



# Security Council

Distr.: General  
27 August 2020

Original: English

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## Letter dated 26 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of briefings provided by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts” convened on Monday, 24 August 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council dated 2 April 2020 (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Dian Triansyah **Djani**  
President of the Security Council



**Annex I****Statement by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov**

Let me begin by expressing my profound condolences to Afghanistan, Chad, France, Nigeria, Somalia, the United Kingdom and all Member States that recently suffered terrorist attacks. My heartfelt thoughts and sympathy go to the survivors and families of the victims.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the eleventh report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, as mandated by resolution 2368 (2017).

The report was prepared by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, led by Mr. Fitton-Brown, and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), led by Ms. Coninsx, in close collaboration with my Office and with contributions from other United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities.

This report covers a period like no other, marked by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, affecting virtually all Member States. This pandemic environment raises several strategic and practical challenges for counter-terrorism, which we discussed during the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week organized by my Office last month.

Our discussions during the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week showed that States need to stay attuned to how the ISIL threat evolves during and after the pandemic. They also emphasized the need to sustain the focus and resources required to address the persistent threat posed by ISIL and the continuing challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

Since the start of the year, we have seen contrasting regional disparities in the threat trajectory. In conflict zones, the threat has increased, as evidenced by ISIL's regrouping and increasing activity in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and among some of its regional affiliates. However, in non-conflict zones, the threat appears to have decreased in the short term. Measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19, such as lockdowns and restrictions on movement, seem to have reduced the risk of terrorist attacks in many countries. Yet there is a continued trend of attacks by individuals inspired online and acting alone or in small groups, which could be fuelled by ISIL's opportunistic propaganda efforts during the COVID-19 crisis.

The pandemic's impact on recruitment and fundraising activities remains unclear, as its socioeconomic fallout could exacerbate conditions conducive to terrorism and increase the medium- to long-term threat, both within and outside conflict zones. Meanwhile, there is no clear indication of a change in ISIL's strategic direction under its new leader. Command and control arrangements between the ISIL core and its remote "provinces" have continued to loosen, thereby strengthening regional affiliates. I would like to highlight some developments in different regions.

In the Middle East, the ISIL core has continued to consolidate its position in some areas previously under its control, operating increasingly confidently and openly. More than 10,000 ISIL fighters are estimated to remain active in Iraq and Syria, moving freely in small cells between the two countries. There has been a significant increase in ISIL attacks in both countries in 2020 as compared with 2019.

The COVID-19 crisis has further complicated the already dire and unsustainable situation of thousands of individuals with suspected links to ISIL who are stranded in the conflict zone, especially women and children. The repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation, reintegration and protection of the vulnerable have become ever more urgent. While some States have repatriated and continue to repatriate children, we have seen only limited progress in overcoming legal, political and practical hurdles to repatriation.

The global threat from ISIL is likely to increase if the international community fails to meet this challenge. Decisive action is required from Member States on humanitarian, human rights and security grounds. The Secretary-General reiterates his call on Member States to meet their obligations under international law and repatriate their nationals — women, men and children. The United Nations system stands ready to support their efforts in that regard.

Turning to Africa, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) remains a major focus of ISIL global propaganda, and its total membership of approximately 3,500 makes it one of the largest of the remote “provinces”. ISWAP has continued to reinforce links with the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, which remains the most dangerous group in the tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

Although ISIL has only a few hundred fighters in Libya, it has been exploiting local tensions between ethnic groups. It represents a potent threat capable of broader regional impact. The risk of escalation of the conflict in Libya could allow ISIL to expand its activity.

Another worrisome development is the attacks staged by the Islamic State Central Africa Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Mozambique, including complex attacks and brief takeovers of villages.

In Europe, the threat continues to come mainly from Internet-driven, home-grown terrorist radicalization. Three ISIL-inspired attacks occurred in France and two in the United Kingdom during the reporting period, while other attacks by lone actors against soft public targets were thankfully foiled. Acute concerns persist about radicalization and failed rehabilitation in prisons, and the imminent release of dangerous inmates with a terrorism background or connections.

Several Member States in Europe report a growing terrorist threat from right-wing violent extremism, which requires intelligence services to shift their operational and analytical priorities away from a focus on ISIL.

In Asia, ISIL’s affiliate in Afghanistan remains capable of high-profile attacks in various parts of the country, including Kabul, despite continued territorial losses and the arrest of its leaders. The group seeks to use Afghan territory to spread its influence across the region, similar to the approach of ISIL’s core. It also aims to attract fighters who oppose, inter alia, the peace agreement reached between the Taliban and the United States.

In other parts of Asia, ISIL claimed its first attack in the Maldives in April. Concern remains over the recruitment of ISIL fighters in the country and the looming challenge of managing returnees from the core conflict zone. In South-East Asia, attacks on security forces occur regularly, but Government authorities have maintained pressure on ISIL activities through counter-terrorism operations.

The report of the Secretary-General also highlights how the United Nations system has continued to actively support Member States over the past six months despite the pandemic. After the COVID-19 outbreak, United Nations entities swiftly adjusted their operations to ensure business continuity. Collaboration under the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact continued with

regular virtual meetings and joint projects. At the end of March, my Office launched the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform to further facilitate this process and engagement with Member States. I have already reported to the Security Council on the outcomes of the successful Counter-Terrorism Week in July (see S/2020/791).

My Office has worked closely with CTED and other Compact partners to incorporate flexible approaches in our capacity-building support to Member States, including by using online platforms and developing remote needs-assessment methodologies. I would like to draw the Council's attention to a few key activities of my Office.

First, we led the development of a multi-agency framework to provide coordinated United Nations support to requesting Member States on the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of third-country nationals returning from Iraq and Syria. The framework, coordinated by my Office and UNICEF, aims to ensure that this support is human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive and takes into account the best interests of the child.

Secondly, we continued prioritizing our work on victims of terrorism, including encouraging Member States to identify specific actions to uphold their rights in national counter-terrorism strategies. The commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism last week reminded us that we need to do more to support victims. In particular, more needs to be done to address sexual violence committed by ISIL, both in terms of accountability and support to victims.

Thirdly, countering the financing of terrorism remains a key priority. The pandemic increases the potential risk of cybercrime by terrorists to raise and move funds. In June, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in my Office, together with CTED, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Office of Information and Communications Technology, launched a new, global capacity-building programme for the prevention and suppression of the financing of terrorism, in line with resolution 2462 (2019).

Fourthly, my Office has continued to partner with a broad range of entities to support Member States in law enforcement and border security. The United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, led by my Office to support Member States in implementing resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), currently has 36 confirmed beneficiaries in different regions. The programme adapted to the COVID-19 crisis by developing, together with CTED, an online assessment methodology that was first used in June in Côte d'Ivoire.

