

**Open briefing of the Counter Terrorism Committee
Countering incitement to Commit Terrorist Acts Motivated by Extremism and Intolerance: the
Kingdom of Morocco's Approach and Experiences of other African States**

United Nations, New York, 30 September 2014

MR DIRECTOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

**In the Name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Peace and salute on the Prophet, his family and his Companions,

It is with great pleasure that I attend this important meeting along with a distinguished delegation representing the Kingdom of Morocco, which reflects the particular interest of his Majesty the King Mohammed VI, May God Assist Him, as Commander of the Believers and protector of the spiritual and religious safety of the Moroccan people, in the international cooperation in the field of counter terrorism within the United Nations.

I am also delighted to express the Moroccan delegation's warmest thanks to the UN Counter terrorism Committee led by her Excellency Madam Raimonda MURMOKAITE, Permanent Representative of the Lithuanian Republic, as well as to his Excellency Mr. Jean Paul LABORDE Executive Director of the CTED, who took the initiative to organize this meeting, thus giving our Kingdom a chance to elaborate on its experience in the field of counter terrorism and in matters of dealing with one of the most important factors behind the outburst of the terrorist threat, which is the radical ideology and the incitement to commit terrorist acts. This demonstrates the high level of trust conferred to the Kingdom of Morocco and highlights its pioneering experience in this field.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The full involvement of Morocco, including his King, its institutions and its people in the fight against terrorism following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, turned it into a target of Al Qaida as demonstrated through the dismantling, in May 2002, by the Moroccan security Services, of a terrorist cell composed of 3 foreign nationals who planned attacks against a NATO naval fleet operating in the Detroit of Gibraltar, as well as against some touristic sites in the Kingdom.

The Security vigilance instated since 2002 allowed also the diminishing or halting the terrorist threat through:

- The dismantling of 126 terrorist structures, among which 41 were linked to the different conflict zones, namely Iraq, Syria and the Sahel, as well as the arrest of 2676 terrorists including 266 recidivists.
- The abortion of 276 plots, including 119 bomb attacks targeting among others, security services' buildings, touristic sites, diplomatic representations, Christian and Jewish worship sites, 109 assassination attempts against security services' members, Jewish Moroccans, State officials, political and foreign figures, tourists, in addition to seven (07) kidnapping plots and 41 robberies and armed attacks.

- The seizure of large amounts of weapons, including Kalashnikovs, machineguns, automatic and semi-automatic guns, RPGs, mortar shells, gun silencers, detonators and hunting guns.

The attacks perpetrated on the 16th of May 2003 in Casablanca, against symbolic sites (Hotel "Farah", restaurant "Positano", "La casa de Espagna", the Jewish Alliance Circle, and the Jewish cemetery) were considered as a warning signal on the local and international extremist linkages, and the belligerent intentions of Al Qaida and its offshoots, namely the Salafist Group for Predication and Combat (GSPC), which became AQIM, towards the Kingdom. Because since 2005, the Moroccan security Services have been able to dismantle many terrorist networks operated by AQIM members based in the Sahel zone, among which the most active are the structures called "Fath Al Andalus" (2008), "Al Mourabitoune Al Joudoud" (2009), composed of members belonging to the "Polisario Front", and the structure of "Amgala" (2011) whose dismantling allowed the seizure of an impressive war arsenal that was supposed to be used in attacks against national and foreign interests.

Mindful of the risk factors of the terrorist threat emanating from the Sahel zone, the Moroccan security Services have been able, prior to the launching of operation "Serval" in Mali, to dismantle two facilitation networks specialized in transferring local combatants to the north of Mali (November and December 2012), in the same context, in 2013, through the dismantling of a cell composed of extremist internet activists cell and linked to AQIM's Emir, **Abdelmalek Droukdel**, that planned to attack the airport of Guelmim (supposedly a takeoff site of the French fighter jets engaged in operation "Serval") and the perpetration of an attack using Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED) against the troops participating in the Moroccan-American military maneuvers in the region of Tan-Tan.

The terrorist threat emanating from the Sahelo-Saharan zone is presently aggravated by the event of alliances between "AQIM" and the "polisario", and other terrorist groups including "MUJWA", "Boko Haram", "Al Chabab Al Islami" in Somalia, and "Ansar Al Charia" in Tunisia and Libya. In this latter, armed militias possess an impressive war arsenal, including jet fighters as well as civilian planes that can be used in eventual terrorist attacks against the western interests in the Maghreb region, including Morocco.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we participate in this meeting, the world is confronted to a real and unprecedented terrorist threat, represented by the so-called "Islamic State", which is a terrorist organization that has gained so much power that it constitutes a threat to world peace and stability, supported in this context by the significant influx of financial and military means, as well as the multiplication of its combatants in Iraq and Syria, and its guerilla and military aptitudes.

In fact, Syria, being easily more accessible than the Sahel or the Afghan-Pakistan zone, witnesses an unrelenting flux of "Jihadis" from all around the world, including from Morocco, where we were able to count 1203 Moroccan combatants present in this conflict zone (including 218 former islamist detainees, 254 died in combat or in suicide operations (219 in Syria and 35 in Iraq), where more than 500 candidates are awaiting the opportunity to travel to those areas, knowing that the security offensive against networks dedicated to recruit and convey Moroccan fighters have allowed the diminishing of this wave.

