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Thursday, 8 August 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Hamiane
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Jambert-Gray
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2024/583)

Identical letters dated 31 July 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2024/589)

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The meeting was called to order at 10a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2024/583)

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The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Natalia Gherman, Executive Director, Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2024/583, which contains the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

Mr. Voronkov: It is an honour to brief the Security Council on the nineteenth report (S/2024/583) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security and on the United Nations efforts in support of Member States to counter the threat. I am pleased to be joined by Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Ms. Natalia Gherman, to present the report, which was prepared jointly by our Offices and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

As we approach the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21 August, I would like to express my condolences to Member States that have been affected by acts of terrorism and my sympathy to the victims and their families. In honour of the Day, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism will organize a high-level event to highlight the role of victims of terrorism as peace advocates. My Office will continue to support Member States in promoting survivor-centred, gender sensitive and human rights-compliant approaches.

Unfortunately, the situation in parts of Africa has not improved since my previous briefing (see S/PV.9550). The terrorism landscape in West Africa and the Sahel remains challenging and complex. Terrorist groups continued to expand in the Sahel and to inflict high casualties, undermining regional stability. Two of the Da'esh affiliates in the region — the Islamic State West Africa Province and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel — have expanded and consolidated their areas of operations. Should those groups extend their influence in northern littoral States, a vast territory stretching from Mali to northern Nigeria could fall under their effective control. In other parts of the continent, Da'esh affiliates have increased their operational pace in northern Mozambique as well as in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a dramatic increase in terrorist attacks resulted in high civilian fatalities. Also in Somalia, the Da'esh affiliate has become stronger.

Two of the risks outlined in reports over the past years have regrettably become manifest since my previous briefing.

The first is the risk of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) — the Da'esh affiliate in Afghanistan — carrying out terrorist attacks abroad. ISIL-K has improved its financial and logistical capabilities in the past six months, including by tapping into Afghan and Central Asian diasporas for support. The group has also intensified its recruitment efforts. The activity of Da'esh and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan remains a significant concern. We must unite to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a hotbed of terrorism. In that regard, the efforts of neighbouring Member States to counter and prevent the spread of the threat emanating from Afghanistan is very important. The Office of Counter-Terrorism will continue to support Member States in Central Asia

in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The second risk that materialized during the reporting period refers to the resurgence of the Da'esh core. The group has claimed responsibility for the attacks conducted by ISIL-K globally, seeking to derive propaganda value for their cause. In early January, the group demonstrated its continued global intent, launching a coordinated campaign across all its self-proclaimed "provinces". That included temporary surges of operations in January and March in Iraq, where operations had otherwise been largely contained.

Da'esh has also increased its operational pace in the Syrian Arab Republic with a surge of attacks, especially in the central desert area. Sustained counter-terrorism efforts will be required to prevent Da'esh from building upon those gains. Further efforts will also be required to address the dire security, humanitarian and human rights situation in camps and other detention facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Some progress made by Member States in repatriating their nationals resulted in a slight decrease in the population of those camps. However, thousands of individuals continue to live in dire conditions. The camps are overcrowded and lacking in adequate shelter and basic services, including clean water and medical care. The Secretary-General continues to call for Member States with nationals stranded in those camps to scale up their efforts to facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of their citizens.

Elsewhere, the threat posed by ISIL-K resulted in heightened threat levels in Europe. The group is considered the greatest external terrorist threat to the continent.

Cooperation among Member States remains indispensable to address the threat posed by Da'esh. For that reason, the Office of Counter-Terrorism supported the Government of Nigeria in organizing the high-level African counter-terrorism meeting in Abuja in April. I welcome the outcomes reflected in the Abuja declaration and look forward to working closely with Member States in supporting the agreed actions. That includes upgrading the Nigerian national counter-terrorism centre in Abuja to a regional counter-terrorism centre that will cover the Sahel and West Africa. Given the complexity of the threat in the region, my Office is committed to supporting the centre's initiative to

address the drivers of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Looking ahead, the Office of Counter-Terrorism is organizing, jointly with the Governments of Tajikistan and Kuwait, the Dushanbe high-level process conference in Kuwait City in November. The event will be the fourth iteration of the Dushanbe process and is intended to broaden the scope and impact of regional counter-terrorism cooperation well beyond Central Asia.

