

**Statement by
Satya Rodrigo, Chargé d’Affaires a.i.
Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations
before the Sixth Committee of the 75th Session of the UNGA
on Agenda Item 114: Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism
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Mr. Chairman,

Let me warmly congratulate you and members of the bureau on your election. Please be assured of Sri Lanka’s fullest cooperation and support in your work to steer this Committee to a successful conclusion.

At the outset my delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country that has suffered under the yoke of terrorism for nearly three decades, we unequivocally condemn in the strongest possible terms, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorism and violent extremism are a global menace that corrodes the very fabric of our societies. It fosters distrust, divides our communities, destroys lives and livelihoods and contributes to increased criminality and organized crimes. It destabilizes countries and entire regions, and thereby endangers international peace and security.

Sri Lanka is party to 11 International instruments concerning International Terrorism and Counter Terrorism, including acts against certain means of transport or specific facilities, acts against specific categories of persons, and specific acts on hostage-taking, terrorist bombings, nuclear terrorism and financing of terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

There has been and continues to be a symbiotic relationship between organized crime and terrorism. International networks with linkages to organized crime provide a strong support structure for terrorist groups, and directly related to financing of terrorism. These networks enable terrorists to propagate their ideologies, raise funds and acquire arms. They are funded by profits siphoned from drugs, arms and human trafficking, money laundering and cyber-crimes. It is therefore essential that member states share intelligence, databases and expertise to counter this issue. It is also essential to enhance international cooperation to facilitate extradition and mutual legal assistance.

During our own 30-year struggle against terrorism, Sri Lanka was in the forefront to emphasize the need for recognition of the dangers of financing of terrorism. The terrorist

organization - the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), that existed in Sri Lanka, prior to its military defeat in 2009, had many international networks and linkages to organized crime that served as a critical, lucrative lifeline for their ability to engage in suicide attacks against civilians, political leaders and opponents, indiscriminate bombing of civilian spaces and critical infrastructure, and wage war against the state through a well-developed ground guerrilla force, complemented by sea capabilities and, although rudimentary, air capabilities. A steady flow of funds was generated through a variety of local and transnational criminal activities, which included trafficking of humans, drugs, arms, wildlife; human smuggling; forgeries; extortion of funds from the diaspora and 'protection money' from those living in areas in which the group operated¹. Notwithstanding their military defeat in Sri Lanka, the well-established networks abroad persist.

We remain an active participant in global efforts to counter the illegal movement of funds for terrorist purposes, and will continue to support the work of the General Assembly and the Security Council in coordinating counter-terrorism efforts and establishing legal norms

Mr. Chairman,

Following the end of the internal armed conflict, Sri Lanka continues to work with its international partners to eliminate all forms of financing for terrorism, whether direct or indirect. In this regard, Sri Lanka works closely with the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) of the UN Security Council. Sri Lanka has also taken a number of legislative measures.

Sri Lanka's legal framework for Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) was implemented in the 2012/2013 period with the issue of Regulations, Directives and Circulars to implement UNSCR 1267 and UNSCR 1373 and subsequent Resolutions. The Government has enacted the Prevention of Money Laundering Act No. 5 of 2006 and the Financial Transactions Reporting Act, No. 6 of 2006 in order to strengthen the financial institutions to monitor the flow of funds for terrorist purposes. Sri Lanka belongs to the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regional body. A Targeted Financial Sanctions (TFS) Committee has been appointed to implement Targeted Financial Sanctions on Terrorist Financing and Proliferation Financing of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

This regulatory framework was supported in implementation by, the supervision of Financial Institutions (FIs), Designated Non-Finance Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) to ensure compliance, conduct of awareness programs for FIs, DNFBs, and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) on AML/CFT aspects, strengthening the functioning of the

¹ "Funding Terror: The Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam And Their Criminal Activities In Canada And The Western World", December 26, 1995 <https://mackenzieinstitute.com/1995/12/funding-terror-the-liberation-tigers-of-tamil-eelam-and-their-criminal-activities-in-canada-and-the-western-world/>

Office of the Competent Authority (OCA) and Inter-Agency Coordination for holistic implementation.

