



# Security Council

Seventy-second year

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*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Cardi . . . . . (Italy)

*Members:*

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) . . . . .	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
China . . . . .	Mr. Wu Haitao
Egypt . . . . .	Mr. Aboulatta
Ethiopia . . . . .	Ms. Guadey
France . . . . .	Mr. Delattre
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Bessho
Kazakhstan . . . . .	Mr. Umarov
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Zagaynov
Senegal . . . . .	Mr. Ciss
Sweden . . . . .	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
Ukraine . . . . .	Mr. Yelchenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Rycroft
United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Sison
Uruguay . . . . .	Mr. Rosselli Frieri

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Foreign terrorist fighters

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts**

#### **Foreign terrorist fighters**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; and Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Voronkov, Ms. Coninsx and Ambassador Kairat Umarov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, in his capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov

**Mr. Voronkov:** Let me thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on this very complex and evolving issue. I am grateful to take part in the discussion together with my colleague and friend Ms. Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

Allow me to start by remembering the tens of thousands of victims of terrorism around the world. I particularly express my solidarity with the Governments and the peoples of Egypt, Mali and Nigeria, who most recently suffered horrific terrorist attacks. My thoughts and prayers are also with our colleagues from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, who are bravely defending the United Nations principles and values at the cost of their lives.

The threat from foreign terrorist fighters affects all Member States, even those far away from the conflict zones. Recent reports suggest that at one stage over 40,000 foreign terrorist fighters from more than 110 countries may have travelled to join terrorist

groups in the Syrian Arab Republic and in Iraq. They have prolonged and complicated the conflicts in both countries, and they have increased the brutality of the fighting and the frequency of human rights violations, including against women and girls.

As the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has suffered a series of major military defeats and Member States have implemented better measures to prevent travel, the flow of fighters to the region has significantly decreased. A significant number of terrorists have tried to relocate to countries such as Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan, which has fuelled existing conflicts and further destabilized fragile regions. Those and other affected countries need significant assistance and support from the international community to tackle that threat.

There are at least 5,600 fighters from 33 countries who have returned home. Many returnees are very well trained and equipped to carry out attacks in their own countries. Others hope to radicalize and recruit new followers to their cause. There are a number who have rejected terrorist ideologies and pose no threat to society.

This is a truly global challenge that demands an urgent and concerted multilateral response. Member States need to enhance their cooperation and exchange information, develop effective border controls and strengthen their criminal justice systems, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights standards.

Following the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), in September 2014, the Security Council issued presidential statement S/PRST/2015/11 in May 2015, which mandated the Office of Counter-Terrorism to develop a capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The Security Council strongly recommended that we set out a list of priorities of capacity-building and technical assistance projects as part of that plan. Taking an all-of-United Nations approach, we developed a comprehensive capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters by mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of 38 United Nations entities, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the ISIL/Al-Qaida Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

As the threat from foreign terrorist fighters has evolved, the implementation plan has also evolved. The plan now addresses the full cycle of foreign terrorist

fighters, including a number of projects related to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration to support Member States in their efforts to address the issue of returnees. New projects that specifically address women and children have also been added. The latest version, based on the all-of-United Nations approach, includes 50 capacity-building projects submitted by 13 United Nations entities, with a total budget of \$107 million over five years.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism is collaborating with INTERPOL to enhance Member State information-sharing on foreign terrorist fighters and to build the capacity of Member States to use their social media engagements to gather vital information. The Office has also worked closely with a range of United Nations entities to deliver a project on advance passenger information for 43 Member States that are most affected by the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. Many of those Member States are now implementing national advance passenger information systems that are fully compatible with their border management infrastructure as well as international standards and obligations.

The Office of Counter-Terrorism is working with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist Member States in complying with international rights standards in their border security and management. The Office has also engaged with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to support Member States in the management of violent extremist prisoners and the prevention of radicalization in prisons. The Office will also shortly begin a project to assist Member States in developing comprehensive policies to support child returnees through a human-rights-based and gender-sensitive approach. I want to thank those Member States that have supported projects and urge others to follow their lead.

In order to start several projects under the plan, the Office of Counter-Terrorism provided a total of 9 per cent of the funding for the implementation plan through catalytic seed funding. However, together with contributions from Member States — and this is very important — the implementation plan is still only 41 per cent funded. However, the list of projects is very long: there are 50 projects. That means that many crucial and urgent projects have not yet been implemented. There is much more that the United Nations can and wants to do

to build the capacities of Member States to counter the threat from foreign terrorist fighters.

Returning foreign terrorist fighters pose an enormous challenge, with no easy solution. A tempting response, and certainly the easiest one, would be to throw all returnees into prison, or even do what can be done to stop them coming home at all. But full compliance with international law is vital to combat the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. As the Secretary-General said in his speech in London earlier this month:

“Terrorism is fundamentally the denial and destruction of human rights, and the fight against terrorism will never succeed by perpetuating the same denial and destruction.”

There are also obvious benefits to developing rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, alongside prosecution efforts, for returning foreign terrorist fighters. Such programmes can be integrated at various stages of the criminal justice process, thereby helping to reduce prison-based recruitment and complement comprehensive strategies to counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Ultimately, addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters requires addressing the underlying conditions that are conducive to young men and women being lured by violent extremism. I therefore welcome the growing emphasis by Member States on drivers of violent extremism at the global, regional, national and local levels to prevent radicalization.

We also need to ensure that our counter-terrorism efforts are based on solid evidence and lessons learned from around the world. That is why my Office published a report in July entitled *Enhancing the understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, which was based on interviews with 43 individuals in detention between August 2015 and November 2016, representing 12 nationalities. The report provides Member States with a strong knowledge base from which to understand the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, assess the risks they pose and develop effective responses. The report confirmed that there is no single foreign terrorist fighter profile. Those interviewed left their countries of residence for different reasons. Unresolved conflicts that include intercommunal violence was one of the strongest factors. A sense of shared identity with — and a desire to help — those from the same religion who were perceived as victimized was also common. The foreign terrorist fighters interviewed

were motivated to leave the Syrian Arab Republic either by their genuine disappointment in the terrorist organization they joined, or were disillusioned by their hosts' lack of welcome, be it the Syrian people or the terrorist group itself. While social networks played a key role in motivating individuals to go to the Syrian Arab Republic, their influence on the decision to return was less evident. Instead, it was the family network, particularly mothers, that exerted the most influential pressure on foreign terrorist fighters to return home.

With the support of United Nations entities, Member States are increasingly strengthening their legal frameworks and criminal justice systems and enhancing their collaboration to prevent and respond to the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. During his recent speech in London, the Secretary-General listed stronger international cooperation on counter-terrorism as one of his key priorities. There is an urgent need for Governments and security agencies to collaborate far more effectively in fighting terrorism, while respecting human rights. That is why the Secretary-General will convene the first-ever United Nations summit of heads of counter-terrorism agencies in June 2018. That will be an excellent opportunity to enhance cooperation, exchange information and to develop new and innovative ways to tackle terrorism and address the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism stands ready to further support Member States to protect its citizens against this threat.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Coninx.

**Ms. Coninx:** I thank the Italian presidency for supporting the inclusion of this topic on the Security Council's agenda and for inviting the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to address the Council. I am very honoured to address the Council for the first time on such an urgent threat to international peace and security.

I would like to begin by joining the Council and the Secretary-General in condemning, in the strongest terms, the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack carried out just a few days ago against a mosque in northern Egypt, which resulted in the loss of more than 300 lives. On behalf of CTED, I wish to express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims, not only of the Egypt attack but also of the many other attacks

carried out in recent days, weeks and months in many parts of the world.

As affirmed by the Council on numerous occasions, all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation. There can be no impunity for such acts. In other words, impunity is not an option.

It is impossible to express the deep sorrow that all of us at CTED feel at the continued senseless loss of life caused by such acts. Despite recent successes, including in the conflict zones of the Middle East, the international community continues to face significant challenges in its efforts to counter the global terrorist threat. Perhaps nowhere is that more clearly illustrated than in Member States' efforts to prevent and counter the activities of foreign terrorist fighters, in accordance with resolution 2178 (2014).

Over the past two years, the rate at which foreign terrorist fighters have returned to their States of origin or residence, or relocated to third States accelerated as a consequence of the losses of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq, Syria and Libya. Over roughly the same period, the percentage of terrorist plots resulting in fatalities increased significantly, owing in part to the activities of returnees, but also to terrorists' evolving methods, including the ways in which they use information and communications technologies. Of particular concern is the increasing trend of attacks carried out by lone terrorists, who are often guided by handlers located in other parts of the world.