Lastly, during the high-level open debate convened by the Indonesian presidency earlier this month on addressing the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime (see S/2020/791), we discussed the need to tackle the illicit supply of small arms and light weapons to terrorist groups. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, UNODC, CTED and the Office for Disarmament Affairs launched a joint project in February focused on Central Asia to address this phenomenon.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the challenges we face in eliminating the threat of terrorism. ISIL and other terrorist groups seek to exploit the far-reaching disruption and negative socioeconomic and political impacts of the pandemic. As emphasized during the Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week, strengthening collective action and international counter-terrorism cooperation must remain a priority during and after the pandemic. As Member States continue their efforts to develop comprehensive responses to the threat posed by ISIL and terrorism, they can count

on the full support of my Office and the United Nations system through the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact.

**Annex II****Statement by the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Michèle Coninx**

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the eleventh report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the continued efforts of the United Nations and Member States to counter the threat.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his overview of the report and to commend both the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, for their invaluable contributions to the report.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is one of the greatest challenges faced by the United Nations in its 75-year history. The resulting period of global uncertainty has exposed existing economic fault lines and social instabilities, and its impact has also been felt across the global security apparatus. As we have heard, the rapidly evolving and deeply uncertain nature of the pandemic makes it difficult to assess its overall impact on ISIL's activities.

The dire situation faced by thousands of ISIL-associated women and children in the detention camps of north-eastern Syria remains a major challenge for the international community. The COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating an already untenable humanitarian, human rights and security situation. Indefinite detention is legally unjustifiable and has significant security and moral implications. The detained children remain the most vulnerable group. Every additional day that they spend in the camps will increase the risk that they will suffer irreparable psychosocial damage.

Last month, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) published an analytical brief on the prosecution of ISIL-associated women, highlighting the gender-specific challenges encountered by States in the investigation and prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR) of women returnees. Women remain the group with the lowest rate of return from the conflict zone. We cannot allow these women to become the forgotten demographic.

There is an urgent need to institutionalize comprehensive, tailored and gender-sensitive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies and to provide States with the required technical assistance. There have been signs of progress. Some States have repatriated their citizens despite the additional challenges posed by COVID-19. Some States are also making progress in prosecuting ISIL returnees for terrorism-related offences, sometimes cumulatively with war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This may help provide justice to the victims of ISIL.

States should continue to improve the collection and sharing of admissible, terrorism-related information and evidence by the military, in compliance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

CTED is working in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNOCT, under the Global PRR Initiative, to explore approaches to rehabilitation and reintegration in various settings. Pandemic-related restrictions, including social isolation measures, curtailed religious and cultural activities and lack of employment opportunities, may exacerbate existing grievances, particularly in societies facing endemic conflicts.

With people spending more time online, ISIL and its affiliates are taking the opportunity to accelerate the spread of their toxic propaganda via digital platforms, including gaming platforms. Member States must ensure that policies adopted to curtail the spread of terrorist narratives and misinformation are human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive.

A whole-of-society approach, based on consultations with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academia, think tanks, religious actors and community leaders, is more crucial than ever. Within the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, CTED continues to engage with States, including in partnership with the Government of Iraq, on their development of comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategies that engage a wide range of stakeholders.

States should introduce innovative and practical counter-terrorism measures, strengthen existing partnerships and ensure that victims' rights are respected.

I welcome the adoption, in March, of the Interfaith Statement on the Victims of ISIL by the leadership of religious authorities in Iraq, which aims to secure justice and accountability and protect the rights of victims and survivors of ISIL.

Despite its significant loss of territory, ISIL continues to pose a threat, not only in the Middle East but also in the newer battlegrounds of South and South-East Asia, the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel. We are closely following the current political crisis in Mali and hoping for the restoration of the rule of law in order for the country to continue its fight against the rise of the terrorist threat. Our response to this enduring transnational challenge must be a multilateral one, rooted in enhanced information-sharing and international cooperation.

CTED has innovated its working methods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and maintained business continuity, despite the challenging circumstances. Acting on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, we have enhanced our desk-based stocktaking of Member States' activities and assisted the Committee in adopting an updated country visit framework, as well as the annual list of briefings and meetings for the Committee and the wider membership.

Under the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, CTED and its partners have conducted virtual deep-dive missions for Botswana and Côte d'Ivoire and developed Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records implementation road maps for both States. CTED also led a virtual deep-dive mission for Botswana with its partners on enhancing the capacity to counter terrorism using National-Level Interagency Coordination Mechanism Fusion Cells.

CTED and UNOCT have held joint consultations with Member States and experts on the use of biometric technologies for pandemic-related measures, aimed at ensuring their compliance with international human rights law. We have deepened our engagement with our partners on the ground, particularly the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams in assessed Member States. This has helped us integrate local, national and regional developments into our analysis of key trends and our facilitation of technical assistance, which will in turn translate into more effective and impactful counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism outcomes. We continue to share our insights through our regular stream of publications, including our recent analysis of the potential short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on terrorism and counter-terrorism.

In June, pursuant to resolution 2462 (2019), CTED and the Monitoring Team produced a joint report on counter-financing of terrorism (S/2020/493, annex), based on responses from 112 Member States. The report was followed by a closed briefing

of the Council. In July, we conducted a virtual global consultation with over 15 civil society organizations on counter-financing of terrorism and its implications for human rights, in accordance with resolution 2462 (2019).

CTED is committed to continuing dialogue with civil society on issues relating to counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism within a human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive framework. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly make our already complex task even more difficult. But the pandemic has also given us an opportunity to question the status quo. We should continue to use this opportunity to review and strengthen our counter-terrorism and counter-violent extremism approaches.

We must collectively uphold our shared principles of a rule of law-based international order and develop human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive policies, practices and whole-of-society approaches. Our determination to ensure justice, equality and human dignity must continue to be the cornerstone of our multilateral counter-terrorism efforts.



## Annex III

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations. Philippe Kridelka**

I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the threats to international peace and security posed by Da'esh (S/2020/774), as well as Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx for their presentations.

Thanks to the efforts of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, of which Belgium is an active member, the Syrian and Iraqi territories were freed from the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group. However, the latter maintains its presence in the region, and other small groups driven by the same ideology continue to spread in other parts of the world, notably in the Sahel, West Africa and the Lake Chad region, thereby attempting to exploit a damaged security situation.

The impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the threat posed by ISIL is multifaceted but not yet clear. Although the measures taken by Member States to fight against the pandemic may have complicated the activities of the terrorist group, we still see an increase in its activities in Iraq and Syria, especially in the most fragile regions. In the coming months, it will be important to remain vigilant and to continue to assess the situation in order to prevent any resurgence of this organization in the region.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, the group's offensive propaganda efforts, mainly on online platforms, have benefited from a fragile, confined audience, particularly among the most vulnerable groups in our societies who feel marginalized and downgraded. Preventing and fighting against such hate speech must remain a long-term priority, as they exacerbate radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

As you stated, the threat posed by Da'esh and its followers is constantly evolving, and therefore requires that all Member States remain vigilant and adapt in a quick, flexible way. In this context, on 16 June, the Council of the European Union updated its conclusions on European Union (EU) external action on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism, which form the basis of the EU's action in this domain. Those new conclusions will allow the EU to continue its action while adapting to the evolution of the Islamic threat and to the emergence of new ones, including the rise of far-right terrorism.

Belgium condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. My country is convinced that the fight against terrorism can succeed only if it fully complies with human rights law and international humanitarian law, which must constitute a leading principle in all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. For this reason, together with its European partners, Belgium ensures that measures taken to fight terrorism do not negatively impact human rights and humanitarian activities on the ground, including in the Syrian camps.

The foreign terrorist fighters issue constitutes a major challenge for our common security. Therefore, my country favourably welcomes the developments to prevent travel for terrorist purposes, and underlines the importance of bringing terrorists to justice, while continuing to fight against the root causes of radicalization leading to extremism and terrorism. At the same time, developing specific rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for men and women suspected of having committed terrorism-related crimes is crucial. It is also essential to differentiate the status of children from those of men and women, and to primarily consider them as victims of terrorism.

Belgium considers that a successful fight against violent extremism and terrorism requires a comprehensive approach. This comprehensive approach is reflected at the military level with a contribution of four Belgian F-16s in support of the Coalition's operations from October onwards for a period of one year, as well as at the stabilization level with a contribution of €4 million in 2020 in the territories freed from Da'esh. We also promote an inclusive, whole-of-society approach. Youth, women, the private sector, civil society and human rights defenders and victims of terrorism all contribute to the development of efficient, relevant and sustainable policies. Their voices must be heard and integrated into our counter-terrorism strategies.

Finally, despite the fragmentation of our efforts caused by the current pandemic, it is essential that our coordination and cooperation in countering terrorism be reinforced, on the international and regional, but also national, levels. In this framework, Belgium wishes to underline its appreciation of the flexibility of all United Nations entities, which managed to continue to successfully fulfil their mandates under the difficult circumstances of the past months. Together with all our partners, Belgium will remain fully committed to eradicating the threat posed by Da'esh.

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**Annex IV****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their briefings. We welcome the eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to international peace and security (S/2020/774).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has highlighted the profound changes the world is undergoing and the severe challenges humankind is facing. Inequalities within and among countries have been laid bare. The ignorance, anxiety, stigma and politicization that come with the pandemic have led to hatred and xenophobia, which have been aggravated and amplified by the popular use of social media.

Although the pandemic appears to have temporarily reduced the risks of terrorist attacks, the socioeconomic fallout from the crisis has the potential to exacerbate conditions conducive to terrorism. It could feed into a vicious cycle of destabilization and violence and increase the mid- to long-term threat, which ISIL and other terrorist organizations are keen to explore and exploit.

According to the report of the Secretary-General, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is witnessing a surge in activities by terrorist organizations, such as ISIL, in Iraq and Syria to rebuild their global operation capability. Terrorists, including ISIL, are also infiltrating into North Africa, in particular Libya, worsening regional turbulence. ISIL has also announced that it may use the virus as a biological weapon to launch terrorist attacks. Member States must remain highly vigilant to all these dangerous developments. Facing the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the common enemy of terrorism, we must bear in mind that humankind is a community with a shared future, and we should strengthen cooperation to jointly address the threat facing us.

First, international counter-terrorism cooperation should follow the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and continue to leverage the central coordinating role of the United Nations and the Security Council with unified standards. In fighting terrorism, we must respect the primary responsibility of Member States and the sovereignty of the countries concerned. We should comprehensively implement relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to further promote multilateralism and strengthen international cooperation in a joint effort to fight terrorism.

Secondly, we must adopt integrated policies to address the root causes as well as the symptoms of terrorism to eradicate its breeding grounds. The international community should push for political settlement of hot-spot issues, resolve differences peacefully, assist Member States in poverty reduction and eradication and sustainable development and encourage dialogue among civilizations and religions. We should support regional organizations, such as the African Union, in playing an important role. Assistance should be given to developing countries, especially African countries, to help build capacity for counter-terrorism and deradicalization. There is an urgent need for the international community to strengthen cooperation in fighting and overcoming COVID-19 and reduce its impact as a potential terrorist threat.

Thirdly, it is important to enhance international judicial cooperation and adapt it to the new trends and features of terrorism. We should focus on the key issues, such as foreign terrorist fighters, the diversified means of terrorist financing, the misuse

of the Internet and communication technologies by terrorists and the collusion of terrorist organizations with organized crime. We should attach great importance to the impact of COVID-19 on counter-terrorism and take timely measures to prevent terrorists from exploiting loopholes caused by the pandemic.

Fourthly, mechanisms, such as the Office of Counter Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee should increase coordination and fully leverage their strengths and expertise to form greater synergy. United Nations counter-terrorism mechanisms should act in strict accordance with the relevant resolutions and rules of procedure. They need to enhance communication with Member States; strengthen coordination among themselves in terrorist threat assessment, the capacity-building of Member States and the use of sanctions; maintain the authority and effectiveness of the counter-terrorism and sanctions regimes; and contribute more to international counter-terrorism efforts. These mechanisms should readjust their working methods during the pandemic and make better use of online platforms to carry out their work according to the needs of Member States.

As an important player in the international fight against terrorism, China resolutely implements all the relevant United Nations resolutions. We actively participate in international and regional counter-terrorism cooperation through the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other forums. We work closely with other Member States in sharing intelligence and combating terrorist financing, transnational organized crime and cyberterrorism.

China will work with the international community to analyse in depth the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global terrorist activities, and will continue to have bilateral and multilateral exchanges and capacity-building cooperation with other countries, especially developing countries, including those in Africa. We will continue to provide political and financial support to United Nations counter-terrorism efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

China firmly rejects the accusation against China by certain members of the Council. It is baseless and absurd, as usual.

Terrorism is our common enemy. There is no such thing as good or bad terrorists. China is firmly opposed to politicization and double standards in counter-terrorism.

The situation in Xinjiang is totally part of China's internal affairs. It is not a religion issue or a human rights issue. Rather, it is about counter-terrorism and anti-extremism.

Xinjiang has suffered deeply from terrorism and violent extremism in the past. To address the threat, Xinjiang has taken a series of preventive counter-terrorism and de-radicalization measures. This is consistent with Security Council resolutions, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. These measures are widely supported by the people in Xinjiang and have yielded good results. Xinjiang has not seen a single terror incident in the past three years. Facts speak louder than words. Anyone who is fair-minded can tell right from wrong.

