

## IPU-UN Regional Conference

### *"The role of parliamentarians in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region"*

**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1 to 3 October 2019**

## OUTCOME DOCUMENT

We, parliamentarians from the countries of the Asia-Pacific<sup>1</sup> region met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 1 to 3 October 2019, for the IPU-UN Regional Conference "The role of parliaments in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing terrorism conditions conducive to terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region". The Conference was jointly organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It was hosted by the House of Representatives of Malaysia in the framework of the IPU-UN Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (IPU-UN Joint Programme), which is being implemented with the support by the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

We wish to express our deep appreciation to the House of Representative of Malaysia for their warm welcome and hospitality, and to the IPU and the United Nations for their timely initiative to bring together the parliaments of the Asia-Pacific region. We very much welcomed the active engagement of all the participants; in particular those who shared concrete national examples and practices.

Indeed, during the Regional Conference we held in-depth discussions, exchanged good practices and experiences, established contacts and enhanced cooperation between parliaments in order to combat terrorism and violent extremism. In addition, we very much welcomed the opportunity to share with the United Nations the regional and national experiences and challenges we face in implementing international resolutions and strategies in national legislation and we look forward to further cooperation with the IPU-UN Joint Programme.

In addition to the presentations made by the various experts, we particularly appreciated the presentation of the Outcome Document adopted at the IPU-UN Regional Conference for the countries of the Sahel region "Parliamentary engagement in addressing terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism in the Sahel region" hosted by the National Assembly of Niger in Niamey, from 12 to 14 June 2019.

Throughout the Conference, our discussions focused on the following main themes: (1) the threat posed by terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region; (2) the recent developments in the international counter-terrorism legal framework and the need to update national legislation in this context; (3) border security and management, including the need for strengthening the detection of terrorist movements, especially through the implementation of the advance passenger information (API) and personal name record (PNR) systems; (4) prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies of foreign terrorist fighters and prevention of radicalization in prisons; (5) support to victims of terrorism; (6) the empowerment of women and youth and building communities resilient to terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism; and (7) the prevention of terrorist radicalization and recruitment, including through effective counter-terrorism narratives in the Internet and social media.

Taking into account that the evolving trends of terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorism pose significant obstacles to development, peace and security around the world, we considered crucial to work within our national parliaments to enhance our contribution to the regional and global efforts against terrorism and violent extremism.

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu. The members of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism from Italy, Malaysia, Namibia, Niger and Pakistan also participated in the Regional Conference.

Additionally, we condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and we reaffirmed that terrorism should not be associated with any particular religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. With this in mind and following active debates on the aforementioned themes, we set down the conclusions and recommendations laid out below:

1. Parliamentarians stressed that the unresolved conflicts in the region were intrinsically linked with terrorism and violent extremism. In this regard, it was crucial to peacefully resolve these conflicts in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and in cooperation with national governments and the international community in order for the fight against terrorism to be efficient.
2. Comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses by the governments and parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region and their strengthened collaboration are urgently required in order to tackle terrorism and violent extremism. Indeed, terrorism threatens national and regional security and undermines, good governance, the rule of law and human rights impairing opportunities for sustainable development. Furthermore, specific actions should be taken with regards to corruption as it may weaken public confidence.
3. Parliamentarians are invited to adopt the necessary budgets to allow the development and implementation of national and regional measures, strategies and plans of action that should all be developed in conformity with international frameworks and obligations.
4. Recognizing the importance of the international and regional legal instruments against terrorism, parliamentarians are urged to ratify and harmonize national legislation in line with those instruments, in particular the resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.
5. Parliamentarians are encouraged to share with the IPU-UN Joint Programme national legislation, strategies, documents and good practices on combating terrorism for purposes of compiling and circulating them, *inter alia*, by means of the legal counter-terrorism database available on the SHERLOC portal.
6. The participants highlighted the importance of effective border security and management in preventing terrorist movements, through the adoption of adequate legislation for the responsible collection, transmission, use, retention, sharing and protection of passenger data (Advance Passenger Information [API] and Personal Name Record [PNR]), with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, for the purpose of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist offenses and related travel. The need to streamline efforts on border security and management with neighboring countries and to address human rights concerns about the right to privacy and data protection was particularly underscored. In this regard, parliaments are invited to benefit from the legal assistance offered by the United Nations Counter-Terrorist Travel Programme.
7. Participants recognized that the return of foreign terrorist fighters and terrorist recruitment and radicalization in prisons represent a serious challenge in many countries of the region. As such, parliamentarians are encouraged to promote the adoption of adequate holistic measures and policies on the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals associated with terrorist groups, including foreign terrorist fighters, taking into account gender and age sensitivities and comprehensive risk assessments, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) and the 2018 Addendum to the Madrid Guiding Principles. Moreover, parliamentarians are invited to draft measures to cope with stigmatization and social exclusion of family members of terrorist offenders, as a good practice against further radicalization.
8. Parliamentarians are urged to enact adequate laws, develop comprehensive plans and ensure that systems of assistance are established in their countries to protect the rights and needs of victims and their families. Such laws should include provisions for proper medical, legal, psychological and physical counseling and support, as well as relief and rehabilitation measures affording them the means to reintegrate into society. It is important that these reparations be made available to the victims and their families both, immediately after the incidents and in the long term. Recognizing the role that victims of terrorism can play in

building resilience and cohesion, parliamentarians are also encouraged to organize public dialogues in their countries to enhance public awareness of the human impact of terrorist acts and to work with communities to eliminate the stigmatization of victims.