Attacks by individuals inspired by ISIL and other terrorist groups often require few resources, but can have devastating consequences. Many recent attacks that appear to have been inspired by ISIL, conducted in its name or claimed by it were initially reported as lone actor attacks. However, subsequent investigations showed that those individuals received support or resources from elsewhere, often via the Internet or social media. Terrorists are also increasingly using new technologies to transfer funds to such individuals.

Since its adoption in 2014, resolution 2178 (2014) has been fundamental to the efforts of Member States to address the foreign terrorist fighters threat. Member States have made progress in many areas, but major challenges remain. In other words, a great deal has been done but we are not there yet. For example, fewer than 60 States have so far introduced measures requiring airlines to provide advance passenger information. That means that it remains very difficult for more

than 100 Member States to check for the possible presence of foreign terrorist fighters on board aircraft flying into, out of or transiting through their airports. Many States require assistance in establishing the necessary connectivity between national databases and border posts.

States also continue to face legal challenges relating to the transfer of data, the protection of data privacy and the establishment of the necessary legal and administrative frameworks. The creation of an adequate legal and administrative framework is indeed a precondition for the establishment of such programmes, and many States will continue to require guidance in that area. International cooperation continues to be undermined by practical and political challenges, as well as by inconsistent compliance with human rights obligations.

States should also do more to upgrade and share intelligence on foreign terrorist fighters and those who return to their countries of origin or relocate to third countries. Efforts to bring suspected foreign terrorist fighters to justice continue to be undermined by the difficulty of collecting sufficient admissible evidence from conflict zones. Our assessment and analysis show that very few States are able to do so effectively. Member States also continue to face challenges in implementing effective strategies to disrupt the financing of returnees and small cells. Some have not yet designated foreign terrorist fighters in their national asset-freezing mechanisms. Many States will continue to require assistance in the development of effective prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies, as well as tailored approaches to deal with women and children. We must therefore continue to work tirelessly to build on the progress achieved since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014).

CTED's assessments and analysis show that adoption of resolution 2178 (2014) has nonetheless mobilized the international community. Member States have introduced measures to strengthen their border-screening processes for identifying foreign terrorist fighters. The information gathered has placed Governments in a better position to track the return of nationals who have travelled to fight in conflict zones. Many States have criminalized foreign terrorist fighter travel, as well as the organization and financing of terrorist groups and improved domestic inter-agency information-sharing. Progress has also been made in strengthening international judicial and law

enforcement cooperation. Central authorities for mutual legal assistance and extradition have been established, and 24/7 focal points on foreign terrorist fighter issues have been appointed. Resolution 2178 (2014) also underscores the need to engage local communities and non-governmental actors in developing strategies to counter violent extremism. It also encourages States to address the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, including by empowering civil society.

CTED is engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening Member States' efforts to counter violent extremism, pursuant to resolution 2178 (2014) and other relevant Council resolutions. Since the adoption of the resolution, CTED has conducted 45 assessment visits, the majority of them to States most affected by the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon. CTED has also facilitated a number of hands-on activities to advance the resolution's implementation and to identify common challenges and gaps, emerging trends and appropriate responses and solutions.

Pursuant to resolution 2178 (2014), CTED drafted three analytical reports identifying gaps in Member States' legal frameworks and institutional and operational structures and proposing a set of recommendations on ways to address those gaps. The Counter-Terrorism Committee, with the support of CTED, has also approved a set of guiding principles — the so-called Madrid principles — which offer a holistic, forward-looking approach to the implementation of flexible prosecution strategies, combined with appropriate alternatives to prosecution, including administrative measures and/or reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, used in a manner compliant with international human rights law and national legislation and subject to effective review. The principles also serve as a guide to the formulation of national counter-terrorism policies and strategies.

CTED has also continued to work closely with its partners to identify the core elements of an effective approach to implementing resolution 2178 (2014), as well as good practices. Those elements and good practices have been incorporated into CTED's updated technical guide to the implementation of that resolution and other relevant resolutions.

Since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), CTED has also facilitated and engaged in numerous activities with its implementing partners to tackle specific challenges associated with foreign terrorist fighters. Those activities include the facilitation

of assistance delivery to highly affected countries following visits by the Committee, as well as a number of regional or global activities. They include a regional programme with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Maghreb countries; a global programme with UNODC and the International Association of Prosecutors on gathering digital evidence; and a joint CTED/UNODC initiative aimed at assisting Member States of the Lake Chad basin with developing approaches to prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating persons associated with Boko Haram.

CTED has also continued to strengthen its cooperation with INTERPOL, including on the use of biometric data and the implementation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) traveller identification programme strategy, which addresses biometric verification processes, quality control, management of errors and exceptions, and effective reading of biometric travel documents at borders. CTED has also worked closely with ICAO to develop an international standard requiring all ICAO members to implement advance passenger information systems and conducted deep-dive missions to high-priority States funded by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, to advise their Governments on the development of such systems. The effective development and use of biometrics, advance passenger information systems and passenger name records systems remain key to the detection of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees.

If we are to continue making progress in promoting and implementing the provisions of the resolutions, we must continue to strengthen partnerships between and among Member States, United Nations agencies and partner organizations. Or, to put it another way — it takes networks to beat networks.

As the Secretary-General noted earlier this month in his London statement, to which Under-Secretary-General Voronkov referred, there is an urgent need for Governments and security agencies to collaborate far more effectively in fighting terrorism while respecting human rights. I wish to assure the Council that CTED will continue to give its full support to the efforts of the Council and the Committee in assisting Member States to prevent and counter the activities of foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorists, as well as bring the perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Coninx for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Umarov.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, I am pleased to report to the Council on the overall activities of the Committee since the previous briefing, on 11 May (see S/PV.7936). I will focus my remarks on four main elements: the evolving threat to international peace and security posed by ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and affiliates; foreign terrorist fighters; the Committee's actions; and the Committee's engagement with Member States.

First, the threat emanating from ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and affiliates has further evolved. The Monitoring Team reported that ISIL core members in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic continue to adapt to the sustained military pressure levied upon it, including delegating decision-making responsibility downwards to local commanders and switching to encrypted communication. ISIL continues to emphasize external attacks perpetrated by its members and sympathizers as part of its response. Those individuals may act alone or in small groups, using simple methods and equipment that are difficult to trace. Increasingly, ISIL is transforming from a territorially grounded organization into a terror network of cells around the globe.

Despite military pressure and decreasing revenues, ISIL core members continue to send funds to its affiliates worldwide, using a combination of money or value-transfer services and the transport of bulk cash via money couriers. However, the movement of those funds are dependent upon transit routes, and many of those routes are now being cut off. Against that backdrop, ISIL core members have increasingly urged its affiliates to become more financially self-sufficient.

While ISIL is being weakened in the physical world, its presence in the virtual world is entrenched and increasingly poses a serious threat to international peace and security. ISIL continues circulating propaganda on the Internet for the radicalization and recruitment of fighters and sympathizers through sophisticated manipulation and brain-washing techniques.

Secondly, the Monitoring Team further reported that the overall flow of foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic appeared to have slowed as a result of military pressure and measures

put in place by Member States, ranging from increased information sharing to improved border control. The regional analysis that follows is based on the reports and assessment of the Monitoring Team.

Military and financial pressure on ISIL compels foreign terrorist fighters to return home or transfer to third countries and other conflict zones. Returnees and relocating fighters present a growing challenge to international security, as they have the potential to re-energize pre-existing terrorist networks, as well as spur the growth of new ones, presenting a resurgent threat in various regions. ISIL is also reportedly sending money to regions where it currently does not have a presence, in an apparent attempt to build up its network. Returnees and relocators who hold multiple nationalities remain an issue of particular concern. The Monitoring Team highlighted the constant need for enhanced information sharing among Member States in that regard.

In Europe, Member States have significantly increased the exchange of information on foreign terrorist fighters through the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and/or INTERPOL. However, the continuing efforts of ISIL followers in Europe to conduct attacks demonstrate the potential for ISIL to recruit and motivate its followers. Member States also report that European foreign terrorist fighters present an income stream for ISIL.

In Central Asia, according to Member States, the flow of new fighters to the conflict zones has been slowed owing to disruptive operations by law enforcement agencies and measures to counter radicalization and recruitment. However, Member States are concerned that returning foreign terrorist fighters from Central Asia might bring terror home and to other countries. Some relocators originating from Central Asia have already been involved in terrorist attacks in Turkey and European countries.

South-East Asia continues attracting foreign terrorist fighters. According to Member State information, in addition to Malaysians and Indonesians, fighters from North Africa, the Middle East, the north Caucasus region of the Russian Federation and even Central America have died in fighting in the southern Philippines. Once fighters arrive in one of the countries of South-East Asia, the porous nature of the maritime borders in the region allows movement between the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia without detection.

