



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

*Provisional*

## 8839<sup>th</sup>

meeting

Thursday, 19 August 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

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*President:* Mr. Jaishankar . . . . . (India)

*Members:*

China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Lipand
France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
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Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ladeb
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield
Viet Nam . . . . .	Mr. Pham

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2021/682)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

#### **Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2021/682)**

**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, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Mr. Davood Moradian, Director General, Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2021/682, which contains the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

**Mr. Voronkov:** I would like to start by expressing my sincere condolences to the Governments and the people of all Member States that have recently suffered from any form or manifestation of terrorism. My heartfelt thoughts and sympathies go to the survivors and the families of the victims.

Tomorrow, we will commemorate the fourth International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, with the participation of the Secretary-General. Let us work every day to prevent and alleviate the pain and suffering that terrorism causes. I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to present the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the

threat (S/2021/682), as mandated by resolution 2368 (2017). I am pleased that Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx is joining me today, unfortunately only on the screen, to present the report, which our Offices prepared jointly with the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, led by Mr. Edmund Fitton-Brown. I take this opportunity to salute the excellent work of the Monitoring Team, which recently produced its own twenty-eighth report on the threat posed by Da'esh and Al-Qaida (see S/2021/655).

We all are witnessing the rapidly evolving situation in Afghanistan, which could have far-reaching implications for peace and security around the world. It is therefore welcome that Mr. Davood Moradian will also brief the Security Council today. I would like to echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the Security Council earlier this week to use all the tools at its disposal to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a platform or a safe haven for terrorism. In that regard, let us remember that several members of the Taliban remain designated terrorists, according to the sanctions regime under resolution 1988 (2011). I also note the concerns expressed by some Security Council members with regard to the release of prisoners affiliated to Al-Qaida and Da'esh.

Despite the most recent developments in Afghanistan, the Secretary-General's thirteenth report on Da'esh remains valid. Its emphasis on the interplay between armed conflict, State fragility and terrorism and Afghanistan is no exception. The report also notes that Da'esh has expanded its presence in Afghanistan. We will need to ensure that Afghanistan is never again used as a launching pad for global terrorism. Globally, the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security during the period under consideration has remained significant and steady over the past six months, raising serious international concerns. Da'esh has continued to exploit the disruption, grievances and development setbacks caused by the pandemic to regroup, recruit new followers and intensify its activities, both online and on the ground. Its core in Iraq and Syria still has access to significant hidden financial reserves, estimated at between \$25 million and \$50 million. Da'esh has further decentralized its governance and the additional autonomy, capacity and confidence gained by its regional affiliates could provide the group with new options, including the orchestration of international attacks and shaping the future global impact of Da'esh.

Coronavirus disease-related lockdowns in many areas were more comprehensive in early 2021 than in 2020, but it is conceivable that attacks have been planned for when restrictions ease. There is an increased threat of attacks by lone actors or small groups inspired and possibly directed remotely by Da'esh, including online.

Only through cooperative measures between and within countries, including civil society and the private sector, can we counter the terrorist threat online. I welcome, in that regard, the first ever high-level debate held on 29 June by the Council on cybersecurity (see S/2021/621), as well as initiatives taken at the regional level.

Da'esh remains focused on reconstituting its capabilities in Iraq and Syria, organized in small cells hiding in deserts and rural areas that wage an insurgency against security forces while they move across the border between two countries to avoid capture. However, it is the lack of a comprehensive solution to the situation of thousands of individuals with alleged links to Da'esh who remained stranded in Iraq and Syria that could shape the future terrorist threat landscape over the medium to long term, not just locally but globally.

The conditions in detention facilities and displacement camps in north-eastern Syria have further deteriorated, especially in Al-Hol camp. Several instances of escapes, terrorist radicalization, fundraising, arms smuggling, training and incitement continue to be reported, as well as killings and enforced disappearances. Thousands of children caught in that limbo, through no fault of their own, continue to have their rights abused and violated on a daily basis.

I welcome the efforts of Member States that have repatriated their citizens since my most recent briefing to the Council in February (see S/2021/140). However, the pace is too slow considering the scale of the humanitarian, human rights and strategic security priority, which only grows more complex as time passes. I think that developments in Afghanistan could create an even more dangerous environment in those camps, with unpredictable consequences. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call upon Member States for the voluntary repatriation of all concerned individuals, with particular focus on children, in line with international law and with the consent of relevant Governments.

Next month, we will formally launch the global framework that my Office coordinates with UNICEF

to facilitate whole-of-United Nations support to requesting Member States on the protection, voluntary repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with suspected links to United Nations-designated terrorist groups returning from Iraq and Syria. We have already begun employing that framework mechanism in support of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and a scoping exercise has been undertaken to support Iraq.

The report of the Secretary-General describes that the most alarming development over the past six months has been the spread of Da'esh in Africa, with spillover from Mali into Burkina Faso and the Niger and incursions from Nigeria into the Niger, Chad and Cameroon and from Mozambique into Tanzania. A global response is urgently needed to support the efforts of African countries and regional organizations to counter terrorism and address its interplay with conflict, organized crime and governance and development gaps, as underscored by a wide range of Member States during the second United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week, which was held from 28-30 June in New York.

Da'esh affiliates in the Greater Sahara have killed several hundred civilians since the beginning of the year in large-scale attacks in Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger. The so-called Islamic State West Africa Province will likely gain from the weakening of Boko Haram. The situation in the wider region could be aggravated by the relocation of terrorists and other foreign fighters from Libya. The expansion of Da'esh in Central Africa, especially in northern Mozambique, could have far-reaching implications for peace and security in the region and needs to be addressed through a coherent regional approach as a matter of priority, as the group's affiliates may seek to exploit intercommunal disputes and illicit trafficking activities.

In Europe, the threat from Da'esh has continued to be suppressed by pandemic-related restrictions. The threat of terrorist attacks by lone actors radicalized and incited online, especially vulnerable youth, remains the primary concern, along with terrorist radicalization in prisons.

Assistant Secretary-General Coninx will brief the Council shortly on the support provided in recent months by the United Nations system to Member States in addressing the threat posed by Da'esh. My Office has continued to work closely with all our partners to ensure business continuity during the pandemic and to

advance the implementation of our global programmes and projects tailored to address the needs of Member States. Those efforts are supported through our presence in the field, as requested by Member States, including our Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa in Rabat and the Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Doha, which were launched in June in partnership with Morocco and Qatar respectively.

Our Global Programme on Detecting, Preventing and Countering the Financing of Terrorism, in response to resolution 2462 (2019), leads on a joint initiative with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum to identify and disseminate good practices to effectively counter terrorist financing while safeguarding civic space.

The United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel programme, led by my Office to help Member States establish advanced passenger information and passenger name record systems, in line with resolutions 2178 (2014), 2396 (2017) and 2482 (2019), now counts 43 beneficiaries. The programme held three virtual assessments for Djibouti, Mongolia and South Africa and interactive online trainings for Sierra Leone, The Gambia and States members of the Southern African Development Community. We also completed a series of virtual study visits to Belgium, Colombia, Norway, the Russian Federation and Spain for the beneficiaries of our global programme on national-level interagency coordination mechanisms or fusion cells and launched, in January, a new global programme on countering terrorist threats against vulnerable targets.

The year 2021 is one of milestones in the international fight against terrorism. There is no better time for Member States to recommit themselves to multilateral action against terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations. Twenty years ago, in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks by Al-Qaida, the Security Council provided momentous leadership and guidance with the adoption of its landmark resolution 1373 (2001) and the establishment of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism.

Today, we face transnational terrorist threats, like those of Da'esh and Al-Qaida, which are enduring and able to adapt to new technologies, as well as expanding to include individuals and groups that commit terrorist attacks connected to xenophobia, racism and other forms of intolerance. The unity and leadership of

the Security Council remain as critical today as they were in 2001 in confronting terrorism in a sustained, collective, effective and principled manner that upholds the rule of law, human rights and gender equality and safeguards humanitarian action.

This year also marks the fifteenth anniversary of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within my Office. I was highly encouraged, therefore, by the success of our second Counter-Terrorism Week in June, during which Member States actively engaged at the second High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, convened by the Secretary-General, and the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the comprehensive and forward-looking resolution 75/291, on the seventh review of the United Nations Global Terrorism Strategy.

That bodes well for our collective efforts and badly for Da'esh and other terrorists. The United Nations system, through the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, stands ready to support the Security Council and all Member States. I look forward to the Council's guidance as we transition into a new decade of counter-terrorism.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Coninx.

**Ms. Coninx:** I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) (S/2021/682) and the continued efforts of the United Nations and Member States to counter the threat. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his briefing and commend both the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, led by Mr. Edmund Fitton-Brown, for their invaluable contributions to the report.

As Under-Secretary-General Voronkov rightly said, we all are witnessing the rapidly evolving situation in Afghanistan. I also echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the Security Council to take all possible steps to ensure that the situation in Afghanistan does not result in the country being used as a safe haven for terrorism.

