



United Nations General Assembly | Sixth Committee

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

(Agenda item 110)

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(check against delivery)

Mister Chair,

The elimination of international terrorism has been somehow on the agenda of the General Assembly since its 27th session. Since 1963, the international community has elaborated 19 international legal instruments to prevent terrorist acts. After the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee have produced a plethora of resolutions, presidential statements, declarations and other instruments on terrorism.

Regrettably, the debate on the topic in the United Nations and our prolific legislative activity over the years have not borne yet what should be their most expected fruit: an internationally agreed-upon definition of terrorism.

It is not surprising then to repeatedly hear frequent accusations of selectivity and double standards in the fight against terrorism, despite our consensual condemnation of this scourge in all its forms and manifestations.

We certainly had progress in fighting terrorism, but we are forced to acknowledge our failure so far in getting close to eliminating it. The fragmented international legal framework on the matter we currently have is far from being the sole responsible for our setbacks. However, it is not conducive to a comprehensive and durable solution to the threat posed by terrorism.

There is much more we can do to counter this threat more effectively, in a way that is harmonious rather than divisive. We should not let the current circumstances of acute polarization stop us from reaching a broader common ground on the matter nor allow ourselves to be paralyzed by skepticism.

It is high time we negotiated a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. The negotiations will be the occasion for us to smooth out our differences and allow us to mount a real united front against terrorism.

An international definition of terrorism will also enable us to counter an alarming trend of undue expansion of the term's meaning. The prosecution of terrorism must abide by the principle of strict legality, which guides criminal law. It should not be misused as a ruse to suppress legitimate political opposition; isolate, for political gain, governments that do not really promote terrorism; or to punish civilian populations, what constitutes a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law.

By adopting resolution 2664, with its humanitarian exemption, the Security Council was able to strike a balance between the coercive power it wields in applying sanctions and the need to minimize their unintended adverse consequences. Brazil looks forward to its renewal in December for the Da'esh and Al-Qaida Sanctions Regime.

Mister Chair,

Although we are a legal committee, we are all aware that norms on their own are not enough to overcome the social challenges facing us. Terrorism has deeper causes beyond an insufficient legal framework to regulate the fight against it.

In the last review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to addressing the conditions conducive

to the spread of terrorism. We discussed topics such as dehumanization of victims, violations of human rights, stereotyping and discrimination, political exclusion, socioeconomic marginalization and lack of good governance.

If we do not strengthen our action on development and human rights, we will not be successful in countering terrorism. A balanced implementation of the Strategy across its four pillars is, therefore, essential in this undertaking.

Thank you.