



**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia**  
**Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations**  
**UNGA 77 – Sixth Committee**  
**Agenda item 112: Measures to eliminate international terrorism**  
New York, 4 October 2022

Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. You have my delegation's assurance of our continued collaboration in your important work.

Terrorism deserves our absolute condemnation. It strikes at peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, and development—the very pillars on which the United Nations was founded.

Mr. Chair,

Terrorism leaves no one unharmed. Its immediate victims are often those found in the most vulnerable situations—including women and children. Frequently, those victims are further victimized as terrorism disrupts the economic and social infrastructure necessary for integral human development.

But make no mistake: by its nature, terrorism also compromises the perpetrator's own dignity, hopes and ideals. As Pope Francis has reminded us, we must “free ourselves of those reductive and destructive notions that offend the name of God by harshness, extremism and forms of fundamentalism, and profane it through hatred, fanaticism and terrorism, disfiguring the image of man as well.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Chair,

Terrorism also challenges States to find an appropriate response within the framework of the rule of law. Failing to respect the rule of law when addressing terrorist threats risks further radicalizing the very elements public authorities are trying to counter. Therefore, an effective response to terrorism requires scrupulous adherence to due process, as well as to international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Opening and Plenary Session of the VII Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions*, September 14, 2022.

We must also ensure that counter-terrorism measures, including international sanctions, do not inhibit the provision of humanitarian aid. Delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need must be the paramount goal. Humanitarian aid not only relieves the suffering of terrorism's victims, but it also sends hope to and upholds the dignity of those who might otherwise fall prey to the terrorists' radicalization and recruitment efforts.

Mr. Chair,

We must build upon our past efforts to address the root causes of terrorism — the economic, political and socio-economic factors that may foment grievances. We support a whole-of-society approach to countering terrorism: educating youth, lessening economic disparity and promoting dialogue. Advancing poverty reduction measures, promoting the work of local communities and grassroots programs, and supporting educational institutions are all essential to prevent terrorism.

Although extremists often exploit religious identity to promote radical ideologies, authentic religious belief is never at the root of terrorism. As noted in the *Document on Human Fraternity*, signed by Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, "religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood".<sup>2</sup> In that context, public authorities should engage with religious leaders and faith-based organizations, who would be more than happy to assist in our counter terrorism efforts.

Mr. Chair,

Indifference to terrorism is not an option. We are all threatened when terrorism strikes. It is only through international cooperation that we can address this threat. My delegation therefore supports this Committee's continuing efforts towards finalizing the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism<sup>3</sup>.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, "A Document on Human Fraternity", Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019.