

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND CHAIRMAN, COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE AT THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2011

Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend all of you a very warm welcome to the Special Meeting of the Counter - Terrorism Committee.

Today, as we commemorate the 10th anniversary of adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in pursuant to that resolution, we are reminded of the horrific events of 9/11 terrorist attacks and its aftermath.

The nature, intensity, coordination and sophistication of those horrendous attacks brought home the need for urgent and concerted action to collectively combat the scourge of terrorism.

Precisely on this day ten years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1373 (2001), which has proven to be a major milestone in global counter-terrorism efforts. The Council unequivocally condemned the terrorist attacks, and introduced a far reaching set of measures aimed at bolstering the ability of United Nations Member States to prevent terrorist acts both within their borders and across regions.

I compliment the Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for taking an active role in furthering the agenda of the United Nations in addressing this threat, and in engaging the various United Nations bodies and agencies as well as Member States in the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Kofi Annan, then Secretary General, aptly summarized the sentiment of the moment when he addressed the General Assembly in September 2001. He said that the terror attacks were:

“... not only an attack on our innocent fellow citizens... but an attack on our shared values. It struck at everything this Organization stands for: peace, freedom, tolerance, human rights, and the very idea of a united human family. It struck at all our efforts to create a true international society, based on the rule of law.

Let us respond by affirming, with all our strength, our common humanity and the values that we share. We shall not allow them to be overthrown... Let us therefore respond to it in a way that strengthens international peace and security – by cementing the ties among nations, and not subjecting them to new strains. This Organization is the natural forum in which to build such a universal coalition. It alone can give global legitimacy to the long-term struggle against terrorism.”

It has been a long and arduous journey since then spanning a decade. I am happy to report that the international community has vigorously responded to the call to rise up to the unprecedented challenges posed by terrorism.

The resolution 1373 (2001) has brought increasing solidarity and intensified dialogue among States concerning the threat posed by international terrorism and the means to confront it effectively. A lot of ground has been covered. As of 11 September 2001, only 2 States were signatories to all the 12 UN conventions relating to terrorism. That number has now grown to 111. In addition, a significant number of States have signed the 4 additional international instruments which have been added to complement the legislative regime.

Positive developments are also evident in other areas. Most States have now taken steps to criminalize terrorist acts in their domestic laws and regulations, in accordance with their obligations under the resolution and the relevant international instruments.

In compliance of their obligations under resolution 1373, States have also established Financial Intelligence Units and other mechanisms to monitor and guard more effectively against terrorist financing and money laundering and for effective cooperation and coordination of their efforts at the national and international levels.

New systems of border security, such as enhanced cargo screening and the introduction in most of the States of machine-readable travel documents, have been helpful in checking terrorists’ transnational activities.

There is better exchange of information among States. It appears that mutual legal assistance now occurs more systematically. Many of these advances are due to the continuing commitment of bilateral donors, United Nations agencies and others to providing technical assistance relevant to States’ implementation of the resolution.

Mr. Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of these achievements, it is important to acknowledge that 11 September 2011 symbolizes neither the beginning nor the end of terrorism.

Today, terrorists are not only truly globalised, but are also waging an asymmetric warfare against the international community.

They recruit in one country, raise funds in another and operate in others. They have global logistical and supply chains; they have developed transnational financial systems; they use the latest and most sophisticated technologies and have command and control mechanisms that are able to operate across continents on a real-time basis.

There is hardly any region of the world that has not been scarred by terrorism during the past decade. The events in Abuja, Baghdad, Bali, Kabul, London, Madrid, Moscow, and Mumbai—to mention a few—are but footnotes to the tremendous personal tragedies involved.

We need to confront these challenges and we must confront them squarely and decisively. Much more remains to be done to make States free from the threat of terrorism. Some of the challenges facing us include the need to effectively address new threats brought on through increased use by terrorist groups and individuals of new information and communication technologies for recruitment, incitement and fundraising.

Challenges also remain in the area of countering terrorist financing, including the need to monitor more effectively new payment methods, informal money and value transfer systems, and the use of cash couriers. Furthermore, the problem of securing porous land and sea borders remains a major challenge for many States. We also need to bear in mind that bringing perpetrators to justice requires continued training to law enforcement and prosecution services.

Mr. Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we deliberate today to chart out our salient achievements as well as the key challenges and strategies towards overcoming the many ordeals which remain in our path, I call upon all Member States to remain true to the initial call echoed here ten years ago to respond to this challenge in a manner which affirms “our common humanity and the values that we share.”

I firmly believe that this is achievable through the introduction of counter-terrorism measures which uphold the rule of law and are compliant with States’ obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law.

I call upon you all to rise up to this occasion with a renewed sense of purpose. Let us continue to work together to make the world a safer place for succeeding generations from the horrors of terrorism.

It is my expectation that our deliberations today will usher in a new qualitative and substantive improvement in the normative framework and we will adopt an ambitious outcome document that, will introduce a new 'zero tolerance' paradigm in the international community's fight against terrorism.

Thank you.

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