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The Fight against Terrorism and the Focus of Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation and the United Nations

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I. Introduction

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was created in 1889; more than 50 years later, in 1945, the United Nations officially came into existence. It then took another 75 years before these important organizations signed their first memorandum of understanding, which provides for a comprehensive programme for the fight against terrorism.

The Memorandum was signed in Geneva on 8 May 2019 by the IPU and the two most important entities of the United Nations devoted to the fight against the worldwide increase in terrorist activities, i.e. the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).¹

In the trilateral memorandum, the United Nations recognized the important role of parliamentarians and national parliaments in ensuring the success of the fight against terrorism; for the first time, a concrete framework for cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations on a specific topic is being outlined.

In this context, an important role is played by the “High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism” (HLAG), which has been fully operational since May 2019.²

This paper deals with the programme of activities of IPU and the measures recently taken by the European Parliament, the 57 participating states of the OSCE, the NATO countries, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the latter representing 47 states with a total of 820 million inhabitants. The lead in the fight against terrorism is taken by the United Nations, a fact which is fully recognized by all other actors involved.

II. The trilateral IPU-UNODC-UNOCT Memorandum

a) The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) of 179 national parliaments

The Inter-Parliamentary Union was founded as the world’s first permanent international political organization to strengthen cohesion among the peoples and to promote peace. Currently, the IPU has 179 members and 12 associate members. Austria has been a member of the IPU since 1890 and hosted its eleventh conference as early as 1903. At the 1925 IPU Conference in Washington D.C. the members of parliament discussed the issue of State responsibility in the case of criminal acts, widening the scope of the definition of terrorism to include actions of individuals which violently disturb peaceful relations between States.

¹) Memorandum “Joint Programme”: <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2019-05/ipu-and-united-nations-reinforce-their-cooperation-fight-terrorism>

²) <https://www.ipu.org/high-level-advisory-group-countering-terrorism-and-violent-extremism>

The IPU works to promote, protect and strengthen democracy around the world. It feels strongly about building fair and inclusive societies, where all groups play a full part in the democratic process. The IPU is also committed to making real and positive change to people's lives by building strong national parliaments that can deliver on issues like health, sustainable development, peace and security. The participation of women and adolescents in political work has been identified as a separate priority.

The IPU equips MPs and parliaments to drive this change, building on the expertise of its members, delivering practical help and resources, encouraging dialogue and bringing together MPs from across the world. It engages with democracy at every level, from influencing global policies to supporting the marginalized. All of its work aims to strengthen the basic tenets of democracy, human rights, equality and the rule of law, as the values set out in the landmark “Universal Declaration on Democracy” for the improved lives of citizens.

The foundation for all of the IPU’s work is dialogue and democracy.

b) Counter-terrorism strategies of the United Nations and the IPU

The fight against terrorism has been a primary concern for the global community, and increasingly so in the past two decades. Since 1996, the IPU Assemblies, which take place twice a year, have adopted 12 resolutions³ relating to terrorism, all of which highlight the need for parliaments to cooperate with the United Nations to support the implementation of its counter-terrorism resolutions and strategies.

Similarly, the United Nations have adopted numerous instruments, including the 2006 United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288), which refers to the role of parliaments by specifying legislative and other measures.

As early as 2004, the UN Security Council introduced a definition of terrorism in paragraph 3 of its Resolution 1566, recalling that “criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism, are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature, and calls upon all States to prevent such acts and, if not prevented, to ensure that such acts are punished by penalties consistent with their grave nature.” In 2006, the United Nations used this definition as a basis for its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Four pillars were elaborated for a plan of action:

³) IPU Resolutions: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications>

- Preventing people from committing and/or supporting acts of terrorism;
- Depriving terrorists of the means to commit terrorist attacks;
- Building State capacities for the prevention of terrorism;
- Protecting human rights in the fight against terrorism.

In implementing all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, parliament's role is not limited to ratifying conventions or encouraging governments to implement Security Council resolutions. In fact, parliaments' actions include the adoption of specific legislative measures, strategies and plans of actions to prevent, and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, as well as a timely exchange of relevant information and knowledge.

Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirming the Strategy by resolution 70/291 of 1 July 2016, called upon Member States, the United Nations and other appropriate international, regional and sub-regional organizations to step up their efforts to implement the Strategy in an integrated and balanced manner and in all its aspects.

With their legislative responsibilities, parliaments and parliamentarians are at the forefront in implementing measures aimed at preventing violent extremism and terrorism.

The UN Security Council has adopted several resolutions related to terrorism, besides Resolution 1566 (2004). Among them are resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2253 (2015), 2232 (2016), 2396 (2017) to name a few. These resolutions lay the foundation for comprehensive and integrated responses to terrorism at the global and domestic levels, while underlining legislative actions as a basis for their implementation. ⁴

c) The “Joint Programme” within the framework of Agenda 2030

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ in 2015, the international community committed to fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. Indeed, there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. Goal 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It calls upon all States to strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for capacity building, particularly in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime. Through promoting the role of parliaments in preventing and countering terrorism and addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism, the Joint Programme of the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT directly contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁴) UN Resolutions: https://www.un.org/depts/german/sr/sr_res.html

⁵) Agenda 2030: <https://www.un.org/Depts/german/gv-70/band1/ar70001.pdf>

Based on this policy framework, it becomes clear that parliaments have a crucial role in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. By strengthening the rule of law, promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, repealing discriminatory legislation and implementing policies, laws, strategies and plans of action that combat discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, parliaments make essential contributions to addressing terrorism and conditions conducive to terrorism.

d) Priority countries of the “Joint Programme”

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been actively contributing to the global efforts to prevent terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism through its longstanding and ongoing efforts to build strong and democratic parliaments, protect and promote human rights, advance gender equality and youth empowerment, contribute to peace building and conflict prevention, promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, and more recently through its focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nevertheless, gaps in the implementation of the international instruments against terrorism persist, calling for greater coordination among legislative bodies. More specifically, such gaps can be observed in the enactment of the relevant IPU and United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Some parliaments also have limited capacity and knowledge of the good practices to address emerging terrorism threats, such as foreign terrorist fighters, emerging methods of terrorism financing, radicalization, terrorism recruitment and training, especially through the Internet and social media. Those gaps hinder international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The proposed Joint Programme of the IPU and the United Nations was designed to help fill those gaps.

Through regional conferences, parliaments are to be supported in significantly improving their capacities in the fight against terrorism. The first two regional conferences took place in Luxor, Egypt, for the MENA countries (Middle East and Northern Africa) and in Niamey, Niger, for the Sahel countries.

UN experts, HLAG delegates and MPs of the regions concerned addressed the issue by developing specific joint regional strategies. The primary focus was on cooperation among the relevant parliamentary committees, the exchange of best practices and the promotion of close cooperation.

e) Topics covered by the “Joint Programme”

Pursuing its motto of the 132nd Assembly (Hanoi, April 2015) of “turning words into action,” the IPU sought to build a member-driven response to terrorism and violent

extremism conducive to terrorism, by building its approach upon the 12 resolutions adopted at its Assemblies, as well as several others adopted by relevant IPU Committees over the past two decades. The Joint Programme built on these resolutions is the first of its kind to be implemented by the IPU and the UN. A budget of about 7 million CHF has been earmarked for this purpose.

The 12 resolutions adopted by previous IPU Assemblies contain 243 operative clauses⁶, of which 43 reflect the most recurrent recommendations. The recommendations of the IPU Member Parliaments have been categorized and prioritized according to their frequency, as follows:

(1) Close cooperation with the United Nations: This is the most recurrent recommendation in the area of counter-terrorism. The Assemblies urge all parliaments to promote the implementation of UN measures to prevent and combat terrorism. The members also ask the IPU to cooperate more closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) of the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as the primary UN entity mandated to provide legislative assistance to Member States, and to support them in their counter-terrorism programmes. The United Nations General Assembly also agreed in June 2017 to the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT), led by the Under-Secretary General.

