



## UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

799 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017-3505

Statement of the United States of America  
71<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Sixth Committee  
Agenda Item 108  
Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism  
Statement by Stephen Townley, Deputy Legal Adviser  
October 3, 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States reiterates both its firm condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as our commitment to the common fight to end terrorism. All acts of terrorism – by whomever committed – are criminal, inhumane and unjustifiable, regardless of motivation. An unwavering and united effort by the international community is required if we are to succeed in preventing these heinous acts. In this respect, we recognize the United Nations' critical role in mobilizing the international community, building capacity, and facilitating technical assistance to Member States in implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions.

We note in particular the Security Council's adoption of a number of resolutions over the past two years including, most recently, Resolution 2309 on terrorist threats to civil aviation, Resolution 2253, which renamed the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Regime and List to the 1267/1989 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al Qaida Sanctions Regime and List and established 'association with ISIL' as a new stand-alone criterion for imposing new sanctions designations, Resolution 2242 on women, peace and security, Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, and Resolution 2178 on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), which created an important new policy and legal framework for international action in response to the FTF threat. One striking aspect of the Security Council's work is that the 'whole of government' has been mobilized. Thus, for instance, our Resolution 2253 was adopted at a meeting of the Council attended by Ministers of Finance, and in 2015, the Council reviewed progress in the implementation of Resolution 2178 at a meeting of Ministers of Interior. UNESCO has also engaged ministers of education on its education and preventing violent extremism projects.

We are seeing results. Over the last year, the flow of FTFs has declined substantially and that is in large part due to the global community's efforts to stem the flow of FTFs as required by UNSCR 2178. The United States now has information sharing arrangements with 56 international partners to help identify, track, and deter known and suspected terrorists, and at least 26 partners share financial information that could provide actionable leads to interdict or prosecute FTFs. At least 31 countries use enhanced traveler screening measures. Furthermore,

approximately 60 countries have laws in place to provide the ability to prosecute and penalize FTF activities and at least 50 countries have prosecuted or arrested FTFs or FTF facilitators. We can all stand to learn from each other on this and we would welcome continued exchanges on the subject.

From aviation security to countering terrorist financing to addressing the phenomenon of FTFs, these resolutions are strong examples of the meaningful role the UN can play to address new challenges that arise in the fight against terrorism. We express our firm support for these UN efforts, as well as those of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and other multilateral bodies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and regional and subregional organizations, aimed at developing practical tools to further the implementation of the UN counterterrorism framework. We call for continued coordination among UN entities and with external partners, including the GCTF and its related initiatives and platforms such as the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law in Malta (IJ), Hedayah, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), which advance practical implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through training, capacity building and grant-making efforts for community-based preventing and countering violent extremism projects.

Despite some challenges during the negotiations, we were pleased to participate in the fifth review of the UN Global CT Strategy, which marked an important 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The strategy that we adopted by consensus 10 years ago remains just as valid and relevant today as it was then. The nature and the extent of terrorism may have changed over the past decade, but the strategy's four pillars, and its approach of supporting and promoting rule of law and respect for human rights, still serve as the best way to ensure, as the Secretary-General has cautioned, that "counterterrorism is not counterproductive." Of particular note was the General Assembly's recognition of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and setting a concrete timeline for the General Assembly to review and decide on how to best shape the UN's architecture to more effectively implement the Global CT Strategy, including as related to preventing violent extremism. We look forward to reengaging on the UN's architecture and, in that regard, would note that we do not believe this year's Sixth Committee resolution should revisit discussions that were had during the CT strategy review. The Secretary General's PVE Plan is an important opportunity for the UN system to implement a comprehensive, global approach to countering violent extremism based on the Global CT Strategy with all key actors, and we look forward to supporting efforts to encourage all Member States to develop national and regional strategies for countering violent extremism. We strongly welcome the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law as central to effectively countering terrorism in a sustainable manner. We also welcome the UK's Joint Statement on "Principles for UN Global Leadership on Preventing Violent Extremism," including its emphasis on the need to revitalize the UN architecture to meet today's threats by enhancing coherence, coordination, and leadership in the UN on these issues, and we encourage other Member States to support it as well.