Despite the welcome progress on the roll-out of vaccines, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has continued to have negative impacts across most hotspot areas for the past months. However, as we outlined in the most recently updated analytical paper by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), published in June 2021, the impact of COVID-19 on terrorism and counter-terrorism has been more mixed.

In many non-conflict zones, pandemic-related restrictions have continued to help suppress terrorist activity. In conflict zones, however, where the impact of pandemic-related restrictions is limited, the increasing interplay among terrorism, fragility and conflict has caused the terrorist threat to grow. Indeed, Da'esh and its affiliates continue to pose a significant threat in West, East and Central Africa and Afghanistan, while simultaneously prioritizing their efforts to regroup and resurge in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. CTED's analytical paper also emphasizes the pandemic's growing impact on humanitarian programming across the world, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. We continue to be concerned about the dire situation faced by those individuals, mainly women and children, with presumed links to Da'esh.

Through the virtual component of the Counter-Terrorism Committee's recent hybrid assessment visits to both Iraq and Member States from which foreign terrorist fighters have travelled to the conflict zones, CTED has continued to monitor compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Although United Nations entities continue to promote the safe, voluntary and human-rights compliant return of foreign nationals from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, many remain stranded in crowded camps, with limited access to essential services, due process and a fair trial.

Those concerns have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Secretary-General's report highlights violence in the camps, forced disappearances and other human rights abuses as serious concerns, in addition to the forced returns, the prevention of return and the discriminatory treatment of families with a perceived link to Da'esh. Further efforts are needed to create the conditions under which social cohesion can be promoted and further Da'esh violence prevented, while ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Those challenges remind us yet again of the critical need for us to strengthen national, regional and

international counter-terrorism efforts. In that regard, I welcomed the discussions held during recent hybrid assessment visits conducted for the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Security Council during this year's Counter-Terrorism Week and its side events on new threats and challenges and how best to marshal our collective efforts to address them.

I also welcomed the Counter-Terrorism Committee's approval of the revised overview of implementation assessment and the electronic detailed implementation survey in March, which were developed by CTED in accordance with resolution 2395 (2017). Those new and local tools will help CTED to improve monitoring the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions by Member States in a timely manner and will enhance CTED's quantitative and qualitative critical capacities and capabilities. They are also expected to support Members States in their efforts to adopt comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism approaches.

It is also important to reflect on other examples of progress made over the past six months. Criminal justice responses, international judicial cooperation and the development of comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies have continued to be significant priorities for CTED and many of our United Nations partners. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNOCT, CTED has supported efforts to increase cooperation in investigations and prosecutions at the national and local levels in Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin.

In March, CTED, UNOCT and UNODC jointly held a regional workshop that promoted gender-responsive approaches to prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration in the Lake Chad basin. There has also been welcome progress in the development of good practices in international and regional counter-terrorism operations, including in relation to judicial cooperation, mutual legal assistance and extradition in terrorism cases.

CTED and its partners further supported Maldives and the Philippines in the use of the internet and social media in counter-terrorism investigations. CTED, together with UNODC, continued to tailor their South Asia Regional Toolkit for Judges to the national contexts of Maldives and Pakistan.



CTED's analysis suggests that terrorists and terrorist groups, including Da'esh, are exploring alternative methods of moving funds, owing to the impact of pandemic-related measures on money-transfer networks. The use of social media crowdfunding campaigns for Da'esh fighters and their relatives in camps in the Syrian Arab Republic also remains an ongoing challenge.

To address those challenges, CTED, in cooperation with other United Nations entities, continues to work together with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), FATF-style regional bodies and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. Due to the terrorism financing risk associated with the illicit trade in natural resources, CTED, together with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, supported the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group in implementing its regional operational plan for combating the financing of terrorism. CTED continued to play a key role in facilitating technical assistance, including by leading virtual consultation missions, which fall under the all-of-United Nations approach, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre global programmes and by supporting activities on topics, including the terrorism-arms-crime nexus, the protection of vulnerable targets, fusion cells and countering terrorist travel. CTED and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also held a workshop to promote the relevant Security Council resolutions and offer expertise to Nigerian law enforcement officers in the application of international best practices, regarding intelligence collection.

Da'esh and its affiliates remain a significant concern and threat to international peace and security. The upcoming joint open briefing on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Africa, on 18 October, will allow us to further explore the recent evolution of such affiliates on the African continent. A comprehensive, coordinated One United Nations approach remains crucial to developing and implementing effective counter-terrorism measures, while also addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. Of course, we must do so while ensuring that our multilateral counter-terrorism efforts do no harm.

In closing, I would like to express my hope that the forthcoming Counter-Terrorism Committee special meeting, to be held on 13 September, marking the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution

1373 (2001) — a landmark resolution, as described by Mr. Voronkov — will serve as a forum for further enhancing and strengthening our multilateral counter-terrorism efforts.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Moradian, who, I believe, was in Kabul until a few days ago.

**Mr. Moradian:** It is a great honour for me to have the opportunity to share my perspective on the threat of Da'esh to international security in this forum. In the light of the unfolding catastrophe and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, I will also bring in the Afghan tragedy and factors given the context of today's briefing.

In fewer than three weeks, the world will witness and commemorate the tragic and painful twentieth anniversary of the 11 September terrorist attacks, which gave birth to our collective struggle against terrorism. The fact that the Security Council is holding a regular session on Da'esh in August is testimony to the fact that the world has collectively failed to deal with the threat of terrorism after 20 years, despite allocating abundant resources in blood and treasure. I would like to offer my own reflections and analysis on some of the reasons for our collective failure. I will begin in my own field — the academic world.

There is hardly any reasonable consensus and intellectual agreement on the very definition and understanding of terrorism. The diversity of names and labels to describe militant Islamist movements indicate that conceptual confusion. Names and labels include jihadist, Salafi, fundamentalist, Islamic terrorist, extremist, violent extremist, Islamo-fascist, insurgent, barbarian, terrorist, foreign terrorist and international terrorism, as well as others.

The failure of the Islamic world to own its share of responsibility is the other important reason for our collective failure. While the bulk of terrorist perpetrators and victims have been Muslims, sadly, those in the Islamic world have remained passive observers in articulating a consistent, credible and constructive narrative about an existential threat to Muslims' well-being and security. The intellectual and political stagnation of our religious, cultural and educational institutions have immensely contributed to the rise of extremism and the failure of defensive measures against the threat in the Islamic world.

Let me bring in the role of the most privileged members of international system — referred to as member States — in our collective failure. The overwhelming approach to terrorism has been to treat it as a non-State phenomenon and independent from a State-centric international system. However, in reality, terrorism is a product of the State system and one or other State tends to be behind or above a given terrorist group. In some cases, there is a group of like-minded States that supports militant groups, as was the case with the Mujahideen during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Da'esh would not have survived and flourished, had it not been for the support that it receives from some member States.

Sadly, the United Nations system protects its guilty members that engage in proxy wars against their regional and global adversaries by utilizing terrorism as a State policy. The disconnect between United Nations analytical reports and United Nations political statements and actions show the inability of the United Nations to confront the State sponsorship of terrorism.

Our global struggle against terrorism can also be compared and contrasted with our other global struggle against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In our recent struggle, we have witnessed the phenomenon of vaccine nationalism, in which rich nations choose self-interest over collective interests. Despite the rhetoric of fighting all forms of terrorism, sadly, many Governments have chosen to focus on their own terrorists, rather than on the integrated nature of global terrorism. The case of Afghanistan is a prime example of the contradictory approach to dealing with terrorism. Many have recommended political means to deal with the Taliban, while advocating military solutions for other like-minded groups such as Al-Qaida, Da'esh, the Pakistani Taliban and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement.

If there is utility and wisdom in a political approach to the Taliban, why should it not be extended to other groups or the other way around? All those groups share fundamental characteristics with one another, despite differences in the scope of their activities. Again, using the COVID-19 analogy, there are variants of the same original phenomenon, which have mutated to different degrees of lethality and versions, as with the Alpha, Beta and Delta variants.

Terrorism, 11 September and Afghanistan have become defining names in global conversation about

terrorism. The take-over of Kabul by the Taliban, on the eve of twentieth anniversary of 9/11, will be remembered as a historic benchmark and turning point. It is natural to be fascinated by the symbolic coincidence of the two anniversaries or intellectual discussion about the definition of terrorism or to engage in political debate about the blame game. But what we must focus on is the humanitarian dimension and the unfolding catastrophe. As the President stated earlier, I was at Kabul airport when desperate passengers held back departing airplanes belonging to the United States, including my own airplane, which was due to leave that airport. It was a scene of sheer human desperation, helplessness and fear. One of the passengers who fell to the ground from a flying airplane was reportedly a member of Afghanistan's national football team. These passengers were not alone in their desperation and fear; they represent millions of Afghans from diverse backgrounds, from women rights activists to destitute farmers.