(2) International parliamentary cooperation: The IPU resolutions urge all States to cooperate, particularly by improving inter-parliamentary exchange of information and experience relating to the implementation of legislative measures to counter and prevent terrorism. The resolutions also urge States to intensify efforts to reach a global agreement on terrorism. The supportive role played by the IPU in the coordination of legislative initiatives to combat terrorism is also stressed. All parliaments are called upon to strengthen avenues of cooperation between State security and national intelligence agencies in order to facilitate the exchange of information between States.

(3) National parliamentary counter-terrorism plans of action: The IPU Members' recommendations underscore the role of national parliaments in counter-terrorism efforts, by urging them to ratify UN and other international instruments pertaining to countering terrorism, or to press their governments to sign and ratify such instruments, as well as to supplement their legislation with provisions on preventing and combating terrorism. The 2006 IPU resolution urges parliaments to oversee and monitor their respective governments' actions in the implementation and enforcement of national laws and international agreements.

(4) Structure and media outreach: IPU Members condemn the broadcasting of extremely violent images, recognizing that more collective efforts are needed to counter terrorist propaganda and other vectors of terrorism.

⁶) IPU Resolutions: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications>

(5) Common strategy, code of ethics and definition: The IPU Members ask for the establishment of an international code of ethics to strengthen international cooperation in all fields. They also appeal to their respective governments to intensify efforts to reach a global agreement on terrorism. Furthermore, they call for the adoption of a common strategy to counter the remote recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters.

f) Implementation strategy of the “Joint Programme”

The Joint Programme supports parliamentary actions and legislative work necessary to implement existing IPU and United Nations resolutions and strategies regarding terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. It seeks to support Parliaments in implementing international counter-terrorism instruments and obligations. It promotes cooperation among relevant parliamentary committees.

The project is a trilateral programme led by the IPU with the support of the UNODC and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOTC).

The UNODC, especially its Terrorism Prevention Branch, has been mandated by the General Assembly to provide legal and capacity building assistance to Member States for the ratification, legislative incorporation and implementation of the international legal instruments against terrorism, i.e. the 19 international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, one of the key priorities of UNODC is to promote regional and international cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism.

As mandated by the General Assembly, UNOCT is the lead United Nations counter-terrorism policy entity and works to coordinate the United Nations efforts to support the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by Member States. Its five main functions include: provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates across the UN system; enhance coordination and coherence to ensure the balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; strengthen the delivery of UN counter-terrorism capacity building assistance to Member States; improve visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for UN counter-terrorism efforts; and ensure that due priority is given to counter-terrorism across the United Nations system.

Overall, the three international entities have different but complementary mandates in terrorism prevention.

A Joint IPU/UNODC/UNOCT Secretariat has been established to support project implementation. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate will be consulted on assessments of Member States’ capacities and efforts in preventing and countering terrorism and incitement to terrorism. The IPU’s High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) will oversee and guide the overall direction of

the project; review the project implementation strategy; monitor results and the delivery of outcomes; approve a project work plan and budget; review project progress reports; and advise on any corrective actions or measures, which might be required.

The IPU will work with parliaments to promote the implementation of relevant IPU and UN resolutions and the ratification of the 19 international conventions and protocol related to terrorism, especially during IPU Assemblies and through direct engagement with parliaments that have not ratified relevant international treaties or not implemented their international counter-terrorism obligations. The IPU will map and consolidate existing IPU activities in the field of preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. It will also foster the creation of a global parliamentary network and support its effective functioning. The IPU will lead the overall implementation of the project, in particular the management of a website and a mobile application, drafting of world parliamentary and project progress reports, and it will organize and manage capacity building activities on the ground. The IPU will also support the work of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

UNODC and UNOCT will fully support the IPU in performing the above functions. Furthermore, UNOCT will take the lead on the following aspects of the Programme:

- supporting national parliaments in promoting a balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
- raising awareness of parliamentarians on the need for developing national and regional strategies and plans of action to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- supporting and enhancing youth and women empowerment and strengthening their role in preventing terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- advising parliaments on the development of effective programmes, means and messages to counter terrorist propaganda, incitement and recruitment, including through the Internet and especially among youth.

