

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts



Last updated: 5/11/2016 // Statement by Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, to the Security Councils open debate on: Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Given on the 11th of May 2016.

Thank you, President,

No country is immune to violent extremism. From Baghdad to Bamako to Paris, Brussels and Istanbul, we have had tragic reminders of this global peril. Threats to our security are more complex than they have been for decades, and the most serious among them is violent extremism.

It must be defeated – at all levels, by governments and citizens alike – and with every possible tool available, long-term and short-term. When and where necessary – as in Syria and Iraq – we must use military means.

At the same time, we must stop the flow of finances and foreign fighters, improve our development policies, strengthen fragile states and offer young people education, jobs and opportunities. It does not help to win the day-to-day battles in Iraq if we lose the battles of the future.

The likes of ISIL can only be degraded and destroyed if their ideology is dismantled. We must refine our counter-messaging – bearing in mind that messages are only effective when accompanied by substance and real progress.

Young people must be able to find jobs and opportunities, to be seen and to influence their own lives – in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and elsewhere.

As we refine our methods, extremist groups are finding new ways to spread their propaganda,

finance their activities, recruit people and carry out their attacks. Sharing of intelligence and information between our countries must be improved.

The core values of peace, tolerance, democracy, human rights and rule of law are what the terrorists are fighting. If we want to defeat terrorism, we must defend the values that gave birth to this assembly 70 years ago.

As ISIL is losing ground in Syria and Iraq, and their recruitment seems to be slowing down, we must increase our focus on the threat that foreign fighters pose upon returning home. We must also do what we can to prevent new ISILs from emerging.

President,

The international community must adapt to a changing security landscape. The UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, building on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is timely and much needed.

It focuses on national, regional and UN activities that can become drivers for change. The plan seeks to tackle conditions conducive to terrorism, and to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law.

It addresses how we can effectively counter the manipulative messages of violent extremism, by advocating freedom of expression and the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding. These are all necessary ingredients when building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Governments have the primary responsibility for preventing extremism, but they can only succeed if they work closely with the civil society, including with young people and women.

That is why Norway has initiated the launch of two civil society networks:

Firstly, YouthCAN – a network of young people working together against violent extremism, not least by developing alternative narratives.

Secondly, we have established an alliance of women's organizations. Many of the women in the alliance have suffered directly from extremism in places like Syria and Iraq. There can be no more qualified and credible voices in speaking out against terrorism than its victims and witnesses.

Norway will continue to work with these networks and help them expand.

President,

We all have a role to play in countering the plague of violent extremism. Our efforts must be amplified and our methods refined.

We need a strong UN to show global leadership. We need a UN that is fit for purpose – and has sufficient resources to do its important part.

Norway is pleased that the General Assembly earlier this year welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop and present his Plan of Action to Member States.

We can fight terrorists with soldiers and police, and indeed we will. In the long run, however, we can only prevail if we understand the root causes of violent extremism and commit ourselves to translating this understanding into action. We cannot rest in our quest for answers and solutions.

Violent extremism is a threat to us all, so we must fight it globally – at home and together.

Thank you.