



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

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE 80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY SIXTH COMMITTEE DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEM
109: “MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM”

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER, UNHQ

6 - 7 OCTOBER 2025

(Please check against delivery)

Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. The delegation of Sierra Leone congratulates you, Chair, on your election to steer the work of the Sixth Committee for the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly and assures you of my delegation's full cooperation.
2. My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the distinguished representatives of Cameroon 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/80/177, and we commend Member States and international organizations that responded to the Secretary-General's request for information.

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4. Sierra Leone continues to stress its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomever committed, as they violate international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
5. No justification can be found for acts of terrorism. In this regard, we welcome the **8th Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS)** and call for openness in negotiations to reach consensus on key points during the 9th Review in 2026, which will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the Strategy's adoption. Periodic updates to the Strategy are essential to ensure it continues to address the evolving concerns and challenges of Member States.
6. Building on the outcomes of the 8th GCTS Review is crucial, particularly in addressing the return of foreign terrorist fighters, countering extremist narratives, and preventing the misuse of emerging technologies, including the internet and social media platforms, for recruitment and terrorist purposes.

Chair,

7. **At the national level**, Sierra Leone has made significant progress. In March, we enacted the *National Counter-Terrorism Act, 2024*, strengthening enforcement against terrorism, terrorist financing, and related offences. In August 2024, we launched the *National Security Policy and Strategy* with support from ECOWAS and other partners to modernize our security framework and enhance response mechanisms. At the sub-regional level, the Mano River Union Initiative is deepening cooperation among Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia in combating terrorism and violent extremism, aligned with ECOWAS's Regional Action Plan.

Chair,

8. Sierra Leone welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to review the UN counter-terrorism architecture and commends the technical support of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in strengthening regional joint task forces in West Africa and the Sahel.

9. **West Africa and the Sahel** regrettably have become the epicentre of terrorist activity, with escalating violence reflected in UNOWAS and UNOCT reporting. In his inaugural address as Chair of the ECOWAS Authority, President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone set out a forward-looking vision centred on revitalizing regional security cooperation and renewing solidarity. The latest UNOWAS report (S/2025/495) documents regional developments, engagement between ECOWAS and the Alliance of Sahel States, progress on the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, and updates on the Lake Chad Basin pursuant to resolution 2349 (2017).

10. The threat in the Sahel however continues to deepen. According to the Secretary-General's report on ISIL and its affiliates (S/2025/496), Africa is now the epicentre of ISIL activity. ISWAP and ISGS, with an estimated 8,000–12,000 fighters, are expanding in the Liptako-Gourma tri-border region, exploiting instability and fragile governance to extend operations toward the Lake Chad Basin and the Gulf of Guinea, threatening coastal States such as Benin

and Togo. The 2025 Global Terrorism Index notes that the Sahel accounted for 19% of all terrorist attacks globally and over half of terrorism-related deaths in 2024. UNOWAS also reports growing operational sophistication, including the use of drones and coordinated attacks.

11. These reports warn of increasing foreign support to ISIL regional branches, in manpower, funding, and technology, including cyber recruitment, encrypted platforms, and AI-driven propaganda. The deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, with millions displaced, livelihoods destroyed, schools closed, and funding shortfalls for life-saving aid, risks further radicalization. Sierra Leone urges operationalization of Security Council resolution 2719 (2023) to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts in the region, coordinated regional responses, closure of cross-border financing channels, and strengthened civilian protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts.

12. Following the Arria-formula meeting we convened last year on combating terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel,

and as co-penholder on UNOWAS, Sierra Leone hosted an Informal Interactive Dialogue in July on enhancing regional cooperation. The participation of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, members of the Alliance of Sahel States, marked a significant step toward inclusive engagement following their withdrawal from ECOWAS in January.

Chair,

13. By reason of the foregoing, my delegation wishes to underscore the following points: **First**, military solutions alone are insufficient. Addressing root causes such as poverty, weak governance, youth unemployment, the absence of state authority, gender exclusion, and unequal access to education is essential. For the West African subregion, ECOWAS's new ECOSOC West Africa platform, designed to strengthen civic engagement and community resilience, is a step in this direction.

14. **Second**, we must enhance real-time intelligence sharing and border-control capacities, drawing on best practices

from the Global Counterterrorism Forum and African-led initiatives.

15. **Third**, disrupting trafficking networks and illicit economies that sustain terrorist groups is crucial. Strengthening border governance as outlined in the AU's 2020 Border Governance Strategy, investing in customs training, and deploying modern technology are critical. We welcome support for relevant Security Council resolutions as pathways to eradicating terrorism, complemented by regional institutions such as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana, the École de Maintien de la Paix in Bamako, and the International Counter-Terrorism Academy in Côte d'Ivoire.
16. **Fourth**, climate change is a threat multiplier driving fragility and displacement. Our region should be prioritized under the UN's Climate, Peace and Security initiatives, integrating conflict-sensitive climate programming and vulnerability assessments into early warning and security planning.

Chair,

17. Sierra Leone acknowledges the work of the Ad Hoc Committee drafting the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) and urges Member States to cooperate in resolving the remaining issues to enable its finalization.

18. In conclusion, as we continue to examine legal, policy, and institutional frameworks at all levels to address the threat of terrorism, we continue to call for a comprehensive, gender-sensitive approach consistent with international humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee law.

I thank you.