Since late 2018, more than 70 foreign delegations have visited Xinjiang. They have seen first-hand a stable, thriving and developing Xinjiang, and agree that counter-terrorism and de-radicalization efforts have made this possible. However, it is regrettable that the United States chooses to ignore basic facts and repeat its rhetoric and keep smearing and discrediting the counter-terrorism and deradicalization efforts in Xinjiang. We urge the United States to listen to the

international community, admit the facts, give up bigotry and double standards and stop using human rights as an excuse to interfere in China's internal affairs.

If the United States truly cares about human rights, it should do its own job first. Please protect the human rights of the American people. Please step up effort to combat COVID-19 to safeguard lives and the health of the American people.

In addition, the United Kingdom followed the United States once again in levelling unfounded charges against China in the Council. China is strongly opposed to this. The baseless remarks of the United Kingdom represent sheer hypocrisy and double standards. We urge the United Kingdom to fix its own problems and to stop interfering in China's internal affairs.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that China is determined to safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests. No interference against China will succeed, and no one can stop China's progress.

**Annex V****Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Executive Director Michèle Coninsx for briefing us today on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh).

Of particular concern to us, having anticipated the latest report of the Secretary-General on the subject (S/2020/774), is precisely the status of that threat as a result of the devastating reality facing the world owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We have witnessed and condemn the increase in the number of attacks and actions by ISIL in places such as Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, where it is consolidating its presence at this crucial moment when Governments are focusing their actions and limited resources on saving lives and fighting to contain the spread of the virus.

Despite the achievements made in the fight against ISIL, in particular at the top of its core organization — and here we commend the various counter-terrorism-strategy operations taking place — its ability to mutate and adapt to new modalities in the face of external events, as in the case of the pandemic, requires that we remain on the offensive.

We also consider it important to pay due attention to the socioeconomic impact of the crisis resulting from the pandemic as an element that could exacerbate conditions conducive to terrorism in the medium to long term.

We also wish to stress our concern about the serious humanitarian situation that people with alleged links to ISIL continue to face in camps and detention centres in conflict zones, as they are exposed to deplorable conditions, particularly women and children — many of whom are the victims of sexual violence — who, in the case of Al-Hol camp, in Syria, make up the vast majority of its population.

COVID-19 has added an additional element of destabilization to the already serious situation in those centres, exposing those admitted to a high risk of contagion, to the detriment of efforts in the area of protection, repatriation, processing, rehabilitation and reintegration, given the need to reallocate resources to combat the pandemic.

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen initiatives and programmes designed to counter the risk of exploitation and radicalization in camps and detention centres, with assistance from specialized United Nations agencies in the development of internal strategies and protocols aimed at better addressing the humanitarian, human rights and security situation, also counting on the important support of the international community.

Given the mobility and confinement restrictions imposed by COVID-19, which have considerably increased the time spent online, we urge the relevant monitoring bodies to maintain the alert levels necessary to act against the increase in cybercrime for financing and ISIL propaganda in the media aimed at inspiring attacks by its affiliates and supporters.

Likewise, of concern is the threat posed by the numerous foreign terrorist fighters and the return of many of them to their countries of origin, as they continue to pose substantial political, legal, operational and security challenges to Member States.

Let me conclude by recognizing the essential work, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, of specialized United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and UNICEF.

**Annex VI****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of Estonia to the United Nations,  
Kristel Lõuk**

We thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx for their comprehensive briefings, which introduced fresh findings as contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates.

Estonia notes that the command-and-control arrangements between the ISIL core and its so-called provinces are loosening. Further, the ongoing pandemic has resulted in travel restrictions, which, according to the report, have complicated terrorist planning and operations, making it harder for terrorists to move, recruit and raise funds.

In the light of those changes, it is encouraging to hear that at least temporarily, the direct threat posed by terrorism appears to have decreased in various regions across the globe. However, we must remain vigilant.

We appreciate the role played by the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism in European Union and beyond, and we welcome the increased cooperation of those agencies with the United Nations.

Despite the aforementioned positive developments, we remain concerned about conflict-affected areas where ISIL continues to undermine regional security. As such, we note that compared with last year, attacks have increased in ISIL core areas, in both Syria and Iraq.

Estonia further recognizes the threat posed by the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. That organization continues to mount attacks on international security forces as well as local communities in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger. In those areas, terrorism is closely interlinked with other forms of communal violence. Therefore, in order to address extremism and terrorism, we need a holistic approach that could build truly resilient communities.

Greater attention must be given to lowering intercommunal tensions and nurturing political reconciliation. Such activities often start at the grass-roots level.

Finally, the question of accountability and denying impunity to the perpetrators of crimes against civilians is an essential part of countering terrorism. It is also vital to healing communities, restoring trust and creating the conditions for sustainable peace.



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**Annex VII****Statement by the Deputy Political Coordinator of France to the United Nations, Wadid Benaabou**

[Original: English and French]

I would like at the outset to thank the briefers for their statements.

I wish to highlight four points.

First, I would like to reiterate France's determination to pursue, along with its international partners, the fight against Da'esh within the framework of the international coalition. Da'esh lost its territorial foothold with the fall of Baghouz in March 2019, but the group still has many supporters in the Levant and beyond. It has shown its determination to exploit the opportunities created by the current health context to step up its violent actions not only in Syria and Iraq but also, through its affiliated groups, in Afghanistan, South-East Asia and Africa. The threat is far from having disappeared.

We will continue our efforts, both militarily and politically, to address the root causes of Da'esh's emergence. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our conviction that there will be no complete and lasting victory against Daesh without a political solution to the Syrian crisis in accordance with the terms of resolution 2254 (2015). France is continuing to work to that end in support of the work of the United Nations Special Envoy. It is also contributing to the recovery of the Syrian territories and populations that were liberated from Da'esh thanks to the action of the international coalition and that are now facing a difficult humanitarian situation.

In Iraq, it is essential for the international community to stand resolutely by the authorities to help the country strengthen its sovereignty and enable the economic development of its entire territory.

It is also necessary to continue our efforts to effectively protect children from recruitment and indoctrination, including by terrorist groups. As the Council recognized five years ago in its resolution 2242 (2015), girls are particularly vulnerable to such recruitment strategies. In the same vein, we must continue our efforts in the area of humanitarian assistance to ensure dignified living conditions for the thousands of refugees and vulnerable persons in regions affected by terrorism and thus prevent them to the extent possible from joining the ranks of terrorist groups.

