

## **Open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee**

### **“The work of CTED with the Member States of South and South-East Asia pursuant to Security Council resolution 2395 (2017)”**

*(14 February 2022, 10.00 a.m.-1.00 p.m.)*

#### **India Statement as delivered by Rajesh Parihar, Counsellor, PMI NY**

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor.

It gives me immense pleasure to brief the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) of the Security Council on India’s initiatives on counter terrorism, how we perceive terrorist threat in the South Asia region and some of the challenges, which the region is facing.

At the outset, I would like to recall that exactly 3 years ago on 14 February 2019, 40 brave men of Indian security forces were martyred in a dastardly terrorist attack in Pulwama, India, carried out by Jaish E Mohammad. I pay my homage to their sacrifice.

2. India has been at the receiving end of terror acts, including cross-border terrorism, for past several decades. As such, India has also been at the forefront of our collective global fight against terrorism, advocating and practicing a “zero tolerance” policy towards terrorism. We remain fully committed to implement Security Council and General Assembly resolutions to strengthen the United Nations counterterrorism efforts.

**Mr Chair,**

3. The terrorist threat posed by State-sponsored terrorism has remained high in the South Asia region. Many countries in the South Asia region have been victims of State-sponsored terrorism in the last 5 decades. The UN designated terrorist groups, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahidin, and Jaish-e-Mohammad, as well as their aliases and proxies continue to operate in the region targeting civilians, security forces, places of worship, soft targets and critical infrastructure.

4. The world had witnessed the horrors of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, the 2016 Pathankot terror attack, and the 2019 Pulwama terrorist attack. We all know from where the perpetrators of these attacks came from. It is regretful that the victims of these dastardly attacks are yet to get justice, and the perpetrators, facilitators and financiers of these attacks continue to walk free, still enjoying State support and hospitality. This epicentre of terrorism nurtures terrorist entities with links to more than 150 UN designated entities and individuals, and its leaders often extol terrorists as 'martyrs'. We have consistently witnessed terror attacks on ethnic, sectarian and religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus and Sikhs. The growth of extremist ideology in our neighbouring state is bolstered by their patronage of radical outfits. The mainstreaming of radicalism and communal ideology by the State has also provided a fertile environment for the growth of terror infrastructure in the region.

5. While India is fully committed to bringing the perpetrators of these terror attacks on our soil to justice, it is also a high time that the international community calls upon this epicentre of terror state to take effective, credible, verifiable, and irreversible actions without further delay against terror outfits operating on its territory and under their control.

**Mr Chair,**

6. In South Asia, under the Taliban, Afghanistan once again is at the risk of becoming a safe haven for Al-Qaida, ISIL and a number of other UN-designated terrorist groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohamed. The 2021 report of the Taliban Sanctions Committee and other reports have recognized the continuation of links between Taliban, especially through the Haqqani Network, and Al Qaida and other terrorist groups in our neighbourhood.

7. The collective approach and expectations of the international community to the situation in Afghanistan has been outlined in UNSCR 2593 which unequivocally demands that Afghan soil should not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts.

8. We hope that Counter Terrorism Committee, its Executive Directorate - CTED, and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team will pay close attention to the terrorist threat emerging from Al-Qaida, particularly, their affiliates, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed as well as the atrocities of terrorist groups against religious minorities. It is important that the UN reporting mechanism on these issues is unbiased, objective, inclusive and comprehensive. It is with regret that our delegation notices that the present reporting mechanism does not treat all member states inputs on an equal footing and continues to be plagued by political biases.

9. It is equally important to call out the masterminds behind these terrorist plots and not let them mislead the international community by painting themselves as victims of terrorism. We need to call their bluff and hold them accountable for their deeds.

10. India has also taken several border security measures aimed at stemming terrorist-travel. India has updated and modernized its immigration records and passports and implemented a tighter immigration control through centralized systems like Immigration Visa Foreigner Registration Tracking (IVFRT), to facilitate legitimate travellers and strengthening security.

11. India has developed necessary capabilities, legal frameworks, and institutions, in order to counter and suppress the threat of terror-financing. India became member of Financial Action Task Force in 2010, allowing itself to bring its systems and practices in line with international standards advocated by the FATF. Besides, India has been regularly conducting the National Risk Assessments to monitor the money laundering and terror-financing risks and address them. In order to reduce the risk posed by cash couriers, steps have been taken towards reducing cash transactions and incentivising digital payments. India is also in process of upgrading its Financial Intelligence Network leveraging latest technologies like artificial intelligence, chatbots, virtual assistants, and advanced data analytics to further strengthen capabilities of our Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) towards combating money laundering and related crimes. Through effective and active coordination, Indian law enforcement authorities continue to disrupt Internet and social media networks being used by terrorists for their nefarious activities.

**Mr Chair,**

12. From the past few years, the UN member-States have been ringing alarm bells about terrorists having access to modern and emerging technologies such as internet, on mobile devices, social media, encrypted messaging services and using them to spread hatred, radical propaganda, fake narratives and carry out recruitment and terror activities. This threat has been further exacerbated due to the COVID19 pandemic. The leaders of terrorist organizations in South Asia region continue to spread hatred against India and other countries in the region through internet platforms and social media, raise funds through fake charities, crowdfunding and by portraying themselves as humanitarian NGOs and non-profit organizations. There is an urgent need for the UN Monitoring Team and FATF to focus on such non-traditional aspects of terror financing.

13. More recently, terrorist groups have been using unmanned aerial platforms, such as drones and quadcopters for cross border trafficking of drugs and arms and for carrying out terrorist attacks. This cannot happen without connivance and support of the State agencies controlling the territory from where these terrorists are operating. We call upon them to cease their despicable acts. There is need for CTED to focus on such activities as well in their reporting.

**Mr Chair,**

14. It may be recalled that India's External Affairs Minister had proposed an 8-point "Action Plan" in his clarion call for the international community to combat the menace of terrorism effectively and comprehensively. These 8 action points from his address to the UNSC Open Debate on "Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts" in January last year [2021] merit reiterating on this occasion:

- **Summon the political will**
- **Say no to double standards**
- **Reform the working methods of the Committees dealing with Sanctions and Counter Terrorism**
- **Firmly discourage exclusivist thinking that encourages radicalization**
- **Listing and delisting under UNSC sanctions to be done objectively**
- **Address linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime**

- **Identify and remedy weaknesses in anti-money laundering regime under FATF**
- **Adequately fund UN Counter Terrorism bodies**

15. I would like to conclude by re-iterating that terrorism is the most serious threat to mankind today and combating terrorism should be at the heart of any discussion on our common agenda for the future. As UNSC Resolution 1566 notes, terrorism grossly impairs the enjoyment of human rights and threatens social and economic development of all countries and regions. We are working with our partners in the South Asia region and beyond to strengthen our counter-terrorism efforts and counter-terrorism capabilities of our partners. India is fully committed to strengthen multilateral counter terrorism response under the aegis of the UN.

I thank you, Mr Chair.

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