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Statement of Saudi Arabia in the Security Council Open Debate on “Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts: Countering the Narratives and Ideologies of Terrorism”

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SAUDI ARABIA: Thank you Mr. President. At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. We are proud to have Egypt preside over the Security Council. We are confident that your expertise and wisdom will have a major effect in ensuring the success of the work of this Council. I would also like you for calling to hold the open debate on the threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his valuable greeting at the beginning of the session and other briefings. My delegation welcomes the adoption by the Council of the presidential statement on fighting terrorism. We are committed to this statement. We renew our support to the UN CCT as the comprehensive umbrella for fighting terrorism at the United Nations.

Mr. President, fighting extremist rhetoric and ideologies that feed terrorism, it is one of the most important an urgent modern national challenges. It is one the main priorities of we have attached an importance to. In fact, we have taken an initiative to fight extremism and terrorism in the world, indeed at all levels, local, regional, and international. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has adopted a comprehensive strategy to fight extremism. Not only did we adopt security measures, enact national legislation on fighting terrorism, and work to dry up the financial resources of terrorism, but we also diagnosed the intellectual reality and assess the root causes that have caused the proliferation of violent extremism and ideologies. We have also developed an intellectual security strategy based on three key pillars Prevention, rehabilitation and care. We have also established the Muhammad bin Nayef Counseling and Care Center that reabsorbs those convicted of terrorism related crimes, rehabilitates them, and reforms those at risk of extreme ideologies. We have strived to share our pioneering experience in terms of intellectual security based on the principles and teachings of Islam, promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence, to other states through several initiatives and international and regional activities. We submitted a proposal to establish an Arab office for fighting terrorism and extremism. This was adopted the 31st session of the Arab Council for Ministers of Interior held in Morocco on the 13th of March 2014. We have also participated with Spain and Austria in opening the center of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for dialogue among different cultures and religions in Vienna in 2014. This was to fight extremism and promote a culture of respect and build peace.

Mr. President, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was a pioneer in inciting the international community to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We called upon the international community to adopt a comprehensive plan in line with international law that ends terrorism and that preserves the sovereignty, security and stability of all States.  In this regard, we have worked to establish the UN Counter-Terrorism Center. We have taken part in setting the strategic priorities of the Center that include countering violent extremism rhetoric, developing strategies for that including at the internet level, and we have also provided support to help Member States in terms of capacity-building.  We have also announced that we will establish a certain center to fight nuclear terrorism in general.

Mr. President, we are faced with a wave of intellectual extremism whose tragic repercussions are felt around the world. Those who believe in extremism and marginalization, those who call for the hatred and dehumanization of others and justify the use of violence against them, all of those were equally extremists, be they Christians or Muslims, be they Jews or Buddhists, bet they Hindus or atheists. The mongers of violent rhetoric are no less dangerous than those who perpetrate terrorist acts. Failing to fight them could drive us into further vicious circles of violence, killings and terrorism. Some have sought to adopt an extremist rhetoric based on distorting the image of Islam and linking it to violence. We have been following with deep concern the growing trend of this rhetoric, the ongoing marginalization that amount to violent terrorism against some Muslims in the world, that amount to blaming Muslims for the indiscriminate acts of some extremists, including calling for prohibiting Muslims from entering a certain country or another, including intensifying the search campaigns for Muslims, as well as other marginalization procedures that only multiply the dangers of terrorism and facilitate its proliferation.

Mr. President, Palestine remains the main cause of our Arab and Islamic nation. In fact, Israel continues to resort to all forms of violence and excessive force against the lone Palestinian people. It has been acquiring Palestinian lands and it continues with its colonization day after day. It is imposing its hegemony on Al Quds and Haram al Sharif. And all of that, it is basing itself on extremist terrorist racial rhetoric that calls for killing, displacement, and destruction. Turning a blind eye to the dangers of this rhetoric based on violence and on the state terrorism, failing to expressly condemn it, failing to fight it, failing to hold accountable those who promote it, is closely linked to the growing hate rhetoric, the rhetoric of violence, extremism, and terrorism, by both parties to the conflict. The ongoing Israeli occupation of Arab occupied territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon is in itself a terrorist act that denies the Arab people in this region their legitimate rights.

Mr. President, we have been witnessing a great rise in the dangerous sectarian rhetoric in our Arab region and the Islamic world fueled by Iran, through which it is trying to deepen conflict to feed sectarian strife. It is exploiting mosques and the media. It is also exploiting official statements. This has provided a fertile terrain for the proliferation of extremism and sectarian terrorism. Moreover, Iran continues to support all sectarian militias and terrorist groups such as terrorist Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Mr. President, Syrian authorities continue to perpetrate hideous crimes through its gangs and forces. It is using foreign groups, chanting sectarian slogans. This has provided a fertile terrain that has fueled violent extremist rhetoric. This has contributed to the proliferation of the so-called ISIS and al-Nusra Front. The failure of the international community to provide protection for civilians in Syria is one of the main reasons for the proliferation of violent extremism ideologies. It is one of the main reasons driving thousands of young people from all corners of the world to join the ranks of Daesh and al-Nusra. Therefore, the ruling regime and terrorist groups in Syria are two sides of the same coin. They are feeding each other. It is unrealistic to expect to defeat terrorism in Syria without a true transition of powers in line with the Geneva One communique and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President, in conclusion allow me to reiterate the following: One, terrorism has no justification, wherever it happens, under any circumstances. Two, fighting terrorist ideologies should be a comprehensive and coordinated effort. Three, fighting terrorism requires fighting violent extremist rhetoric against Muslims and Islam. It requires ending occupation, refraining from supporting sectarian repressive regimes, not allowing for the promotion of sectarian militias and their extreme ideologies. It requires working to achieve a comprehensive development for all peoples.

Mr. President, the last few years have left a great burden of human losses and violations of human rights. This was caused by the proliferation of the phenomenon and ideologies of extremism, violence and terrorism. The main reasons of this phenomenon continue to exist. To address them we have to be courageous, we have to bear the responsibility to listen to voice of reason instead of the narrow political interest. My delegation looks forward to continuing to coordinate and collaborate in this or with you in this important work to ensure the stability and security of this region and to preserve international peace and security.