In North Africa, Foreign Terrorist Fighters continue to pose a threat, in particular in Libya and Tunisia. The Tunisian region of Kasserine and the Libyan-Tunisian border area continue to be destinations for both returnees and relocators. In the Arabian peninsula, Member States are monitoring the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters to Yemen and other places in the region, and they believe that there is an ongoing risk of a clandestine infiltration of fighters along the coast of the Arabian peninsula.

Afghan authorities assess the total number of foreign terrorist fighters in that country at several thousand. According to official Afghan sources, ISIL, despite pressure from the Afghan army and security services, has recovered quickly and currently numbers around 2,500 fighters and supporters, of which 80 per cent are foreigners. Reports are coming in on the deployment of ISIL from the eastern parts of Afghanistan to northern regions closer to the borders with Central Asia.

On the subject of the Committee's actions to enhance the full and effective implementation of the sanctions, the Chair has undertaken visits to selected countries. In that context, I visited Malaysia and Singapore from 28 to 31 August and Afghanistan from 28 to 31 October. I also visited Krasnodar in the Russia Federation to participate in the sixteenth Meeting of Heads of Special Services, Security Agencies and Law-Enforcement Organizations, and Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to attend the fifth meeting of the scientific and practical conference of the regional anti-terrorist entity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. That meeting was held under the theme "Fighting terrorism: cooperation without borders". Such visits help the Committee to obtain first-hand accounts regarding the implementation and effectiveness of our sanctions measures and to promote enhanced dialogue with and engagement of national authorities with the Committee.

The Committee strives to ensure that its sanctions list is as updated and accurate as possible in order to facilitate the implementation of the sanctions measures. As of today, there are 256 individuals and 80 entities on the ISIL, Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions list. Since the beginning of 2017, the Committee approved the delisting of 12 individuals, the listing of 12 individuals and 5 entities, and the amendment of 19 entries on the list, including 17 individuals and 2 entities. In addition, the recommendation of the Ombudsperson to remove one individual from the sanctions list is under consideration by the Committee, and the Office

of the Ombudsperson currently has one case in its information-gathering phase.

With respect to the Committee's engagement with Member States, on 17 October I held an open briefing, as the Chair, on the overall work of the Committee for all Member States. I plan to continue to hold such open briefings regularly. I encourage Member States to share any queries and concerns with the Committee and the Monitoring Team. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon Member States to continue their engagement with the Committee and the Monitoring Team, as that is essential for maintaining an updated and dynamic sanctions list and fundamental for the effective operation of the sanctions regime. I encourage all Member States to continue to actively propose individuals and entities for listing under the ISIL, Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, including foreign terrorist fighters, so as to ensure that the sanctions list adequately reflects the current threat and is therefore fit for purpose. Only if the list includes the relevant individuals and entities can it fulfil its full potential as an operative instrument in the global fight against terrorism emanating from ISIL and Al-Qaida.

In that regard, I would like to note that the Committee is in the process of concluding its current annual review for 2016, which evaluates whether names on the list, especially those not reviewed for three years, remain pertinent. We are addressing cases where sufficient identifiers do not exist, individuals are deceased or entities are defunct. I thank the Member States that have provided information, as it has proven challenging to obtain responses from all relevant Member States. We urge all Member States to engage with the Committee in a timely manner during the next annual review in order to support that key due-process function.

In addition to the regular reviews, the Monitoring Team updates entries on the list based on information provided by Member States. We encourage Member States to keep the Team informed. I also urge those Member States that have not done so to submit their implementation reports mandated under the relevant resolutions. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to all Member States for their cooperation with the Committee, its Monitoring Team and the Office of the Ombudsperson.

**The President:** I thank Ambassador Umarov for his briefing.

**Ms. Sison** (United States of America): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Coninx, and the Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, Ambassador Umarov, for their briefings today on foreign terrorist fighters.

We have come a long way since 2014 when foreign fighters were traveling en masse to join Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). At that time, ISIL was spreading like a pandemic across the region. That fall, the Council took urgent action to stem the flow of those fighters. Meeting at the Heads of State level, the Council adopted resolution 2178 (2014) to establish a new legal and policy framework to counter the threat posed by those fighters. Since then, international partners and the coalition to defeat ISIL have made extraordinary progress in rolling back the gains made by ISIL, which has now lost approximately 95 per cent of the territory it once controlled in Iraq and Syria. Raqqa, the self-proclaimed capital of ISIL, has fallen to coalition forces. Men, women and children who have suffered for years under the brutality of ISIL have been liberated.

As part of the campaign, resolution 2178 (2014) has facilitated unprecedented international cooperation aimed at identifying, stopping and prosecuting foreign terrorist fighters. That resolution obligates countries to take concrete and tangible steps to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters to conflict zones. It has also spurred new efforts to address the underlying factors that are conducive for the rise of terrorism and violent extremism and allow them to take root in our societies in the first place.

Regrettably, many Member States have yet to fully implement resolution 2178 (2014), including adopting the necessary domestic laws to provide the ability to criminalize the travel, financing and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters. That gap leaves us all vulnerable, and we must therefore recommit ourselves to the full and complete implementation of that critical resolution.

Yet three years later, despite progress against ISIL, the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters persists and has evolved to now include the need to address the challenge of returning foreign terrorist fighters. As the territory of ISIL shrinks, some of its supporters



are on the move, with some returning home and others going to other countries. We will see more and more battle-hardened terrorists travelling around the world to carry out deadly attacks in the name of ISIL.

Additionally, ISIL has even called on its supporters, who may have never been to the conflict zone, to launch attacks wherever they are present. One such supporter carried out an attack in New York City just last month. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that as we defeat ISIL on the battlefield, the terrorist ideology and narratives that underpin the group will just fade away. That is why the Council and the international community must address the evolving challenge now. We must shatter the ISIL narrative of invincibility. We must help demonstrate to the world, especially to individuals who are vulnerable to radicalization, violence and terrorism, that there is more to live for than supporting ISIL.

The United States therefore proposes that the Council adopt a new resolution to confront that evolving threat. We must now grapple with an increasingly decentralized ISIL threat, with new flows of fighters and their accompanying families. We propose that the Council's action stress three priorities.

First, we need to continue to improve border and aviation security. To do so, we must do more to create and implement standards aimed at developing and sharing biographic data and biometric data, advanced passenger information and passenger name records, which are three essential tools needed to detect foreign terrorist fighter travel. It is essential that all countries collect and use passenger name record data to spot potential terrorists crossing their borders. The Security Council should recognize passenger name records as a foundation of our efforts to secure our borders and aviation.

Secondly, we need to strengthen efforts to address and improve the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters. Since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), we have applauded countries' efforts to implement legislation that allows authorities to prosecute various acts committed by foreign terrorist fighters. However, because of the way some laws are written and because it is hard to collect evidence in a conflict zone, it can sometimes be difficult to obtain convictions. We must do a better job of bringing those fighters to justice, including by sharing, whenever possible, the evidence needed to do

so. However, we cannot ignore that the family members of foreign terrorist fighters are also returning home, some of whom have committed crimes and others who have themselves been victims of ISIL. The Security Council should therefore recognize the need to approach their prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration in a tailored and nuanced way. That will also require the involvement of civil society, including faith leaders and youth — a true whole-of-society approach.

We should not rely too heavily on fighting terrorism through security measures alone. History shows that the false narratives and justifications of terrorism can live on no matter how many terrorists we put in jail or kill on the battlefield. That is why we also need to commit ourselves to the prevention of terrorism.

Thirdly and finally, we need the United Nations to be more coordinated in its efforts to address the foreign terrorist fighter threat. Various bodies of the United Nations have vital roles to play. We look to the Office of Counter-Terrorism to support capacity-building, and we look to the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate to monitor gaps in the implementation of Security Council resolutions. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and the various sanctions committees established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) must also contribute. Those entities will need to harmonize efforts, with each focusing on its comparative advantages.

If there is one thing that we should all take away from this meeting, it is the need to do more than simply remain vigilant against an ever-adaptive ISIL and an Al-Qaida on the rebound. We must also take the necessary steps to update our toolkit so as to be able to confront an increasingly decentralized enemy. We look forward to working with Security Council members on an upcoming resolution to adapt to new challenges.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is grateful for the briefings presented today by the Under-Secretary-General for the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, and the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Ms. Michèle Coninsx. We are also grateful for the activity report presented by the representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Kairat Umarov, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

(Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

The scenarios in which terrorism operates today have surpassed local and regional dimensions to become a global problem. The threat of terrorism and violent extremism constitutes one of the greatest challenges facing the international community, particularly because terrorist groups and organizations have developed capacities for long-distance recruitment through various methods and narratives.

