

Sixth Committee, 76th session: Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)

I have the honour today of speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, and my own country, New Zealand.

We reiterate our full condemnation of terrorism and violent extremism in all forms and manifestations. CANZ countries remain committed to the fight against international terrorism and support the United Nations' role in addressing this shared challenge.

Terrorism continues to threaten global peace and security, and the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened many key drivers of radicalisation to violence, such as inequality and strained social and political stability. The threat continues to evolve and present new challenges, which requires a co-ordinated response from the international community.

Each of our own countries has been impacted directly by terrorism within our own borders. We and all of our international partners have also felt the effects of terrorism abroad, and we have also worked closely together over many years to combat the scourge of terrorism through international coalitions and partnerships which recognise the transnational nature of this tragic phenomenon. CANZ will continue to support efforts to counter violent extremism and the networks that support it, and reiterates its steadfast commitment to support and work collaboratively with all others in this regard.

In doing so, we also recognise that the strongest weapon we have against terrorism is a resilient, diverse and inclusive society, where all members can thrive and where violent extremist ideologies of any kind cannot flourish.

We reaffirm our support for the comprehensive approach of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Through joint actions taken in compliance with Security Council resolutions and international law, the international community can take action against the global terrorist threat.

The international community also has a responsibility to address the needs of victims of terrorism. CANZ members proudly support the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, which promotes a comprehensive approach towards the promotion and protection of victims' rights and needs, giving them a voice internationally and promoting their role in countering terrorist narratives. We welcome efforts to continue ensuring that victims are at the heart of the planning and decision making process.

We note, in particular, the importance of integrating gender considerations and the Women, Peace and Security agenda into our analysis and response, particularly given the ways in which gender is exploited by violent extremist and terrorist organizations to recruit and maintain members. We also note women's significant and powerful role as buffers to violent extremism and terrorism and their efforts at the forefront to protect their families and communities.

Technologies and online social networks can be exploited for terrorist purposes, to espouse ideologies, build networks and facilitate financing. CANZ believes that a collaborative approach between governments, online service providers, civil society and non-governmental organisations focused on protecting a free, open and secure internet is crucial in addressing terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet. CANZ notes the significant progress made on the commitments of the Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online and will work to continue this momentum.

Member States continue to grapple with the challenges presented by the return of their citizens who have travelled abroad to associate with terrorist groups. These challenges demand a comprehensive approach to find enduring solutions for society, which includes preventive, security, law enforcement, and rehabilitative and reintegration measures. Responses must be tailored to the individual and co-ordinated between government agencies and civil society, ensuring laws are enforced, national security is protected, human rights are protected and society is kept safe. Particular care must be taken to consider the welfare and best interests of children of violent extremist travellers.

CANZ remain committed to working with other Member States to develop coordinated and effective measures to counter terrorism and all forms of violent extremism. We remind all Member States of our continuing commitments and obligations under UNSC Resolutions 1373, 2178, and their successor resolutions, which provide the means for Member States to effectively investigate and prosecute terrorist acts. Incorporating these obligations into domestic law is critical to effectively addressing terrorism and strengthening international law enforcement cooperation. We note also the need to ensure that all actions taken to combat international terrorism comply with the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international refugee law and other international obligations.

Please allow me in conclusion to reiterate our commitment to working with United Nations bodies, governments, civil society, victims, and the private sector to counter terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms. We will continue to work with others bilaterally, regionally and internationally towards this goal. This threat will continue to evolve, so we must be prepared to cooperate to develop effective, targeted measures in response.

Thank you.