



ESPAÑA

**Statement by the Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Spain to the
United Nations**

H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver

**Virtual Dialogue with Human Rights and Civil
Society Partners on Building a Better Paradigm to
Prevent and Counter Terrorism**

New York, 26 May 2021

Dear USG Voronkov, Dear Ambassador Al-Hassan, Dear Mayor of Málaga,

During these two days, we have had the opportunity to discuss about a subject, the fight against terrorism, where Spain has a long and painful experience, as our Minister explained yesterday in her opening remarks, an issue that has been a continuous priority for Spain in the last decades.

We have looked into this issue, trying to improve on the existing paradigm, through the deepening of the Human Rights perspective, as well as by strengthening the participation of Civil Society.

Our experience has shown us that upholding Human Rights while countering terrorism is a moral, legal and practical priority; therefore, we need to strengthen in all possible ways the means for making sure that we observe Human Rights in the struggle against terrorism.

At the same time, we have witnessed the growing importance of a “whole society” approach to tackle this challenge. Certainly, it is the responsibility of the State and the public authorities to conduct and lead this fight. Nevertheless, civil society organizations play a very significant role in the fight against terrorism. In particular in its prevention, in collaborating in the analysis of possible ways to conduct this fight, in combating the narratives set out by terrorists, overseeing the way the fight against terrorism is developed, and trying to mitigate some of its terrible consequences.

We have witnessed in Spain the tremendous job that civil society organizations have carried out in the support to victims of terrorism. The emotional documentary that we just had the opportunity to see, and for which I would like to thank and congratulate UNOCT, is a good example of these tremendous consequences in the lives of victims that have survived a terrorist attack. In addition, on how the response from the public authorities in Spain has been constant throughout all these years in addressing their needs, as the Director General for Support to Victims of Terrorism and Ms. Irene Villa just explained some minutes ago.

This is the reason why Victims of Terrorism remains one of the key priorities for Spain, and for its Mission to the UN, where together with Afghanistan we chair the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism. We look forward to continuing these efforts to put victims in the center of the struggle against terrorism, and at this regard, we will continue to work in New York, together with our Afghan colleagues. In fact, we have a series of events ahead, such as the side event on Counter Terrorism Week, the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Terrorism in August, the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends, and in the fall, the Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism.

As we enter the final stage of the negotiation of the Seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which, together with Ambassador Al-Hassan, I have the honor to cofacilitate, we are sure that these two elements will have the space they deserve in the outcome of these negotiations. During the process of negotiations, we have tried to put into practice, in a concrete way, this engagement

with Civil Society organizations, as relevant stakeholders on this process. We have listened to their views, out of their experience, to get a better picture of the challenges we are facing.

In the same spirit, we are in close contact with UN entities and Civil Society organizations that deal specifically with Human Rights. A critical part of one of the four pillars of the Strategy, in order to have a deep understanding of their views and concerns, with the aim of fulfilling the mandate set out in the sixth review of the strategy of a balanced implementation of the four pillars.

We think that this engagement has been very fruitful and positive, and it would be advisable to maintain it after the adoption of the Seventh review. There is a big merit in the discussion itself, as a basis to deepen the understanding of the problems, and to help to build consensus. Therefore, we would be glad to continue these efforts, from the Mission of Spain in New York, beyond the negotiation process. The road to the in-person edition of the Regional Conference on Human Rights and Civil Society in Málaga at the beginning of 2022 are very good opportunities to maintain the momentum.

We expect that the outcome of the Strategy will manage to reach a consensus that shows the big advances and evolutions that have taken place in the fight against terrorism within the UN System in the last three years. First, and foremost, strengthening our common agreements of how to best counter and prevent terrorism, and adjusting it to the new circumstances and menaces. Second, advancing in a very decisive way in deepening the respect for Human Rights in this common challenge, and increasing the role played by Civil Society. Third, consolidating the important institutional architecture developed in these last years, and at this regard, we would not want to miss the opportunity to refer to the key efforts carried out by UNOCT.