

ISRAEL

67th Session of the General Assembly

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Statement by:

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Agenda Item 105

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

9 October 2012

United Nations

New York

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to congratulate you on your election and to also express my delegation's appreciation to you and to the other members of the Bureau.

Terrorism has been the subject of countless discussions and studies, including in this committee, but truth be told, there are still too many unresolved challenges surrounding this scourge. One such instance, which perhaps stands out, relates to suicide terrorism and the means to prevent it when even death, let alone – imprisonment - is clearly not a deterrence, but rather a motivation.

A cursory analysis of terrorism presents various schools of thought and some conceptual confusion, but ultimately all lead to the same conclusion, that these reprehensible acts are unjustifiable, unlawful and immoral.

In the curriculum of terrorism – its history, semantics, politics, geography, economics and law are elementary to understanding the complexity of this phenomenon and its global reach, as well as the urgency of adequately addressing it.

The *geography* of terrorism spans all corners of the world, transcending borders and cultures. Its victims are the ultimate reminder that no one is immune.

Israelis have long been a target of terrorist attacks, both in Israel and beyond. In this regard, the Security-Council's PRST of September 19th condemned in the strongest terms the recent terrorist attack aimed at Israeli tourists that occurred in Bulgaria, reaffirming that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. In this regard, Israel welcomes the third review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy earlier this year, and its emphasis on the role of the victims of terrorism.

The *semantics* of terrorism reveals perhaps one of the greatest perplexities over its definition. Indeed, while it may be convenient to suggest that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter", at the end of the day this cannot be reconciled with the imperative to condemn terrorism unconditionally in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its motivation.

Equally troubling are the attempts by some to supposedly "humanize" terrorism by differentiating between so-called "good" and "bad" terrorism and by mysticizing it by references to glorification and martyrdom.

Mr. Chairman,

The *politics* of terrorism suggests that while it may be convenient for some to condemn terrorism in their own backyard, while condoning attacks carried out elsewhere - such duplicity cannot be reconciled with a genuine intent to counter terrorism.

In the *topography* of terrorism, states sponsoring terrorism such as Syria are permanent features in the landscape.

This is why the accountability of states-sponsoring-terrorism becomes ever more pertinent in today's world, as some of the main terrorism threats emanate from territorial sanctuaries that allow for operational planning, recruiting, training and financing of terrorist groups.

Mr. Chairman,

The *economics* of terrorism are simple. International terrorism is a business. Like any industry, it cannot operate without a steady flow of funds. It doesn't spring out of a vacuum, but rather it feeds on a vast logistical and financial support from state sponsors of terrorism. The Security Council recognized this when it called upon all States to prevent the financing of terrorists and terrorist organizations, including through organizations claiming to have charitable, social or cultural goals.

The *math* is equally simple. It takes many to build what even a single person can destroy. Zero tolerance to terrorism, is the only winning formula. The *statistics* of terrorism reveal a dire reality of too many deaths and casualties in vain all around the world. This is intolerable by any standard.

Mr. Chairman,

The struggle against terrorism transcends physical and tangible boundaries. It is part of a much larger battle of ideas. Terrorism thrives on a culture of incitement, indoctrination, intolerance and glorification of death. In this respect, education is key to countering radicalization and fostering a culture of peace.

In this respect, *education* and *international law* are crucial in countering terrorism. Security Council Resolution 1373 embodies perhaps the centerpiece of the UN efforts to create a special counter-terrorism regime with coordinating bodies and specialized expertise, emphasizing the principle that no perceived cause or grievance can ever justify the deliberate murder of innocents.

As a party to the core UN conventions on terrorism, Israel continues to be a dedicated partner in the global effort to counter terrorism. Over many years, through our ongoing technical cooperation and support of initiatives in this field, both bilaterally and through different UN agencies, we seek to

share our best practices and expertise, and to contribute professionally to the global counter-terrorism efforts.

Israel supports a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that would underscore the fundamental conviction that no cause or grievance justifies terrorism in any form and manifestation, without exception. At the same time, however, one should not trade principle for the mere illusion of consensus. It is essential that an effective definition of terrorism should not be sacrificed for expediency, undermining its very edifice by condoning terrorist acts under the veil of martyrdom, liberation or some other pretext. In the same vein, a comprehensive convention should not extend to apply to state military action, which is already governed by entirely different international legal regimes.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, it is most unfortunate and surreal that certain delegations - typically among the worst human rights violators in my region - continue to exploit this important debate.

One would have hoped that at least in this forum they would rise above such conduct, which has no place in this hall. They aim to cynically divert attention from their own abuses. It is no coincidence that they cannot even bring themselves to condemn murderous terrorist attacks that have claimed the lives of so many Israelis.

To the representative from Saudi Arabia who lectured us yesterday, I can only say that it is astounding to hear such a lecture from a country that brutally represses its LGBT community and discriminates against women; and where homosexual conduct is still punishable by death, by flogging, by stoning, by imprisonment or by all of the above.

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To the Syrian delegate, suffice it to say that a regime that has murdered many tens of thousands of its own citizens over the past year alone should be the last to lecture about human rights.

Syria is renowned for its expertise in the business of terrorism. Damascus harbors the headquarters of some of the most notorious terrorist organizations. They build terrorist infrastructure while they seek to demolish the edifice of basic norms and principles of international law. Syrian involvement in terrorism beyond its borders only mirrors the Assad regime's terrorizing of its own people.

Syria is a prime sanctuary for terrorism. It harbors, supports, finances and encourages terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas, whose expertise and reputation is in the business of terrorism. It provides them facilities and permits them to maintain their headquarters in Damascus. These facts more than anything, speak volumes about the Syrian perspective on terrorism.