In that context, the emergence of foreign terrorist fighters has taken on particular significance, given that those individuals travel to a State different from their country of residence or nationality with the purpose of committing, planning, preparing or participating in terrorist acts and providing or receiving training to commit such acts, including by taking part in various internal conflicts. That phenomenon proves that terrorism and violent extremism are not tied to any specific nationality, religion, civilization or ethnic group, and that any measures intended to confront or prevent that phenomenon should not be based on such criteria under any pretext. On that understanding and in the face of such a serious transnational threat, we believe that the response of the international community must be global and must make effective use of all of the means provided for by the Charter of the United Nations.

It is important to make it very clear that foreign terrorist fighters did not emerge suddenly. Rather, they are the product of a process of ideological radicalization, and once on the ground, of military training. That terrible situation was made possible by vacuums in Governments, the weakening of law and order and of security forces, and the absence of border controls, which were fostered to a large extent by the implementation of regime-change policies, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of other States.

More than three years following the unanimous approval of resolution 2178 (2014), which proposes parameters to confront the problem of foreign terrorist fighters, we must question what progress and results have been attained in tackling that problem. Undoubtedly, the use of new communication technologies, such as the Internet, has been one of the platforms through which terrorist groups and organizations have managed to disseminate their radical ideology and misinformation

in order to recruit fighters, in addition to generating economic resources through smuggling and the illegal sale of cultural and historical objects, among others, the profits of which are legitimized through money-laundering and the use of tax havens, which reduce or eliminate controls, especially in the investment and service sectors.

According to the study published in July by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, entitled *Enhancing the Understanding of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in Syria*, the factors that have had the greatest influence on people when they were recruited are linked to their socioeconomic situation and their vulnerability when exposed to promises of material and personal benefits, as well as to ideological or religious convictions. Those factors have motivated more than 30,000 fighters from more than 100 countries to move to conflict zones since 2011, mainly in Syria and Iraq. However, according to the twentieth report, submitted in August by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has been decreasing, while the number of people returning to their countries of origin or moving from conflict zones to third countries has increased.

In dealing with that situation, the international community should orient its efforts towards a smooth and effective exchange of information on those individuals. That should involve both States and international organizations, such as INTERPOL, as no country or region is exempt from the potential arrival of those individuals. By the same token, the coordination of the work of the various Committees and subsidiary organs of the Security Council with that of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is a fundamental task needed to prevent the emergence of further threats to international peace and security in the world. In the same vein, the effective implementation of resolutions — such as resolution 2354 (2017) on narratives and methods to combat terrorism — constitutes a useful tool for preventing and combating extremist rhetoric.

We believe that the countries of origin of foreign terrorist fighters should implement integration policies aimed at avoiding situations in which social and political isolation and precarious economic situations

generate the space for extremist ideologies to spread and flourish. In that sense, all the efforts made by regional and international organizations should focus on a perspective of inclusion.

At the same time, all the efforts made by the Security Council and our Organization aimed at eliminating terrorism should count on the maximum support of all Member States and must seek to bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts, so that they can be duly investigated, prosecuted and punished. Finally, Bolivia expresses its greatest support for the transparent and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and we call on all States to commit to the fight against that scourge.

**Mr. Rosselli Frieri** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefings presented in their respective capacities by Ms. Coninx, Mr. Voronkov and Ambassador Umarov.

The evolution of the terrorist phenomenon— and especially the growing role of foreign terrorist fighters — causes us deep concern. In recent times, indiscriminate terrorist attacks have been increasing, committed by individuals who use vehicles, knives or homemade explosives against innocent civilians, resulting in tragic deaths and injuries. When we witness such atrocities, we are seized with a mixture of feelings of consternation, defencelessness and incomprehension: consternation at the pain caused by the loss of so many innocent lives; defencelessness as we see the cruel truth that no one is safe from the risk of terrorism; and incomprehension, as it is difficult to understand how, despite the many efforts and actions taken to combat terrorist groups, their members and followers manage so often to carry out such acts of destruction.

We welcome the dedicated work of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council and its Executive Directorate in helping States fight against terrorism. During our membership in the Security Council, we have had the opportunity to appreciate at first hand the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, and we value their expertise reflected in numerous areas of thematic analysis. Its recommendations and identification of good practices are highly useful, and the Committee's role in facilitating technical assistance is of crucial to States that need and request such assistance.

We have also appreciated the dedicated efforts of the sanctions committees — especially the important work of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL, Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) concerning the Taliban — on the listing and delisting of persons or entities. Furthermore, the reports and recommendations prepared by the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of those Committees have become an important and very useful source of information for States. All of those actions have helped raise awareness of the threat of terrorism, which is growing thanks largely to its geographic mobility and its ability to adapt its modus operandi to new circumstances.

Mention has been made of terrorists increasingly using the Internet and turning to the so-called dark web to carry out transnational criminal activities, including trafficking in arms, false identity documents, money and drugs. Passenger and border controls and the implementation of systems such as Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Records remain important to that end. We recognize the importance of those instruments, as well as the need for checks at all borders. Uruguay is therefore devoting its utmost efforts to making the technical adaptations required to meet to the current demands of the international context.

Facts show, however, that adopting security measures has proven insufficient to the challenge of preventing acts of terrorism. We can take steps to stem the flow of recruitment, prevent travel or cut off financial support, but all of that, it seems, is not enough. Recent attacks have revealed that many of the individuals involved have no criminal background and, as citizens or legal residents of the countries they attack, they can carry out their acts with little in the way of resources and preparation. Against that backdrop, we underscore the importance of designing and implementing prevention strategies aimed at stopping the propagation of violent extremism and avoiding radicalization.

The preamble of the UNESCO Constitution proclaims that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. That task takes on all the more importance in the light of the recent announcement by recognized experts that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has undergone a transformation from

a geographically-based terrorist group into a global terrorist ideology.

We understand that beyond all of the international cooperation and United Nations assistance, it is States that bear the primary responsibility for preventing the emergence of extremist ideologies that may lead to the fomenting or commission of acts of terrorism, and for combating domestic complicity with terrorist groups, wherever it may exist. Religious leaders also have an important role to play in that regard: they have the knowledge and the ability to ensure that faith is not exploited for spurious ends. Strengthening democracy and the institutions of States, reinforcing the rule of law, respecting human rights, promoting religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence, maintaining open dialogue with civil society and prioritizing education are further key elements for ending intolerance and violent extremism.

Fighting global terrorism calls for sincere commitment on the part of all members of the international community, without ambiguities. Only in that way, in solidarity and with full respect for the rule of law, international law and the Charter of the United Nations, will we be able to better navigate the multiple challenges that the threat of terrorism poses every day.

**Mr. Rycroft** (United Kingdom): I should like to thank all our briefers today for their insightful remarks on the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters. I extend a particularly warm welcome to Ms. Michèle Coninx on her debut.

In recent weeks and months, we have seen the near total military collapse of Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. The permanent defeat of terrorism in Syria still requires a long-term political settlement and a political transition away from the Al-Assad regime, but it is clear that we are now, thankfully and finally, witnessing the crumbling of Da'esh's so-called caliphate. That is prominently thanks to the courage and resolve of the Iraqi security forces, our partners in Syria and the 73 members of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. Together, we have shown that by working collectively with unflinching commitment we can defeat that global plague.

However, with the defeat of Da'esh in Iraq and Syria, the terrorist threat has evolved in such a way that we now face new challenges. Foreign terrorist fighters pose a particular risk, as we know that many members of that dreadful organization remain committed to Da'esh's ideology and to exporting their fight to new

locations beyond Iraq and Syria. Others are trying to return home following Da'esh's military defeat. Some among those returnees will still be committed to Da'esh. Others will be disillusioned. Our job is to help those who are disillusioned to reintegrate into society and, at the same time, to guard against the threat posed by those who are still committed. On top of that growing challenge, we need to carry on tackling some ongoing challenges such as homegrown violent extremism and the spread of terrorists' poisonous messages online.

All of that means that our combined counter-terrorism efforts and our commitment to cooperating and working together cannot end as Da'esh crumbles in Iraq and Syria. We must remain proactive, committed to working together and ahead of the threat. That is why our work here at the United Nations is so important. Three years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 2178 (2014). An important pillar in the international counter-terrorism framework, it established measures binding on States aimed at preventing travel by and support for foreign terrorist fighters associated with Al-Qaida and other groups. Three years on, the United Kingdom fully supports the United States initiative to work on a new resolution that tackles the new challenge posed by foreign terrorist fighters no longer traveling to Iraq and Syria but relocating to new theatres or returning home.

