



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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STATEMENT

by

Ms. Hawanatu Kebe
First Secretary

at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item 109:
“Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism”

New York, 2nd October 2023

Check Against Delivery

Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. The **Delegation of Sierra Leone** congratulates you, **Chair**, on your election as Chair of the Sixth Committee for this 78th session, and we equally congratulate your Bureau members on their respective election as well. We have no doubt that your extensive diplomatic experience will lead to a successful conclusion of our work during this session. I assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation.
2. My delegation respectively associates this statement with the statements delivered by the Distinguished Representatives of the **Republic of Uganda** on behalf of the **African Group**, the **Islamic Republic of Iran** on behalf of the **Non-Aligned Movement**, and the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** on behalf of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation**.

3. We thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document **A/78/221**. We take due note of the content thereof.

Chair,

4. Sierra Leone underscores its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations wherever and by whomsoever committed.

5. The Delegation of Sierra Leone in this debate will highlight four points.

6. **First**, and following the unprecedented acts of domestic terrorism, including on the 10th of August 2022, the Government of Sierra Leone continues to take steps to ensure accountability for the loss of lives inclusive of civilians and officers of the Sierra Leone Police, as well as the destruction of public and private properties. A Special Committee has been established to conduct thorough, impartial, and independent investigations and bring to justice the responsible perpetrators.

7. The 10th of August 2023 acts of terrorism and other similar incidents had critical transnational components in the form of incitement through the use, or rather, the misuse of the internet, including social media platforms. In this regard, we reiterate the absolute need for international cooperation to address the problem of misuse of the internet and social media to incite acts of terrorism and dissemination of extremism and hate speech, and member States must comply with their international obligations to ensure effective accountability in the transnational context.

8. **Second**, the Delegation of Sierra Leone continues to express deep concerns on the regrettable proliferated presence of terrorist groups in the Sahel and parts of the West African subregion, and the cowardly acts of terrorism. By the end of June 2023 based on Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) information, there were 408 incidents with 4,890 fatalities recorded in Burkina Faso; 57 incidents with 786 fatalities recorded in Nigeria; 47 incidents and 273 fatalities recorded in

Mali; 40 incidents and 53 fatalities recorded in Niger; and 15 incidents and 35 fatalities recorded in Benin.

9. These are not just statistics, but the lives of innocent civilians lost, families devastated, and communities terrorized. The ECOWAS Commission has identified capacity-building opportunities needed to take forward efforts on the fight against terrorism. These include member States of ECOWAS to deepen information and intelligence sharing on terrorists' activities; the need to commit to substantial resources to the fight against terrorism at the national level and to the **Regional Security Fund** for the implementation of the **2020-2024 Plan of Action for the Eradication of Terrorism** in the ECOWAS space; promote sensitization initiatives and counter-terrorism narratives to prevent violent extremism; and technical and financial support from the international community and organizations, including the United Nations.

10. My delegation therefore welcomes the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 22 September 2023 between the United Nations Office

of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and ECOWAS to strengthen their partnership in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. The MOU, we note, establishes a framework for cooperation between both entities over the next 5 years on a range of security and counter-terrorism initiatives, including preventative efforts to counter terrorist travel, financing, access to weapons and misuse of information and communications technologies; border security and management; prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR), and the delivery of counter-terrorism training programmes in Africa.

On the **third** point, and turning to the international level, Sierra Leone welcomes the conclusion of the 8th Review of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the adoption of General Assembly consensual resolution (77/298). We call for the meaningful implementation of the Strategy with real impact in field and lives of people. We further restate our call for strong international cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Chair,

11. On the fourth and final point, the Delegation of Sierra Leone continues to urge for progress to *finalizing the process on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism [CCIT]; and the convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations.*

As Sierra Leone continues to restate its positions on the two issues, reiterating our support for the urgent finalization of the CCIT; and the convening of a high-level conference on terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations, there is an imperative to resolve the impasse. Reiteration of positions will not resolve the outstanding issues and the current impasse that exists. Member States **MUST** look at their respective and common interests in a holistic manner in order to achieve progress.

12. **I thank you.**