



## UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

799 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017-3505

### **Statement at the 78<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Sixth Committee Agenda Item 109: Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism**

**Dorothy Patton, Attorney-Adviser  
United States Mission to the United Nations  
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#### **As Prepared**

Thank you, Chair.

It has long been recognized by the United Nations that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations. Although the terrorism landscape has evolved over the years, the human suffering caused by terrorism and violent extremism remains the same - tragic and profound. The attack in Ankara just yesterday demonstrates the continuing threat, and the United States extends deepest condolences to the people of Türkiye during this tragic time. Every year, individuals, families, communities, and nations are devastated by terrorist violence. It is for this reason that we come together as an international community to rigorously pursue measures to eliminate international terrorism.

The United Nations plays a critical role in strengthening the capacity of Member States to prevent and counter terrorism, while highlighting the value of gender-sensitive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and the importance of respecting human rights and the rule of law. Together, we have taken many steps to diminish terrorist threats, including by targeting terrorist networks' financing and support systems, countering their propaganda, and preventing their travel.

Over the past year, there have been several achievements in the counterterrorism space, most notably the adoption of the General Assembly resolution that reviewed the Global Counterterrorism Strategy. The four pillars of the GCTS remain as relevant today as when the Strategy was initially adopted in 2006. The resolution adopted by consensus earlier this year contains critical guidance for Member States, including on the important role of civil society, gender equality, and respect for human rights in approaches to countering terrorism. The GCTS resolution also now calls on Member States to provide technical assistance and to help build capacity to repatriate, rehabilitate, reintegrate, and where appropriate, prosecute foreign terrorist fighters and associated family members. In so doing, the resolution recognizes that foreign terrorist fighters in inadequate detention facilities and associated family members living in overburdened camps in Syria and Iraq pose a serious security threat and constitute a dire humanitarian crisis, raising human rights concerns. Repatriation of Member States' nationals is essential to preventing a resurgence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria and the uncontrolled return of

foreign terrorist fighters to countries of origin in the future. The United States stands ready to assist Member States in their efforts on this front.

While recognizing the advancements we have made as an international community to address terrorism, we also must recognize that there remains much to be done. We should remain united in our collective efforts to prevent and counter the rising and changing threat posed by Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremists or “REMVEs.” REMVE actors target religious and racial minorities, immigrants, women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, and other perceived enemies. Many attacks that are categorized as REMVE are inspired by transnational, white supremacist movements. We consider REMVE to be one of the most pressing counterterrorism challenges facing the international community today due to loose, leaderless networks and the ease of access to REMVE propaganda - online and offline - that can mobilize and radicalize followers to violence.

We should also commit to addressing the threat posed by the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, including terrorist radicalization, recruitment, mobilization, planning and operations. The speed at which technologies – such as generative artificial intelligence - are evolving presents a real challenge which requires an innovative and comprehensive approach. In addition to *countering* terrorism online, we should also focus on *preventing* it by cultivating critical thinking skills, media literacy, and online public safety awareness. These efforts can help build resilience against terrorist narratives among those who may be vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization to violence. Public-private partnerships and international cooperation are key to these endeavors, including through the UN and the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Yet more research is needed in order to bolster our collective abilities to address these emerging threats, including on questions such as when and why consuming online content leads to offline physical harm. The United States, along with key partners, is supporting a project to facilitate more independent research and looks forward to engagement with others on additional opportunities to expand upon this work.

It is critical that all efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism respect human rights, including freedom of expression, religion or belief, and the rule-of-law. In fact, efforts to stifle freedom of expression, religion or belief and other human rights and fundamental freedoms under the guise of counterterrorism are counterproductive, at times providing fuel for terrorist narratives. The international community must recommit to multilateral efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism, utilizing whole-of-society approaches that incorporate a broad range of actors.

Concerning a “Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism,” we will listen carefully to delegates’ statements. However, it is critical that the United Nations send united, unambiguous signals when it comes to terrorism; otherwise, we risk some of the progress that we have made.

To close, the United States reiterates its firm condemnation of terrorism in all forms and manifestations and reiterates its commitment to work with the international community to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Thank you.