

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (spoke in Spanish):

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your delegation's initiative to convene this open debate to address this issue to which my country attaches particular importance, namely, the threats posed by terrorism to international peace and security. We also value the concept note (S/2016/306, annex) prepared by your delegation, which contains key elements for the discussion of this problem of global scope, with a view to intensifying international efforts to prevent, combat and eliminate this scourge.

We also welcome the presence of and briefing by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and thank him for his valuable contribution to the topic of our deliberations today. As usual, my delegation supports the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon, given the fact that its use has been a constant feature in various political conflicts in our modern history. However, in recent years, terrorism has assumed new dimensions, which greatly affect the manner in which it can be combatted. Terrorism in the Middle East has become an insurgency on the part of a sector of the population that uses terrorist methods to achieve their political goals. Those groups, actual armies, have been able to take advantage of unprecedented military and logistical capacities, which has enable their expansion into significant countries in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, with significant impact even on other parts of the world, including Europe and Asia.

The acts committed by terrorist groups endanger the territorial integrity and political unity of States, thereby contributing to the destabilization of legitimate Governments and violating their constitutional order, with the ultimate aim of overthrowing them. All of that not only produces adverse outcomes for the economic and social development of peoples, but also includes the destruction of their infrastructure and institutions. In that regard, we should ask ourselves what conditions are conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. The situation experienced today by the brotherly peoples of the Middle East and North Africa is no coincidence. It is due, in our opinion, to the military intervention by major Powers in Iraq in 2003 and in Libya in 2011, directed towards overthrowing the Governments of sovereign countries, which, in turn, created the conditions for Da'esh, Al-Qaida and Ansar al-Sharia, among others, to develop in those regions in order to implement their strategy of destruction, based on terror and denial of the Other.

Today, the violent actions of these terrorist groups and their associated entities have inflicted sectarian violence on several African and Middle Eastern countries, leaving in their wake a trail of destruction, which is worsened by the fact that, shielded by a sectarian interpretation of religion, they are carrying out ethnic cleansing of vast areas of Iraq, Syria and Libya, among others. It is important to consider the effect that the military interventions in the wars since 2003 have had on the societies of those countries. Children who at the time of the interventions were six, seven or eight years old are the young people today, who are 20 or 25 years of age and have joined terrorist groups en masse. They were children in societies that in those years experienced a culture of death, a contempt for life, sectarianism and intransigence.

Terrorism and violent extremism are problems of a global scope that threaten international peace and security. This is reflected in the unprecedented threat represented today by the self-proclaimed Islamic State, which has been joined by at least 34 terrorist organizations from different regions of the world — not only in the Middle East and North Africa — and is exacerbated by the grave phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters whereby more than 30,000 people, including women and

young people, from at least 100 countries from different latitudes, have joined these terrorist groups, not to mention the threat posed by lone wolves.

The use of violence and terrorism to subjugate societies, civilizations, religions and beliefs is taking on new forms, such as the recruitment of children, kidnapping, the destruction of the cultural heritage of humankind, slavery and sexual violence as a weapon of war, as well as the use of chemical weapons. However, deep down, those despicable practices, which have severely impacted civilians — in particular ethnic and religious minorities and the most vulnerable groups whose human rights have been systematically and deliberately violated leading to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis — are still the result of practices that respond to intolerance, violent extremism and sectarianism. The experience of those actions paint a clear picture of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, and the perpetrators of those actions must be brought to justice.

Experience teaches us that terrorist groups feed on despair, injustice, frustration, lack of opportunities, the denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly in devastated societies, to promote practices that resemble those of fascism, as well as their criminal, ideological and political agendas. Poverty; social and economic inequalities; political, ethnic and religious intolerance; and violations of the sovereignty of peoples and nations, among others, are also part of the so-called push factors of terrorism. In addition, protracted crises further exacerbate conflicts and serve as a breeding ground for violent extremism and terrorism to fuel organized transnational crime and to facilitate the flow, financing and training of foreign terrorist fighters, thereby enhancing terrorist organizations' capacity for action. Hence the long-term solution to the threats posed today necessarily involves, among others, a political settlement of the conflicts in countries, such as Syria, Libya, Iraq and Palestine.

