

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

Statement by Mr. Thoresson Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

First I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman and Ambassador António of the African Union for their comprehensive briefings. The Nordic countries stand firmly behind the United Nations fight against terrorism and organized criminal activities. We welcome today's discussion and the focus given by the Security Council to these pressing issues. The connection between terrorism and other forms of criminal activity is a serious challenge to international security. This was first recognized 13 years ago in resolution 1373 (2001), but it is, unfortunately, still true today. No country is immune to the effects of this connection, whether it relates to terrorist acts, poverty or the illicit trade in arms or drugs.

Terrorism and organized crime generate violence against civilians. Violence is a universal challenge to poverty eradication and sustainable development. There are 1.5 billion people living in countries affected by conflict, violence and fragility. Those countries are furthest away from achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is estimated that by 2030, more than 80 per cent of world poverty will be concentrated in conflict-affected and fragile States. That implies that violence is likely to be one of the most pressing poverty issues ahead. Combating terrorism and organized crime is crucial in order to eradicate poverty. The Nordic countries are large donors of both humanitarian and development aid, and we are advocating the inclusion of a goal on peaceful, inclusive societies and freedom from violence in the new post-2015 global development agenda.

The trafficking of weapons fuels armed conflict and armed violence, and organized crime or terrorist groups in many cases provide the networks needed to move this deadly commodity. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty later this month will add an important new tool to combat this phenomenon. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant's illicit trade in historical, religious and cultural artifacts has generated considerable income and must be countered. The Nordic countries are fully behind UNESCO's efforts in combating this problem. Trafficking in persons is one of the most heinous and lucrative criminal activities globally. The funds generated are often used to fund other forms of organized crime, such as the smuggling of weapons or drugs. **Around 70 per cent of all victims of trafficking are women and girls, who are trafficked primarily for sexual exploitation.**

The narrative of terrorism is that of hate, intolerance and rejection of human rights, in particular women's human rights. Countering this narrative and creating resilience is essential. The Nordic countries believe that our strongest counter-narrative is a firm commitment to democracy, human rights and equality. We consider these values as end goals in themselves as well as key drivers of economic and social development. They are cornerstones of peaceful and inclusive societies where no one should feel marginalized or be attracted to violent extremism or organized crime.

Our response to the challenges that I just outlined must be interconnected and mutually

reinforcing. Multilateral cooperation is essential. Local action is needed on a global scale. The challenge lies in enabling efficient coordination among local, regional and international efforts. Therefore, the Nordic countries welcome today's debate and wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the Republic of Chad for your timely initiative.

The Nordic countries place great value on the efforts of the United Nations in assisting States in strengthening resilience against both terrorism and organized criminal activities. We are strong supporters of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other efforts to enhance States' capacities to counter terrorism within the rule of law, including the protection of and full respect for human rights. We have been active partners in and long-standing contributors to the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), including its technical assistance in the field. We support the efforts made by the United Nations to explore additional ways to counter terrorism and organized crime. The Nordic countries recognize that cross-border crime has a strategic impact on terrorist groups through the weakening of State authority and State capacity. Cross-border crime also strengthens terrorist groups by increasing their access to illicit markets. To counter those threats, the Council needs to combine different types of peace operations, counter-terrorism bodies, panels of experts and the other tools available, as well as reach out to relevant institutions such as the UNODC and INTERPOL. We also welcome further consideration of a strategic review of the tools available to reduce the strategic space that cross-border crime affords terrorist groups, as proposed in the concept note (S/2014/869, annex).