In the same context, 473 dual-nationals have been able to access Syria from their host countries, including Belgium (360), France (52), the Netherlands (37), Spain (13), Germany (06), The United Kingdom (03), Italy (01), and Greece (01). These combatants are, for most of them, part of a group called "Harakat Cham Al Islam" created by the Moroccan-afghan, ex-Guantanamo detainee, Brahim Benchakroun (dead). Beyond its participation in the combats, the strategy of the leadership of Cham Al

Islam consists mainly in training the Moroccan combatants in matters of military skills, to later re-deploy them in Morocco in order to carry out wide terrorist projects, in association with Al Qaida members who fought in the Afghanistan-Pakistan zone (the afghan-algerian "Abou Abdellah", the Libyan Abdelbasset Azzouz) whose support aims at providing the Moroccan combatants with authentic Libyan passports so as to facilitate their access to the Kingdom, through Libya and Algeria.

The role of the Moroccan nationals combating for the "Islamic State" "ex-ISIL" (more than 300 cases) is not less important, since they serve in high executive ranks, as the case of Abdelaziz El Mahdali (ex-military Emir of the region of Aleppo, who died in march 2014 following a military operation).

The keen interest in committing suicide operations shown by the "Islamic State's" Moroccan elements demonstrates their predisposition to take part in dangerous terrorist plots, knowing that a large number of these "jihadis" have expressed their determination to return to Morocco in a clandestine way in order to perpetrate suicide attacks, as the example of Mohammed Hamdouch who declared in a media statement, showing pictures of him holding decapitated heads of Syrian soldiers, the will of his organization to conquer the countries of the Maghreb.

The proclamation of the "Islamic State" is in fact worrying knowing that local extremists consider their allegiance to the so called-Califate "Abou Bakr Al Baghdadi" as a prelude to the carrying out of "Jihad" to give life to an Islamic caliphate preached by their aforementioned leader. However, the continuous efforts of dismantling networks dedicated to transferring combatants to Syria and Iraq, highly appreciated by the international community, had a deterring impact on the travel intentions of volunteers towards these war zones.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The engagement of the Moroccan security Services in the fight against the internal terrorist threat wouldn't cover up their contribution to the fight against terrorism at the international level, and this through the sharing of crucial intelligence that led to the disruption of several terrorist plots against friendly States.

At this level, the sharing of operational intelligence on the location of camp "Khalden" in Afghanistan to our American partners, have led the coalition forces destroy this "Al Qaeda" site, whereas the dismantling of networks belonging to the "Islamic group of Moroccan fighters" GICM, helped the French, Belgian and Spanish authorities in dismantling the structures associated to this terrorist entity.

Moreover, the dismantling in march 2006 of a terrorist network linked to Al Qaida and to the ex-GSPC led by the Tunisian national Mohamed ben Hedi M'sahel gave way to the abortion of terrorist plots that targeted the headquarters of the ex-"DST" in Paris, the Milanese subway, and the "San Petronio" basilisk in Bologna. The same cooperation efforts with France have led to the dismantling of an important terrorist structure that was plotting to perpetrate terrorist attacks on the French soil, and whose leader was based in Strasbourg.

Furthermore, the Danish Services have been alerted on a suicide attack plotted by Al Qaeda against the Danish caricaturist Kurt WESTERGAARD. In the same way, the Moroccan security Services have communicated to their foreign partners sensitive operational intelligence concerning the hostage taking operation that took place in Ain-Amenas in the south of Algeria, perpetrated in January 2013 by the terrorist sub-group "The signatories by the blood".

Besides and in the framework of the Moroccan efforts to fight against the expansion of Al Qaida in Syria, Moroccan security services have shared with their counterparts, operational intelligence regarding the phalanx called "Khorassane", considered as the operational wing of Al Qaida in charge of perpetrating attacks against Western targets.

Our country is developing also an important cooperation dynamic with its African partners in matters of training and intelligence sharing, a cooperation that permitted the abortion of a large number of terrorist projects that targeted high level officials from these friendly countries and western interests in the same countries (Mauritania, Niger and Ivory Coast).

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 2005, the Security Council has adopted the resolution 1624 that prohibits the incitement to commit terrorist acts, and calls for the reinforcement of the international cooperation in the matter. It is in the spirit of this resolution that the Kingdom has consolidated its cooperation with the different UN mechanisms in charge of fighting terrorism, including the Counter Terrorism Committee with which we are closely working.

Moreover, I would like to reiterate from this tribune that our country, in accordance with its tradition and its convictions, will remain fully engaged in any multilateral or bilateral effort aimed at combatting terrorism in all its forms, starting with its main factors of development, mainly the radical ideology and the extremist discourse inciting to violence.

Finally, I will not conclude my speech without addressing the warmest thanks to the Counter Terrorism Committee and the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate for the efforts they made in order to ensure a better space for international cooperation in matters of counter terrorism.

I would like also to reiterate the engagement of my country, the Kingdom of Morocco, in pursuing its way through respecting its engagements to fight rigorously against terrorism and to fight against the dark extremist ideologies, inspired by the outlined path and the clear-sightedness of his Majesty the King Mohammed VI, May God Assist Him.

Assalamou Alykoug Wa Rahmatou Allah.