We would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to the elements that are mentioned in the concept note and that we believe are crucial to be able to have an effective counter-terrorism strategy. First of all, we must determine how the terrorist groups have achieved such a military and logistical capacity. They are terrorist groups that have heavy weapons; they are terrorist groups that have missiles; they are terrorist groups that have chemical weapons. Who has given those weapons to those terrorist groups and who maintains them? The terrorist groups occupy wide swaths of territory in Iraq, Libya and Syria. They are capable of defeating and containing national armies from those countries and they are capable of resisting the actions of coalitions and other international efforts aimed at defeating them. Not only do they occupy and govern in those territories, but they also impose their fascist and extremist ideology. That is only possible with foreign support.

Furthermore, terrorist and extremist groups also receive a great deal of financing, which is the result of the illicit trafficking in oil. It is not easy to sell oil illegally. There are mechanisms that are perfectly monitored by all international organizations, and we do not understand how they do not condemn or do not take clear action to put a stop to that financing of terrorist groups, which is the result of oil sales. To sell oil one must transport it and store it. It must be transported on ships. Therefore, the Security Council should act honestly on the basis of the resolutions that it has adopted in order to stop the illegal flow of those resources that fuel terrorism. In addition, we ask ourselves how it is possible that the international financing system, which is controlled and regulated by the large centres of power, is not capable of detecting and blocking those financial flows. We believe that this is an activity that should be tackled with genuine commitment.

Another serious problem is the trafficking of small arms and light weapons. We have said that the Security Council must promote a resolution to prohibit the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which is a euphemism because small arms and light weapons range from heavy

submachine guns to missiles. However, in the area with that technical designation, we have allowed weapons to be distributed to violent non-State groups. Those violent non-State groups then become terrorist groups, which is what is happening and has happened in Syria, where non-State armed groups are trained, armed and equipped with advanced destructive technology and then go on to join Al-Nusra and other terrorist groups.

In order to defeat the Government of President Muammar Al-Qadhafi, thousands of tons of weapons and munitions were distributed in Libya. Today they are in the hands of various militias and factions and have been distributed and spread in Africa, especially in the Sahel region, which is one of the main threats for the security of those brotherly countries in Africa.

The issue of terrorism cannot be dealt with by using a double standard. We cannot instigate the creation of terrorist groups to defeat, combat and destabilize Governments. This is not the first time this has happened and experience has shown that these extremist groups then become a problem and a threat for the Governments that stimulated their creation. That was the case in Afghanistan and it is the case in Libya. We hope that we do not have to wait for documents to be declassified to understand that this was one of the main causes that has fuelled the current terrorist groups.

Furthermore, the concept note draws attention to the use of social networks as an instrument to destabilize Governments. The use of that mechanism is nothing new. The fact that the tremendous and penetrating capacity of social networks to destabilize legitimate Governments is now being used has been condemned on various occasions. That happened in Iran and with other Governments. It is just that now terrorist groups also use that platform to spread their fascist and extremist ideology and recruit young people around the world. The fact that more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters have entered Syria has a great deal to do with the incitement that is carried out from countries of origin against specific Governments. That was the case of the brutal campaign in some European countries against Syria, which has led young people, for various reasons, to join the terrorist groups that are fighting the Government of President Bashar Al-Assad. We believe that the Security Council must act to combat this problem, because all of the social networks use technology platforms that are under the absolute control of the large information technology corporations.

Finally, Venezuela condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There are no good or bad terrorists. We deplore the fact that the Security Council did not express regret when the terrorist group Da'esh occupied Palmyra last year and killed more than 500 people. They killed the archaeologist who was in charge of protecting this world cultural heritage and then began the destruction of the society of Palmyra. At the time, the Security Council was not able to deplore those acts. Nor was the Council, following the liberation of Palmyra, able to express its satisfaction at the liberation of the city of Palmyra and at the fact that its rebuilding had begun.

The Security Council has the responsibility of condemning all terrorist acts, whether or not for any reason they favour their national interests. We believe that all countries are victims of such terrorist acts. On a daily basis, Syria, Libya, Nigeria, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and European countries all are affected by this phenomenon, which we must condemn.

Terrorism is a violent expression of the fascist extremist ideology with clear political objectives. Hence the response of the Security Council must be a political and military one. The Council has the responsibility of preventing conflicts that due to a lack of political response, as in the case of Palestine and Western Sahara, could turn into violent conflicts and even lead to the expansion of terrorism as a result of the frustration and despair of those peoples.

Lastly, our country supports an inclusive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy that would be the result of a broad-based debate in the General Assembly and in which the Security Council, as the organ responsible for international peace and security, would take part constructively, in strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and in particular international humanitarian law.

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