The world must step in to avert and mitigate an apocalyptic humanitarian tragedy. To this end, the United Nations must go beyond its usual approach and declare the situation an urgent humanitarian crisis under the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and undertake serious and urgent deliberation with a view to declaring Kabul a safe zone protected by a United Nations peacekeeping mission. That would allow the opposing factions to come to an inclusive political settlement, while working to mitigate the unfolding catastrophe.

I use the word "catastrophe" very intentionally because I was in a very catastrophic situation in Kabul just 48 hours ago. It is therefore not an exaggeration when I use the word "catastrophe". The word has also been used by the Secretary-General in recent remarks to the Council.

The crisis of Afghanistan during the last four decades has shown that a military solution is just a brief pause before the next phase of the war. The Taliban and their regional partners, particularly the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, should reflect on the principal role they are playing either in mitigating or in accelerating a catastrophic situation in Afghanistan, which is an outcome that will determine our decades-old struggle against terrorism.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for External Affairs of India.

Let me begin by thanking Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, for their briefings on the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) to international peace and security (S/2021/682). I wish to reiterate my thanks to Mr. Moradian, Director General of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, for joining us remotely today.

On the day after tomorrow, the world will be commemorating the fourth International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. Next month, it will be 20 years since the horrific 11 September tragedy in New York. We in India have had more than our fair share of both challenges and casualties. The 2008 Mumbai terror attack is imprinted on our memories. The 2016 Pathankot air base attack and the 2019 suicide bombing of our policemen at Pulwama are even more recent. Let me therefore express my solidarity with victims and their families all over the world who have suffered and continue to suffer from the scourge of terrorism. We must never compromise with this evil.

The international community holds a collective view that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be condemned. There cannot be any exception or any justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of the motivations behind such acts. We also recognize that the menace of terrorism cannot be and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. However, in spite of the progress we have made to tighten the legal, security, financing and other frameworks to combat terrorism, terrorists are constantly finding newer ways to motivate, resource and execute acts of terror. Unfortunately, there are also some countries that seek to undermine or subvert our collective resolve to fight terrorism. This cannot be allowed to pass.

The latest report of the Secretary-General has provided another stark reminder to all of us that ISIL (Da'esh) continues to pose a critical threat to international peace and security. ISIL (Da'esh) remains active in Syria and Iraq, and its affiliates are growing

in strength, particularly, as we heard from the briefers, in Africa. The financial resource mobilization of ISIL (Da'esh) has become more robust. The flow of funds has continued, and rewards for killings, I believe, are now being paid even in bitcoin. The radicalization of vulnerable youth by systematic online propaganda campaigns remains a serious concern.

In our own immediate neighbourhood, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan has become more energetic and is constantly seeking to expand its footprint. This should be taken seriously.

Events unfolding in Afghanistan have naturally enhanced global concerns about their implications for both regional and international security. The heightened activities of the proscribed Haqqani Network justify this growing anxiety. Whether it is in Afghanistan or against India, such groups as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed continue to operate with both impunity and encouragement. It is therefore vital that the Security Council does not take a selective, tactical or even a complacent view of the problems we face. We must never countenance sanctuaries for terrorists or overlook their raising of resources, and when we see State hospitality being extended to those with innocents' blood on their hands, we should never lack the courage to call out this double-speak.

We heard from the briefers about the aggravating impact of the pandemic. What is true of the coronavirus disease is even more true of terrorism: none of us are safe until all of us are safe.

Insofar as ISIL is concerned, its modus operandi has changed, with the core focusing on regaining ground in Syria and Iraq and affiliates functioning independently. This evolving phenomenon is extremely dangerous and poses a new set of challenges to our collective efforts in our fight against ISIL and terrorism.

In January 2021, when I had an opportunity to address the Council — virtually, at that time — I proposed an eight-point action plan for consideration (see S/2021/48). Let me reiterate some of its cardinal principles : first, to summon the political will — we must not justify terrorism or glorify terrorists; second, to prohibit double standards — terrorists are terrorists, and distinctions can only be made at our own peril; third, to refrain from placing blocks and holds on listing requests without any reason; fourth, to discourage exclusivist thinking and be on guard against new terminologies and false priorities; fifth, to enlist and



delist objectively, not based on political or religious considerations; sixth, to recognize the linkage to organized crime; seventh, to support and strengthen the Financial Action Task Force; and, eighth, to provide greater funding to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

I call on the Council to collectively build on these principles. It is also therefore important to end the stalemate preventing the adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which India has championed for so long. India has been at the forefront of global counter-terrorism efforts, taken part in all major global initiatives against international terrorism and is party to all United Nations sectoral conventions relating to terrorism. We were pleased to play our role in strengthening the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted last month (General Assembly resolution 75/291). We reiterate our full support for counter-terrorism cooperation under the auspices of the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): Today's meeting is an important opportunity to discuss the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and the actions that we are all taking to prevent and counter terrorism. Our thanks go to Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and Mr. Moradian for their informative briefings today. I would also like to thank the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the other United Nations entities that contributed to the report (S/2021/682).

Today I would like to discuss the current state of the threat posed by ISIS and everything that we can do to counter that threat, especially by undercutting its finances. To start, we are deeply worried by the Secretary-General's assessment that ISIS continues to expand throughout Africa, especially in various parts of West Africa and the Sahel, in addition to Central and East Africa. To neutralize that expansion, the United States is providing critical counter-terrorism assistance to disrupt, degrade and respond to terrorist activity perpetrated by ISIS. Our tactical training, mentorship and equipment strengthens the capacity of the law

enforcement, the judicial sector and communities in our partner nations to respond to that growing threat.

In June, ISIS-Khorasan attacked a HALO Trust camp in northern Afghanistan, killing 10 people and injuring 16. That attack on a humanitarian group, working to rid the country of landmines, shows the barbarity of ISIS-Khorasan and its efforts to undermine the Afghan people's security. Given the ongoing events in Afghanistan, we are monitoring this situation very carefully. As President Biden has stressed, we will hold the Taliban accountable for its commitments not to allow any terrorists to threaten the United States or its allies from Afghan soil. As I said earlier this week, we must all work together to ensure that Afghanistan cannot ever again be a base for terrorism.

While such threats are real, there is good news. The Secretary-General's report notes that ISIS financial reserves are on a downward trajectory. That is, in part, thanks to the hard and valiant work of the United Nations, in cooperation with other multilateral bodies. We must continue those efforts. Undercutting the financing of ISIS and other terrorist organizations is one of the most effective ways to defeat them. Let us therefore sharpen our focus and strengthen our efforts to go after terrorist financiers and financial facilitators, including virtual currencies and new payment methods.

To that end, the United States continues to believe in the strength of sanctions and the unique role of the ISIS and Al-Qaida sanctions regime under resolution 1267 (1999). It is the most effective global tool to proscribe specific ISIS branches, members and support entities. As it has since its creation in 1999, the 1267 sanctions regime must continue to evolve to ensure that it remains a credible counter-terrorism tool. But that evolution can never come at the expense of dulling its ability to apply effective pressure on ISIS and Al-Qaida.

As we apply that financial pressure, we must remember that the most successful counter-terrorism approaches incorporate perspectives and voices beyond those in the national Governments and local administrations. We need to listen to the people affected by terrorism on the ground. That includes women, young people, civil society, religious leaders, educators, the private sector, victims of terrorism and affected communities. Some of the people and organizations closest to the threat understand it better than anyone.

To bolster that kind of civil society engagement, the United States provides funding to the Strong Cities Networks, the Global Community and Engagement Resilience Fund, mother schools and many other civil society organizations that work to strengthen community resilience against violent extremism.

Finally, let us address the difficult issue of the approximately 2,000 foreign terrorist fighters in detention centres. About 60,000 of their associated family members, mostly women and children, are stranded in displaced persons camps. That includes tens of thousands of innocent children. No child should suffer for their parents' crimes. That situation is untenable. It is a humanitarian crisis, a human rights crisis and a security crisis.

The United States believes that the repatriation and prosecution, as appropriate, of those foreign terrorist fighters is the best way to hold individuals accountable for their crimes and to prevent their uncontrolled return to countries of origin or elsewhere. To be clear, we do not exclude ourselves in that call; we are repatriating our own, as well.

The Secretary-General's report provides a stark outline of the shifting ISIS threat, but it offers hope and a way forward, too. Together, we can stop the spread of ISIS in Africa, counter its presence elsewhere and undercut its finances. We can listen closely to civil society. We can address the humanitarian crises caused by foreign terrorist fighters. Together, we can work towards stamping out the ISIS threat once and for all.

**Mr. Ladeb** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Mr. Davood Moradian, Director General of the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies, for their valuable briefings.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/682) before us is the thirteenth such report since the adoption of resolution 2253 (2015). However, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations remain a serious threat to peace and security throughout the world. In addition, countries afflicted by conflict and instability are still the most vulnerable to the growing terrorist threat.