But cooperation alone will not suffice unless it leads to responses that are comprehensive and firmly grounded in political strategies. While responses may sometimes require the legitimate use of force, such force must be aligned with broader strategies. Those strategies should be aimed at addressing the multifaceted drivers of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and such responses must be fully compliant with international human rights and humanitarian law.

Terrorism remains a significant challenge for the international community, one that no State can tackle alone. To eradicate the terrorist threat, we need inclusive, multilateral responses that are firmly grounded in political strategies, compliant with international law and also informed by all-of-society and all-of-Government approaches. The upcoming Summit of the Future represents a critical opportunity for Member States to recommit to countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism along those lines. The Office of Counter-Terrorism, including through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, will continue to support and work in partnership with Member States in order to realize that vision.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Gherman.

Ms. Gherman: I am very pleased to be briefing the Security Council on the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/583) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) to international peace and security and on the wide range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering that threat.

I extend my gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir

Voronkov, and to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and all of our United Nations partners for their close collaboration on this report.

Since the Secretary-General's last report on the threat posed by Da'esh (S/2024/117), we continue to witness the profound challenges that Member States face in preventing and countering terrorism. West and Central Africa have been particularly affected by armed groups affiliated with Da'esh, which have engaged in complex attacks against security forces and civilians. That has led to widespread displacement.

The Lake Chad basin region has seen persistent activity from the Islamic State West Africa Province, contributing to the displacement of more than 2.9 million people as of May 2024. In the Central Sahel, the impact on children is severe. Most States in the region continue to face capacity challenges in managing the escalating threat, including through the effective screening, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of people associated with terrorist groups. At the same time, with the horrific attack on the Crocus City Hall in Moscow in March and the increased threat levels in Europe, Da'esh affiliates have demonstrated their capacity to mount attacks across the globe.

In the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 44,000 individuals are still being held in closed camps and detention facilities. More than half of those are children living in dire conditions characterized by overcrowding, limited services, inadequate shelter and scarce access to essentials. The longer that that situation is allowed to persist, the harder it will be to solve.

In the face of those challenges, in the past six months, progress has also been made by Member States, many of them working in close cooperation with the United Nations. The United Nations has been helping Member States address barriers to the sustainable return and reintegration of displaced individuals from Da'esh-affected conflict zones. Ten Member States have repatriated children and some adults from the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations continued to support the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals returned from conflict zones in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. That support included implementing specialized rehabilitation programmes, in collaboration with local governments and civil society organizations. Supporting victims of Da'esh, including those affected by sexual and gender-based violence, remained a priority for the

United Nations. In order to contribute to those efforts, in April, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) published a report on civil society perspectives on advancing accountability for such crimes in 16 Member States in regions affected by terrorism. That work emphasized the need for Member States to adopt a survivor-centred approach and insist on justice for all victims and survivors.

In parallel, the United Nations has highlighted challenges and opportunities for Member States to improve law enforcement and border management approaches to countering terrorism. In May, CTED published two trend alerts on counter-terrorism and border management in Africa, highlighting the need for an integrated approach to border security, involving local communities and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism.

The United Nations continued to promote accountability for terrorism through the dissemination of good practices. Despite the increasingly dire situation in West Africa and the Sahel, CTED has observed some good practices in addressing those challenges, practices that can be shared by other Member States in the region and conflict-affected areas around the world. In Nigeria and Benin, for example, CTED and other United Nations agencies have worked with authorities that are addressing violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Both Member States are implementing comprehensive prevention plans, with a focus on development and the inclusion of civil society, women and youth groups and religious leaders. In June, the Counter-Terrorism Committee convened to examine the criminalization and codification of terrorist offences in accordance with Security Council resolutions. The meeting highlighted good practices in defining terrorism offences with full respect for the principle of legality, so as to limit the potential for the misuse of legislation to undermine human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United Nations also continued to work with Member States to counter the financing of terrorism. In that regard, CTED further enhanced its cooperation with its Global Counter-Terrorism Research Network. In May, CTED invited the President of the Financial Action Task Force to the Counter-Terrorism Committee to discuss the implementation of international standards against the financing of terrorism.

The United Nations has also been actively involved in initiatives aimed at transitional rehabilitation and justice and improving social cohesion.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm CTED's commitment to working closely with Member States, international, regional and subregional organizations, civil society and the private sector. To that end, we believe that a "One United Nations" approach is crucial in our common endeavours to effectively combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The President: I thank Ms. Gherman for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for the joint preparation of the nineteenth report on the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (S/2024/583) and for their briefings.

