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Sixth Committee
Agenda item 111

Measures to eliminate international terrorism
Statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic countries

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 are 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.

This is the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. In some countries, it has fuelled mistrust of governments due to imposed restrictions, economic hardship, social isolation, restricted access to education – factors that may lead to an increased threat from violent extremism and terrorism. Social tensions are exacerbated, and minority groups have been targets of conspiracy theories. There is little doubt that the pandemic affects our common effort against terrorism and violent extremism.

It is worrying that violent right-wing extremists and other forms of violent extremism continue to perform attacks and recruit new followers.

ISIL and al-Qaeda continue to pose serious threats, and their spread in Africa is concerning. Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan has been hailed by terrorist groups and may be used to bolster recruitment and inspire further terrorist attacks across the world.

20 years have passed since the horrific attacks of 11 September 2001, and the passing of Security Council Resolution 1373. Although the terrorist threat has changed character over these years, it very much remains and threatens our societies. Our response must continue to be based on 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 manifestations 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, and continue to put issues regarding gender, and countering terrorism and violent extremism, on the UN's agenda.

M(r/s). Chair,

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 gender-sensitive approach, where women, youth and local communities play an important role.

Women play different roles in the phenomenon of terrorism and violent extremism including both as actors and victims. On the one hand, we know that women can play an instrumental role in terrorist organizations as campaigners, recruiters, financiers and as perpetrators of terrorist acts.

On the other hand, women can play a vital role in countering violent extremism. 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.

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, religious leaders, municipality workers and all others acting as our first line of defence against those who instigate hate. In addition, we appreciate the efforts of the Strong Cities Network, Nordic Safe

Cities, the Global Community Engagement & Resilience Fund and similar platforms at the local level.

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 how youth perceive their own grievances – they may also hold the solutions to key challenges. We should therefore engage youth in meaningful discussions on how to diminish influence from violent extremism, on the local level as well as online.

M(r/s). Chair,

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was reviewed earlier this year, and we are glad that it came to a positive conclusion. While we are overall pleased with the outcome, there are some issues where we had hoped for further progress. While we recognise the important work made by the Office of Counter Terrorism, we believe that stronger evaluation mechanisms would be beneficial. We would also like to underline the need for enhanced coordination of counter-terrorism and prevention activities between all UN entities. Language concerning human rights and gender could have been stronger and should be included as cross-cutting issues in all UN counter-terrorism activities.

In conclusion, we would once again highlight the importance that the Nordic countries attach to full respect for human rights and international law in counter-terrorism. The Security Council has repeatedly underscored that all counter-terrorism measures taken by Member States must comply with their obligations under international law. Numerous studies have shown that failure to fulfil international obligations is one of the factors contributing to increased radicalisation. Measures to counter terrorism must comply with international law, and human rights must be at the centre of any strategy to fight terrorism and violent extremism.