In that context, Tunisia expresses its deep concern about the increased terrorist threats, especially in the Sahel region and in West, East and Central Africa, where groups affiliated with Da'esh and Al-Qaida continue to extend their control on the ground, including over ports and border areas, in addition to their ability to mobilize financial resources, weapons and advanced equipment, such as drones.

As the Secretary-General's report indicates, the increase in such threats is largely due to the attempts by Da'esh to decentralize its power, whose core has become fragile. Da'esh therefore relies more on regional branches in an attempt to reorganize its ranks, following its military defeat in Iraq and Syria, without completely abandoning the main aim of the organization, which is to restore its central control on the ground.

We are also following with concern the security situation in Afghanistan, especially in the light of reports that state that a significant number of terrorists affiliated with Da'esh and Al-Qaida have been released from Afghan prisons.

Terrorist financing remains one of the most serious threats to all nations. In addition to the significant financial resources available to both Da'esh and Al-Qaida, new technologies are now increasingly being used, as stated in the report, to finance terrorist activities, including cryptocurrencies, digital currencies and virtual banks, as well as the ongoing reliance on organized crime, particularly through the illicit antiquities trade and trafficking in drugs and precious metals.

In this context, Tunisia reiterates its call for the necessary attention to continue to be paid to the issue of addressing the financing of terrorism, particularly through the exchange of expertise in the field of monitoring and tracking terrorist crimes associated with the use of digital currencies and cryptocurrencies.

While terrorist groups affiliated with Da'esh and Al-Qaida have not yet been able to establish within their goals clear strategies to harness the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it is nevertheless necessary to continue to take into consideration the repercussions of this pandemic in the short, medium and long terms when monitoring and tackling these threats. We note in this regard that some terrorist groups may be able to exploit the effects of the pandemic and carry out terrorist attacks with the gradual lifting of health-

care restrictions, as well as polarization and online recruitment through social media.

It is worth noting the rise of transnational terrorist groups today based on xenophobia and intolerance. They also take advantage of the pandemic to spread extremist propaganda. That is why Tunisia calls on the international community to step up its efforts following the pandemic to enable quick recovery and reconstruction and to prevent political, social and economic effects that might become factors that lead to terrorism.

The first line of defence against terrorism is tackling its root causes and the factors that fuel it. That is why there is a need to step up international efforts to resolve all conflicts that offer a breeding ground for terrorism, as well as to limit the movement of terrorist fighters and mercenaries towards conflict zones, because that prolongs conflicts and thwarts efforts to achieve peace. We must also step up our efforts to achieve sustainable development and address all factors that create vulnerability by strengthening good governance, the rule of law and human rights and tackling the root causes of violence.

In conclusion, fighting terrorism is at the top of Tunisia's priorities. We reiterate our commitment at the national and international levels to strengthening the means necessary to fight terrorism while fully respecting our commitments related to international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Tunisia welcomes the General Assembly's adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by consensus (resolution 75/291). We hope that this consensus will be maintained within the Security Council when renewing the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the sanctions regime against Da'esh and Al-Qaida.

We are committed to working with all Member States, United Nations bodies and various actors to strengthen multilateral cooperation and achieve our common goal, which is eradicating the scourge of terrorism.

**Mr. Kvalheim** (Norway): Let me start by thanking the briefers for their comprehensive presentations, as well as the Secretary-General for his thorough biannual report (S/2021/682). The report is a harsh reminder of the fact that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

and other terrorist groups still pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

Norway shares the Secretary-General's concerns regarding the expansion of ISIL affiliates into Africa. We have witnessed numerous attacks in the Sahel, the Lake Chad region and in East and Central Africa, as well as in Mozambique. We therefore express our full support for the Global Coalition against Da'esh and, together with our international coalition partners, we will maintain our highly prioritized contributions.

The fight against ISIL and other terrorist groups must continue on all levels. Experience shows that ISIL and other terrorist groups exploit existing conflicts and vulnerabilities in States and populations, including gender inequalities and sexual and gender-based violence. We must apply a gender perspective in our response to address the impact of those threats.

We would like to emphasize three principles from our national counter-terrorism strategy, which takes a whole-of-society approach to terrorism. We believe that the principles of prevention, protection and aversion are globally applicable.

First, on prevention, it is clear that preventing violent extremism is the most effective counter-terrorism strategy. For every terror attack prevented, we will save human lives and avoid suffering. We also avoid the economic cost of an attack, as well as the largest societal impact that results from the fear of terrorism. Prevention encompasses a wide range of measures, including education, the provision of basic services and proactive and cross-cutting outreach from Government institutions, civil society and the private sector.

Secondly, on protection, it is critical to impede terrorist attacks through the development of proper infrastructure, such as physical barriers and other obstructions. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the importance of implementing existing Security Council resolutions.

Thirdly, on aversion, we must disrupt terrorist plots through effective investigation and surveillance by police and security institutions, as well as information from the public. National authorities should make use of effective international tools, such as INTERPOL databases and border protection programmes. Those tools must be kept up to date and supported by relevant actors while being applied proportionately

and in compliance with international law and human rights law.

Here in the Security Council, it is particularly important that we identify and prioritize areas of cooperation. We believe that the financing of terrorism is one of those areas. The increased use of encryption technology and cryptocurrency linked to organized crime underscores the importance of coordination. Because financial instruments have no regard for borders, we too must work across them like we do in forums such as the Financial Action Task Force. We must continue our dialogue to ensure effective counter-terrorism frameworks while protecting humanitarian spaces.

Principled humanitarian action, with a focus on avoiding the negative unintended consequences of sanctions and promoting humanitarian exemptions and efficient exemptions procedures, must be facilitated.

Moreover, the pandemic is an underlying factor contributing to increased recruitment among terror organizations and incitement to violent extremism, which is well described in the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate trend reports. Preventing violent extremists' misuse of cyberspace and Internet platforms must be a high priority.

A few months ago, we heard the former Special Advisor and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Mr. Karim Khan, brief the Council on the investigation into ISIL atrocities in Iraq (see S/2020/1193, annex I). Let us keep that in mind as a reminder of what is at stake in our international fight against terror, especially as current events unfold in Afghanistan, where we are deeply concerned by the expansion of ISIL-Khorasan in several provinces, as well as the continued presence of Al-Qaida. We reaffirm the responsibility of all parties to ensure that the country does not become a safe haven for terrorists.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of accountability and the continued need for action against terrorism. The adoption of this year's review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by consensus sends a strong message that we must all stand together against hate speech, violent extremism and terrorism.

**Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is grateful to India convening this open debate as well to the briefers for the valuable information that they have shared with us this morning.

In light of the current situation in Afghanistan, my country wishes to stress the importance of uniting our efforts to firmly condemn any action that threatens international peace and security, as well as international humanitarian and human rights law.

Moreover, and in line with the press statement issued by the Council on 16 August, Mexico reiterates the need to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan does not become a safe haven for the training of terrorists, nor for planning or perpetrating terrorist acts, as set out in resolution 1267 (1996).

Mexico has closely studied the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/682) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), which brings us together at this debate. Accordingly, I would like to highlight several points.

First, Mexico expresses its concern about what the report identifies as the most striking development during the reporting period, which is the expansion of Da'esh in Africa, where the largest number of victims has been recorded. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, we must focus our attention on the cross-border activities of terrorist groups in West, East and Central Africa.

With regard to the challenges presented by the coronavirus disease pandemic, we are concerned that restrictions have made the delivery of humanitarian assistance more difficult in many regions of the world, impacting communities most in need. That has created a situation in which terrorist organizations have sought to become providers of food, charity, monetary resources and other forms of support, while at the same time seeking to use disinformation concerning the pandemic to promote their violent narratives and consolidate and expand their operations and recruitment activities.

Furthermore, we are concerned about ISIL's access to funding sources, as was mentioned earlier, as well as the group's access to weapons. The increase in the use of cryptocurrencies must be urgently addressed, with the support of the private sector. Cooperation must also be strengthened between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to cut the links between terrorism and



illicit arms trafficking, as mentioned in the report. To that end, we must work even more diligently towards the full implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the regime established by the Arms Trade Treaty. We take this opportunity to call on States that have not yet done so to join that important legal instrument.

Moreover, we agree with the Secretary-General that, in order to confront the impact of ISIL on women and girls, a truly cross-cutting gender agenda is needed. In that regard, we recall the convening of last month's Arria Formula meeting on the topic of preventing terrorism and violent extremism by addressing gender stereotypes, masculinities and gender inequality. As a result of that discussion, it was clear that there is a consensus on the need to incorporate the notion of masculinities in determining the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism and prevention strategies. We would request the Secretary-General to include this dimension in his next report in order to bolster a comprehensive gender agenda in analysing threats posed by ISIL and other terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida.

