



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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SIXTH COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: 111

STATEMENT

by

Ms. Sandra Pejic

Counsellor

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia

to the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

Before I proceed to make my statement, I would like to congratulate you for your election as Chairman of the Bureau. Also, I assure you of the full support of my delegation.

The Republic of Serbia has aligned itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of the European Union. I shall, therefore, make some additional comments from our national perspective.

Serbia is firmly committed to responding to present-day security challenges. The fight against terrorism and violent extremism and radicalism belongs among its priority goals. In cooperation with partners all over the world, my country is ready to make a full contribution to the suppression of these threats at national, regional and global levels. Terrorism and violent extremism are phenomena of global spread and, in order to counter them, we need continued and wide-spread cooperation among States. This is why Serbia considers the United Nations to be the proper forum for active engagement on this plane. In that context, the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is of paramount importance.

Over many years, Serbia has supported the work of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate and, last year alone, it co-sponsored the following resolutions of the Security Council: 2341 (2017), 2354 (2017) and 2396 (2017). After their visit to Belgrade in March 2013, the Committee representatives assessed that Serbia is the readiest and best equipped country in the region to address possible terrorist acts. A Committee delegation made a follow-up visit from 27 to 29 March 2018 and reported that evident and important progress had been made in all areas. The delegation confirmed Serbia's significant engagement in the implementation of the Committee recommendations and its full awareness of the importance of the individual areas and objectives of the Security Council resolutions.

Mr Chairman,

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters has been at center stage of the attention of my country; it is a challenge necessitating active measures and regional cooperation. Many such measures have been taken, including in the area of operational activity, either independently or in cooperation with partners, especially in the Western Balkans and South-East Europe.

The number of foreign terrorist fighters recruited in the Western Balkans and South-East Europe is not negligible. Almost one thousand persons from the Western Balkans have been engaged in Syria and Iraq. Many of them participated in brutal and suicidal attacks. So far, about 40 persons from central Serbia have taken part in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, percentage-wise the smallest number of foreign terrorist fighters in the region. Speaking of Kosovo and Metohija, the situation is altogether different; percentage-wise, the largest number of foreign terrorist fighters went to foreign battlefields from this Serbian province.

Serbia's Criminal Code provides for incrimination of Serbian citizens' participation in armed conflicts abroad, including the organization thereof.

Late last year, the Government adopted the National Strategy for the Prevention and Countering of Terrorism for 2017-2021 and the Action Plan for its implementation. The Strategy emphasizes the importance of prevention and establishes priority goals: prevention of terrorism; violent extremism and radicalism; protection, identification and elimination of terrorist threats; prosecution of terrorist with full respect for human rights, rule of law and democracy; and the response of the system to a terrorist attack.

Prevention of violent extremism and radicalism leading to terrorism is of great importance for Serbia and the work on preventing violent extremism is very important in the overall struggle against terrorism.

In December 2017, Serbia amended its Law on the Freezing of Assets with the Aim of Preventing Terrorism, providing for a more precise and effective regulation of the questions relative to the List of persons designated by the Security Council and other international organizations of which Serbia is a member, as well as for the designation procedure. In December 2017, the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism was adopted whereby additional adjustments were made with the standards of the European Union and the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force.

We have consistently fulfilled our international obligations regarding the implementation of Security Council resolutions on arms embargoes, including bans of non-State actors, including terrorist organizations and individuals linked to them and are ready to continue our cooperation with the United Nations in this important area.

Thank you.