UNODC leads on the following aspects of the Programme:

- increasing the understanding of parliamentarians of the requirements of the 19 international conventions and protocols related to terrorism;
- supporting the ratification process of the 19 international conventions and protocols related to terrorism;
- providing assistance in drafting and amending national counter-terrorism legislation;
- implementing national anti-terrorism obligations with full respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- promoting the development and conclusion of bilateral and multilateral treaties or agreements for effective international cooperation in criminal matters related to terrorism;

- promoting parliamentary oversight to ensure due process of law, fair trial, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and accountability of security agencies.

g) Activities based on the “Joint Programme”

Institutionalize the IPU support to UN efforts, thereby giving a voice to parliaments, and through them, to the people, in the elaboration of future counter-terrorism measures. The IPU’s support builds upon resolutions adopted by IPU Assemblies aimed to effectively implement the legislative role in global efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

To that end, the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG-CTVE) was established as a coordination structure at the 137th IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017. The HLAG-CTVE comprises 21 MPs. It reports to and serves under the authority of the IPU Executive Committee and the IPU Governing Council as the global parliamentary focal point for counter-terrorism-related parliamentary activities. The HLAG-CTVE may decide to carry out field missions and to examine the role played by a given national parliament in addressing the issues that fall within the Group’s mandate. The Advisory Group guides the implementation of the Plan of Action and is supported by a joint IPU-UNODC-UNOCT support team.

At the first meeting of the HLAG held in Geneva in February 2018, the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, H.E. Ms. Amal Al Qubaisi was elected as the HLAG Chair.

At its second meeting in Abu Dhabi in May 2018, the HLAG agreed to the results, the work plan and the budget of the Programme.

At the 140th IPU Assembly in Doha in April 2019, the five members representing the 47 countries cooperating within the framework of the “12 Plus Group” were elected to the HLAG, one of them being the author of this contribution, and the body started its work. The terms of office of the members expire in 2023.

Moreover, a Global Parliamentary Network was launched, which functions under the leadership of the HLAG and with the support of the joint IPU-UNODC-UNOCT Secretariat. The Network serves as a platform for the relevant national parliamentary committees to establish contacts, foster cooperation and exchange expertise and good practices on countering terrorism as well as strategies, policies, and action plans. The network will be a tool to foster cooperation between national parliamentary security committees and to exchange expertise and knowledge on legal frameworks and international resolutions dealing with counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism.

To facilitate the effective functioning of the Network, a web platform and mobile application for parliamentarians is being developed. A legal counter-terrorism database will be included in the platform to improve access for parliamentarians to existing legislation, international

good practices and other resources in the area of preventing and countering terrorism. The database is designed to support national officials, especially policy- and law-makers, responsible for the ratification, legislative incorporation and implementation of the universal legal instruments against terrorism, such as the 19 international conventions and protocols related to terrorism. It will provide a powerful tool to access United Nations model legislation and legal practices of other countries that can support legislative drafting in line with international counter-terrorism obligations. The database will host full texts of treaties, legislation, case law, legislative guides, model laws, and other tools produced by UNODC in the ratification and legislative incorporation of international legal norms and standards.

Parliamentary capacity-building is a key element of the Programme to strengthen the capacity of national parliaments, the primary goal being to prevent and counter terrorism and address conditions conducive to terrorism.

Parliamentary capacity-building started with a pilot activity, namely an IPU-UNODC regional conference funded through UNODC's Global Programme on Strengthening the Legal Regime against Terrorism and hosted by the Egyptian Parliament in Aswan, Egypt, from 31 January to 2 February 2017. It brought together 30 parliamentarians from the MENA region and the Gulf States to discuss the challenges posed by violent extremism leading to terrorism.

The annual implementation report outlines the progress made by the HLAG and the joint IPU-UNODC-UNOCT Secretariat in the delivery of the Programme. It highlights key achievements under the Programme, reports on all activities delivered and concludes with a set of recommendations for the year ahead.

The project support team will elaborate on guidelines and proposals, including a model counter-terrorism law, a compilation of good practices, studies and research in the area of terrorism and violent extremism. Furthermore, a toolkit for parliamentarians will be developed with a view to providing parliaments with an inventory of measures used successfully to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. It will provide guidance on how to integrate existing international obligations and good practices into effective national actions and strategies taking into account their national and regional context and their legal systems.

