



General Assembly
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Sixth Committee

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

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Statement by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

Delivered by Ambassador Mr. Odd Inge Kvalheim
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M(r/s). Chair,

I have the honour to address the Sixth Committee on behalf of the five Nordic countries:
Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country Norway.

Terrorism and violent extremism remain a grave threat to our societies. The ideologies of intolerance and violence of terrorists and violent extremists of all forms and manifestations, pose a challenge to our shared values of peace, security, human rights, and the rule of law.

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This year has been extraordinary, with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting our common effort against terrorism and violent extremism. ISIL and al-Qaeda are using the pandemic to strengthen their narratives, and to incite mistrust in governments. Their continued attacks and attempts at destabilisation in the Sahel are particularly worrying. Right wing extremists have been very efficient in using Covid-19 to spread conspiracy theories online and recruit new followers. People in a disadvantaged position or who are socially isolated are more likely to be a fertile target audience for violent extremists' propaganda, regardless of the underlying ideology behind the propaganda.

Terrorist and violent extremists are not idle, even if the current pandemic situation might induce us to believe so. We must be prepared for what comes afterwards, and our response must be one of global cooperation, with the United Nations playing a leading role. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law must be at the core of this response.

M(r/s). Chair,

The Nordic countries attach great importance to preventing violent extremism in all its forms, and are all members of the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism. Norway and Jordan co-chair the group. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the underlying conditions that drive the spread of violent extremism and terrorism. The group has promoted integration of PVE across the UN-system.

The Nordic countries will continue to support the work of the Secretary General, the UN Office of Counterterrorism and CTED, to putting issues regarding gender, terrorism and violent extremism, on the UN's agenda.

M(r/s). Chair,

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We need to maintain the momentum on prevention of terrorism and violent extremism. In this regard, we need to take a whole of society and gendered approach, where women, youth and local communities play an important role.

Women play different roles in the phenomenon of terrorism and violent extremism. On the one hand, we know from studies and research that women play an instrumental role in terrorist organizations as campaigners, recruiters, financiers or as perpetrators of terrorist acts.

On the other hand, women can play a vital role in countering violent extremism empowered with the right tools. We must strengthen women's political and economic rights: empowered women help create peaceful and stable communities, which in turn lead to better prevention of violent extremism. Women have again this year delivered important counter-narratives to violent far right and Islamist extremists, that are using the Covid-19 pandemic to strengthen their case.

This year we celebrate two important Security Council resolution anniversaries: UNSCR 1325 on Women Peace and Security was adopted 20 years ago, whilst UNSCR 2242 on Integrating Gender in Counterterrorism Work was adopted 5 years ago. In celebrating these resolutions, we must remember the importance of including a gender sensitive response in our common efforts to prevent violent extremism and countering terrorism.

M(r/s). Chair,

In the Nordic experience, the threat from terrorism is global, but effective and sustainable solutions can often be found at the local level. We applaud civil society actors, community leaders, schoolteachers, youth representatives, municipality workers and all others acting as our first line of defence against those who instigate hate and discord. In addition, we appreciate the efforts of the Strong Cities Network, Nordic Safe Cities, the Global Community Engagement & Resilience Fund and similar platforms for release of local-level potential.

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Youth and children are our future, and we must keep in mind that they are some of our most important assets in the struggle against terrorism and violent extremism. We must listen to young voices as they play a key role in preventing radicalisation. We must pay particular focus to youth perceptions on their own grievances – they may also hold the solutions to key challenges. We should therefore engage youth in meaningful discussions on resilience to diminish influence from violent extremism, on the local level as well as online.

M(r/s). Chair,

The review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was due earlier this summer, but was postponed due to the pandemic. We must stress the importance of conducting a comprehensive review as originally planned as soon as the situation allows it.

While the CT-week was a welcome opportunity for stocktaking, we look forward to participating in the full review. Waiting for the review, we would like to underline that the Nordic countries consider that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy must continue to rest on its four pillars. We cannot tackle terrorism by military and security means alone, and we must continue to address the root causes of violent extremism. We must include civil society and local communities, empower our youth and ensure gender equality. The UN must play a central role in our collective response to terrorism and prevention of violent extremism.

We also welcome the proposal by USG Voronkov to hold a high-level conference on HR and counter terrorism, which was presented during the virtual CT-week in July.

The Nordic countries attach great importance to human rights and international law while countering terrorism. The Security Council has repeatedly underscored that all counter-terrorism measures taken by Member States must comply with their obligations under international law. It has made it clear that failure to fulfil international obligations is one of

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the factors contributing to increased radicalisation and fostering a sense of impunity. Measures to counter terrorism must comply with international law, and the human rights must be at the centre of any strategy to fight terrorism and violent extremism.

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