The United Kingdom is already taking its own action and is supporting others. We are helping our partners identify and prevent the movement of foreign terrorist fighters by strengthening their borders through information-sharing and the creation of watch lists and controls. We are helping partners prosecute terrorist criminals by improving the use and handling of evidence, particularly that retrieved from the battlefield. We are working with partners to ensure that countries have effective deradicalization programmes for processing returning foreign fighters so that they no longer pose a threat to their home communities. We are enhancing intelligence collaboration and military capacity-building to help States improve their ability to disrupt terrorist attack planning. And we are continuing to combat relentlessly the evil ideology of terrorist groups. We will continue to do that and more, working closely with our Security Council partners to raise international standards and set out new measures in those areas.

There are two other points I would like to address. First, the United Kingdom will maintain its focus on preventing the terrorist use of the Internet. There was

a very useful event on this in the General Assembly in September, co-hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May, President Macron of France and Prime Minister Gentiloni of Italy.

The planning and organization of many attacks can be traced back to the Internet. Governments and private companies must work in partnership and with civil society to tackle the threat and protect those vulnerable to radicalization.

Secondly, we cannot hope to eradicate the threat for the long term without tackling the root causes. Terrorist organizations flourish where there is instability. They use instability to drive radicalization and to drive recruitment. The best defence against this is a globally unified rejection of extremism and support for the international order based on unassailable human rights and tolerance.

That is why we encourage the United Nations, in particular the new Office of Counter-Terrorism, headed by Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, to put prevention at the heart of our counter-terrorism support to States. I agree with him that our efforts will be more effective if we tackle the causes, not just the symptoms, of the scourge of terrorism and extremism.

**Mr. Ciss** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal welcomes the convening of this important meeting on the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. I would like to thank our briefers — Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED); and Ambassador Umarov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan and Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities — for their high-quality presentations.

We note with genuine concern that three years after the Council adopted resolution 2178 (2014), on 24 September 2014, not only has the threat to international peace and security posed by the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters not diminished, but that the opposite is true: it has become more dangerous. Foreign terrorist fighters, who number 40,000, according to estimates, and come from more than 120 countries, represent a serious threat to transit and destination countries as

well as to their countries of origin, as their return can undermine peace, security and stability.

As early as 2013, the Council, in paragraph 5 of its resolution 2129 (2013), directed the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to identify emerging issues, trends and developments in that respect. The work carried out by CTED is outstanding and should be commended, as the information contained in its three reports has enabled us to better understand the phenomenon. The implementation of the recommendations formulated thereon must be followed up regularly.

Terrorist groups are increasingly using the Internet and social networks to incite to violence and disseminate their strategy and bloodthirsty ideology, which is based on an often incorrect interpretation or instrumentalization of religion, as well as on the improper use of religious terminology. Containing the current flow of foreign terrorist fighters therefore must be done through the strict joint implementation of the relevant provisions contained in resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2253 (2015).

It is clear that in a globalized world no country can alone counter this fresh threat to world peace in the long term. We therefore need to devise an appropriate, effective and comprehensive strategy that is based on a holistic approach in order to eliminate it. Such an approach must include measures aimed at addressing both the structural and cyclical causes of the phenomenon, such as marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, lack of socioeconomic prospects and latent conflicts.

We must also deconstruct the terrorist discourse and develop initiatives and programmes that promote tolerance, dialogue and understanding among civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions. We must also provide young people with reasons to stay with their families and their countries rather than leave for adventures of uncertain outcome that frequently come to a tragic end. Senegal, while pursuing its strategy on preventing violent extremism and terrorism, emphasizes education, information and communication by focusing on raising the awareness of the people and on dialogue with opinion leaders, in particular religious leaders, whose role is key in countering the extremist narrative.

Preventing or, at the very least, reducing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters requires intensified regional and international cooperation, in particular

in the areas of information-sharing, border control, passenger registration measures and other boarding security controls. All of these measures are in keeping with its road map, the Global Aviation Security Plan. That is why, as it implements the relevant provisions of resolution 2178 (2014), Senegal, with a view to increased effectiveness, in June 2014 put together a general delegation on national information so as to centralize all of the intelligence services, which had been based in various ministries. Furthermore, Senegal is now one of the most advanced countries on the African continent in terms of advance passenger information with the adoption of aeronautical regulation 9/2016.

Turning to the INTERPOL database, in particular its I-24/7 network, it is important to provide assistance to Member States, in particular those in West Africa and the Sahel, in strengthening their capacity in this area. However, we wish to ensure that our fight against foreign terrorist fighters does not impede the free flow of goods and services, as this is essential for the political and economic integration of countries, in particular the Economic Community of West African States in our West African subregion.

The third CTED report on terrorism (S/2015/975) states in its paragraph 5 that monitoring the return of foreign terrorist fighters to their country of origin or a third country remains one of the most urgent challenges facing us. As noted in paragraph 8 of the report, any policy in this respect must categorize returning combatants and take account of the role they played in the respective terrorist organization as well as their reasons for leaving and returning. Their effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society will depend on how well we understand their motives. The involvement and cooperation of their families are also very helpful in this respect.

I wish to say by way of conclusion that the Senegalese delegation invites the new Office of Counter-Terrorism to further strengthen the coordination of United Nations work in this area, in particular the assistance extended to Member States in the framework of the plan to build the capacity of the United Nations to counter flows of foreign terrorist fighters, which was established by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all warmly to thank Mr. Voronkov, Ms. Coninx and Ambassador Umarov for their very enlightening presentations on the issue that brings us together today,

that is, the return of foreign terrorist fighters, which is one of France's major priorities. I shall make three key points today.

The first concerns the evolution of the terrorist threat and the main challenges we face today. The commitment of the international community, particularly through the action of the coalition, has made it possible to push back Da'esh and deprive it of its main refuges in Iraq and Syria. The fall of Raqqa, the city from which terrorist attacks against various capitals were planned, including Paris, has a particular symbolic value in that respect.

However, we know that the fight against Da'esh is not over. The fighters who a few years ago moved to Iraq and Syria are now leaving the conflict zone either to return to their countries of origin or to move to other countries. In the case of France, there are currently 688 French nationals or residents in Syria and Iraq, of whom 295 are women and 28 are minors over the age of 15. In addition to those individuals, there are some 500 minors under the age of 15 who were taken to the area by their parents or who were born locally; over half of them are under five years old. With regard to returnees, since 2013 244 adults and 59 minors have returned to France.

The diversity of profiles, especially the large number of women and children, the highly variable level of radicalization among those people and the continued attraction of the barbaric ideology of Da'esh — still too widely spread on the Internet — are all major challenges that we must meet.

My second remark concerns France's response to the evolving threat of foreign terrorist fighters. French legislation has been constantly updated since 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), to strengthen our system with new security and prevention measures, in accordance with international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Since 2014, France has been developing an action plan against radicalization and terrorism, which was updated for the first time in May 2016 after the wave of attacks that we experienced, and will be updated again soon. The plan aims, among other things, to dismantle recruitment channels, prevent displacement that could pose a terrorist threat and cooperate more effectively at the international level. It also contains a preventive and family-support component.

With regard to the care and reintegration of minors returning from Iraq and Syria, France created a mechanism last March specifically to mobilize all State services. It provides targeted support tailored to the age and individual situation of each child, as well as medical and psychological monitoring, and it raises awareness of those specific problems among the professionals who are responsible for monitoring such minors.

Finally, we believe that the United Nations has a central role to play. In France's opinion, the United Nations has two particular essential missions to fulfil regarding the issue that brings us together today.

The first mission is to oversee and strengthen international cooperation in the face of the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. Three years ago, resolution 2178 (2014) laid the foundations for international cooperation at a time when individuals were traveling in droves to Iraq and Syria to fight alongside Da'esh. That led many States, including France, to adapt their laws and mechanisms. Today, faced with the evolution of the threat and the risk posed by returnees, we need to update that framework. France is ready to work with its partners to develop a strong and united Security Council response. Further efforts are needed, particularly in the areas of information-sharing, including the need for a better use of INTERPOL tools; border management; cooperation with the private sector to prevent the use of the Internet by terrorists; the prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters, taking into account the central issue of evidence gathering; and reintegration measures.

The second essential mission of the United Nations is to support States in implementing their obligations under the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of the General Assembly and relevant Security Council resolutions. In that respect, close coordination between, on the one hand, the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which are responsible for analysing the threat and assessing the measures taken by States; and, on the other, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which is responsible for supporting States in implementing their obligations, is absolutely essential. I am pleased that the representatives of those three entities highlighted that key coordination in their interventions.

No State can act alone when faced with a threat of this magnitude. Only close international cooperation, within the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations, that involves civil society, and in particular major online players, will enable us to act effectively. The Council can be assured of the continued and resolute commitment of France in that regard.

**Ms. Guadey** (Ethiopia): I wish to start by thanking the Italian presidency for organizing this important briefing on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. I would like to express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx, and Ambassador Kairat Umarov for their informative briefings.