III. The European Parliament and the fight against terrorism

During the past two decades, the European Parliament dealt extensively with the topic of counter-terrorism.⁷

⁷) EP Resolutions: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliament-positions.html>

Security has become a crucial concern for many Europeans, with a large majority of 80% wanting the EU to do more in the fight against terrorism. Since 2015, the number of “religiously motivated” acts of terrorism have increased in the EU.

In order to prevent further terrorist attacks, the European Parliament adopted resolutions providing for stricter checks at Europe’s external borders, better cooperation between the police and the judiciary in the identification of suspects and the pursuit of perpetrators, as well as measures directed against the financing of terrorism, organized crime and radicalization.

In the interest of security within the Schengen area, systematic checks for all persons entering the EU, including EU citizens, were introduced in April 2017.

In order to record the movements of non-EU citizens within the Schengen area and to accelerate the border checks, the parliaments and the competent EU ministers in November 2017 agreed on a new system for the registration of persons entering and leaving the EU, which is to be fully operational at the external borders by 2020 at the latest.

According to information provided by Europol, at least 7,800 Europeans from 24 countries travelled to conflict regions in Syria and Iraq in order to join jihadist terrorist groups. The number of “foreign fighters” returning to Europe is expected to increase following the military collapse of the IS.

Certain acts, such as training or travelling for terrorist purposes, have been criminalized through counter-terrorism acts applicable throughout the EU, which together with the new external border checks serve to cope with the problem of “foreign fighters” and to provide for their prosecution under criminal law.

Airlines offering flights to and from the EU are obliged to communicate passenger data to the national authorities, including the passenger’s name, travel data, itinerary, and mode of payment. These so-called PNR data are used to prevent, discover, investigate and prosecute terrorist acts and severe crimes.

Terrorists often use several identities to evade detection by border control and law enforcement authorities. This underlines the importance of an effective exchange of information between the authorities (law enforcement, judiciary, intelligence services) of the EU Member States. The European Union has already established several databases and information systems for border protection and internal security. The European Parliament currently focuses on rules to enable the interoperability of these data systems and the simultaneous entry of queries, options which are not available to date.

Europol, the law enforcement authority of the European Union, supports the exchange of information between the national police authorities. In May 2016, the European Parliament voted in favour of granting Europol additional powers in the fight against terrorism and to

set up special units, such as the European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC), which was opened in January 2017.

An effective way of stopping terrorists is to cut off their sources of income. The EMPs have finalized the most recent amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Directive, which tightens the rules governing virtual currency platforms and anonymous prepaid cards.

The European Union has also introduced more stringent provisions in its Firearms Directive. It demands that the Member States introduce adequate monitoring systems, while exemptions for hunters, museums and collectors are maintained.

Most of the terrorist attacks in Europe were committed by “home-grown” terrorists. The European Parliament therefore proposed measures to combat radicalization and extremism in prisons and on the Internet.

The EU’s counter-terrorism strategy is based on four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and reaction. In its proposals, the European Commission follows the framework set out by the European Security Agenda for the period from 2015 to 2020, which is to facilitate cooperation between the Member States in the fight against terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime.

IV. Activities of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the OSCE, NATO and the Council of Europe

a) OSCE priorities

In its Berlin Declaration of July 2018, the Parliamentary Assembly of the 57 OSCE Participating States unanimously stated that terrorism is one of the greatest threats to peace, security and stability as well as a threat to the respect for human rights and the social and economic development in the OSCE area.⁸ As recalled by the declaration, terrorism aims to undermine the values shared by the OSCE Participating States. At the same time, the parliamentarians of the Participating States unequivocally refused to associate terrorism with a particular race, ethnic group, nationality or religion. The organization expressed its determination to advocate measures facilitating the effective fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as a severe crime that cannot be justified by any motivation or cause.

