

Statement by Mr. Majed Bamya, First Counsellor, Mission of the State of Palestine to the UN, before the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly in its 74th session, on “Measures to eliminate international terrorism” (Agenda item 109), 9 October 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

We congratulate you for your election to Chair our work and extend our congratulations to the other members of the bureau and we express our hope for a constructive and successful session that contributes to advancing the rule of law and addressing the many challenges being faced by the international community at this critical time. All these challenges, including terrorism, must be addressed by strengthening the rule of international law, not undermining it.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on Measures to eliminate international terrorism.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the Statements delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

A global threat requires a global response; international cooperation is the only guarantee to protect our people, societies, and future from the evolving terrorist threat. Terrorism must be addressed in a holistic manner at the international, regional and national levels, and with concrete actions to eradicate its root causes, based on international law.

Humanity should be united in refusing to play along the dividing lines drawn by terrorists, as well as in rejecting their self-proclaimed titles. Vanquishing terrorism entails never associating terrorism with a religion, in words and in practice, even when, and especially when, the terrorists distort this religion to advance their nihilist ideas and their hatred. It is important to constantly reaffirm that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group and constitutes a threat to all humanity, so the fight against terrorism can bring us together, not tear us apart.

To those who do the opposite, we say: Look closer, you will discover that the religion you are accusing is the one of a great number of victims of terrorism and of those who fight terrorism, sometimes at the expense of their lives. Look closer, and you will discover that terrorism that has taken lives in your country has taken many, many more, in the countries of those you discriminate against. Understand that where you had the possibility of enhancing the alliance against terrorism, you have fragmented our ranks and fueled hatred, feeding the narrative of the terrorists instead of debunking it.

Mr. Chairperson,

The State of Palestine condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and terrorist acts wherever, by whomever and against whomsoever committed, including those in which States are directly or indirectly involved.

We are committed to contribute to the global efforts on countering terrorism through regional and international cooperation, particularly at the practical level of law enforcement cooperation. When it comes to financing of terrorism, the State of Palestine has developed a wide range of legislations, instructions, and tools, including the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Decree-Law. A national committee was established to advance implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. This committee is entrusted with cooperation with the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee. The State of Palestine also signed 83 cooperation agreements on combating terrorism with different States and specialized security agencies.

Also, The State of Palestine is proud to have joined last year the Code of Conduct towards achieving a world free of terrorism initiated by Kazakhstan.

We reiterate the importance of the conclusion of a comprehensive Convention for combating international terrorism, which would contribute to furthering the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This Convention should include a clear definition of the crime of international terrorism that covers all its aspects, including State terrorism. The State of Palestine supports the work of the UN Office of Counter-terrorism and stresses the importance of international cooperation in advancing the effective, balanced and comprehensive implementation of the four pillars of the Strategy.

We stress in this regard the importance of capacity building to developing countries, at their request, and based on their national strategies.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that the need to fight terrorism is a matter of international consensus and should remain as such. It should therefore not be undermined by attempts to exploit the legitimate fight against terrorism to suppress the inalienable right to self-determination of peoples, notably those under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation. While action to prevent and combat terrorism is necessary, such action must be in full compliance with international law, including the Charter, international human rights, refugee law, and international humanitarian law. Vanquishing terrorism requires rejecting all attempts to misuse the legitimate fight against terrorism to advance illegitimate goals or to justify injustice. This fight can not be used to justify acts of aggression, extra-judicial killings, torture or continued denial of collective and individual rights. Such actions can only undermine the objectives they are allegedly undertaken to serve.

When we speak of counter-terrorism, we should never lose sight of the victims of terrorism. As a nation that has endured and continues to endure more than its share of suffering and injustice, and with a countless number of victims of terrorism, we express our solidarity with all victims of terrorism and their families, wherever they are. We are proud to have joined the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism and commend Afghanistan and Spain for their leadership in this regard, as countries that have suffered first-hand the ills of terrorism.

This solidarity with victims of terrorism can not suffer double standards. It has to reach every corner of the globe. It is saddening that countries and peoples that suffer most from terrorism are sometimes those that receive the least attention, either because they remain invisible in the international media, or because so many lives were taken in repeated attacks that some become numb to the news of yet another deadly attack, or because the perpetrators do not fit a certain politically-motivated stereotype. We seize this opportunity to tell victims, we see you and ache with you and will strive along your side to create a better tomorrow.

We have a shared and collective duty to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Respect for human dignity, pluralism and diversity can help shield our communities from the threat of terrorism while discrimination, alienation, segregation, xenophobia will only foster this threat.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.