9. Parliamentarians, as the representatives of the people and the intermediary between the people and the government, are at the forefront of the prevention of extremism. Preventative strategies to eradicate conditions that drive individuals to join terrorist and extremist groups should be an integral element of the effective counter-terrorism response. With the support of the IPU-UN Joint Programme, parliaments should ensure the whole-of-society approach to terrorism and violent extremism with the full participation of civil society, local communities, religious leaders, private sector and women and youth organizations. Parliaments are further invited to ensure that governments pay due attention to conditions conducive to terrorism and adopt policies to promote good governance and provide socio-economic and education opportunities.
10. Terrorists increasingly target religious sites and places of worship worldwide and in particular in the Asia-Pacific region. Interfaith and intercultural dialogue is crucial to promoting tolerance and understanding between communities. Religious leaders play an important role in building trust and disseminating counter-narratives to hate speech, incitement and intolerance. In this regard, parliamentarians are urged to seek the more active engagement of religious leaders, where appropriate, to voice their rejection of violent ideologies by emphasizing on the peaceful values of their religions and countering misrepresentation and misinterpretation of religions. Furthermore, places of worship and religious sites represent cultural heritage. Actions are required to prevent objects and places of religious interest against terrorist attacks aimed at destroying them.
11. Terrorism aims to destroy homelands and the values of humanity, civilization and faith. Therefore, parliaments are strongly encouraged to adopt preventive, legislative, educational and other measures to protect countries from the scourge of terrorism.
12. Participants emphasized the importance of youth as an invaluable partner to the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism; in particular since the Asia-Pacific region contains a large number of the world's youth population under 25 years of age. It is crucial for parliamentarians to support public policies that are aimed at preventing youth radicalization and recruitment by terrorist and violent extremist groups. In addition, investing in education, making it accessible to vulnerable youth, addressing school drop outs, unemployment and offering the youth alternatives through vocational training, as well as sports and cultural programmes are all measures that could aim at preventing violent extremism. Parliaments are encouraged to make each and every effort to enhance youth participation in terrorism prevention.
13. Parliamentarians recognize that gender equality is in itself a preventative measure, and thus are urged to adopt measures to empower women and young girls, especially female-headed households. In addition, they are invited to facilitate the development and implementation of public policies to empower women and women's organizations and to promote their active engagement in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Nevertheless, the participants recognized that women may play different roles in terrorism and encouraged parliaments to invest in the research of drivers that lead women to join terrorist groups and to ensure the adoption of gender-sensitive counter-terrorism policies and measures, which address women's specific needs.
14. The Asia-Pacific region also has the largest number of Internet users, which is the first tool of choice for terrorist groups to radicalize, train and recruit, especially among the young people. Additionally, there is a lack of social media regulation in some countries in the region. Parliaments are thus encouraged to ensure that their governments invest in strategic communication tailored to local contexts to counter terrorist propaganda and incitement to any type of violence. Participants highlighted that the dissemination of hate speech and intolerance through the Internet and social media requires urgent intervention where parliamentarians may play a crucial role through enhancing public awareness and understanding of measures taken by governments and online service providers to eliminate terrorist and extremist content online, without delay.

15. Lastly, participants further noted that the evolving nature of terrorism required continuous adaptation of domestic law and that the actual implementation of legislation remained a major challenge. Recognizing that some countries might require assistance to draft national legislation, adopt measures, establish specialized institutions and parliamentary working groups and committees, parliamentarians are encouraged to request support from United Nations and the IPU through the IPU-UN Joint Programme to implement all of the above conclusions and recommendations.

In conclusion, we very much welcome the implementation of the IPU-UN Joint Programme, which aims to reduce the gap between the implementation of the international resolutions and national legislations, and we recognize it as a basis enabling us to actually put the final conclusions into practice. In light of the foregoing, we request the IPU-UN Joint Programme to engage with the participating parliamentarians on a continued basis, including through the web-based platform, as well as to periodically solicit information on the status of implementation of this outcome document and on any actions taken at the national level.

Lastly, we ask that the IPU brings our Outcome Document to the attention of the global parliamentary community on the occasion of the 141<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly, to be held in Belgrade, Serbia from 13 to 17 October 2019. We also request the House of Representatives of Malaysia to take the necessary action to request that the final document be issued as an official United Nations General Assembly document and to be circulated to the relevant United Nations bodies.