Within the framework of international counter-terrorism efforts and under the leadership of the United Nations, the OSCE is determined to make a substantial contribution by addressing not only the manifestations of terrorism, but also the various social, economic, political and

⁸⁾ Annex to the Berlin Declaration of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE from 7 to 11 July 2018: <http://www.oscepa.org/documents/annual-sessions/2018-berlin>

other factors likely to create conditions under which terrorist organizations can recruit followers and gain support. In this context, the Parliamentary Assembly underlines the central role of the United Nations in the attainment of this goal.

In the fight against terrorism, the OSCE promotes a cooperative and coordinated approach at all levels, including coordination between national authorities, cooperation between the Participating States, and cooperation with relevant international and regional organizations, as well as, where appropriate, the establishment of public-private partnerships between government authorities, the private sector (business and industry), civil society, and the media.

As stated in the Berlin Declaration, these efforts are being undertaken against the background of the worldwide United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Strategic priorities of OSCE counter-terrorism activities:

Promotion of the implementation of the international legal framework for countering terrorism and strengthening cooperation in criminal matters aimed at countering terrorism
Combating violent extremism and radicalization conducive to terrorism by applying a multi-dimensional approach

Prevention and elimination of the financing of terrorism

Combating the use of the Internet for the purposes of terrorism

Promotion of dialogue and cooperation in matters relating to the fight against terrorism, in particular through public-private partnerships between government authorities, the private sector (business and industry), civil society and the media

Strengthening of national efforts aimed at implementing Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Improvement of security of travel documents

Advancement and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in connection with counter-terrorism measures

In its Berlin Declaration, the Parliamentary Assembly notes that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism is to be supported and an increased parliamentary perspective is to be brought to this field. Since July 2017, this twelve-member parliamentary committee has been making every effort to support the implementation of the OSCE resolutions to the best of its abilities.⁹

The short-term goals of the committee are the consolidation of its strategic partnership with the OSCE governmental structures, the determination of the most pressing needs and gaps through visits, meetings and expert debates and awareness about OSCE counter terrorism efforts in parliaments and international fora.

⁹ OSCE Resolutions: <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/annual-sessions>

Long-term goals are the advocacy for inclusive, effective and human rights-compliant counter-terrorism responses and the contribution to the timely implementation of the international counter terrorism framework and the development of forward-looking policy guidance based on identified loopholes and new approaches.

b) NATO measures

At its meeting in Bratislava at the beginning of June 2019, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, referring to the fight against terrorism, noted that countering terrorism has been regarded as a crucial issue since 11 September 2001 and will remain a priority area of activity in the future.

Reacting to the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001, the Allies invoked the collective defence clause enshrined in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty for the first time in the history of the Alliance. The fight against international terrorism became the number one issue on NATO's agenda. From then on, NATO directed its agenda as well as its military and political capabilities towards the goal of countering non-state terrorist groups and the related challenges, including failed states and piracy at sea.

Consequently, NATO substantially broadened the geographic scope of its activities as well as the range of its operations. NATO's engagement in Afghanistan is perceived as one of the crucial driving forces for the Alliance's deployment of lighter, more mobile and more lethal armed forces. NATO is maintaining its presence in Afghanistan in order to prevent this country from again becoming a breeding ground for jihadist terrorists. The NATO mission in Afghanistan dominates defence planning in all NATO countries and has been one of the core tasks of NATO since the early 2000s.

Moreover, cooperation in Afghanistan promoted the fast development of relationships between NATO and countries outside the Euro-Atlantic area as well as other international organizations.

“Widespread instability in Libya, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan is generating humanitarian crises and multifaceted terrorist threats and forcing mass migration. Although largely defeated on the battlefields of Iraq and Syria, Daesh continues to pose a serious security threat. Defeating Daesh and other violent extremist groups requires broad international cooperation, including among NATO Allies and their partner countries.”¹⁰ This assessment was shared by almost all parliamentarians of the 28 NATO Member States in the report by the Political Committee of NATO “NATO@70: Why the Alliance remains indispensable” at the Parliamentary Assembly in June 2019 in Bratislava.