As the reports of the Secretary-General and the Monitoring Team have highlighted, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has remained under continuous military pressure and experienced several setbacks on the main battle grounds in Iraq and Syria. The group continues to suffer a reversal of its fortune, which has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of its fighters and the decline of its propaganda, perhaps because of a shortage of cash. However, the group continues to enable and inspire a range of attacks outside the conflict zone, as those same reports have indicated.

What is more worrying is the fact that foreign terrorist fighters and returnees from conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable threat to international peace and security. The concept note for today's briefing rightly states that foreign terrorist fighters have fuelled conflict elsewhere, including in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen.

We, in the Horn of Africa, have very much been at the receiving end of that phenomenon for some time — long before it began to draw wide international attention. Now, of course, we are witnessing what is happening every day in East, West and North Africa, the Middle East and other regions. For us in the Horn of Africa in particular, the growing threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) and the increasing number of fighters infiltrating Somalia are indeed a source of great concern. Therefore, the evolving threat of foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocating fighters deserve our utmost attention.

We recognize what has been done so far since the adoption of resolution 2178 (2014), which established a comprehensive international framework to address the

threats of foreign terrorist fighters, including in some cases to rehabilitate and reintegrate them. We also recall presidential statement S/PRST/2015/11 of May 2015, which stressed, among other things, the need to develop the United Nations capacity-building implementation plan to counter the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and we appreciate the briefing that we received today on the progress made in that regard.

We note that the Counter-Terrorism Committee, through its Executive Directorate (CTED), has continuously included the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees in its comprehensive visits to Member States, and provided useful recommendations to address the existing threat. In accordance with these recommendations, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and other United Nations entities have provided technical assistance and capacity-building to those States that are in need of such assistance. Furthermore, reports of the Secretary-General, the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities and its Monitoring Team have continuously addressed the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and returnees.

We also note the efforts being made by Member States to stem the travel of foreign terrorist fighters, inter alia, by sharing information, cooperating, detecting and preventing foreign terrorist fighters from travelling through a proper border-control mechanism, creating laws to prosecute foreign terrorist fighters, and working on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returning foreign terrorist fighters and thereby breaking the cycle of violence.

The assistance being given by the United Nations system to Member States in addressing the challenges that they face in dealing with foreign terrorist fighters and returnees is important. A case in point is the project of CTED, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and relevant entities to launch a regional initiative for the Lake Chad basin States in order to support the development of national approaches to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, and to strengthen regional cooperation. If this project succeeds as planned, it will serve as a model for other regions.

No doubt the progress made and challenges encountered in addressing the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters and returnees vary from region to

region. While some have done well, others continue to face difficulties in addressing the required technical, legal and other related capacities, of which there are too many to recount here. That is why attempts to combat the threat through a purely domestic approach cannot be effective without forging the necessary regional and international cooperation; hence the need to intensify our individual and collective efforts in fighting the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism.

What recent events have shown us is that we should not take comfort in the recent successes achieved on the battlefield, and that we must continue to mobilize our efforts with respect to ISIL, Da'esh and its affiliates, wherever they may be. However, we need to have far better cooperation and coordination than the terrorists do, without which we will not be able to achieve much.

**Mr. Bessho (Japan):** I would like to begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov; Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate Michèle Coninx; and the Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, Ambassador Kairat Umarov, for their informative briefings.

While the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is experiencing significant military setbacks and losing its strongholds in Iraq and Syria, the threat is spreading globally. Foreign terrorist fighters are returning to their countries of origin or relocating to other Member States. For example, the threat level has intensified in South-East Asia due to returnees and relocators to that region. There is even a video in which ISIL fighters urge viewers who cannot travel to the Middle East to go instead to the Philippines.

Advance Passenger Information (API), Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems and connection of access to INTERPOL databases with airports and border checkpoints are important to detect foreign terrorist fighters, especially when they use broken travel. Japan encourages Member countries that have not yet done so to introduce API and PNR systems, as well as connection of access to INTERPOL databases with frontline officers as soon as possible, in accordance with resolutions 2368 (2017) and 2322 (2016).

The use of biometric tools is becoming more and more effective in stemming the flow of foreign



terrorist fighters. Terrorists try to disguise themselves and use forged travel documents when they cross borders. They even undergo plastic surgery and change their fingerprints. To detect these terrorists, Japan has introduced fingerprint readers able to identify altered fingerprints. We have also introduced identify certificate passports with facial images in the identity certificate chips. Last month, Japan started using facial recognition gate machines at the Tokyo International Airport to automatically match passengers' faces with the facial images in the identity certificate passports. This system has been proven to be effective even when facial features have been altered by surgery.

We are concerned by the evolving tactics of terrorists. We must respond and proactively take measures against them. For instance, at the Group of Seven Ise-Shima Summit in May 2016, Japanese police set up drone detectors, drone interceptors and net-launchers around the conference sites to prepare for a possible threat from drones. Some Japanese companies have started producing or using state-of-the-art techniques to develop security systems. For instance, one famous Japanese manufacturer is producing high-tech facial recognition cameras to automatically detect blacklisted faces in a crowd in a moment. One security company employs artificial intelligence to analyse and extract suspicious patterns from big data through security cameras, robots or drones.

In closing, I would like to stress the importance of continuing to develop our counter-terrorism measures as terrorists change and evolve their tactics. Japan is ready to work closely with other countries to enhance their capacities in this area. We must unite against terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, by implementing Security Council resolutions faithfully.

**Mr. Yelchenko** (Ukraine): I would also like to start by thanking today's briefers for their insightful presentations.

Three years ago, by adopting resolution 2178 (2014), the Council responded to the evolving phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, whose participation on the side of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) exacerbated conflicts in the Middle East. As a result, around the world many foreign terrorist fighters have been prevented from reaching Iraq and Syria, and their recruitment and financing campaigns have been revealed and disrupted. Yet, despite resolute measures, many extremists have managed to infiltrate the region.

Now, due to the constant military pressure exerted by the international community, ISIL has suffered significant losses and its so-called caliphate has collapsed. Still, this fight is far from over. We have repeatedly raised concerns about possible strategies that this terrorist organization could choose to ensure its survival. Sadly, they have all come true, as ISIL has accelerated the transfer of human and financial resources to its affiliates in other countries. Europe and North Africa, as well as Central and South-East Asia, have to face the inflow of returning or relocating foreign terrorist fighters. The threat is more than real as these former ISIL fighters are ready to merge with any terrorist group, should the opportunity arise, and put the lethal skills they have acquired in Iraq and Syria to use. Their joining the fray of existing conflicts will only exacerbate the latter, increasing their complexity and duration.

Another side of this problem is the possible abuse of asylum systems by terrorists at a time when huge waves of migrants are arriving from conflict zones in search of shelter. There is a growing concern over the creation of small sleeping cells in different parts of the world, as well as the potential preparation of signature lone-wolf attacks. The terrorist strikes that have swept through Europe are a clear reflection of this.

No country can be immune to this threat's manifestations. That is why Ukraine is also actively working to ensure that all necessary measures are taken domestically to counter this threat. In recent years, Ukraine has also acquired bitter experience in countering the terrorist threat fuelled by external support for terrorist groups and organizations in the east of the country. The operations conducted by the security service of Ukraine from 2015 onwards have led to the liquidation of logistical networks, with 23 transfer points used for the facilitation of travel of foreign terrorist fighters who were natives of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Europe through Ukraine and Turkey to the Syrian-Iraqi zone and back. Persons responsible for creating and maintaining transfer points were arrested and sentenced. Bearing in mind that a relevant United Nations sanctions regime is a vital and effective tool against terrorism, Ukraine has also submitted respective listing requests to the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

To address changes in terrorists' modus operandi, we might consider adopting revised sophisticated measures to supplement resolution 2178 (2014). The reviews of its implementation show that combating potential threats posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters and relocating them requires the following.

First, there is the matter of introducing advanced technologies for identifying terrorists at border crossing points, while conducting risk assessments of the most vulnerable border segments to strengthen their respective control. That cannot be accomplished without expeditious information-sharing among States, especially terrorists' biometric data, as well as ensuring a broader use of Advanced Passenger Information (API) and INTERPOL databases. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the International Civil Aviation Organization to approve API as a universal standard and call on it to help Member States in need of its assistance to ensure its effective implementation.

Secondly, there is the issue of ensuring a more universal criminalization of the actions of foreign terrorist fighters and conducting proper investigations of their crimes so that terrorists are apprehended and do not escape justice. The support of affected countries in collecting credible evidence, as well as that of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, and the recently established United Nations investigative team for Iraq, is vital to that end. Moreover, an appropriate amount of caution is required in dealing with specific categories of returnees, in particular minors, women, family members and disillusioned returnees, who have committed less serious offences. In cases in which it is not appropriate to level terrorism-related charges, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes should be implemented.

