

Statement by the President as Chair of the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism

September 29, 2015

Leaders from more than 100 countries, 20 multilateral bodies, and 120 civil society and private sector organizations met today in New York City to review progress in countering ISIL, addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), and countering and preventing violent extremism. Participants took note of the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL since its founding one year ago, expressing support for the work of ministers guiding the Coalition and reaffirming the Coalition's support for the Government of Iraq in its fight against ISIL. They also expressed support for efforts to further implement UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) on preventing the travel of, and support to, foreign terrorist fighters. Participants welcomed progress on the comprehensive, multi-stakeholder action agenda against violent extremism developed at the February 2015 White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which catalyzed a global movement to address the drivers of existing terrorist threats and prevent future ones from emerging. Participants underscored the central role that the United Nations should continue to play in addressing these challenges, while ensuring respect for international law. Most importantly, participants announced new initiatives on ISIL, FTFs and CVE, demonstrating the international community's resolve to address these issues.

Countering ISIL

Leaders emphasized their enduring commitment and common mission to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group ISIL. Over the past year this broad and multifaceted campaign has harnessed a range of tools, including superior military strength, to roll back some of the group's gains in Iraq and Syria and build increasingly capable local partner forces. Also critical has been the Coalition's work to organize efforts to disrupt ISIL's finances, counter the group's messaging, and help those who have borne the brunt of ISIL's brutality to return safely home. This is a long-term campaign that will continue to see periods of both progress and challenge as we advance toward our shared objective of degrading and ultimately destroying ISIL in the interests of regional and global security.

Countries leading the Coalition Working Groups on Stabilization Support, Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Counter-ISIL Messaging and Counter-ISIL Finance thanked members for their intensive efforts over the past year, and welcomed new Coalition members Malaysia, Nigeria, and Tunisia. Others contrasted the military situation a year ago—when ISIL was rapidly advancing and threatening Baghdad and Erbil—to the still challenging but improved situation today. While much remains to be done in this multi-year campaign, the Coalition has begun to make progress against ISIL.

Many speakers noted the dedication and sacrifices of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including Kurdish Peshmerga and tribal forces, and the Syrian moderate opposition and Kurdish forces. In coordination with international partners, these forces defeated ISIL in Kobane in January, in Tikrit in March, in Tal Abyad in June, and in Hasakah in August. All told, ISIL has lost the freedom of movement in approximately 20–25 percent of the populated territory in Iraq and Syria that it held one year ago.

Participants commended the more than 5,000 personnel from 18 countries now in Iraq supporting the Iraqi government's efforts to strengthen and develop local security forces. Coalition members have trained more than 13,000 ISF and Kurdish Peshmerga forces in Iraq; in addition, the U.S.-led advise and assist mission at Taqaddum Airbase (al-Habbaniyah) has facilitated training for thousands of Sunni tribal recruits in Anbar under the auspices of the Iraqi government. The Iraqi government has also taken important steps to equip these fighters. Separately, Coalition personnel are supporting the Syrian train and equip mission. More than two dozen Coalition partners, led by the United States, have contributed in some way to the military campaign, with more than 7,200 strikes in Iraq and Syria to date. Turkey's opening of its bases to the Coalition and committing its own aircraft have improved Coalition operations.

Steps are also being taken to stabilize liberated areas of Iraq so displaced residents can return to their homes. Participants welcomed the Iraqi government's partnership with local leaders and the United Nations to help stabilize areas liberated from ISIL, and the Coalition is committed to working within this framework to help Iraq ensure that returnees have services to meet basic needs in a safe environment. Quick, targeted infusion of stabilization support in Tikrit has contributed to the return of more than 100,000 civilians, supported by the United Nations Development Program's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization. More than half subscribed already and the Fund is on track to meet its target of \$60–70m by the first quarter of 2016.

Italy is leading the police training aspect of stabilization efforts: more than 100 Carabinieri are working to train Iraqi police, and Coalition members are working to provide trainers, equipment and funding to expand this effort. And Canada is leading Coalition efforts to improve the integration of women and gender perspectives into decision-making, including on stabilization and protection.

Members of the Coalition's Counter-ISIL Finance Group (CIFG) highlighted efforts to disrupt ISIL's financial activities, including its ability to raise, move, and use funds. Earlier this year, the CIFG agreed to implement an action plan to disrupt ISIL's financial activities and as a result, are developing enhanced mechanisms to share information and develop tailored countermeasures to address the problem. Today, the UN added key ISIL facilitators to the al-Qaida Sanctions List—an action that underscores the international community's unity and commitment to disrupting ISIL's financial activities. The further development of an informal Public-Private Partnership to help protect antiquities in Syria and Iraq was also announced.

Participants highlighted efforts to coordinate strategic communications to de-legitimize ISIL and diminish its influence. The new Sawab Center in the UAE is a first step toward creating a series of networks to facilitate rapid communications and empower web-savvy practitioners in effectively conveying their individual messages. Participants also noted how the private sector is working with Coalition governments and took note of a new testimonial campaign focused on individuals who have defected from ISIL.

Many speakers drew attention to the plight of refugees and displaced persons who are victims of the conflict in Syria and Iraq, and to the pressing unmet humanitarian situation. A number of speakers announced new contributions to the UN humanitarian appeals for Syria and Iraq as well as other mechanisms to help relieve the situation.