In the light of the fact that we will commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) this September, Mexico reiterates the need to carry out an in-depth assessment of the lessons learned and good practices that the international community has used to address the structural and underlying causes of terrorism. Twenty years later, reality — including recent events — has shown us that any so-called war on terror that fundamentally relies on military action is not the way to tackle the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. Therefore, now is the time to invest our resources and efforts in prevention and sustainable development.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to reaffirm Mexico's commitment to multilateral initiatives that seek to comprehensively meet this challenge to peace and international peace and security, including with respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and a gender perspective.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation): (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Coninx for their detailed analyses of the situation in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We express our support for the activities of the

agencies they head. We thank Mr. Moradian, our long-time friend, for his comprehensive and emotional, yet sobering and extremely pertinent briefing.

Today, the attention of the international community is riveted on the situation in Afghanistan. Undeniably, in the context of a discussion of counter-terrorism, we cannot ignore the situation in that country. It would appear that, in the aftermath of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, for 20 years Afghanistan was full of American and NATO troops, trainers and advisers, whose officially proclaimed purpose was the fight against terrorism and the training of the Afghan national security forces to prepare them for this fight. To that end, enormous human and financial resources were mobilized.

What are the results of that assistance and presence? As soon as foreign support was withdrawn, 20 years of efforts were erased in an instant. Everything went to waste. No one was either willing or able to fight for the values and interests inculcated by the foreign Powers. Has Afghanistan ceased to be a source of terrorist and narcotic threats? Of course not, but the new Afghan authorities and Afghanistan's neighbours will have to deal with that. Following the exit of Western contingents, Afghan citizens are facing an even greater number of problems.

We would like to underscore that the Russian Federation will cooperate only with those political forces in Afghanistan that have no ties to terrorists, above all the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and their affiliated groups. We trust that all Afghan parties will refrain from violence and contribute to resolving the situation peacefully.

In recent years, thanks to the consistent efforts of the Russian and Syrian militaries, we have been able to significantly weaken the potential of terrorist organizations operating in Syria, in particular ISIL. However, certain terrorist cells remain active and continue to pose a serious threat. The largest group remains the Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, which emerged from Jabhat Al-Nusra. According to various estimates, its members number from 10,000 to 15,000. The fight against that terrorist organization is complicated by attempts to present it as some kind of political opposition.

Another terrorist organization that continues to pose a threat in the region is Huras Al-Din, a branch of Al-Qaida in Syria. According to various estimates, its members number from 3,500 to 5,000, half of whom

are foreign terrorist fighters. For our part, we continue to provide needed assistance to the Syrian authorities to counter terrorism. The situation evolving in other regions of the world also raises our concern. ISIL is spreading its influence in Africa. The autonomy of their regional affiliates, especially in West, Central and East Africa and the Sahel, is growing stronger.

I once again underscore the Russian position on the return of foreign terrorist fighters. We support ensuring their unavoidable punishment for terrorist crimes and pooling the efforts of the entire international community to that end. In accordance with international obligations, foreign terrorist fighters involved in terrorist activities must be repatriated to their countries of origin, where they should be prosecuted in accordance with the gravity of their crimes. Otherwise, they should be tried in the place where the crime was committed, in accordance with the national law of the State concerned. Such cooperation with the legitimate authorities of the countries where the fighters are located will be key to resolving many of the problems associated with foreign terrorist fighters and their family members.

Recently, there has been an active spread of ISIL terrorist ideology among children in cyberspace. We call on Member States to conduct the relevant work on prevention and deradicalization in that extremely vulnerable segment of the population.

We cannot ignore the human rights aspects of the fight against terrorism. Speaking out in support of human rights and gender aspects is insufficient; the international community must see results. We must again raise the question of the operation of the Guantanamo Bay prison. On many occasions, we have heard high-ranking American officials state that they intend to close that facility, notorious for detaining people without trial or investigation, as well as for the torture and inhumane and degrading treatment of prisoners. We expect our Western colleagues to fulfil their international legal obligations under, inter alia, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and other essential international treaties. Those obligations are particularly relevant in the context of the growing mass exodus of people from conflict zones. The fight against terrorism is a common effort and we call for full cooperation in it.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate.

Two years on from its territorial defeat, Da'esh remains a significant global threat. The recent attacks in Baghdad and the continuing violence in Syria provide further tragic evidence of that fact. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's report on the threat posed by Da'esh (S/2021/682). I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their briefings, and Mr. Moradian, in particular, for his moving presentation.

We are also indebted to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) for their important work in analysing the threat.

The position of the United Kingdom in countering Da'esh is very clear. We remain an active and committed member of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We are a co-leader of the Coalition's counter-propaganda effort and we host the Counter-Da'esh Coalition Communications Cell in the United Kingdom. We continue to provide significant humanitarian and stabilization support to those liberated areas of Iraq and Syria. We also continue to facilitate the return of unaccompanied or orphaned children, on a case-by-case basis and subject to national security concerns. However, we remain clear that those who have fought or supported Da'esh should face justice for their crimes in the most appropriate jurisdiction. Often that will be the region where those crimes were committed.

While it is vital that we focus on the immediate threats Da'esh poses, we must also work together to tackle the long-term drivers of terrorism. That is why the United Kingdom recently announced an additional £2.6 million of funding to support stabilization in north-eastern Syria. We must also remain alert to the rising threat in other geographies. What is happening now in Afghanistan is a tragedy. We will remain vigilant to the return of the terrorist threat. We all share an interest in making sure Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven for terrorists. The threat continues to grow in Sub-Saharan Africa. We are providing security, stabilization and humanitarian assistance in many countries to help them tackle the threat, build stability and support communities that are affected.

Meanwhile, Da'esh continues its attempts to incite and recruit supporters around the world, particularly

using social media and encrypted online platforms. Terrorism is global and requires a global response. Multilateral cooperation lies at the heart of that global response. At the United Nations level, we welcome the continued efforts of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, CTED and other United Nations agencies in supporting States to tackle it. At the same time, we must be agile in recognizing the other new and emerging threats, including the use and misuse of new technologies. We should continue efforts to counter terrorist financing and extreme right-wing terrorism and to prevent terrorists' misuse of the internet.

Finally, we believe it is important to bring our values to that effort. When countering terrorism, we must all ensure that we protect and promote human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. We must integrate the gender-sensitive and whole-of-society approach into those efforts. In that way, we will uphold the very principles on which the United Nations was founded.

The United Kingdom will remain steadfast in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism. We will continue to stand up for our shared values and interests. We will continue to work with our partners and through the multilateral system to that end.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank His Excellency Mr. Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs of India, for presiding over today's meeting. I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the statement by Mr. Moradian, civil society representative for Afghanistan.

In a few days, we will mark the twentieth anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks. Although important progress has been made in the area of international counter-terrorism cooperation, the current global situation remains complex and dire, with terrorism and violent extremism intertwined. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/682) indicates, in the first half of the year, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has regrouped in places, including Iraq and Syria, and has expanded in Africa. It has provided financial support to terrorist organizations in various regions and terrorist attacks have occurred from time to time. The coronavirus disease has aggravated economic and social challenges, which could bring about a new wave of terrorism. The international community must attach

great importance to the matter and adopt comprehensive measures to jointly respond to the threat of terrorism.

Terrorism is the common enemy of our societies and combating it is a responsibility shared by the international community. Countries should strengthen cooperation at the national, regional and global levels by stepping up counter-terrorism efforts in areas, such as early warning, counter-terrorism financing, travel restrictions, border control and intelligence-sharing. In the first half of the year, terrorist organizations, so designated by the Security Council, have caused more casualties in Africa than in any other continent. China supports greater coordination between the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, so as to help African countries strengthen their counter-terrorism capacity-building.

There should be no double standards in the fight against terrorism. There is no such thing as a good terrorist or bad terrorist. Terrorism, regardless of when and where it occurs, its motives or perpetrators, should be condemned and eliminated. Determining terrorists based on political self-interest essentially condones terrorist activities and seriously undermines international counter-terrorism cooperation. The fight against terrorism cannot be based on ideology. We firmly oppose linking terrorism to specific countries, Governments, ethnic groups or religions. We are also opposed to allowing terrorist organizations to grow and perpetrate violent attacks under the pretext of protecting ethnic minorities and religious freedoms.

In combating terrorism, emphasis should be placed on the prevention and elimination of its root causes. Counter-terrorism measures should focus on long-term solutions, by addressing its symptoms and root causes alike. It is important to adopt comprehensive political, economic, judicial and social measures, and ensure the peaceful solution of hotspot issues through political means. It is important to assist Member States in eradicating poverty, strengthening capacity-building, promoting sustainable economic and social development and advocating mutual respect and harmonious coexistence among civilizations, religions and ethnic groups.

Young people are vulnerable to extreme ideologies. Therefore, special attention should be paid to strengthen education and employment opportunities for young people, so as to provide a favourable environment for

their growth. Countries should carry out exchanges and engage in cooperation on counter-terrorism and deradicalization measures, such as vocational training, education and community correction measures, to help vulnerable countries strengthen their counter-terrorism capacity-building.

In combating terrorism, it is important to focus on key issues, while taking into consideration new developments. We must be highly vigilant to terrorist forces using the coronavirus disease to instigate terrorist activities and strive to solve outstanding problems, such as the abuse of the Internet and emerging technologies by terrorists, the diversification of terrorist-financing channels and their connection with organized crime. For a long time now, a great number of foreign terrorist fighters have been stranded in Syria, Iraq and other countries, which is increasingly becoming a major security hazard. Solutions should be developed as soon as possible, and repatriation of these fighters must be properly facilitated.

In his briefing just now, Mr. Moradian focused on the counter-terrorism situation in Afghanistan. In the 20 years since the war on terrorism in the country began, the threat of terrorism has not been eliminated. Instead, the number of terrorist organizations in Afghanistan has gone from being in the single digits to more than 20, with close to 10,000 foreign terrorist fighters now present in the country. The monitoring teams of the Security Council Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1988 (2011) have repeatedly issued reports this year pointing out that such terrorist organizations as the Islamic State, Al-Qaida, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement and the Pakistani Taliban have multiplied and gathered in Afghanistan.

The current situation in Afghanistan has undergone major changes, and terrorist organizations are likely to take advantage of this chaos. Afghanistan must never become a terrorist paradise again.

We hope the Taliban will completely cut off ties with all terrorist organizations. All countries should cooperate with each other in combating all forms of terrorism in accordance with international law and Security Council resolutions, so as to bring hope for peace to Afghanistan.

China will continue to actively work with the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum to strengthen

exchanges and cooperation in such areas as counter-terrorism, intelligence exchanges, combating the financing of terrorism, transnational organized crime and cyber terrorism in a joint effort to respond to terrorist threats and maintain world peace and stability.

**Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland):** I would like to thank the Indian presidency for ensuring a continued focus on the critical issue of counter-terrorism. I also want to thank our three briefers this morning for their excellent briefings.

It may sound like a truism, but it is indeed a fact: the scourge of terrorism remains one of the gravest threats to international peace and security despite significant progress made by the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/682) is clear. In the first half of this year, the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued to increase, with ISIL activities expanding in Africa, notwithstanding the restrictions imposed by coronavirus disease.

The report also highlights the significant threat posed by ISIL-Khorasan to the people of Afghanistan, evidenced by the horrific attack on HALO Trust staff in Baghlan province on 8 June. The Council spoke with one united voice in condemning that heinous attack. While the circumstances in Afghanistan have changed very significantly since then, we cannot forget that aspect of the conflict environment.

The pandemic has accelerated the digital transition across so many aspects of our societies. Unfortunately, this is also true for terrorists and for terrorism. Ireland supports the Secretary-General's call for States Members of the United Nations to rise to the challenge of digitally enabled terrorism through international cooperation and effective government in line with international law. Civil society and the private sector play a crucial role in this regard. However, the challenge, as always, is to move from rhetoric to implementation.

We were particularly interested to learn of the important work carried out by the United Nations Development Programme, Burkina Faso, Kenya and other partners to address the differential impact of the threat of ISIL and its affiliates on women and girls. Specifically, we welcome the development of a toolkit to generate gender-disaggregated data and inform a gender-sensitive response to those threats. Greater



detail in future reports on the outcome of this work would be useful, including on how it could be applied more broadly. Put simply, including gender-sensitive disaggregated data in our analysis will strengthen our capacity to address terrorism.

Ireland is a small, open economy with a thriving financial services industry. We know that both terrorism and organized crime are fuelled by complex systems of money-laundering and terrorist-financing. We also recognize that countering such financing is a central part of our global counter-terrorism response. At the domestic level, we have a robust, institutional framework for countering terrorist financing. This is kept under review to reflect new and emerging trends, as well as European Union requirements and Financial Action Task Force recommendations. We have also recently introduced legislation that extends the countering of terrorist-financing obligations to virtual-asset service providers.

Just last week, at the Arria Formula meeting organized by Kenya, members of the Security Council heard about the negative impact on humanitarian actors and their provision of humanitarian aid of some regulations designed to counter the financing of terrorism and their resultant de-risking practices. The Secretary-General has also raised concerns that tightening counter-terrorism measures by some Member States during the pandemic could negatively affect non-profit organizations and emergency humanitarian aid. We reiterate once more that such measures must not impede the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance, nor should they infringe upon the legitimate activities of humanitarian and civil society organizations carrying out vital work, often in fragile or conflict-affected contexts. We will remain vigilant on that issue right across our agenda in the Security Council. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that measures to counter terrorist funding are applied based on risk and that they fully comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law.

Independent oversight of counter-terrorism legislation has been effective in mitigating some of these risks and challenges. Domestically, Ireland is undertaking an independent review of its main body of counter-terrorism legislation and has recently published proposals for the establishment of an independent examiner of security legislation. Such an entity will

ensure that legislation is necessary, fit for purpose and contains appropriate human rights safeguards.

Finally, we know that victims and survivors of terrorism continue to struggle to have their voices heard. We believe that they need support, that this support should be reflected in this regard and that their rights are upheld. We firmly believe that a holistic approach to transitional justice is essential to upholding those rights. We will work to that end in our role at the Security Council.

Tomorrow, we will mark the fourth International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism, so let everyone of us around this table recommit to supporting their gender-specific needs, to upholding their rights, and most importantly, to hearing and heeding their voices. This is surely the least that we owe to the countless victims and survivors of terrorism.

**Mr. Aougi** (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I thank the President for organizing today's debate. I thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Ms. Michèle Coninsx and Mr. Davood Moradian for their substantive and clear briefings.

Six months ago, when we were debating the twelfth report of the Secretary-General assessing the international terrorist threat (S/2021/98), my delegation expressed its satisfaction with the positive developments in the global fight against terrorism in 2020, which had resulted in the neutralization of several senior commanders of terrorist organizations in Iraq, Syria as well as in Africa (see S/2021/140).

Today, unfortunately, the situation is alarming. My country is concerned about the resilience and adaptability shown by the terrorist organization, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), which, having lost all territorial control in Iraq and Syria, has managed to export its atrocities to several other regions of the world, including Africa. Indeed, the continent has become the epicentre of global terrorist activities, as the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the subject (S/2021/682) so clearly indicates. Statistics show that since the end of 2019, more than two thirds of terrorist attacks committed by Da'esh fighters worldwide have taken place on the African continent, mostly in the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions. That rapid expansion of the Da'esh threat in Africa has been accomplished through several local groups affiliated with the terrorist organization.

My country, the Niger, which has been facing terrorist threats for several years on at least three of its borders, to the west, south and north, has been experiencing an increase in atrocities committed by terrorist groups mainly affiliated to Da'esh, and, to a lesser extent, Al-Qaida, since the beginning of 2021. A dozen armed attacks recorded during the first half of the year resulted in nearly 500 deaths, most of them civilians. Most of those attacks were carried out in the west of the country in the so-called tri-border area — Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso. The most recent attack on Monday targeted the village of Darey-Daye near the Malian border, killing 37 people. Just yesterday, 47 civilians and soldiers died in Burkina Faso as a result of a terrorist attack. The perpetrators of those wanton attacks against defenceless populations must be held accountable for their crimes.

Such an upsurge in terrorist attacks in African countries comes at a time when almost all the international community's attention is focused on the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. One disaster should not hide another. Our efforts to eradicate the spread of the coronavirus disease should not blind us to the threat of international terrorism. That is all the more true given the fact that the many challenges always faced by Governments and people in the regions of Africa affected by that scourge make them even more vulnerable. Such challenges are poverty, famine, insecurity, lack of knowledge, youth unemployment, porous borders and intercommunal conflicts. All those challenges have facilitated the rapid expansion of the terrorist threat that I mentioned earlier. The weakness of the defence systems of those countries, as well as political instability, are aggravating factors.

Given such a tragic situation, the international community has a duty to take urgent measures to help the Governments of the affected African countries before it is too late, for it must be emphasized that Da'esh has never concealed its ambition to regain the capacity to plan and foment international attacks, even through one of its now powerful regional affiliates.

My delegation believes that the fight against terrorism is not won by military forces alone. It is also won by implementing development programmes and measures to eradicate the underlying behaviours that enable the spread of terrorism, which include corruption, the illicit trade in natural resources and money laundering, to name but a few. To that end, States must strive to comply with the recommendations made

in resolution 2462 (2019), as well as all relevant Council resolutions aimed at preventing and combating violent extremism and the emergence and online dissemination of terrorist ideas and rhetoric.

