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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 7 May 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing with regard to agenda item 109, “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”.

The Republic of Cuba has consistently expressed its unequivocal rejection and condemnation of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, by whomsoever, against whomsoever and wherever committed and whatever the motivation, including cases in which States are directly or indirectly involved.

In its resolution [72/284](#), entitled “The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review”, the General Assembly clearly states that terrorist acts cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

In the same text, it underlines the importance of strengthening international cooperation to, inter alia, address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and prevent and counter incitement to commit terrorist acts.

In this regard, the Republic of Cuba considers it necessary to draw the attention of the international community to a terrorist act recently committed against the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba to the United States.

At approximately 2 a.m. on Thursday 30 April 2020, an unknown individual shot at the Embassy building with an assault rifle. A number of officials and diplomats were inside the building at the time. No mission personnel were injured; all are safe and secure. However, the heavy fire did cause damage to the property. This serious incident endangered the lives and safety of the Embassy personnel and their families. The United States Department of State is aware of the incident.

The attacker was detained by the local authorities at the scene and is currently in their custody. We appreciate the professional conduct of the members of the United States law enforcement agencies, who arrived quickly at the scene.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba called a meeting with the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the United States in Havana, which was held at around midday on 30 April, to discuss this extremely serious event. The Minister for Foreign



Affairs of Cuba voiced a strong protest against the attack to the United States diplomat.

We have reminded the United States authorities that, under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, a State has a duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the premises of any diplomatic mission accredited in its territory against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity or normal functioning.

The Government of Cuba awaits an investigation by the United States authorities into the motives of the attacker and the circumstances surrounding the incident. It hopes that the investigation will be thorough and swift, and that the results will be shared with the Cuban authorities.

The Government of Cuba has offered to cooperate in the investigation. It has also called for light to be shed on the facts and for guarantees that this act will be punished and that acts such as this will not be repeated or go unpunished.

As yet, there has been no official public statement by the Department of State. Its official comments to the Government of Cuba on the matter were made through the diplomatic channel almost five days after the incident.

In the past, serious acts of violence and hostility, including terrorist acts, have been carried out against Cuban diplomatic officials living in the United States and serving at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. or our Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. Such acts include the murder of diplomat Félix García Rodríguez in New York on 11 September 1980 and the direct attacks on the Permanent Mission of Cuba in New York carried out using explosive devices. Groups and individuals that have committed terrorist attacks against Cuba have operated with impunity in the United States for years, and continue to do so, with the full knowledge of the law enforcement agencies of the Government of the United States.

Aggression of the kind carried out on 30 April 2020 against the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C. has been fostered by the increasing hostile rhetoric against our country. The Secretary of State of the United States and high-level Department of State officials responsible for relations with States in the Western Hemisphere, including the Ambassador of the United States in Havana, publicly and systematically participate in such rhetoric.

An event such as this cannot be dissociated from the worsening of the policy of aggression and hostility applied by the United States against Cuba and the strengthening of the economic, commercial and financial embargo, which includes non-conventional measures and persists even during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that is affecting the whole world.

Violent actions are being encouraged by incitement to violence against Cuban medical personal overseas, as seen recently in Bolivia, including with the involvement of United States officials, and by the slandering and demonization of health workers.

It is impossible to dissociate these types of incidents from the effects of policies and hate speech that promote division and social violence.

Cuba considers the incident to be serious, and it took place in a capital city in which there are a significant number of diplomatic missions. The silence of the Government of the United States could be an encouragement to those who see diplomatic missions as targets for violent attacks or terrorist acts.

In its resolution [74/194](#), entitled “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”, adopted on 18 December 2019, the General Assembly calls upon all States

to adopt further measures, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international law, to prevent terrorism and to strengthen international cooperation.

It also calls upon all States, with the aim of enhancing the efficient implementation of relevant legal instruments, to intensify, as and where appropriate, the exchange of information on facts related to terrorism and, in so doing, to avoid the dissemination of inaccurate or unverified information. It further calls upon all States, in accordance with their obligations under applicable international law and the Charter, to deny safe haven and bring to justice the perpetrators of terrorist acts or any person who supports, facilitates or participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning or preparation of terrorist acts.

In the light of the above, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 109.

(Signed) Ana Silvia **Rodríguez Abascal**
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative and
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