Secondly, I wish to recall the need to effectively combat the financing of terrorism. Daesh's financial capabilities remain at a high level. Those resources, which are diversifying, must be dried up. This is a priority for France, which drafted resolution 2462 (2019), adopted in March 2019. We call for its full implementation, including with regard to States' compliance with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, I would like to stress the importance of combating the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. The Christchurch Call that we launched together with New Zealand in May 2019 now brings together some 50 States and partners, including major Internet companies. The participation of the latter is an essential condition for ensuring the effectiveness of the fight against online terrorist content. Because the coronavirus disease pandemic has led, during periods of containment, to increased exposure to online terrorist propaganda, it is essential to regulate the use of the Internet, which cannot be a lawless zone, while imperatively respecting freedom of expression.

This brings me to my fourth point. I would like to stress that the fight against terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism must be conducted in accordance with international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law. Similarly, that fight cannot justify attacks against civilians or the targeting of humanitarian actors and infrastructure. Respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as education, inclusion and social cohesion, are in the long term key factors in any strategy to prevent and combat terrorism.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a mention of the victims of Da'esh and their families. I am thinking in particular of the Yazidis in the Sinjar district of Iraq, who, exactly six years ago, were victims of war crimes and abuses committed by Da'esh. Friday's tribute to the victims of terrorism recalled the importance of placing victims at the heart of our collective action against terrorism. They have a right to justice. In that regard, France supports the activities carried out in Iraq by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as it supports initiatives aimed at combating impunity by prosecuting the alleged perpetrators of crimes as close as possible to where the crimes were committed.

## Annex VIII

### **Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter**

I would like to make three remarks. The first is on our approach to fighting international terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters in particular. The second point is on the continuing threat emanating from Da'esh. The third point is on why it is important that we be serious about our values when it comes to fighting terrorism.

The issue of terrorism, including the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters will remain on our agenda for the foreseeable future. Our goal must indeed remain the lasting defeat of Da'esh, Al-Qaida and all the other terrorist organizations and their gruesome ideologies. We therefore need to find the right responses, here in the Council, back home and in all the conflict-torn regions on which terrorists focus, because they serve as a base of operation.

We believe that we have four tools at our disposal. The first tool that works is respect. Disrespecting people and pushing them to the margins of society will make the world less safe, step by step. Inequality and injustice fuel the propaganda machinery of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and the like. If the Members of the United Nations fail at providing everyone with opportunities for a meaningful life, a life in dignity, we will all fail in our fight against terrorism.

The second tool is a second chance after adequate prosecution respecting the principles of due process and fair trial. Rehabilitation and reintegration are not easy, but there is no humane alternative.

The third tool that works is not trying to solve the problem alone but working together. Here lies the true value of cooperation, be it internationally or within a society. International, regional and subregional cooperation remains vital.

There is a fourth tool, in our view. Counter-terrorism works best with a strong role for civil-society organizations. But even more important are the stories of those who lost a brother, a mother, a friend to terror, the stories of those who have lost their own lives. And let us also in the Council remember those who stand at the front lines of this conflict, sometimes even, sadly, at the cost of their lives. Together, we should honour the women and men in the field who do the actual work: members of the armed forces and of law enforcement, social workers, religious leaders, those working for urban and rural development — they all are the heroes of this struggle.

My second point is on the threat that Da'esh continues to pose. Bringing Da'esh's territorial control to an end was an enormous achievement. Its withdrawal into the shadows, however, was not a reason to celebrate. As the Secretary-General has reported, 2020 brought a surge in activity in Syria and Iraq. The coronavirus disease may keep terrorists from travelling, but the terror continues wherever they dwell. So we must continue our counter-Da'esh efforts tirelessly.

My third point is on why our values matter. It is also about double standards, on which we have already seen quite a discussion this morning. Our values are key to ensuring that our response remains credible and effective. As soon as we are perceived as employing methods similar to those used by terrorists, we are losing the battle for the hearts and minds. Among the most important lessons we have learned in our struggle is that counter-terrorism measures must never serve as a pretext for human rights violations. We all know examples of so-called counter-terrorism measures that indiscriminately target ethnic minorities. That must not be our approach. The exclusion of ethnic minorities only makes those marginalized more prone to falling into the traps of violent extremism and terrorist networks. That counteracts all our efforts in trying to prevent terrorism.

Regarding Xinjiang, the internment of large parts of the population is, in our view, unjustified. In the long run, it is likely not to reduce but, rather, to increase the risk emanating from terrorist organizations. Counter-terrorism measures must not hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance by humanitarian actors consistent with international humanitarian law and based on humanitarian principles.

These days we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women in armed conflict. Gender is and remains an important element in countering the terrorist threat, in a number of ways. On the one hand, women are often affected by violent conflict and terrorism even more than men. On the other hand, women are not only victims. Within Da'esh, women have been among the perpetrators as well. They have assumed important operative functions within the organization. We should therefore include female radicalization in the priorities on our agenda.

One word on the weakest of all — children. Children have suffered dramatically under the so-called caliphate, and almost an entire generation may be lost. With a view to continuing negotiations on a resolution in which we exhaustively consider the situation of children, our position is clear: children are victims of terrorism and of their upbringing when they are born or brought into a region of conflict. After a certain age, they become juveniles who are responsible for their actions and must face the consequences. But before that, they are victims first and foremost. To protect them and lead them back into society should therefore be our most important goal when it comes to rehabilitation and reintegration. In very concrete terms, we in Germany are considering humanitarian cases, especially children who are German nationals, on a case-by-case basis. Each case is different and needs to be assessed on its individual merits.

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**Annex IX****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx for their briefings. Let me also express my gratitude to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the other United Nations-related entities for the report before us (S/2020/774).

In February, I had the pleasure of accompanying Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and the Coordinator of the Monitoring Team on the first ever joint high-level visit to Jakarta. I believe that visit underlined Indonesia's comprehensive and balanced approach to the fight against terrorism, including the strategies in the Global Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Initiative.

The importance of developing a prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration (PRR) strategy has also been highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. Indonesia is of the view that a PRR strategy is instrumental to counter-terrorism efforts as an integral part of a comprehensive and tailored approach to addressing the threat posed by terrorists. Providing clear guidance for Member States to develop and implement comprehensive PRR strategies should therefore be one of the imminent priorities for the Council. That also applies to the continuing humanitarian and security challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members.

We also note that the issues of relocation and returning foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members present significant challenges for Member States. In that regard, we believe that an effective comprehensive PRR strategy is appropriate. We must therefore set our differences aside and show our unity once again in our collective efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism.

My delegation takes note of various salient points in the report, particularly concerning how the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted counter-terrorism efforts and amplified threats through media propaganda. With that in mind, allow me to make three brief points.