In that regard, I would like to commend the remarkable efforts of all the relevant United Nations entities, particularly the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which, despite the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, have found alternative ways to ensure the continuity of capacity-building in Member States through innovative distance assessment, e-learning and virtual events.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my country's conviction that the fight against terrorism requires the commitment of all. For that fight to be effective, our approach must be comprehensive, taking into account the social, economic and political reasons for radicalization. Military actions must necessarily be accompanied by soft development and good governance activities.

**Mr. Lipand** (Estonia): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their comprehensive briefings, introducing their fresh findings on threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates. As one of the penholders on Afghanistan, we also highly appreciate the insights provided by Mr. Davood Moradian.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2021/682) notes that the pandemic has had a substantive impact on the threat of terrorism. The measures taken to tackle the spread of the virus have complicated terrorist planning and operations. Transportation, recruitment and fund-raising have become more difficult in many parts of the globe.

However, we must remain vigilant. United Nations reporting emphasizes that the threat has persisted and increased in conflict zones, such as Afghanistan and the Sahel. We remain concerned about those and other areas, where ISIL and Al-Qaida continue to undermine regional security.

The deteriorating situation in Afghanistan remains of substantial concern. The number of civilians killed and injured has reached the highest on record. Half the population in Afghanistan is in need of humanitarian

aid. Estonia calls for those in power to adhere to international law, respect human rights and ensure that terrorism finds no support or shelter there.

Estonia further recognizes the threat posed by the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. The organization continues to mount attacks on international security forces, as well as local communities in the tri-border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger.

In those areas, terrorism is closely interlinked with other forms of communal violence. Therefore, in order to address extremism and terrorism, more attention must be given to lowering intercommunal tensions and nurturing political reconciliation.

We are facing new complex security challenges, such as cyberthreats and hybrid ones, as well as capabilities such as drones, which increase the real-time threat from terrorists to civilian populations and our men and women on operations and peacekeeping missions across the world.

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

Coordinated efforts must be made to tackle the challenges posed by foreign terrorist fighters. Estonia commends the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for the coordination of the Global Framework to provide “all-of-United Nations” support to Member States on the protection, voluntary repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with suspected links to terrorist groups returning from Iraq and Syria.

Finally, States must ensure that all counter-terrorism measures comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Ignoring those principles can undermine counter-terrorism activities and lead to increased radicalization, fed by violence and a sense of impunity.

We condemn all attempts to misuse the counter-terrorism agenda as a pretext for human rights violations or for silencing political opponents and members of religious or ethnic minorities.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to start by thanking Mr. Voronkov, Ms. Coninx and Mr. Moradian for their briefings and their comprehensive and insightful testimony.

The fight against terrorism remains a priority now more than ever. The latest developments in Afghanistan, which could lead to an increase in the terrorist threat, are a strong reminder of that.

France is playing its full part in the fight against terrorism, particularly within the international coalition against Da'esh, which met in Rome on 28 June. That coalition is the cornerstone of the international fight against Da'esh. Our collective action has also been strengthened by the adoption, by consensus, by the General Assembly of the seventh review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (General Assembly resolution 75/291) in June.

While Da'esh no longer controls any territory and the populations under its rule have now been liberated in Iraq and Syria, we know that the threat remains grave against a backdrop of continuously spreading terrorism. In Afghanistan, the victory of the Taliban — which, as we know, has not severed its ties with terrorist groups — could exacerbate the threat not only at the local level but also across the subregion. The spread of Da'esh into Central and Southern Africa also remains a major source of concern.

The first pillar of our collective action against terrorism must be to cut off terrorist groups from their resources. In that regard, on the occasion of the high-level United Nations Counter-Terrorism week, France and India jointly organized an event on 25 June with 172 participants and relevant United Nations entities on the fight against the financing of terrorism. That meeting highlighted the risks associated with virtual assets and new financing instruments, emphasizing in particular the need for existing anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorist financing obligations to apply equally to all institutions, whether virtual or not. Those obligations stem primarily from resolution 2462 (2019), adopted under France's presidency of the Council, as well as from the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force. We will continue to be committed to this fight, in particular by encouraging the holding of a third No Money for Terror conference as soon as the health situation allows.

The second pillar of our joint effort must be to tackle the root causes of terrorism. Terrorist groups thrive

on frustration and situations of despair and conflict. We must therefore address the root causes of conflict, extremism and terrorism. In Syria, for example, that requires a political solution in line with the provisions of resolution 2254 (2015). In Iraq, it means stabilization and reconstruction.

We must also be unrelenting in the fight against ideological indoctrination, in particular by combating the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes, including as a vehicle for disseminating Da'esh propaganda. France continues, in a constant and determined manner, to strengthen the national, European and international responses to counter the dissemination of such propaganda in conjunction with the private sector and Internet companies in particular. I am pleased that the Christchurch Appeal, which we launched together with New Zealand, has now brought 55 States on board so far, as well as the European Commission, two international organizations and 10 companies.

Thirdly and finally, the fight against terrorism must be conducted in accordance with our principles. Most importantly, it must be carried out within the framework of respect for human rights, international law and international humanitarian law. Our collective action must therefore ensure that counter-terrorism measures work effectively while also allowing for essential humanitarian action. That fight must then lead to justice for all victims of such barbarism.

On 31 March, 18 Foreign Ministers, including France's Foreign Minister, issued a statement reminding us that they would not remain silent in the face of the crimes committed in Syria, including those perpetrated by Da'esh. Those crimes can be considered war crimes and crimes against humanity, and we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that such crimes do not go unpunished.

Those crimes also have an unbearable impact, first and foremost on children. Unlike their parents, children have not chosen to join terrorist groups in a war zone over which they have no control. With the best interests of the child at heart, the most vulnerable orphans and unaccompanied minors must be repatriated as soon as conditions allow. France has done so on several occasions and will continue to do so. Adult foreign terrorist fighters who have joined Da'esh's ranks must be tried as close as possible to where they committed their

crimes. Not only is it a matter of security and justice, but also a moral obligation towards their victims.

In conclusion, France wishes to reiterate that it will continue to play a firm and determined role in the international fight against global terrorism in order to put an end to that scourge.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I thank you the President for organizing today's meeting and travelling to New York to hold it. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx for their briefings on the Secretary-General's thirteenth strategic report (S/2021/682), as well as the Secretary-General for producing it.

As all other delegations that have spoken before me have reflected, the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates remains real and dangerously potent. As the findings of the report have noted, the group continues to maintain operational capability and could likely undertake a surge in its activities in a post-coronavirus disease landscape.

I want to point to Kenya's experience as a possible illustration of some of the responses in different countries and theatres that the Council could utilize and from which it can learn. We are a front-line State in the fight against international terrorism, and ever since the attack by Al-Qaida on the United States Embassy in 1998, which treated Kenyans as acceptable collateral damage to their evil actions, we have sought to engage fully in that fight.

We have joined up our capabilities within Government, and today terrorism is faced by a true multi-agency approach that holds from the national level to the local level and is driven by intelligence-sharing and joint local action. We have also built up what we believe is a robust — but still growing — prevention capability that includes disengagement from very early on in the radicalization and recruitment cycle all the way to the disengagement of hardened fighters who do not fit in our judicial system.

We have worked within the prison sector and our judiciary to ensure that our magistrates and the legal profession are better aware of the laws on the books and of the kind of threat that we face. We have worked on building programmes aimed at countering violent extremism and have now extended those to the security sector in a way that allows us to directly and operationally



deliver messages to sites where Al-Shabaab and similar groups have tried to drive their message.

We are committed to the public being involved and aware of that challenge, and we are committed to working together with our partners regionally and globally. We have initiated what we call county action plans that bring together civil society, local government administration, different ministries and security agencies at the county level to diagnose a problem within a certain template and take action together. We are very grateful to some of the countries here in the Council that have been robust partners in that endeavour.

I point to this experience only to say something simple, which is that, in the coming years, we are going to need to build counter-terrorism capabilities within the State — not merely as temporary mechanisms to address temporary episodes or temporary challenges, but rather as standing and permanent capabilities.

I want to point to a specific issue of concern that was reflected in the report in relation to the victims of sexual violence by ISIL and the children born of such abuse, many of whom continue to be confined in camps in Iraq and Syria. What is unfortunate is that such confinement centres are becoming not only breeding grounds for recruitment and radicalization, but also incubators of ardent terrorist elements. Decisive action is necessary to dismantle this vicious cycle, and we highly recommend that the Council, in its engagement with the mandates that are relevant to those camps, take this matter into account and take action accordingly.

We are alarmed by ISIL's expansion in many regions, especially in countries in Africa. Its so-called Provinces and offshoots are entrenching themselves in conflict situations with far-reaching implications. We very much appreciate the awareness of this threat in countries in Africa, which has been reflected by delegations that have spoken before me. However, we would like to add a note of caution, namely, to perhaps not associate Africa with ISIL or Africa with terrorism, because the overwhelming majority of African countries do not, in fact, have an ISIL challenge. Making that association not only mischaracterizes the reality, but can wrongly shape our response to the challenge as it exists.