Last but not the least, we must counter the threat of radicalization posed by returnees. Some are coming back battle-hardened, strongly indoctrinated and with newly forged ties with extremist groups. Therefore, States should focus on implementing nuanced measures in line with the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and resolution 2354 (2017), on countering terrorist narratives.

Implementing the corresponding measures demands concerted and harmonized actions on the part of the entire international community. That is why international cooperation at the regional and global levels between respective law-enforcement and intelligence agencies is indispensable. Without it, any kind of national effort will be futile. The further development and dissemination of good practices in preventing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters are also crucial to dealing with that phenomenon. In that regard, we support the work being done by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, as well as that of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate in assisting and enabling Member States to strengthen their respective capacities.

**Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to the Italian presidency for convening this important briefing. I would also like to thank all the briefers for their valuable presentations.

The phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters is one of the most dangerous aspects of the unprecedented terrorist threat facing our world today, and has increased in scope over the past several years. The ability and capability of such terrorists to spread in Syria, Iraq and other countries and regions throughout the world — whether in Africa, Asia or Europe — have also increased, demonstrating that the phenomenon is linked to many problems and factors that must be addressed effectively if we seriously desire to halt it. I will touch upon several specific points in connection with those problems, while sharing our view on how we believe that they should be addressed.

First, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters has highlighted the success of terrorist organizations — especially that of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida — in recruiting many individuals, including men and women of various age groups and social, educational and professional backgrounds and countries, to join the ranks of their terrorist groups. In that regard, we believe it necessary to counter all political and socioeconomic conditions that might lure such people to terrorism. In addition, we must effectively combat terrorist ideologies and messages whereby terrorists apply takfiri thought and falsely interpret religions. Aware of that danger, Egypt has adopted a comprehensive international framework to counter the terrorist narrative, pursuant to resolution 2354 (2017).

Second, various reports have come to the firm conclusion that the Internet and other social media are among the most important tools used by terrorist groups to recruit and direct foreign terrorist fighters. Accordingly, although we have encountered difficulty in reaching an international framework to ban the use of the Internet and social media when they are used for purposes of terrorism — owing to differences in Constitutions and domestic laws in various countries — it is nevertheless important to find common ground and strengthen international cooperation to prevent the use of the Internet and social media for terrorist ends. We must also promote cooperation with the private sector and relevant enterprises, as well as civil society.

Third, foreign terrorist fighters require financing to travel and reside in their countries of destination. Such financing might originate from individual sources, terrorist organizations or certain States that provide funding for political purposes. In that regard, we reaffirm the need to block all forms of terrorist financing in general, and that of foreign terrorist fighters in particular. It is important to implement the many relevant resolutions, especially resolution 2368 (2016), as well as other relevant international norms.

Fourth, it is vital to screen foreign terrorist fighters who travel to Syria and Iraq and track their movement towards other countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. It is necessary to take all measures to stop them, given that the status quo is a violation of resolution 2178 (2014), which, simply put, means preventing foreign terrorist fighters from reaching various countries throughout the world.

Fifth, the effort to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters has revealed many legal gaps that must be addressed. At the national level, countries must criminalize the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and terrorists' travel to conflict zones for the purposes of terrorism. They must also criminalize any act that supports or incites foreign terrorist fighters. At the international level, we must consider how to legally deal with foreign terrorist fighters leaving conflict zones who, as yet, have not been served with arrest warrants or who have become stateless. We believe that the best-case scenario should end with either their prosecution in the countries in which they were arrested or their extradition to the countries of origin before they left for the conflict zones in question. Furthermore, we do not agree with the trend of refraining from prosecuting foreign terrorist fighters and attempting instead only

to rehabilitate them and reintegrate them into society. Any person considered a foreign terrorist fighter must be held accountable if we are to uphold the principles of justice and accountability and ensure deterrence.

Sixth, it is crucial that we exchange information on the issue. In that regard, we stress the importance of making use of the INTERPOL database of foreign terrorist fighters. We urge INTERPOL to scale up its interaction with countries so that they are aware of the potentially helpful data it has available. Where application programming interfaces and similar systems are concerned, we can see that the number of countries that apply such systems is very limited. We should therefore investigate the reasons why States have reservations about implementing them and try to address them.

Seventh, we emphasize how important it is to promote international cooperation in law enforcement and justice when addressing the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as to encourage mutual legal assistance to promote international legal cooperation and abide actively by the principles of extradition and accountability.

Last but not least, the United Nations must play a concrete role on the ground by helping States to build their capabilities so that they can fulfil their obligation to counter the problem of foreign terrorist fighters. We expect the Office of Counter-Terrorism to play a vital role in this area, taking into consideration the priorities defined by the States concerned and the recommendations of the Counter-Terrorism Committee following the assessment visits conducted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of ensuring that States respect the relevant Council resolutions and that the Security Council follows up the implementation of its resolutions in earnest, without turning a blind eye to any violation by any country, whether for political reasons or other considerations. That lesson should not be forgotten when we consider the draft resolution renewing resolution 2178 (2014).

**Mr. Zagaynov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The situation today makes it vital for us to exchange opinions and assessments of the contemporary threats posed by the activities of terrorist groups. We would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Ambassador Umarov, Chair of the

Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, for their briefings. We also thank Ms. Coninx, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and congratulate her on her maiden briefing to the Security Council.

An unprecedented number of radicals high on terrorist ideology, including many residents of extremely affluent States, have set out for the areas of conflict in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya and other parts of the world. They return home or relocate to other countries in search of so-called safe havens on the assumption that they will not be held accountable. In that regard, it is essential that States fulfil their obligations with regard to countering foreign terrorist fighters strictly and rigorously. Three years ago, in addition to its already extensive counter-terrorism toolkit, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2178 (2014) on this specific issue. The decision had wide support from the States Members of the United Nations. Nonetheless, when it came to implementing it, it turned out that many States do not get around to improving their counter-terrorism systems until there is a flare-up on their own territory. A good example of that has been the commitment to criminalizing various aspects of foreign terrorist fighter activities laid out in paragraph 6 of resolution 2178 (2014).

As the results of the Counter-Terrorism Committee's monitoring have shown, in a number of cases neither the process of formulating legal bans on travelling abroad with the intention of committing an act of terror, or on giving any kind of assistance to foreign terrorist fighters, has even begun. Furthermore, terrorist crimes as such have not actually been outlawed everywhere. It would be naive to think that terrorists leaving Syria and Iraq en masse have not noticed such loopholes. There are also gaps in the area of international counter-terrorism cooperation. The legal assistance and extradition mechanisms effectively almost cease to function, frequently becoming hostages to bureaucracy, not to mention to attempts to politicize them. There are also serious difficulties linked to tracking terrorists' movements across borders, in many cases compounded by the fact that the borders themselves are porous.

Besides that, the scope of the information about foreign terrorist fighters that States exchange, bilaterally and multilaterally, does not measure up to

that of the current threat. That is not because the right mechanisms do not exist. INTERPOL has advanced systems. The International Counter-Terrorism Database, founded in Russia, is gaining traction and provides the greatest possible flexibility for posting and using information. In such circumstances, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the effectiveness of efforts in this area depends first and foremost on whether there is a genuine desire to cooperate.

We must maintain a comprehensive approach to dealing with the issue of foreign terrorist fighters returning from conflict zones. It is crucial to ensure that they are held criminally responsible. The principles whereby punishment will be assured and also commensurate with the crime should be the foundation of these efforts. We can and should use the reintegration and rehabilitation of terrorists as tools in this, but within the framework of the penal system. In our view, it is pointless to see rehabilitation programmes as some kind of alternative to criminal prosecution.

As for the practice of qualifying terrorists by categorizing them as violent extremists, that could lead to the possibility of terrorists generally, and foreign terrorist fighters in particular, avoiding criminal responsibility, among other things, and could ultimately increase the terrorist threat. Right now, it is also especially important to ensure that foreign terrorist fighters come under the remit of the counter-terrorism sanctions regime for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida. That raises questions about some countries' reluctance to agree to Russia's request to the Sanctions Committee for listing two individuals who have participated in those terrorist organizations' activities. That kind of apparently politicized approach undermines the Committee's effectiveness.

The fight against the terrorists who flocked to the conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa is coming to an end, and it is the Russian aerospace forces' successful operation in Syria that has been the key contribution to that effort. Nonetheless, we cannot fight terrorism by military means alone. My country has initiated more than 2,000 criminal proceedings related to the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and has succeeded in identifying 112 agents who purposely recruited new members for terrorist organizations. We are taking every possible step to ensure that the requirements of resolution 2138 (2014) are fully implemented.

