

UNGA 74: Sixth Committee: Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

Statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and my own country, Canada, on the agenda item Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. I would like to congratulate you, Chair, and other members of the Bureau. We know we are in safe hands.

At the outset, let me reiterate our absolute condemnation of terrorism and violent extremism, wherever it takes place and in whatever form. This year, once again, we have all too many examples of terrorist acts and the devastating impact they can have on victims, communities and societies at large. This includes the devastating terrorist attack against the Muslim community in Christchurch on March 15 and the Easter attacks in Sri Lanka on April 21, both this year.

I also would like to reconfirm our full support for the holistic and preventative approach of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as well as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Only through joint actions – taken with conviction and in compliance with the UN Charter, Security Council resolutions, as well as the relevant principles and rules of international law – can the international community credibly respond to the global terrorist threat.

Let me also convey CANZ's appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), for their ongoing work to encourage Member States' to comply and fully implement Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) on measures to eliminate international terrorism.

Through concerted efforts, we have made real progress in preventing acts of terrorism being committed, and suppressing and combating international terrorism. In that regard, we welcome the efforts made towards implementation of counter-terrorism conventions, and we encourage all Member States to ratify and implement the various international instruments concerning international terrorism.

CANZ believes collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts between governments, online service providers, civil society and non-governmental organisations focussed on protecting a free, open and secure internet, are crucial in addressing terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet, as well as to address online hate and abuse. In the wake of the 15 March terrorist attack on the Muslim community in Christchurch, CANZ members were pleased to join Government and tech industry leaders in adopting the Christchurch Call to Action. The Christchurch Call to Action, gives us a road map to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online.

We are also working in support of the development of the OECD Voluntary Transparency Reporting Protocols (VTRP). This project will establish a common global reporting standard — starting by delivering a benchmark of existing practices by online platforms, establishing metrics to measure progress, and developing a common voluntary reporting protocol. We encourage online platforms to accelerate their efforts to prevent and remove terrorist and violent extremist content on the Internet.

To achieve long term sustainable results, we will need to find better ways to combat the spread of hateful online messages, while upholding our commitment to human rights, the rule of law, democratic principles, inclusion and diversity.

CANZ countries encourage Member States to comply and fully implement Security Council resolution 2396 (2017). Better coordination on border protection, information sharing, and detection are making it increasingly difficult for foreign terrorist fighters to travel to conflict zones.

Denying terrorists groups access to resources, both human and financial, is a prerequisite for success. The evolving and highly sophisticated use of block-chain technology to mask the movement of illicit funds is a worrying phenomenon, which requires immediate attention. Australia is pleased to be hosting the No Money For Terror Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing in Melbourne on 7-8 November 2019, which will include a focus on the risk of emerging technologies such as blockchain, being exploited to finance terrorism.

CANZ encourages Member States that have not done so to implement all UNSC resolutions addressing international terrorism, along with the various international instruments. We remind Member States of our continuing commitments and obligations under Resolutions 1373, 2178, and their successor resolutions, pertaining to the effective investigation and prosecution of all acts of terrorism.

Through collective action we have succeeded in depriving Da'esh of its territory in Iraq and Syria – an essential step towards its defeat. Nonetheless, the group remains a threat in the region, and its expanding influence in Afghanistan, sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia are particularly concerning. Al Qa'eda also remains a threat. We must remain alert, vigilant, and prepared to act together.

Member States are also grappling with the challenges of returning foreign terrorist fighters and their families. For those who return from the conflict zone, and are not subject to arrest and prosecution, finding enduring solutions for their successful rehabilitation and reintegration into society requires the coordinated involvement of governments and civil society. To be effective, our approaches need to be trauma-informed, age and gender appropriate, and address the many complex needs that stem from witnessing and/or experiencing violence. Children taken to the conflict zone or born there are particularly at risk of trauma-impact. CANZ applauds the many women's organizations working on the front lines in prevention, early warning, and responses to international terrorism. They are key partners in building resilience in local communities.

The international community also has a responsibility to address the plight of the victims of terrorism. CANZ members are proud to support the recently-formed Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism, including in its focus on victims' rights and needs, on giving them a voice internationally, and on promoting their role in countering terrorist and violent extremist ideology. We also recognise our collective obligation to bring terrorists to justice, and support calls for coordinated action by governments, civil society and the private sector to share best practices and lessons learned in the areas of prosecution and correction - for those who can be successfully charged and tried, and in monitoring, rehabilitation and reintegration, for those who cannot.

Please allow me in conclusion to reiterate CANZ's unwavering commitment to support and work with all others engaged in countering terrorism and violent extremism, including through the work of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum which Canada will be co-chairing with the Kingdom of Morocco for the next two years, from 2019 to 2021.

Thank you.