

Over the last three decades, global terrorism has rapidly captured vast areas and has become an unprecedented threat to international peace, security and development.

No country is immune from this threat, and no one country, no matter how powerful, can solve the problem by itself. The scourge from terrorism transcends cultures and geographical boundaries and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Terrorism is a sophisticated threat. We need to stay at least one step ahead to anticipate, prevent and counter new attacks. Terrorists are not sitting idle. They are actively on the look-out for the next blow they can inflict, the new opportunity to outsmart us and escape our vigilance.

The military defeat of ISIL has led to the emergence of a new threat: returning or relocating foreign terrorist fighters. Many returnees are well trained and equipped to carry out new terrorist acts and strengthen and activate underground sleeper cells. Terrorists are trying to abuse new technological advances, including communication technologies, drones, and artificial intelligence. They are using social media, including encrypted communications and the dark web, to spread , coordinate or incite supporters to carry out attacks in other countries. The next battleground against terrorism will be in the cyberspace.

Terrorist groups continue also to seek ways to acquire weapons of mass destruction. There has been progress in enhancing disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, but we must remain alert to the threat of WMD terrorism.

Yet, terrorists are ready to use whatever does the trick: vehicles, bladed weapons and the rest of it. Such attacks of course do not require special training and planning and are therefore extremely difficult to detect. Many of these attacks have been carried out in public areas to maximize casualties and instil fear.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The stakes are high and the challenges ever more complex but the international community is not starting to counter this scourge from scratch. There is a strong international legal and political framework against terrorism already in place.

The consensus UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006, provides a necessary international framework, further developed in relevant Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. Our focus now should be on its balanced implementation.

There is a need for Member States to enhance their cooperation against terrorism at the global, regional and bilateral levels, in accordance with all their commitments and their obligations under international law.

The exchange of information, lessons learnt and good practices among law-enforcement, judicial and counter-terrorism practitioners needs to become more proactive and systematic. Operational information should be shared through relevant databases, like those of INTERPOL, and through national initiatives, such as the International Counter-Terrorism Database administrated by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.

UN Member States should step up international and national inter-agency cooperation to counter the financing of terrorism. Financial intelligence needs to be effectively integrated within broader counter-terrorism efforts, including investigations and prosecutions. In this regard I would like to express my appreciation for the Russian Federation, which championed the adoption of the milestone UN Security Council resolution 2199 (2015) on countering the financing of ISIL, Al-Nusrah Front, Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. I would also like to particularly note the Russian initiative to combat the propaganda of terror on the Internet.

Besides interstate and interagency cooperation, it is important to tap fully into the potential of public-private partnerships. State authorities have the primary responsibility for counter-terrorism but engaging with industry and businesses is instrumental to counter terrorism financing, to prevent , to protect vulnerable targets and critical infrastructure, including from cyberterrorism.

An approach focused on dismantling already existing terror networks and thwarting attacks is not enough. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to countering terror, including to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and stem the involvement of new recruits into this criminal activity. Not only the State, but the entire society should play a responsible part in this.

We can put terrorists in jails, but we cannot put ideas in jail. We must confront terrorism on the emotional and ideological level to win hearts and minds, and in the first place - of the youth. This has become an essential component of our fight against terror perhaps the most difficult yet most important part of our battle for ultimate victory.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The United Nations Secretary-General included countering terrorism into his top priorities. In this context he has emphasized two key themes: first promoting broad international cooperation and second.

To translate these ideas into practice, the Secretary- first reform initiative was to create the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which I lead. Its task is to provide general leadership to United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.

In the context of further reform, the Secretary-General initiated in February the signing of the United Nations Global Counter-