The first point relates to the terrorism that continues to threaten other parts of the globe, carried out by affiliates of ISIL. The report clearly demonstrates that ISIL affiliates are still active in many parts of the world, even as the world now faces the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that this threat remains and works through media propaganda, which may inspire attacks once normal public mobility and assembly resume.

That leads me to my second point. Indonesia believes that we should always invest in soft measures towards countering terrorist narratives and steering people away from the violent extremism that is conducive to terrorism. We need to promote and facilitate the spread of messages of peace, moderation and tolerance as the best approach to confronting terrorist propaganda. We must provide messages that reject negativity and amplify positivity and hope.

My third and last point is that, despite the pandemic, our fight against terror should neither cease nor waver. The pandemic should in no way hinder our fight

against terrorism, as that is the hope of the terrorists. Let us not permit the pandemic to create more terrorists or let their affiliates regroup or consolidate. We need to stay attuned to how the threat of ISIL continues to evolve during and after the pandemic in order to adjust our response.

Resolution 2532 (2020), adopted last month, anticipated those concerns, as it called for the immediate cessation of hostilities during the pandemic, except in the fight against terrorist groups. To that end, Indonesia would like to reaffirm our commitment to working together with all countries and the United Nations to strengthen our counter-terrorism cooperation.

**Annex X****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

At the outset, allow me to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx for the in-depth analysis of the situation regarding countering the threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The eleventh report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) provides a comprehensive overview of the situation on the ground, including insights on how the terrorists adapt to the circumstances of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We note with appreciation that this document duly reflects assessments of those trends provided by various States, including Russia.

At present, the level of the global terrorist threat, despite the failure of the leaders of ISIL to build a pseudo-caliphate in Syria and Iraq, remains high. The principles of organization and tactics used by ISIL suggest that it has now fully transformed into a network structure with a high degree of autonomy of branches and sleeper cells in various countries and regions of the world. The high command of the organization has sufficient financial resources to restore mechanisms for coordinating and planning terrorist attacks in the border area between Syria and Iraq, and is doing just that.

At the same time, the terrorists do not intend to abandon plans to revive the caliphate in Iraq. ISIL continues to build up its combat potential and is seeking to expand the area and scope of terrorist attacks in the country. The determination of ISIL to focus on expansion across the African continent is now obvious. At the same time, in addition to the States of the Sahara-Sahel zone, where ISIL branches are already actively operating, the countries of Central and Southern Africa are in their sights.

A difficult situation is developing in Afghanistan, where approximately 4,000 ISIL fighters are present. The main units are concentrated in the eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar, where their numbers reach 2,000 terrorists. According to various estimates, there may be an additional 2,000 fighters in the north of the country. Supporters of the world caliphate regularly carry out large-scale terrorist attacks in various cities of the country, mainly against the Shiite minority.

Recently, the leaders of the international terrorist organization have shown increased interest in South and South-East Asia, which, in their opinion, are promising for recruiting new supporters.

The spread of COVID-19 provoked large-scale socioeconomic turbulence around the world and diverted the attention of many States from the counter-terrorism agenda, which in turn paves the way for the international terrorist organizations to increase their deadly potential. Terrorists are seeking to use the coronavirus pandemic to increase the number of supporters, primarily at the expense of those dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities in the context of the crisis, and in order to carry out hybrid attacks that combine terrorist attacks, biothreats, the spread of propaganda and the incitement of terrorist acts.

Recently, there has been a noticeable increase in the activity of international terrorist organizations on the Internet, where calls for supporters to take various actions in order to increase panic in society are spreading. ISIL leaders are brainwashing their supporters and urging their followers to intensify their activities.

At the same time, the pandemic has somewhat disrupted the relocation of terrorists to various hotspots and made it difficult to deliver funds and weapons to conflict zones. Some terrorist cells lack money and arms. In particular, branches of

ISIL in North Africa can no longer profit from smuggling and human trafficking due to the closure of borders between countries.

However, despite those obstacles, international and regional terrorist groups are rapidly adapting to the pandemic and gaining supporters.

There is undoubtedly still huge room for improvement in the area of international cooperation, especially with regard to the repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members to their countries of origin. Among the most vulnerable in that connection are the women and children associated with foreign terrorist fighters, currently trapped in camps and detention facilities in the Middle East.

The Secretary-General's report once again sheds light on the insufficient repatriation rates and the horrific conditions in which these people have to fight for their lives. Unfortunately, this is the battle from which some of our colleagues, including in the Council, decided to withdraw. It is totally unacceptable to prioritize human rights issues while denying innocent children their right to live.

Russia calls on the Council to ensure support for the repatriation efforts of States. All counter-terrorism resolutions must recognize that problem.



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**Annex XI****Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Halimah DeShong**

I wish to begin by joining Council members in thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their valuable briefings on the threats that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) poses to international peace and security.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains profoundly concerned about the acts of violence and the atrocious crimes committed by ISIL and its affiliates. Recent terrorist attacks across the globe demonstrate that, despite its territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, ISIL is continuing to expand its network, threatening State authority and disrupting peaceful societies as it carries out attacks against innocent civilians. We also note with particular concern, the findings in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/774) that the global threat from ISIL is likely to increase in the medium to long term if the international community fails to comprehensively address it. Also disturbing is the observation that the inequalities and social fractures, accelerated and magnified by the coronavirus disease pandemic, have the potential to feed into a vicious circle of destabilization and violence that ISIL is keen to exploit.

In order to address the threats to international stability and security arising from ISIL's continued expansion, the international community should renew its commitment to strengthening cooperation, bolstering stability and enhancing institutional capacities across all regions. Comprehensive strategies that promote social inclusion and cohesion, including through sustainable social and economic development initiatives, should be advanced in order to build resilient societies and reduce radicalization. Moreover, all counter-terrorism actions must be conducted in accordance with international law and accompanied by the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We must also effectively and efficiently share information responsibly with our partners in law enforcement and the intelligence community.

Countering the financing of terrorism is also an essential part of the global fight against terror. It is therefore of the utmost importance to monitor changes in the terror-financing techniques utilized by ISIL. Similarly, in order to combat emerging terrorist financing risks, we call on the international community to fully implement resolution 2462 (2019), which requires Member States to disrupt and criminalize the financing of terrorism for any purpose. In that regard, we commend the efforts made by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in the area of terrorist financing, and welcome the recent launch of a global capacity-building programme, pursuant to resolution 2462 (2019), on the prevention and suppression of the financing of terrorism. We underscore, however, that all initiatives to combat terrorist financing must be designed in such a way that they safeguard all legitimate and well-managed financial activities, including in offshore jurisdictions.

In conclusion, we underscore the central role of the United Nations in preventing and countering terrorism. The threats posed by terrorism can only be defeated through increased regional and international cooperation and through a comprehensive approach, with the active contribution and participation of all Member States. Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to contributing to the global efforts of preventing and countering terrorism.

