

## **The Secretary-General:**

I thank His Excellency Ambassador Liu Jieyi, President of the Security Council, for convening today's open debate on countering terrorism. It is clear that both terrorism and the violent extremism that can be conducive to it are at the top of the international agenda. I have just returned from Switzerland, where, together with Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, I co-chaired the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism. It was encouraging that many ministers and heads of regional and United Nations organizations, as well as civil society, came together to focus on solutions. Two weeks ago, the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., adopted an important action plan in support of the key role that the United Nations can play in mitigating the threat and managing the response to the possible use by terrorists of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological materials. Recent attacks around the world have destroyed lives, heightened fear and defied all norms of international law and our common humanity. Terrorism and violent extremism are global threats, transcending cultures and geopolitical boundaries. They should not be associated with any one religion, nationality or ethnic group. While recognizing the importance of measures to counter terrorism, we also need to engage earlier and address the drivers of violent extremism. We know that violent extremism flourishes when groups are marginalized, political space shrinks, human rights are abused and people lack prospects and meaning in their lives. My Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism asks each country to develop a national plan that engages key communities and focuses on conflict prevention. The Plan also calls for the resolution of long-standing conflicts, which would give hope to those enduring oppression and eradicate the breeding grounds of violent extremism and terrorism. Da'esh is adept at raising funds through nefarious activities and has shown an ability to radicalize and recruit disaffected youth, including women and girls, through strategies involving the Internet and social media. More than 30,000 people from all over the world have joined Da'esh's campaigns in Iraq and Syria.

These foreign terrorist fighters also pose a significant security threat to their home or third countries when they return. We need to focus on implementing the relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), and other resolutions and measures that sanction terrorist groups and individuals. We also need to implement all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a comprehensive and balanced manner, recognizing that security and respect for human rights are mutually reinforcing. Member States need to take more concrete steps to stop fundraising through the smuggling of oil and gas, the illicit trade in cultural artefacts, kidnapping for ransom and donations from abroad. We must also curtail the ability to abuse and misuse the Internet and social media to radicalize and recruit young people by identifying global and regional solutions that involve Governments, private enterprise and civil society. Strategies to counter the threat of online radicalization will also require legislative and law enforcement measures at the national level. We also need an effective approach to strategic communications, moving beyond counter-narratives to reinforcing the values of peace and tolerance. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre has made this a priority area in its new five-year programme. To stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, we need to intervene at all stages — from their initial radicalization to their travel and return. Resolution 2178 (2014) called on all Member States to cooperate in this effort and, at the request of the Security Council, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) developed the United Nations Foreign Terrorist Fighters Capacity-Building Implementation Plan, which includes 37 mutually reinforcing project proposals to be carried out by 12 CTITF entities. The Security Council also called on Member States to provide the needed financial assistance. While the Counter-Terrorism Centre will support several of these projects with catalytic funding, more funding will be required for implementation. We must also be sure that our approaches to preventing violent extremism and countering terrorism respect our shared values, as reflected in the Charter of the

United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights and humanitarian law. Too often, this basic understanding has been broken or ignored. We must also have the courage to address certain difficult situations, such as the support that violent extremists and terrorists may receive — directly, indirectly and perhaps even unintentionally — from Governments. We must also recognize that, too often, Government counter-terror strategies are so heavy-handed and discriminatory that they end up being counterproductive, generating further alienation among targeted communities and even more terrorists than there were beforehand. Through the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the Capacity-Building Implementation Plan, the United Nations system has come together through an all-of-United Nations approach to provide support to Member States in their struggle. As we look ahead to this year's General Assembly review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on its tenth anniversary, I hope that Member States will find consensus on a strong outcome resolution that reinforces international unity in the face of the divisions that terrorist groups and violent extremists seek to create. The Security Council has a key role to play, and I look forward to continuing our shared efforts to address this global menace.

For more details, please visit [this page](#).