countries of the continent and beyond, and a setting in which all could discuss the link between peace and sustainable development. Those aims are in line with the comprehensive counter-terrorism vision of Egypt and will help African States to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Egypt has organized many activities and events, most notably the Arab and African Youth Platform, which the city of Aswan, the African youth capital for 2019, hosted from 16 to 18 March 2019 under the auspices of the President of Egypt. At the conclusion of the Forum, the participants adopted a set of recommendations, in one of which they called on the World Youth Forum management to establish an Arab-African working group to develop a young people's vision for mechanisms to address intellectual polarization and extremism and present it as a youth initiative to eradicate terrorism and extremism. The creation of an Arab-African counter-terrorism mechanism was also proposed.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Capacity-building in the East Africa Region Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which was then co-chaired by Egypt and the European Union, hosted two workshops for experts from 15 to 18 April 2018, one on countering extremist ideology underlying terrorism in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, and another on international best practices in combating the financing of terrorism in

East Africa. As Co-Chairs of the Working Group, Egypt and the European Union, in conjunction with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, organized a high-level side event on combating the financing of terrorism on 26 September 2019 in New York on the margins of the latest session of the General Assembly. The event, in which Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov took part, was held to further implementation of Security Council resolution 2462 (2019), the adoption of which Egypt spearheaded. A number of other activities and events on topics concerning counter-terrorism are being organized in conjunction with the Counter-Terrorism Office.

In keeping with the commitment of Egypt to protect the rights of victims of terrorism and given the way in which terrorism infringes on people's enjoyment of their basic human rights, in particular the rights to life, personal security and development, the National Council for the Families of Victims and the Wounded, a subsidiary body of the Cabinet, plays an important role in the country's holistic approach to counter-terrorism. It provides the full range of support services and assistance to victims and their families. Such support includes free health-care services, medical treatment, housing, education and transportation, monthly ration cards, tourist excursions and seminars for young victims of terrorism aimed at protecting them from extremist ideology. Psychological rehabilitation services are also offered to the families and children of victims and to persons who have been left completely disabled as a result of terrorist attacks or who are suffering from post-traumatic stress. Young members of families that have fallen victim to terrorism are afforded access to suitable jobs based on their qualifications and small-scale projects are run in cooperation with the relevant agencies for the families of victims and the wounded.

Some 150 local civil society organizations have partnered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to support the State in its efforts to carry out the Wa'i awareness programme, the aim of which is to disseminate positive cultural and social values and prevent intellectual polarization. Those organizations are promoting community involvement, in particular by young people, through joint economic and cultural programmes and events. The aim is to forge positive social values, attitudes and conduct that can improve the quality of life, health and education and the social and economic status of all family members, thereby fostering sustainable development in society and across the country. Some 10,000 young people have contributed to the widespread implementation of the Wa'i programme, with the aim of protecting youth from terrorist ideology and promoting social change and development. On the international level, Egypt helped to launch the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism at the United Nations in New York. It was also part of the small group that drafted General Assembly resolution 73/305 on the enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism, which was adopted in June 2019.

Egypt continues to provide technical support through a range of agencies to build counter-terrorism capacity in African countries. They include the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development and the centres that Egypt hosts, in particular the Sahel-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Centre, and the Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding. The African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development is expected to play a key role and the Al-Azhar Observatory is working to counteract extremist ideology and train imams.

Over the past two years, Egypt has hosted numerous regional and international conferences, workshops and training courses on counter-terrorism issues in such areas as: analysing terrorist crimes; securing vital facilities and protecting dignitaries against terrorist operations; combating organized crime associated with terrorism; enhancing regional and international cooperation and mutual legal assistance in cases of terrorism; supporting and strengthening the legal system to address the problem of foreign terrorist fighters; enhancing international cooperation to counter the mounting threat posed by the financing of terrorism and money-laundering; suppressing the financing of terrorist networks by applying sanctions imposed under Security Council resolutions; using open sources to investigate cases of money-laundering and financing of terrorism; and countering extremism and radicalism conducive to terrorism. Some of those activities have been organized jointly with international and United Nations partners, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force.