In recognition of these efforts, the European Commission has delisted Sri Lanka from its list of high-risk third countries with anti-money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism strategic deficiencies, published in May of this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The brutal Easter Sunday Terrorist Attacks last April in Sri Lanka, resulted in the tragic loss of over 250 civilian lives, including foreign visitors from 14 different countries, engaged in religious and leisure activities. These senseless attacks marred the peace that had been hard won and enjoyed by Sri Lanka, since militarily neutralizing the LTTE in 2009. We would like to extend our deep appreciation to the international community for the unhesitant support and solidarity extended to Sri Lanka following the attacks, that supported our resolve to once again rebuild society and eliminate the new threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

Following the attacks, action was taken by the authorities under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979, as amended, and regulations formulated under same, and the United Nations Regulations Act of 2012, giving effect to UNSCR 1373, to proscribe the three main organizations that had been directly linked to the attacks, as well as individuals who had funded the dastardly actions. Sri Lanka also took action to initiate the process of promulgating local legislation to give effect to relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on countering violent extremism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters.

Mr. Chairman,

The threat of terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorism is not limited to any one country or region, but crosses national borders.

Today, the front line against terrorism is increasingly the realm of cyberspace- where terrorist groups exploit social media tools and the internet to spread their propaganda, recruit new followers and coordinate attacks. Many actors target and manipulate youth-most at-risk of indoctrination, perceptions of grievances and alienation to radicalize and turn impressionable minds towards violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman,

Governments cannot combat this alone. There is a crucial need to work with civil society, our community and religious leaders - to ensure that early warning signs of radicalization are recognized that can make them easy prey for terrorist groups.

In this regard, it is also vitally important that the media helps disseminate the values to foster a culture of peace and a forum for dialogue and understanding. We must actively seek to prevent the abuse of social media and advanced technology that promote the culture of racism, hate and intolerance.

Sri Lanka is urgently addressing the issues of radicalization of our youth and preventing and countering violent extremism through a social prism as well as a law enforcement angle. Many projects have been launched to mitigate radicalization.

Mr. Chairman,

The transnational nature of terrorism means that we need multilateral cooperation. There is a vital need to strengthen the capacities of our counter-terrorism structures and institutions. We must complement our counter-terrorism efforts in the security realm with concerted efforts to identify and address the root causes.

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and related resolutions provide a comprehensive framework that can be built on to guide the member States. We take this opportunity to thank the Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) for its work. We are confident the Office will help strengthen the capability of the United Nations system to ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

In expanding our cooperation with other member States, Sri Lanka has recently signed several international and mutual legal assistance agreements to address counter-terrorism cooperation.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism established by the General Assembly has made a vital contribution to strengthen the international legal framework against terrorism.

We recognize that the building blocks for a normative framework in enhancing international cooperation are contained in the efforts undertaken by the Ad Hoc Committee and the Working Group of the Sixth Committee that has been chaired by Sri Lanka for the past two decades, demonstrated by "new generation" conventions such as The Terrorist Bombings Convention, Terrorist Financing Convention and the Nuclear Terrorism Convention. Despite broad support for the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT), a positive conclusion to negotiations continues to elude us. Sri Lanka stresses the importance of finalizing these negotiations as a vital step in our collective efforts to combat terrorism.

As we mark this milestone of the 75th session of the General Assembly, this is opportune time for us to focus and show the necessary political will to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion. To this end, Sri Lanka urges member states to work with renewed

vigor and commitment to seek to bridge differences. We look forward to more constructive dialogue with all countries and will continue to advocate tirelessly against the scourge of terrorism.

It is imperative that we send a clear message on our collective resolve to search for constructive and cooperative ways to work with greater purpose in our work before us, for the betterment of all, and our future generations.

I thank you.