Countering the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Threat

Coalition members outlined efforts to help counter the FTF threat, to include strengthening counterterrorism legislation in their own countries and expanding information

sharing on terrorist identities. The FTF Working Group has established strong coordination with other international fora, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

Participants underscored the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which created a policy and legal framework to address the FTF threat. Participants welcomed progress made since the adoption of the resolution last September, including legislative and judicial efforts. They noted that since the passage of UNSCR 2178, 22 countries have passed or updated existing laws to deal with FTFs; 34 countries have arrested FTFs or aspirants; at least 22 countries have brought cases against FTFs; and 12 countries have prosecuted at least one FTF case, resulting in a conviction or sentencing.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to increase and enhance border security to identify, restrict and report travel of suspected FTFs by sharing passenger name records and advanced passenger information and taking greater advantage of INTERPOL's resources, such as screening passengers against its Foreign Terrorist Fighters database and its Stolen and Lost Travel Documents system. In this regard, participants welcomed INTERPOL's announcement of an action agenda that will seek to improve data sharing agreements and international cooperation.

Participants reaffirmed the importance of bilateral agreements to share information on known and suspected FTFs for use by law enforcement, border authorities and security services.

Participants welcomed the efforts of UN bodies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1267/1989 Al-Qa'ida Sanctions Committee, and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to strengthen global actions against FTFs.

Participants reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation and welcomed recent efforts at the international, regional and subregional levels on FTFs, including the Government of Spain's Ministerial Meeting on Stemming the Flow of FTFs in Madrid on July 28. They reaffirmed the importance of initiatives to develop good practices such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum's *Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Phenomenon*. Participants also noted the announcement of the GCTF Cross-Working Group Initiative to Address the Full Life-Cycle of Radicalization to Violence, which will reinforce many of the key elements of Coalition efforts and the CVE Summit Action Agenda that emerged from February's White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism and was adopted in Rome.

Participants reaffirmed their resolve to continue to take further concrete steps to address and mitigate the FTF threat, to include strengthening counterterrorism legislation, enhancing border security, improving information sharing and adopting new programs to prevent radicalization to violence. They also urged States, if they are able, to assist in the delivery of urgent capacity building and other technical assistance needed by the most affected States, and to adopt holistic approaches to responding to emerging trends and challenges, including the rehabilitation and reintegration of former foreign terrorist fighters.

Countering and Preventing the Spread of Violent Extremism

Participants underscored that the February 2015 White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism catalyzed a global movement to embrace a proactive, positive approach to the urgent challenge of violent extremism in all of its forms and manifestations, that involves contributions from national and local governments, civil society, local communities, the private sector, and multilateral bodies.

They highlighted how this approach must complement rule of law-based, rights-respecting, military, intelligence, and law enforcement efforts. They stressed the importance of continuing to expand the set of CVE stakeholders, initiatives, and interventions that are necessary both for confronting ISIL and other existing terrorist threats, as well as preventing future threats from emerging.

Participants expressed gratitude to the governments and organizations that hosted regional CVE summits and other related events following February's CVE Summit, which were essential for expanding participation in and sustaining the global movement against violent extremism.

Participants welcomed the progress made on the implementation of the CVE Summit's Action Agenda, including new CVE strategies, policies, programs, and partnerships being developed across the Agenda's several pillars, and pledged to redouble implementation efforts. Progress has included:

- new, inclusive national CVE strategies and programs that place increasing emphasis on the role of local communities;
- new initiatives involving women, youth, scholars, and clerics discrediting—both on-line and off-line—hateful ideologies and build community resilience against violent extremism;
- business leaders investing in community-based solutions;
- mayors and municipal leaders developing engagement programs that lift up and support ethnic and religious minority communities;
- additional funding and other support for practical multilateral CVE efforts, including those of the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, Hedayah, and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund; and
- the United Nations and other multilateral bodies intensifying their own CVE efforts, including by developing action plans, programs, and initiatives that will help sustain the global CVE movement.

Participants welcomed the update from the UN Secretary-General on the development of his plan of action to prevent violent extremism, which he will present to the UNGA in November. They encouraged the UN to play a central role in sustaining the CVE Summit Action Agenda in 2016 and beyond.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to championing the global CVE movement following the Leaders' Summit, underscoring the need for government and non-government actors to collaborate to make progress on several priority issues, including:

- better understanding the drivers of violent extremism at the local and regional level;
- countering the narratives of violent extremists who glorify violence and attempt to recruit and radicalize young men and women;
- strengthening protections for members of all communities, in particular ethnic and religious minorities;
- preventing radicalization in prisons and facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of former violent extremists, including by expanding diversion programs;

- addressing political, social and economic grievances that terrorists exploit, including by working together to advance human rights, improving the rule of law, expanding social services and strengthening security in communities that are at risk; and
- ensuring the inclusion of local communities, civil society, religious leaders, and the private sector in addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism, recognizing that they are often more capable and credible than national governments.

Participants pledged to make progress on these priority issues, including by supporting the new sub-national networks announced during the Summit, such as those involving cities (i.e., the Strong Cities Network), civil society, and researchers (RESOLVE), new regional CVE hubs and hubs, initiatives aimed at strengthening CVE capacities and cooperation across East Africa and the Western Balkans, as well as supporting the youth-driven Action Agenda that emerged from the first-ever Global Youth Summit Against Violent Extremism.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon. It also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Categories: Statements by the President : Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, U.N. Leaders' Summit on, Chair.

Names: Ban Ki-moon.

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