**Annex XII****Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

We congratulate Indonesia on its successful presidency of the Security Council and thank the briefers for their insightful perspectives on the Secretary-General's eleventh strategic-level report (S/2020/774) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the various efforts of the United Nations to support Member States in countering that threat.

Appropriately, this meeting takes place shortly after the United Nations marked the third International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21 August in an event that provided a moving and timely reminder of the immense human costs that result from terrorism. As humankind continues to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, South Africa strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world.

The Secretary-General's report illustrates that, much like the COVID-19 pandemic, which is proving to be a stubborn threat despite massive efforts to counter it, ISIL/Da'esh continues to be a stubborn threat to international peace and security. The report describes a new surge of ISIL activity in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, while the group continues to pursue its deadly agenda via new affiliations in different regions of the world. South Africa is encouraged by the progress made by the Organization's leadership in its development of a global multi-agency framework to assist Member States with the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of third-country nationals returning from Syria and Iraq in order to meet the ongoing challenge of individuals with suspected links to ISIL — especially women and children — stranded in camps or being held in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The report also describes the inherent risks of the greater online recruitment and radicalization of a much larger captive audience, and of making greater use of the Internet as a substitute for activities impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Equally important is the report's mention of the possibility that the widespread economic depression resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to the exacerbation of socioeconomic challenges linked to radicalization and terrorism.

South Africa has consistently sought to highlight the importance of measures to address these root causes, which give rise to the resentment that ultimately fuels terrorism. On that point, we urge the United Nations and its Member States not to allow the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent us from reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by their target date, which would inevitably allow extremist movements throughout the world to take further root.

We are of course particularly concerned about the situation in Africa. As the report details, the persistent instability in Libya continues to provide fertile ground for the spread of terrorism on the continent. At the same time, Islamic State affiliates in the form of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, the Islamic State West Africa Province and Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) continue to carry out frequent attacks while attempting to entrench their operations and strengthen their ties with core and local strategic partners of ISIL.

Naturally, a key concern for South Africa is the situation described in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where ISCAP has continued its attempts to establish a greater operational presence and has carried out attacks against the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the forces of the United

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Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are also particularly concerned about the insurgency that is gripping northern parts of South Africa's neighbour, Mozambique, where some attacks have been claimed on behalf of ISCAP.

Both of those situations are the focus of high-level regional attention by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Indeed, only a few days ago, the leaders of SADC's 16 member States expressed their commitment to supporting Mozambique in addressing terrorism and violent attacks. It is important that these regional efforts continue to enjoy the full support of the international community and the United Nations. Allow me in this regard to express South Africa's appreciation to the United Nations for its continued support, including the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's valuable contribution to a Southern Africa-wide counter-financing of terrorism operational plan, developed and implemented in collaboration with the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating South Africa's steadfast condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and our strong commitment to supporting United Nations-led efforts to fight this scourge. As always, we call for the further development and enhancement of regional strategic partnerships, including with the African Union, and we emphasize the critical importance of ensuring that all of our counter-terrorism measures across the board are conducted in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

**Annex XIII****Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations**

I thank both Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx for their comprehensive briefings.

I would like to take this opportunity to express Tunisia's support for and solidarity with the victims of terrorism and their families all over the world on the occasion of the third International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, held on 21 August.

As the report of the Secretary General (S/2020/774) indicates, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and Al-Qaida continue to constitute a threat to international peace and security. Despite its previous military defeat in Syria and Iraq and the continued efforts to combat its affiliates around the world, ISIL is attempting to reconstitute and rebuild its network and readjust its continued ambition for a territorial existence, particularly in conflict zones.

The increase in the number of terrorist attacks in Syria and Iraq compared to the same period last year is very concerning in this regard, despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Furthermore, ISIL still maintains ownership of important financial resources amounting to \$100 million. It continues to engage in illegal activities, including organized criminal enterprise, and reap profits from donations and fundraisings, especially through social media campaigns.

The accelerated decentralization between the central command in Da'esh and Al-Qaida and their remote affiliates has been increasingly visible, with local groups acquiring their own distinct regional characteristics and objectives. This may constitute both an opportunity and a threat. On the one hand, the lack of command, with the recent deaths of several terrorist leaders, creates a power vacuum that the international community needs to use to good advantage to further mangle the strategic direction of ISIL and Al-Qaida and the effectiveness and outreach of their propaganda. On the other hand, however, affiliates are increasingly adapting themselves to regional contexts and exploiting local grievances by building financial, operational and family ties with other terrorist and organized-crime groups and by exacerbating tensions among different ethnic groups in some contexts to fuel conflicts and insecurity.

Tunisia expresses grave concern with regard to the growth of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, particularly in Libya and the West Africa and Sahel regions, where terrorist groups are systematically undermining poor socioeconomic conditions, marginalization, porous borders and the lack of security and political and social instability. We express particular concern about the recent reports of thousands of mercenaries from north-western Syria travelling towards Tripoli. This relocation constitutes a major terrorist threat not only to Libya but to the entire region. The terrorist travel towards Libya can only prolong the conflict and renders it bloodier and more difficult than ever to resolve peacefully. Tunisia calls upon the international community to uphold its obligation to disrupt terrorist travel and support.

To a certain extent, the pandemic has reduced terrorist threats in the world, given the difficulty of terrorist movement, and terrorists' access to financial resources and regular means has minimized the opportunities for terrorist attacks against civilians and soft targets to take place. Nonetheless, we should not ignore the possible medium- and long-term effects of the pandemic on the terrorist threat, as explained in the Secretary-General's report and in the analytical paper submitted by

the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). The unprecedented social, economic and political challenges resulting from the pandemic have been quickly integrated into the strategies and propaganda of terrorist groups, in order to escalate their attacks and spread hateful and extremist ideas to a captive audience that is more than ever exposed to their online platforms.

The dire economic and social consequences of the pandemic on countries and populations have also increased the fragility of societies while pressuring Member States to dedicate resources to countering terrorism and violent extremism measures. Such vulnerabilities can be exploited in future to radicalize those most affected and marginalized.

For the foregoing reasons, the response to the terrorist threat should be comprehensive and multi-dimensional.

First, States Members of the United Nations need to maintain the necessary resources and focus on their counter-terrorism priorities, while keeping and enhancing means of international coordination and cooperation despite the current pandemic, in a manner consistent with international law, particularly international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.

Secondly, it is crucial to address the deep causes of terrorism and establish the necessary safeguards to build resilience against terrorism and radicalization through the promotion of human rights, gender equality, youth participation, sustainable economic development and social cohesion. Tunisia also reiterates its call for the international community to disrupt all safe havens of terrorism through the peaceful settlement of conflicts, particularly during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In this regard, the report of the Secretary-General highlights resolution 2532 (2020), in which the Security Council, considering the unprecedented extent of the COVID-19 pandemic likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, demanded a general and immediate cessation of hostilities and a durable humanitarian pause. However, the Council affirmed that these requirements do not apply to military operations against ISIL and other designated terrorist groups.

