



STATEMENT

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Item 111: Measures to eliminate international terrorism
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Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At last year's debate on this item, we spoke about Marawi. It was the most destructive act of terrorism in our history. If Marawi fell and stayed in their hands, other cities would be taken by terrorist groups that included foreign fighters espousing violent extremist beliefs that **are alien** to our race, to our Christian and Muslim religions, to our country and democracy, and abhorrent to the rest of the civilized world. I don't know about the enablers of ISIS in the Middle East; they have irreligious reasons of state we cannot accept.

Our armed forces and police liberated Marawi from Daesh-inspired terrorists after 5 months of non-stop fighting in a textbook perfect battle with an admirable ratio of 165 of our young soldiers killed to over a thousand enemy dead. We had effective assistance from the United States and Australia for which we are eternally grateful.

Addressing root causes

The Philippines condemns terrorism anywhere in the world however inspired—by religion or the natural propensity to use religion for sex, for homicide or anything else that scum do to get themselves off. There are no deep philosophical or religious reasons that need detain us on that score. It is a people problem—specifically a bad people problem; and the solution is to get rid of them first—and then study why they turned out so badly from such nice little boys.

We abhor terrorism in all its manifestations wherever, by whomever, and against whomsoever committed—and whatever the excuse. We reject poverty as an excuse and condemn it as lazy thinking by the usual suspects whose brains have hemorrhaged.

Sure, we recognize the long-term need to search for the roots of terrorism. It is an academically promising field of study. But once terrorism has taken root, grown and started to bear militant fruit—then addressing the roots of terrorism must take a back seat, and pulling out the growth must take first priority before it scatters its seeds farther afield to take root, grow and flourish in more places. This must be done with the strictest regard for human rights; with no hurt to the innocent. For the blood of the innocent fertilizes the ground for terrorism to take root and spread.

But, and this is a big but, when dealing with terrorism one must never err on the side of giving it the benefit of the doubt. If it talks like it; walks like it; and is armed like it; and invokes some grievance as its murderous motivation—you must take it out.

“Whole of nation” approach

The Philippines addresses terrorism and violent extremism through a “whole of nation” approach. That is to say we throw everything at it to destroy it—never to accommodate it in our society. We throw its potential targets at it by alerting our communities to their approach. We educate our communities to resist its allure; not least by showing what happens when you buy into terrorism.

Terrorism and transnational organized crime

Marawi illustrates the deep and symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the illegal drug trade. With drug money, terrorists were able to gather a motley assortment of well-armed extremists, criminals, mercenaries, and foreign terrorist fighters to take control of Marawi and reestablish in our part of the world their shattered caliphate in the Middle East. Our answer was not an appeal to conscience or to the better angels of the terrorist nature. But force. It works.

International cooperation

Marawi spoke to the transnational nature of terrorism. Terrorism is a global problem no country can tackle alone. The fight against terrorism should unite us all. Foreign terrorist operations do not recognize borders. The complexity and reach of the threat they pose have expanded. Every civilized society they destroy becomes a platform for the destruction of another; we **saw** that in the Middle East.

To put a stop to terrorism requires the widest and most sincere cooperation because one state’s terrorist is a foreign interventionist’s way to weaken and subjugate it. The global fight against terrorism—but only by states that scorn the use of terrorism to advance foreign policy—must cover the whole range of the counter-terrorism spectrum: from border control to countering the false narratives of extremism by piercing and countering propaganda with truth on the Internet—and always and ever by fighting it. To that end we subscribed to Kazakhstan's initiative for a Code of Conduct

calling for a united front against terrorism until all that's left of it is a painful memory like fascism in the past.

At the global level, the United Nations—through the Global Strategy on Counter-Terrorism—has primacy. For the Strategy to be effective, the United Nations and its institutional architecture must be, not just comprehensive but coherent, coordinated, **but** not waste its time talking and wringing its hands about the roots of terrorism. The sapling is there; indeed it is growing into a tree, and soon there will be an orchard of it. The solution is clear: uproot it.

The UNOCT¹ must work closely with CTED² and the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact but always **with** respect for national ownership and national priorities—or be thrown out by sovereign states for its presumption. No one can know better than a state how its country's particular terrorist threat must be addressed. This is one area where there are no experts outside of those fighting it in-country.

Our country has adopted measures in line with the Strategy:

- Amendment and enhancement of our terrorism law;
- Strengthening our engagement on anti-money laundering and combating financing of terrorism;
- Passage of the strategic trade management act to strengthen our compliance with UNSC Resolution 1540 and other sanctions regime relative to chemical-biological-radiological-nuclear issues;
- Crafting our own “advance passenger information” system to enhance our compliance with UNSC Resolutions;
- Strengthening our partnership with the INTERPOL thru the global police communications system; and
- Investigation and prosecution of the personalities included in the UN sanctions list and our national list.

Beyond the Strategy is the urgent need for a Comprehensive Convention for Combating International Terrorism. This has been discussed to exhaustion by the UN for over 20 years now. Fortunately, we states have been combating terrorism while our diplomats exhaust patience discussing it. Let us resolve the outstanding issues now; particularly on having a common definition of “terrorism”—if that is even necessary. Like pornography terrorism is hard to define; at times it is indistinguishable from freedom fighting. But like pornography we know terrorism when we see it.

And finally, one thing is true; terrorism takes advantage of the chaos created by big powers interfering with small powers in a region of the world they want to control. Thank you.

¹ United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

² Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate