

# Statement by the delegation of Ukraine at the UNSC open debate on Countering The Narratives And Ideologies Of Terrorism

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**Statement by the delegation of Ukraine at the UNSC open debate on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts (“Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism”)**

**Mr. President,**

At the outset, I would like to join others by expressing our sincere gratitude to the Egyptian delegation and to you personally, Mr Minister, for convening this debate.

Also, please, accept condolences in connection with bloody terrorist attack, committed in Cairo last Sunday.

Our thanks also go to the briefers, who provided us with valuable information concerning the current trends and policies applied in the field of countering terrorist narratives and propaganda both by the United Nations and Member States, as well as by the civil society actors.

**Mr. President,**

Terrorist and violent extremist ideologies, propagated all over the world by terrorist entities, the most known of them are ISIL, Al Qaeda and associated individuals and groups, nowadays pose a serious threat to international peace and security, as well as to stability in the world. They threaten our core values and principles, including democracy, human rights, rule of law, equal opportunity and freedom. Notwithstanding the recent tentative progress in the suppression of these international terrorist threats, especially by depriving the terrorist organizations of some sources of their financing, there is still a significant lack of cohesive actions with regard to countering their propaganda while ensuring effective implementation of the UNSC resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014). Achieving this goal would be possible only through a comprehensive framework of concrete strategies aimed at consolidating all existing efforts and strengthening cooperation among all stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector, so as to improve their understanding of the ways, in which terrorists use information and communication technologies (ICT) for terrorist purposes.

This will allow applying a unified approach for the deterrence of the use of Internet and social media for incitement to terrorism, training and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, planning and financing terrorist activities.

To strike at the heart of terrorist aggressive informational campaign, aimed at recruitment of new followers and sympathizers, the strategy of the international community should involve not only countering the ideology, distributed through Internet, but also developing persuasive context-specific counter narratives and messages to neutralize terrorists' influence on persons belonging to target audiences and to eliminate terrorist focal points of radicalization.

This is where the civil society and, in particular, representatives of local communities and religious leaders, could play crucial role in raising public awareness by revealing truth about would-be jihadists and "de-glorifying" their activities.

To monitor the threat posed by the use of ICT for terrorist purposes, to collect, identify and share good practices in this field developed worldwide, as well as to mobilize resources for building needed capabilities, we need to establish a strengthened international cooperation mechanism that should engage relevant United Nations counter-terrorism entities, acting within "One UN" approach, together with regional and sub-regional organizations.

**Mr. President,**

It goes without saying that counter-measures would not have a long-lasting effect without removing the root causes of violent extremism and terrorism threats. Having put off the fire in one place there is no guarantee that an outbreak will not occur elsewhere in the world.

Our collective response should be focused on addressing underlying factors that provide opportunities for the spread and thriving of violent extremist and terrorist ideologies.

Only by combining countering and prevention measures, more nuanced and comprehensive, that address governance deficit, promote social development and dialogue, respect for the rule of law and human rights, strategic communications, engagement of women and youth, public-private partnerships, we can reduce the appeal of and support for terrorist groups, and enhance resilience against them.

In this respect, we note with appreciation the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent

Extremism, add our voice in support of further consideration of the said Plan during the review process of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy this June and look forward to extensive discussions on how it can enhance the existing comprehensive counter-terrorism architecture.

**Mr. President,**

While addressing the need to intensify our common work on preventing the spread of malevolent ideologies we should explore ways to engage young people, who constitute one of the strata most vulnerable to violent extremist and terrorist narratives.

There are many factors contributing to the youth radicalization, yet one of the most important is propaganda. Violent extremist and terrorist groups actively exploit this tool through media and social networks. In our opinion, the most dangerous situation emerges when such manipulations are elevated to the rank of State policies.

Under the international law states are obliged to refrain from engaging in and to prevent acts of terrorism. Both obligations, as their essential element, include countering propaganda of terrorist ideology. This observation should be taken into consideration while assessing states` input in combating terrorism.

For more than 2 years, Ukraine has suffered from the aggression of its neighbour, the Russian Federation. Russia has temporarily occupied and attempted to illegally annex a part of the territory of Ukraine — the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol — and continues hostile and subversive actions, supporting terrorism in the Donbas region. Russia employs a broad range of hybrid warfare techniques, including financing terrorism, to promote ideology of the so-called “Russian world”, which implies exclusive role for the RF in the internal affairs and in shaping foreign policy priorities of the countries, which were parts of the Russian empire or former Soviet Union in the past. This neo-imperialist ideology tolerates and encourages violation of the international law, human rights, perpetration of serious crimes, including terrorists acts. Fierce, deceitful propaganda disseminated by the State-controlled Russian media and through numerous means is one of the key elements of the ongoing hybrid aggression against Ukraine.

The international community has to be alarmed by the fact that this hybrid propaganda –machine based on Soviet and Tsarist experience, other totalitarian concepts, keeps working very well and in effective manner, first and foremost affecting the youth. There are reported cases of teenagers` participation in the activities of the Russian-backed terrorist organizations so-called “DNR” and “LNR”, which attacked several times civilians in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, using armaments and munitions supplied by the Russian Federation. Some are 15-years old and even younger. There is also credible information that the Russian proxies and their Kremlin masters are forcing pupils and students into their ranks using different means of influence, including religious organizations. Moreover, there are numerous testimonies that such means as promising to annul criminal records or to repay loans are practiced in the Russian campaign to recruit mercenaries into the terrorist gangs operating in the Donbas. Young people are common victims of such recruitment campaign.

Therefore, apart from comprehensive efforts to eliminate the social, economic, cultural, religious and other grounds for the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, there is a need to address such phenomena as State propaganda of intolerance and hatred, as well as information wars, which often

serve as part of hybrid warfare.

**Mr. President,**

We proceed from understanding that victims of terrorism should also play an important role in the above-mentioned comprehensive preventive campaign to combat extremist and terrorist ideologies and to counter their narratives.

The messages brought by the victims of terrorism and their family members can help us revive people's natural understanding of good and evil and to disrupt terrorist information campaign aimed at pulling the wool over people's eyes.

We strongly believe that by establishing an International Day of Commemoration of Memory of Victims of Terrorist Acts we will send a strong signal about the dire consequences of terrorist activities to be remembered as the lessons of the tragic past with the ultimate goal of preventing such act from occurring again.

**I thank you for your attention.**