

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SIXTY-NINTH SESSION
SIXTH COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 107: MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

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S T A T E M E N T

by

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Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your appointment and to wish you every success in your work, in which you can count on the full support of my delegation. Also, let me point out that, as a candidate country for membership in the European Union, my delegation has aligned itself to the statement of the European Union. I shall, therefore, mainly focus on some points from the national perspective.

The problem of terrorism is complex and calls for coordination of activities and attention to all aspects of this global problem. As we speak of the suppression of terrorism, we must take into account all elements that help its emergence and spread – fake religious fanaticism, increased migration, social exclusion, especially of ethnic and religious minorities, uneven access to education and the lack of employment and economic opportunities. Also, we must keep sight of the sources of financing of terrorist groups, arms smuggling channels, clandestine recruitment centers and boot camps. Of particular concern is the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, which, although present for a long time in many regions of the world, including the Western Balkans, especially during past crises, has gained prominence with its dramatic escalation in the Middle East. In this respect, we must not disregard the fact that the sudden rise in their numbers coincides also with the development of information technology and social networks.

Having in mind the complex character of the threat, we do not believe that military solutions are sufficient to suppress this urgent problem and that a multidimensional approach is needed. We consider that banning recruitment and transport of potential foreign terrorist fighters by way of adopting appropriate national laws and regulations and the engagement of local communities, aimed at suppressing violent extremism and backed by the threat of sanctions to groups and individuals engaged in recruitment, would be a first step. We therefore welcome the adoption of UNSC resolution 2178 and see it as a significant step towards the suppression of terrorism on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

Serbia, too, is facing the problem of foreign terrorist fighters engaged in the Middle East theatre. Although their estimated number is relatively small, the risks for the society are manifold. Of particular concern for Serbia is the fact that hate-speech and religious intolerance are on the rise. In confronting this challenge Serbia is actively working within the broader plan of the fight against terrorism. A functional system against money laundering and terrorism financing has long been in place in Serbia. Currently, draft amendments to the Criminal Code are in parliamentary procedure, awaiting adoption by the National Assembly of Serbia. They will provide for incrimination of incitement, organizing, recruiting and equipping of individuals or groups with the aim of joining foreign armed groups outside of Serbia whose intention is to participate in wars or armed conflicts.

Serbia is open for promotion of cooperation with all countries in the region of the Western Balkans on suppressing terrorist threats by coordinating the activities of competent national institutions. To that end, we consider that it is equally important that the entire region and each individual country of the Western Balkans becomes actively involved in the fight against terrorism at the international level, which, we consider, should be coordinated through the United Nations system. Appraised by the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee as one of the countries with the most significant counter-terrorist capacities in the region, Serbia stands ready to offer its expertise and knowhow to the countries in its neighborhood.

In the end, let me reiterate that Serbia has always unequivocally and strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, having suffered from its consequences in the past. It is a party to 14 out of 18 international counter-terrorism instruments and is doing its utmost to fully implement relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy which it considers a pinnacle of global fight against terrorism and to which it is fully committed.

Thank you.