¹⁰⁾ NATO Resolutions: <https://www.nato-pa.int/documents>

c) **Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – “Counter-Narratives”**

In its Resolution 2221 of June 2018¹¹, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe notes that, to date, the international community’s response to terrorism has mainly taken the form of security-based counter-terrorism measures. However, according to the resolution, such measures have not been sufficient to prevent the phenomenon of “foreign fighters”, radicalisation or the spread of violent extremism, including by terrorists acting alone. The creation of new measures, in the form of positive alternative narratives to extremism, is necessary to combat this evolving threat.

The Assembly emphasised the importance of creating effective and positive alternative narratives, aimed at specific target audiences, which confront, challenge and contradict the themes intrinsic to the terrorist narrative through ideology, logic and facts.

Merely reacting to terrorist narratives is not enough. Counter-narrative efforts should focus on creating proactive, positive and alternative narratives, including a positive call for action and a clear articulation of the “overlapping consensus” and ethical traditions which unite diverse communities that are committed to the common values of non-violence, tolerance and democracy.

Given that many of the recent terrorist attacks which have occurred in Council of Europe Member States – Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom, but also in other countries – have been claimed by or may be attributed to Daesh or its followers, the concept of shared values, namely the shared ethical traditions common to both the European Convention on Human Rights and Islam, should be actively promoted. The Assembly welcomes, at European Union level, the creation of a strategic communication task force to work with European Union delegations in Arab countries, and with the Global Coalition against Daesh, to identify shared values and plan concrete actions. At the United Nations level, the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which highlights the importance of fostering a global dialogue to unite countries, people and communities on the basis of universally shared values and principles, is to be supported.

In its Resolution 2221, the Assembly therefore calls on the Council of Europe Member and Observer States and the States to:

- where they do not already exist, draw up national strategies for the prevention of radicalization;
- prioritise the creation of tailored, flexible, positive alternative narratives to terrorist propaganda and violent extremism, to undermine and detract from the authority of

¹¹ Resolution 2221, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 1 June 2018: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=24810&lang=en>

terrorist leadership and expose the hypocrisy of the violent extremist narrative and the reality of life as a terrorist;

- work in collaboration with communities and members of priority audiences, as well as civil society, religious leaders and community leaders, using credible messengers, including women, victims of terrorism, repentant former terrorists and ex-prisoners, and a variety of media (including electronic messages, television, radio, print media and the internet) to dispel the terrorist narrative;
- challenge all incidents of hate speech and strongly condemn all those who preach or propagate hate and violence;
- take measures, including legislative measures, to counter violent extremism and hate speech on the Internet and in social media that may lead individuals towards violent radicalisation;
- explore and promote the concept of “shared values”, examining the ways in which the values that inspire both the Convention on Human Rights and Islam can create positive alternative narratives emphasizing respect for the universal scope of rights and equality before the law, the right to life, the right to justice, the right to liberty and security, and the fundamental freedoms of plural societies, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 9), freedom of expression (Article 10) and freedom of assembly and association (Article 11);
- promote positive alternative narratives with local community outreach activities, engaging with members of the target audience face to face;
- establish monitoring and evaluation practices to assess the impact of counter- and alternative-narrative strategies;
- strengthen international co-operation through the sharing of best practices and information exchange, evaluating the efforts of States and better co-ordinating approaches;
- review the situation in education systems, promote inclusive education and ensure that schools fully play their role in preparing active citizens with a sense of responsibility and critical thinking skills, and who are prepared to live in a diverse society and defend the values of democracy;
- sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol, along with other relevant Council of Europe legal instruments, if they have not already done so.

Through this resolution and the work done by the competent committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the parliamentarians of the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe are contributing to the fight against terrorism.

V. Conclusion

The fight against terrorism and violent extremism is difficult and marked by setbacks. To this very day, some states have been engaging in various forms of cooperation with groups classified as terrorists; others neglect the need to take a firm stance against such organizations. The Joint Programme of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary

Union is the first one to create a practical basis for a shared approach based on the United Nations' many years of experience and a special focus on particularly vulnerable countries. The work on the Joint Programme constitutes a positive start, but the community of states still has a long way to go.

The annual implementation report of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism will show if visible progress is being achieved and which measures are yet to be taken.