



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(For immediate press release)

**STATEMENT BY
MDM. SITI HAJJAR ADNIN, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**OPEN DEBATE ON THE VICTIMS OF ATTACKS AND ABUSES
ON ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS GROUND IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

NEW YORK, 27 MARCH 2015

Mr. President,

Malaysia joins other Council members in warmly welcoming you Mr. President, and other high-level dignitaries to the Council and to today's meeting. We commend you and the delegation of France for convening this important open debate at this crucial juncture for all the communities in the Middle East.

2. My delegation takes this opportunity to express appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary-General and His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for sharing their perspectives and insights on the topic at hand.

3. We also thank His Beatitude Louis Raphaël Sako, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans and the Honorable Mrs. Vian Dakhil, member of the Iraqi Parliament for being with us today and for bringing their perspectives as victims directly affected by the wave of violent extremism in the Middle East today. We are humbled by your fortitude in the face of such trying circumstances.

Mr. President,

4. The landscape of threats to international peace and security has evolved significantly since the establishment of this Council. Accordingly, the Council's responses must continue to evolve and take into account the changing nature of the threats faced.

5. Among others, the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism stands out as one of the most prominent and challenging threats we face today. In this connection, Malaysia recalls Council resolutions 2170, 2178 and 2199 which are among the most recent responses by the Council and reaffirms its commitment to their implementation and that of other relevant resolutions.

6. We are pleased to take note of the Secretary General's proposal on the United Nations Plan of Action to combat fanaticism and violent extremism. We also welcome France's leadership in taking this proposal forward through the proposed International Conference.

7. It is tragic and disconcerting that the deadly consequences of the twin scourges of terrorism and violent extremism – fuelled by the fires of radicalisation and hatred – have spread and seemingly become entrenched in the Middle East, a region known as the 'cradle of civilisation'.

8. Malaysia condemns in the strongest possible terms the outrageous and senseless acts perpetrated by violent extremists, against ethnic or religious minorities, wherever and whenever they occur. We denounce and reject totally, the ideology propagated by the likes of Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Da'esh, Ansar Al-Sharia, al-Nusra Front and other groups or individuals of similar persuasion. We especially reject their claims that heinous and barbaric acts of violence are carried out in the name of Islam, a religion of peace.

9. To the victims, we can only but attempt to assuage their grief and despair by reaffirming and reassuring them of our continuing strong commitment to combat these scourges, including through the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

10. Malaysia wishes to reaffirm its commitment to continue working in a coordinated and concerted manner with all partners and stakeholders in combating terrorism and violent extremism under the framework of the United Nations and other relevant international and regional organisations.

11. The current wave of extremist violence in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria and other parts of the Middle East affects all communities irrespective of creed or ethnicity, whether Christian, Yezidi, Kurd, Shia or Sunni. These are communities which have for the most part, lived in peace, side by side with each other for centuries if not millennia.

12. The advent of the violent extremists and their particular brand has resulted in deep fissures among these communities from which they may never recover. As such, while it may be seem an impossible task at this particular juncture, we must remain mindful of the need to maintain and strengthen the common ties and linkages between them in order to build a better future for the next generation.

13. At the same time, we also wish to highlight the situation of Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel. The Palestinian minority in Israel has suffered continuously from racial discrimination and inequality, much of it officially legislated and sanctioned by the Israeli government. At least 40 different laws are currently in place which in essence,

discriminates against the Israeli Palestinian population, whether Muslims or Christian, affecting schools, communities, land ownership and other rights. Palestinians in Israel are relegated to second-class citizens and they are victims of segregation and displacement.

14. Impunity, wherever it may occur breeds hatred and vengeance. In this regard, we echo the views expressed by the earlier speakers that efforts and initiatives aimed at establishing accountability must be fully supported by the international community. Perpetrators of extremist violence must realise that there will be consequences for their despicable actions.

Mr. President,

15. Malaysia reaffirms the primary responsibility of Governments to ensure the safety and security of the citizens and on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of their peoples, including minorities.

16. We realise that for certain countries, especially those just emerging from conflict or are in a transition process, the key challenges they face include the establishment and maintenance of strong governance and law enforcement institutions that are able to ensure the peoples' safety and security, regardless of creed or ethnicity. At the same time, the institutions established should be able to foster enabling conditions for the pursuit of socioeconomic development and the promotion and protection of human rights for the people. We believe that the international community, in particular, the United Nations has a critical supporting role to play in this regard.

Mr. President,

17. As a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-faith society, Malaysia is keenly aware that the exercise of certain rights and freedoms must be carefully balanced against the responsibility to maintain peaceful and harmonious relations among the various communities.

18. While there is generally peace and harmony among the various communities in the country now, this was not always so, as inter-ethnic relations and intercommunal divisions on certain issues such as wage, income and other socio-economic inequality were acutely sharp and divisive in the immediate years, post-independence.

19. In light of our own experiences, we would like to take this opportunity to underscore the importance of certain key values, principles and approaches that must be preserved and nurtured in plural societies, including:

- 19.1 Tolerance and inclusiveness among the various communities, which must be fostered and strengthened over time in plural societies;

- 19.2 The belief that diversity as a source of strength and unity must also be fostered and where appropriate, efforts to this end to be led by the Government;
- 19.3 Application of moderation as an approach, whereby application of this principle could guide or frame the parameters for inter-communal relations, cooperation and understanding; and
- 19.4 Where appropriate, certain rights and freedoms of minority communities must enjoy legal protection and sanction. It is equally important for the promotion and protection of minority rights to be seen as balanced, especially against the legitimate concerns of the majority.

Mr. President,

20. Against the rising tide of extremist violence and their narrative, the need for broad-based cooperation aimed at fostering understanding and building bridges between the different communities, including through sustained interfaith dialogue, among others, must be pursued in earnest. For its part, Malaysia stands ready to participate and contribute in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, including in combating their destructive narrative and agenda.

I thank you, Mr. President.