Domestically, we are also taking a "whole of government" to countering violent extremism, and the White House has set up a new Interagency Task Force on Countering Violent Extremism. The Task Force began operating in the early spring and has focused on four main lines of effort: (1) Engagement, (2) Research and Analysis, (3) Interventions, and (4) Communications. In the Interventions line of effort, for example, the Task Force is exploring new multidisciplinary intervention strategies for individuals headed down a path toward violent

extremism. As we explore these options, including possible alternative dispositions for juveniles and those with mental health problems, one challenge that we face is the lack of existing deradicalization and violent extremism rehabilitation programming available in the United States. We are also looking at what happens when those convicted of terrorism-related offenses are held in prisons spread across our country. These offenders currently receive the same types of rehabilitation and reentry programming as other violent criminals. We look forward to continued exchanges on these issues as we seek to improve global CVE efforts.

As we work together to counter violent extremism, it is also critical that we recognize that the common goal of countering terrorism should never be used as an excuse to suppress political dissent and that the free flow of information can be part of an effective strategy.

To help achieve this comprehensive vision, we need all member states to better assist and sufficiently resource UN system actors and other relevant implementers in order to deliver needed technical assistance and generate more effective solutions. To do our part, we are pleased to note that we continue to make voluntary contributions to the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch, INTERPOL, and UNICRI for development of research, assistance and training. We encourage other interested member states in joining us to help further build the capacity of the UNCCT to allow it to provide assistance to member states across a range of issues addressed in the UN Strategy, including preventing and countering violent extremism, and relevant UNSCRs, including 2178, especially by funding programs included in the UN's Capacity Building Implementation Plan to Counter FTFs. We think that a growing pool of UNCCT donors can also have helpful benefits in coordinating our civilian counterterrorism assistance on shared priorities.

Beyond the UN, we should also partner with local communities and key civil society organizations. They will often be among the most effective in countering terrorist lies.

Focusing now on treaty developments, we recognize the great success of the United Nations, thanks in large part to the work of this Committee, in developing 18 universal instruments that establish a thorough legal framework for countering terrorism. The achievements on this front are noteworthy. We have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of states that have become party to these important counterterrorism conventions. For example, 170 states have become party to the Terrorist Financing Convention.

The United States recognizes that while the accomplishments of the international community in developing a robust legal counterterrorism regime are significant, there remains much work to be done. The 18 universal counterterrorism instruments are only effective if they are widely ratified and implemented. In this regard, we fully support efforts to promote ratification and implementation of these instruments. We draw particular attention to the six instruments concluded since 2005 – the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (Nuclear Terrorism Convention), the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM Amendment), the 2005 Protocols to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Protocols), and the 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation and the 2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention

for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft. While the work of the international community began with the negotiation and conclusion of those instruments, that work will only be completed when those instruments are widely ratified and fully implemented.

The United States is advancing in its own efforts to ratify these instruments, and recently, we have made significant progress. Last year we deposited our instruments of ratification and accession, as appropriate, for the Nuclear Terrorism Convention, the CPPNM Amendment, and the SUA Protocols. As we continue our own efforts to ratify these recent instruments, we urge other states not yet party to do likewise.

And as we move forward with our collective efforts to ratify and implement these instruments, the United States remains willing to work with other states to build upon and enhance the counterterrorism framework. Concerning the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, we will listen carefully to the statements of other delegates at this session. We would highlight in this regard that it is critical that the United Nations send united, unambiguous signals when it comes to terrorism, otherwise we risk some of the progress that we have made. And as the world grapples with the atrocities Da'esh has committed, it must be unequivocally clear that actors such as Da'esh, even if they are engaged in armed conflicts, should be prosecuted as terrorists.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.