

Security Council Open Debate on Threats to International Peace and Security Terrorism and Cross-Border Crime December 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Alhakim Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations.

We would first like to congratulate Chad on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to thank the delegation of Chad for holding this important open debate on combating terrorism and on the relationship between terrorism and cross-border organized crime. I would also like to thank Australia for its successful conduct of the business of the Council last month. We also congratulate the delegation of Chad on today's adoption of resolution 2195 (2014).

Today's meeting focuses on the threatening phenomenon of the mushrooming spread of terrorism, which cooperates with organized criminal networks, which themselves thrive in direct proportion to increased terrorist activities. They are interdependent. There has been a change in the nature of terrorism and its connection to organized crime. Both are conducted across borders, and both constitute threats to the security and stability of peoples. Both undermine economic and social development. Both help to deplete States' resources. Both undermine democratic governance. They have brought about many humanitarian crises and made it difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance to thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees. Iraq is a case in point; we are a country that is suffering deeply from the effects of those scourges.

The report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities (S/2014/815) indicates that, according to media reports, the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL) is the wealthiest terrorist organization in the world. Its strength and funding are derived from criminal means and activities that intimidate and terrorize people through kidnapping, extortion, robbery, the smuggling of valuable historical artefacts and trafficking in women and children, as well as the control of oilfields in Iraq and Syria. The smuggling of oil and Iraqi artefacts, along with the trafficking in persons and human organs, are ISIL's most important sources of funding. ISIS benefits from existing smuggling networks in the region. Weak border controls, owing to the Syrian crisis, and ISIL's control of Iraqi cities and territories close to the Syrian border have both contributed to establishing increasing numbers of such organized criminal networks, which move freely across the territories concerned and traffic in archaeological artefacts. We urge States Members of the United Nations to remain committed to complying with resolution 1483 (2003), particularly paragraph 7, which states that "all Member States shall take appropriate steps to facilitate the safe return to Iraqi institutions of Iraqi cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance illegally removed".

The ISIL terrorist organization exploits areas under its control in Iraq and Syria by looting, smuggling and trading in valuable artefacts in order to fund its terrorist activities. It relies on a network of Iraqi intermediaries, both Arab and Kurdish, as well as networks in the neighbouring countries of Syria, Lebanon and Turkey, to transfer oil, gas and artefacts to countries in Europe and other regions.

The terrorist organizations, intermediaries and States that make up this complicated web and illegally and illegitimately purchase the Iraqi property that I just referred to are not bound under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and thus they threaten international peace and security. The Security Council should take decisive action to end such activities. It should blacklist the companies and individuals that deal with such partisan entities. There should be accountability in accordance with international law and international legal frameworks.

Implementation of resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) would limit the spread of terrorism and transnational organized crime. Transnational organized crime supports a lifeline of financial resources for terrorist organizations. International and regional cooperation and implementation of those two resolutions are crucial, especially in the areas of security, intelligence, border control and capacity-building. Iraq is a glaring example of a country suffering from trafficking of its cultural and religious patrimony. We therefore support the adoption of a bold and firm resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter. We agree that there is a connection between terrorism and transnational organized crime, particularly since we suffer from both phenomena.