First, it creates a two-track counter-terrorism comprising counter-terrorism for ISIL in Africa and counter-terrorism elsewhere. Usually, twin tracks are filled with double standards and do not provide,

perhaps, sufficiently robust support for those countries in Africa.

Secondly, it can create a sense of hopelessness in the international community by giving the impression to policymakers that the whole continent is suffering from terrorism, and therefore, if it is such a large problem, then maybe nothing can be done about it. Consequently, I believe that we need to be very aware of that possibility, as we comment on the challenge.

That having been said, as the ongoing developments that have led to the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban show, the Council should be concerned about the possibility that extremist groups or groups within the African region or internationally and which hold an extremist worldview may find inspiration in these developments, with dire long-term consequences. I listened very carefully to Davood Moradian and truly believe that he has a lot to contribute in terms of his ideas and directness.

We all continue to be concerned that the terrorism-financing activities by such groups as Al-Shabaab have surged, with their revenue collection sometimes rivalling, and even surpassing, that of the Federal Government of Somalia, as well as other Governments elsewhere. We do not believe that we are taking sufficient action to strangle these groups' terrorist financing, and we must face up to this fact and make our actions at the regional and global levels much tougher.

Mr. President, I would like to commend to the Council your comments on the predictability and transparency of the listing regime. I believe that we need to take this matter very seriously. When countries bring a terrorist group before the Council, they need to be able to find the pre-established clear criteria that apply. When Kenya tried to bring a certain group before the Council, the request was refused, although we all know that the group concerned is an affiliate of Al-Qaida and clearly comes under the purview of the sanctions regime of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities. That has weakened the credibility of the 1267 regime, as it appears to apply different rules to different situations.

We very much appreciate the limits set in considering how counter-terrorism can affect humanitarian aid, but we would like the Council to better consider that terrorism itself is leading, and has led, to humanitarian crises. The fact that terrorist groups are looking to

destroy States to control populations is in and of itself one of the major drivers of humanitarian catastrophes. Counter-terrorism is therefore not in opposition to humanitarian action. Counter-terrorism is one of the tools to prevent humanitarian disaster.

Rather than continue to repeat statements on the principles we all hold, we highly advocate serious discussion about what carve-outs we should build, how we should implement them and how we should actually continue to strengthen the counter-terrorism regime. We are open to that discussion. That was the point of our Arria Formula meeting, and we hope that we will have such a discussion rather than the same discussions and arguments among one another, while terrorists continue to use humanitarian supply chains to gain resources and recruits.

We also want to urge the protection of democratic processes and a united global call denouncing any attempt of the takeover of the legitimate political aspirations of citizenries by ISIL or Al-Qaida elements. In particular, we believe that the elections in our region in countries with Al-Qaida or ISIL groups should have specific protections to prevent a takeover of State structures by terrorist organizations.

To that end, the full effect of resolution 1267 (1999) must be felt, and we want to recommend to the Council to list Al-Shabaab as an affiliate of Al-Qaida. We believe that that will reflect the Council's seriousness about terrorism, holding terrorists to account and the architecture that the Council established after 11 September 2001. In our view, failure to do so will reflect a Security Council that is backing away from its own commitments against terrorism.

I am sorry to speak for so long. I will now conclude by saying that we notice that one of the missing pieces in our discussions and deliberations in dealing with this problem is perhaps what the representative of Mexico was alluding to earlier with regard to the issue of masculinity — that is, how identity and State-building interact to actually produce terrorist thinking, worldviews and radicalization. We believe that we must deal with the issue of how identity is utilized and mediated in the process of State-building, when we undertake peacebuilding, when we oversee transitions out of United Nations peacekeeping missions, and when we promote long-term support for countries that have been affected by terrorist groups. Let me finally say that we support the press statement (SC/14609)

circulated by the President and support the elements and the spirit of that statement.

**Mr. Pham** (Viet Nam): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and Mr. Moradian for their informative briefings.

It is deeply concerning that the threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) have continued to increase and that Da'esh is trying to regroup and resume its attack capabilities. The African region has been debilitated by ongoing armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, natural disasters and deadly diseases. It is now further threatened by the increasing terrorist presence in the region. As we have witnessed, the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic have intensified in conflict situations. Those could exacerbate conditions prone to be exploited by Da'esh and its affiliates in the medium- and long-term.

In that context, I would like to share the following points. First, the international community should remain vigilant at all times and be proactive in its readiness. Solidarity and cooperation are our most effective response. International cooperation and technical assistance are crucial to enhancing regional and national capacities to ensure that the weakest links are not left to exploitation by terrorists. Operational cooperation enables better monitoring of terrorists' movement, detecting and responding to imminent attacks and countering terrorist financing and money-laundering. We commend the efforts of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the relevant entities under the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact in coordinating efforts to tackle the scourge of Da'esh.

Secondly, an effective counter-terrorism strategy must be in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. The humanitarian and security situation posed by thousands of ISIL fighters, including foreign terrorist fighters and their family members remaining in Iraq and Syria, should be addressed with urgency and in a sustainable manner. We encourage Member States and international organizations to enhance their sharing of best practices in reintegration and rehabilitation, while ensuring the best interests of the

child wherever children are concerned. Terrorist acts must be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the rule of law.

Thirdly, the Security Council must remain firmly committed to using all tools at its disposal to detect and avert new threats of terrorism. Terrorists' use of the Internet and new technologies to raise money, recruit and propagate their agendas deserve our heightened attention.

Recent developments in Afghanistan necessitate enhanced vigilance and strengthened cooperation to fight terrorism in the region. In that regard, we recall press statement SC/14604, issued earlier this week by the Council, in which it stressed the need ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not used to threaten or attack any country. It also underscored that parties should not support terrorists operating on the territory of any other country.

Last but not least, terrorism can be rooted out when dealt with holistically. Comprehensive strategies should focus on addressing its underlying causes, building cohesive societies that are resilient to terrorism and radicalization and promoting sustainable socioeconomic development, a culture of peace and tolerance, national reconciliation and harmony. A whole-of-society approach involving all actors, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and technology companies, remains very relevant.

Viet Nam maintains its firm position of rejecting terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations. We will continue to actively engage in advancing the global fight against terrorism, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and our common values.

**Ms. Prince** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We, too, thank the briefers for their briefings.

The threat of their terrorism and violent extremism is among our most complex challenges. Every day people continue to lose their lives to terrorism and families and communities continue to suffer. Indeed, 21 August marks the fourth commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. On that day, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will join the global community in pausing to remember all of those affected by terrorism. As the day approaches, we are ever mindful that we

must directly confront the root causes of terrorism to ensure that the pain of the victims is not in vain.

While we condemn all acts of violence and atrocious crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its affiliates, it is important to recognize that the traditional methods of warfare have shifted and that the threat of terrorism is growing. Da'esh and other terrorist groups have taken advantage of the disruption, grievances and development setbacks caused by the unprecedented global crisis, both online and on the ground.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines notes with concern the findings of the Secretary General's report (S/2021/682) regarding the African continent, where regional affiliates have been further strengthened, especially in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as East and Central Africa. We are particularly troubled about the spillover from Mali into Burkina Faso and the Niger — incursions from Nigeria into the Niger, Chad and Cameroon and from Mozambique into the United Republic of Tanzania. We also note with concern that ISIL-Khorasan has expanded its presence in several provinces of Afghanistan and that Da'esh affiliates in South-East Asia continue to disturb counter-terrorism operations with a steady pace of attacks. We cannot allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for terrorism again.

All counter-terrorism actions must be conducted in accordance with international law and with the full implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. We call on Member States to redouble efforts and remain committed to the full protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms across all efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism. We must also effectively and efficiently share information responsibly with our regional and international partners.

In response to the concerns about terrorism and in an effort to enhance and guarantee a safe and free Caribbean region, Saint Vincent and Grenadines remains committed to the Caribbean Community Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is aimed at reducing the risk of terrorism and associated violent extremism by denying terrorists the means and opportunity to carry out their activities and improve the Caribbean Community's defence against terrorist attacks.

Countering the financing of terrorism remains an essential part of the global fight against terrorism. Therefore, in our efforts to combat emerging terrorist financing risks, we must fully implement resolution 2462 (2019), which requires Member States to disrupt and criminalize the financing of terrorism for any purpose. Moreover, all initiatives to combat terrorist financing must be designed in such a way that they safeguard all legitimate and well-managed financial activities, including in offshore jurisdictions.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the relevant international

instruments, resolution 1373 (2001) and all subsequent resolutions related to combating terrorism. It is also imperative that the Security Council continue to play a leading role in promoting international peace and security. We must remain dedicated to strengthening the global alliance against terrorism.

**The President:** Before concluding, I would like to thank the Security Council Affairs Division, its Director and team for the support extended to the Indian presidency.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*