Thirdly, the international community must address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) in a manner consistent with the realities, needs and capacities of different Member States. The Security Council has recognized in several of its resolutions that FTFs pose a serious threat to their States of origin and that these fighters have, upon their return, attempted, organized, planned and participated in terrorist attacks, including against soft targets. Tunisia reaffirms that Member States need to ensure that all perpetrators of terrorist crimes are held accountable for their acts, including through judicial and law-enforcement cooperation.

Finally, during the pandemic, the United Nations needs to remain vigilant and unified in its response to terrorism. It is crucial that we adapt to the new and unprecedented challenges before us and that we ensure the continuity and efficiency of our response, particularly through the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies. The postponement of the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should not make us lose focus on the priority given to counter-terrorism efforts nor hinder respect for our international obligations and commitments, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. We remain committed to multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation in striving to reach our common objective of a world free of terrorism.

**Annex XIV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his informative assessment of the evolving threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS) and the ongoing United Nations efforts to counter it. Last year, we saw how our collective efforts resulted in ISIS's loss of territorial control and the death of its leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. These victories in the battle against ISIS are a testament to the ongoing work of the global coalition to defeat it.

The coalition continues to pursue four main non-military lines of effort: counter-financing; counter-messaging; detention, repatriation and accountability for crimes and abuses by foreign terrorist fighters; and stabilization of areas liberated by ISIS. It is critical that the coalition continues each of these efforts.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) has made it clear that ISIS affiliates continue to pose a serious threat, from West Africa to South-East Asia. The United States seeks to call attention to the vast scale of this threat by identifying, sanctioning and targeting each ISIS affiliate. Earlier this year, the United States worked with Council members to list five ISIS-affiliated terrorist organizations in the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. We thank the many countries that sponsored these listings and encourage States Members of the United Nations to join us in identifying, listing and countering similar affiliates around the world.

Even though ISIS and its so-called caliphate have been defeated on the battlefield, we must work together to ensure that the population of detained foreign terrorist fighters as well as their family members displaced in Syria and Iraq do not become the nucleus of an ISIS 2.0. We share the Secretary-General's deep concerns regarding the thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members, most of whom are young children, who are still in camps and detention facilities. Foreign terrorist fighters must face prosecution and accountability for their crimes, and we need to rehabilitate and reintegrate family members, so a new generation of ISIS fighters does not emerge.

The United States has led by example, bringing back our citizens and prosecuting them where appropriate. Countries must repatriate, prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters and their families, as appropriate.

We are disappointed that Indonesia's efforts to draft a meaningful resolution on the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorists were stymied by the refusal of Council members to include repatriation. The world is watching. Will the Security Council make efforts to address the situation of foreign terrorist fighters and their family members left in Syria and Iraq? Or — just as the Council did two weeks ago with our draft resolution on the Iran arms embargo (S/2020/797) — will members dismiss this grave threat to international peace and security and bury their heads in the sand?

We would also like to take this opportunity to challenge the Council to refuse to accept countries' attempts to misuse counter-terrorism to pursue their own political ends. We are deeply concerned about the situation in Xinjiang, where more than a million Uyghurs and other Muslims have been detained under the false guise of counter-terrorism. Confinement that is imposed based on vague indicators and without fair trial guarantees is inconsistent with international law. Counter-terrorism

and countering violent extremism should never be used as a pretext to silence political dissent or freedom of expression or to violate religious freedom or repress minority groups.

The United States stands ready to work with our partners to prevent and counter terrorism, while protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. We can only hope our partners will rise to the occasion to join us — particularly when it comes to addressing threats emanating from Iran — the world's number one State sponsor of terrorism.

**Annex XV****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx for their informative briefings.

We highly appreciate the Secretary-General's eleventh strategic report on the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) (S/2020/774). We share the concern that, during the reporting period, the international community faced a two-pronged attack — from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and from new attacks by ISIL and its affiliates, especially in conflict areas. Terrorists are taking advantage of every opportunity to exploit and exacerbate the harsh socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and prolonged conflicts, turning them to their advantage. They sow discord and radicalization by promoting narratives on inequalities, inequities, poverty, marginalization and discrimination. These are stark reminders that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations remains a serious threat to international peace and security.

We take this opportunity to thank the Indonesian presidency for consistently focusing the Council's attention on addressing the threat of terrorism. In this regard, my delegation wishes to stress the importance of international and regional cooperation, as no country is safe until all are safe. That is particularly true when States have to stretch their domestic resources dedicated to meeting other priorities.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/774) confirms that the issue of foreign terrorist fighters returning to their home country or relocating to third countries is a growing challenge, in particular when countries reopen their borders. ISIL's financial reserves, worth some \$100 million, together with various fundraising methods used by terrorist groups, add to the seriousness of the threat. It is therefore crucial to enhance the sharing of intelligence and analysis between and among States on terrorists' movement, imminent attacks, recruitment, financing and online propaganda, as well as on building national capacity in law enforcement.

At the global level, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy continues to represent a comprehensive and effective framework for eliminating the threat, with the United Nations assuming a central coordinating role. We welcome in particular the instrumental functions fulfilled by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015), as well as various other relevant United Nations agencies, in providing technical assistance and capacity-building. Their efforts to ensure business continuity, deliver technical assistance and engage with Member States through online platforms deserve a special note.

We wish to highlight the contribution of the recent Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week in maintaining the momentum in the fight against terrorism. We have listened to and welcome the emphasis on strengthening the coherence, coordination and effectiveness of United Nations counter-terrorism work, particularly between UNOCT and CTED. The COVID-19 pandemic shows how important it is to ensure synergies and coordination in our actions with limited resources.

Last but not least, addressing the multidimensional threat of terrorism requires a comprehensive and holistic approach, which includes addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism. We must remain firmly committed to preventing and resolving conflicts, sustaining peace, promoting development and ensuring respect for human rights for all. Bringing terrorists to justice and preventing the



return of terrorism continue to be of the utmost importance and must be carried out in accordance with national laws and international obligations. We are convinced that mutual legal assistance and the sharing of best practices in the prosecution, reintegration and rehabilitation of terrorists and their dependents, as appropriate, can prove beneficial and should be furthered. It is also critical to adopt a whole-of-society approach by involving all actors, especially women, young people, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia, in building balanced and cohesive societies that are resilient to terrorism and radicalisation.

In closing, Viet Nam reiterates its firm position rejecting terrorism and will continue to be a devoted partner in advancing our common struggle against terrorism on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and our common values.

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