At the same time, the challenges of today mean that we have to continually improve our anti-terrorism and anti-extremism legislation. Recent updates of Russia's anti-terrorism laws have touched on issues related to disseminating extremist materials and inciting people to terrorism through the Internet, and committing crimes in situations of armed conflict. In formulating such changes to the law we analysed the most up-to-date world practices.

One of our priorities is combating terrorist ideology, and we are actively involved in producing anti-terrorist propaganda. We distributed more than 79,000 messages with counter-terrorism content in Russia in 2016 alone and blocked more than 37,000 Internet sources that contained terrorist or extremist materials. We believe that it is essential to develop active cooperation in this area based on the principle of the State and the private sector's mutual responsibility.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that, given our experience in counter-terrorism, our delegation stands ready to continue working substantively to improve the Security Council's counter-terrorism tools and the mechanisms for monitoring their implementation.

**Ms. Schougin-Nyoni** (Sweden): Let me begin by thanking the United States for initiating today's important briefing. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and Ambassador Umarov for their valuable contributions to our discussion.

The threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters touches all countries and is constantly evolving. In the case of Sweden, of the approximately 300 Swedish citizens who have left the country to join terrorist groups in Syria or Iraq, we estimate that, to date, half have returned, 50 have died in conflict and 50 are still outside Sweden. The profile of returnees is mixed — men, women and children, some disillusioned, others still ideologically committed.

It is the obligation of all Member States to criminalize the travel, training and financing of foreign terrorist fighters. In Sweden, we have amended the existing criminal legislation on terrorism to address the evolving threat and meet the penal law requirements outlined in resolution 2178 (2014). The amendments entered into force last year and contain new provisions on terrorist travel, training and financing. Next year, the legislation will be tightened even further,

including through an expanded definition of terrorist offences. Since 2015, we have tried and convicted seven individuals for terrorism-related offences, including crimes committed abroad. So far, one person has been prosecuted under the new amended legislation on terrorism travel.

We recognize the important work being done by both United Nations actors and civil society in trying to better address the root causes of violent extremism. We were a sponsor of the groundbreaking report of the United Nations Development Programme entitled *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, launched in September. The report concluded that the main reasons underlying recruitment are not religion or ideology but socioeconomic conditions and a breakdown in the rule of law.

With that in mind, we have sought to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters through a whole-of-Government approach that involves, among other elements, the police, social services and prison and probation services at the municipal, regional and national levels. As part of our strong focus on prevention, we are putting in place mechanisms aimed at safeguarding individuals and targeting, in particular, those at risk of radicalization. A new national centre for the prevention of violent extremism will be launched in the new year. New guidelines are being issued by our national board of health and welfare to municipalities and practitioners that deal with returnees and defectors.

Resolution 2178 (2014) provides a robust policy framework for addressing the challenges of foreign terrorist fighters. We would, however, welcome a new Security Council resolution to address the new trends and challenges and look forward to engaging with other Council members in the upcoming negotiations. In that regard, the situation of children in terrorist-related activities needs special attention. Children's full enjoyment of their human rights must be safeguarded. Children returning from armed forces or groups must be provided with proper community-based support in order to avoid stigmatization and future radicalization. Children should always be treated primarily as victims.

Several of the foreign terrorist fighters from Sweden have been women. We would like to see an integrated gender approach in the new draft resolution that emphasizes the multiple roles played by women in relation to terrorism, including as perpetrators, supporters, facilitators, victims and preventers. The

global framework and programmes for preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism should reflect that reality.

As the Secretary-General told the General Assembly in September,

“As soon as we begin believing that violations of human rights and democratic freedoms are necessary to win the fight, we might as well have lost the war” (*A/72/PV.3, p. 2*).

For that reason, States must comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, as well as the principle of the rule of law, in all measures to combat terrorism.

Collaboration among countries and with partners across the globe will be central to defeating the terrorist threat. Sweden remains fully committed and will continue to play its part in that global effort.

**Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today’s meeting on combating foreign terrorist fighters. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Executive Director Coninx and Ambassador Umarov for their briefings.

Terrorism is a common enemy of humankind. In the face of that joint challenge, the international community must acknowledge that we are all part of a community with a common destiny. Enhancing our cooperation on terrorism therefore demands that we make the most of the leading role in this area of the United Nations and the Security Council, and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all States. We must follow a uniform standard and reject the practice of associating terrorism with any particular ethnicity or religion.

In order to respond to terrorism’s adaptive nature, we must take comprehensive measures to eradicate its root causes and breeding grounds. Terrorist forces have carried out violent attacks around the world in the past few years, while the flow of foreign terrorist fighters has become more organized and their means of attack more varied. In order to contain the cross-border movement of foreign terrorist fighters, China would like to propose the following steps.

First, we must take effective measures to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. Their outward and return journeys severely jeopardize the security and stability of countries of origin, transit and destination. Member States, especially countries adjacent to conflict zones, should strengthen border controls and law-enforcement cooperation and take specific measures to prevent the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. The United Nations counter-terrorism bodies and the relevant international organizations should play their designated role by establishing databases and fully information-exchange platforms on the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, sharing intelligence, helping to block the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and assisting Member States in capacity-building based on respect for their sovereignty.

Secondly, we must enhance efforts to combat terrorist activities conducted through the Internet. In the age of information and the Internet, organizing the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and of financing for terrorism has become simpler, easier to hide and more international. Terrorist organizations use the Internet and social media to incite and recruit terrorist fighters and to plan terrorist attacks. The international community should make blocking the use of social media for the propagation of extremist ideologies a top priority, strengthen Internet oversight and prevent terrorist organizations from using it for their expansion and financing.

Thirdly, we must respect the diversity of civilizations and eliminate the root causes of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters: wars, conflicts, ethnic hatred, poverty and backwardness. The international community should remain committed to helping Member States to alleviate poverty, strengthening the political settlement of regional issues and promoting inclusive, universal and balanced development. It should create an environment conducive to dialogue on an equal footing and to the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of our different civilizations and religions. Furthermore, it should establish a new order of international relations and build a shared community of the future.

China is firmly opposed to terrorism in all its forms. As an important member of international counter-terrorism efforts, China has actively participated in multilateral cooperation mechanisms, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. China is ready to join hands

with other countries and international organizations to jointly address the threats and challenges of terrorism and maintain international peace and stability.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Italy.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Executive Director Michèle Coninsx for their briefings. I also wish to take the opportunity to commend very much Ambassador Umarov for his excellent leadership of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities and for his detailed presentation.

Three years ago resolution 2178 (2014) underscored the urgent need to tackle the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters travelling to conflict zones to join Da'esh. In that context, the Council required Member States to ensure that their legal systems provided for the prosecution, as serious a crime, of travel for terrorism or related training, as well as of the financing or facilitation of such activities. Subsequently, in 2015, Italy amended its penal code to criminalize the conduct of any individual organizing, financing or promoting transnational travels aimed at committing terrorist acts.

Since its adoption, resolution 2178 (2014) has been considered a comprehensive and central tool aimed at enhancing Member States' operational and legal measures to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and implement capacity-building programmes. Nonetheless, the global threat posed by terrorism continues to evolve and diversify, as we have heard in the briefings.

The sustained military pressure levied upon Da'esh, as well as the deterioration of its financial conditions, have not deprived the group of its capability to send funds to its supporters outside the conflict zone and to enable external attacks. ISIL has been continuing to adapt to military pressure by changing its organization from one that is State like to a network, reframing narratives and making investments even in legitimate businesses. The heinous attack perpetrated last Friday in a Sufi mosque near Egypt's Sinai coast clearly

demonstrates the persistently very high level of the terrorist threat.

While the flow of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to the conflict zones has nearly stopped, Member States continue to be confronted with the threat posed by returnees and relocators. The international community is still looking for an effective way to properly address the challenge. Our commitment to counter-terrorism must also be extended far and wide, including in the Sahel, where instability contributes to the spread of violence and terrorism.

The lack of adequate information-sharing mechanisms further hinders countries' efforts to assess and mitigate the threat. In this regard, it remains crucial for Member States to enhance their cooperation within and between public sector agencies, both domestically and internationally, and to empower financial intelligence units, law enforcement and intelligence services to improve the exchange of relevant information in a timely manner.

Effective border police measures and enhancing capacity-building on terrorist financing investigations are particularly key in this regard. Italy already provides advanced training to foreign officers dealing with counter-terrorism and is also committed to providing judicial and law enforcement international cooperation, in the framework of transnational investigations.

We welcome the proposal of the United States for a new draft resolution. In it, the Security Council should address the threat posed by returnees and relocators by considering the international best practices and provide comprehensive strategies and guidelines to help Member States understand how to reintegrate returnees, especially women and children. Italy stands ready to continue to work with Member States and the United Nations as a whole to guarantee a timely implementation of existing resolutions and studying new recommendations in order to update and enhance the response to terrorism by the international community.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.*