



78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Sixth Committee

Item 109: Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Statement by H.E. the Ambassador Mohan Pieris

Monday, 02 October 2023

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. Allow me to assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation during the proceedings of this committee. Sri Lanka also aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Chairman,

Terrorism constitutes an extreme form of aggression, in which non-state actors attack civilians to reach a political objective through the spreading of fear. The threat of terrorism has captured the world's attention, including media depictions, lay concerns, government policies, and scholarly analyses.

We are all cognizant of the seriousness of the threat that terrorism poses and the effects it has on global peace and security. With the dramatic increase in terrorist attacks around the world, it is evident that the time for complacency has long passed. The indiscriminate violence perpetrated by terrorist organizations knows no borders, and its repercussions are felt far beyond scenes of horror. Innocent lives are extinguished in seconds, communities are torn apart and the very fabric of societies is tested. It is at this critical moment that we must unite as a global community to combat terrorism. It even represents a threat to our very existence.

Sri Lanka reiterates its firm condemnation of all forms and manifestations of terrorism, along with any actions, methodologies, or practices associated with it, regardless of their source or perpetrators. We maintain the position that such acts are criminal and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

Mr. Chairman,

Sri Lanka, having experienced the devastating consequences of terrorism firsthand, remains committed to the principles enshrined in the United Nations in combating terrorism. We firmly believe in upholding the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all nations while working together to eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

My country has made significant strides in its own efforts to combat terrorism, successfully defeating a long-standing domestic terrorist organization that had plagued our nation for over three decades. Through this experience, Sri Lanka has gained insights into challenges and complexities involved in countering terrorism.

Mr Chairman,

Let's have no misgivings ;The threats we faced 30 years ago aren't the threats we face today, nor are they the threats we will face in the future,"" non-state actors of today are constantly evolving with the use of technology to identify vulnerabilities. It's through our strategic plans that we can address any vulnerabilities and any threats we may face in the future."

Mr. Chairman,

All that said and done We cannot emphasize more the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism, which often include socio-economic disparities, political instability, and extremist ideologies. Sri Lanka recognizes that a holistic approach is needed, one that not only focuses on security measures but also includes the efforts to

promote dialogue, reconciliation, and the protection of human rights. We believe that sustainable peace can only be achieved when these underlying issues are effectively addressed.

Sri Lanka also acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, intelligence sharing, and capacity-building to effectively counter transnational terrorist networks. We encourage member states to enhance their collaboration in this regard, while respecting international law and human rights.

Furthermore, countering the financing of terrorism is crucial to disrupting the operations of terrorist organizations. Sri Lanka calls upon all nations to implement robust financial monitoring and regulations to prevent the flow of funds to terrorist groups.

Mr. Chairman,

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) (1979) and the Public Security Ordinance (1947) serve as the primary legal basis for national counterterrorism initiatives. Allow me to highlight the recent developments related to the draft Anti-Terrorism Bill in Sri Lanka. In 2022, we made significant amendments to the prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) after extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including the public, civil society, and international partners. A transparent and open consultative process resulted in the cabinet's approval for the latest PTA draft in August 2023.

Sri Lanka's government remains dedicated to developing anti-terrorism legislation that effectively addresses our national security needs while respecting international standards and best practices.

Mr. Chairman,

Sri Lanka also reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations' global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and encourages all member states to support its implementation.

We further call upon the international community to consider the development of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which would bridge existing gaps in the legal framework and facilitate stronger international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. We recognize the challenges in arriving at a universally acceptable definition of terrorism, but we believe that a convention could provide a necessary legal basis for enhanced cooperation and prosecution of terrorists across borders.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Sri Lanka reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the elimination of international terrorism. We firmly believe that only through unity, global efforts, adherence to international law, and addressing root causes can we aspire to create a world free from scourge of terrorism. Sri Lanka stands ready to collaborate closely with all member states and reaffirms its confidence in the United Nation's pivotal role in coordinating and supporting global counterterrorism efforts.

I thank you.