The United States shares the Secretary-General's concern regarding the ability of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) to conduct attacks outside of Afghanistan, as we saw with the horrific terrorist attacks in Kerman on 3 January and Moscow on 22 March, which resulted in hundreds of deaths. The Taliban has made efforts to counter ISIL-K, and it is critical that it adheres to its counter-terrorism commitments.

Similarly, we remain particularly focused on the terrorism threat across Africa outlined in the Secretary-General's report. We share his concern about developments in West Africa and the Sahel, as well as in Central and Southern Africa, where the situation is fragile with the prospect of greater instability. We continue to provide our African partners with essential assistance in degrading the capabilities of and countering the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and Al-Qaida affiliates, in a manner that is consistent with international law. Capable law enforcement and broader security service responses are vital to preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. In that vein, the United States welcomed the adoption of resolution 2734 (2024), which extended the mandate of the United Nations sanctions regime under resolution 1267 (1999). We welcome the Security Council's recognition that sexual and gender-based violence is a strategy that terrorists use to further their nefarious aims, which was recognized in resolution 2734 (2024) as potential grounds for sanctions listings.

Promoting accountability for conflict-related sexual violence is a priority for the United States. Pursuant to the Presidential Memorandum on Promoting Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, in December 2023, the United States issued sanctions against four leaders from the ISIS affiliate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who killed, maimed and committed sexual violence against women and girls. Resolution 2734 (2024) is a critical step forward for the global campaign to end gender-based violence. We encourage the Security Council and Member States to nominate individuals, including terrorist operatives and facilitators, to be sanctioned for committing or enabling those types of offences. We encourage Member States in need of assistance to avail themselves of sanctions and other tools and to play an active role in updating and implementing 1267 (1999) sanctions to counter ISIS and Al-Qaida.

The United States continues to prioritize the repatriation of detained non-Syrian ISIS fighters and displaced ISIS-associated family members, because the return of those individuals to their communities of origin is integral to securing the enduring defeat of ISIS. The United States therefore welcomes the efforts of Member States that have repatriated their nationals, especially Iraq. Over the past three years, nearly 11,000 displaced individuals have been repatriated, including more than 5,000 in the past 12 months. That trend reflects a general increase in the willingness of countries of origin to make the difficult but necessary decisions to repatriate their nationals from the region. Still, the situation in the displaced persons camps of Al-Hol and Al-Roj in Syria constitutes an urgent humanitarian, human rights and security challenge. More than 43,000 people reside in those camps, the majority of whom are children. Countries of origin must do more and more quickly to repatriate their nationals from north-east Syria.

The United States recognizes the importance of partnerships with civil society across the work of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. The inclusion of civil society, particularly local women leaders, is essential in ensuring that Member States and the United Nations system are accounting for all voices and perspectives. As called for in resolution 2734 (2024), the United States looks forward to continued Secretary-General reporting that highlights the impact of United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.

The Secretary-General's report correctly recognizes that the fight against terrorism requires comprehensive efforts beyond security-centred approaches. The international community must continue to invest in whole-of-society approaches that respect human rights and the rule of law in order to effectively prevent and counter the spread of ISIS and other terrorist groups.

Ms. Jambert-Gray (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their briefings. I also thank the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team for its work on the report (S/2024/583).

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the rising threat from Da'esh and its affiliates. While Da'esh has been unable to resurge territorially, it continues to propagate its poisonous ideology globally. Its branches present an acute threat to at-risk communities, while its propaganda seeks to exploit global events to inspire terrorist violence across the world. The increasing threat from Da'esh's continued focus on Africa, including attacks from Da'esh affiliates Islamic State West Africa Province and Islamic State — Sahel Province in West Africa and the Sahel, threatens regional stability. And as the Secretary-General's report notes, its activities in the region inflict grave violations on children and, in particular girls. The Security Council's recent decision to include sexual and gender-based violence as a criterion for listing under the regime pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) sends a strong message that those crimes should not go unpunished.

The development of African-led initiatives such as the Abuja process are a crucial response. Working closely with regional economic communities and with the support of United Nations entities, the African Union plays a central role in those efforts. The Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa for whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approaches to tackling terrorism was a positive step forward, and we stand ready to support the development of national action plans. It is vital that those collective approaches work to address the underlying drivers of terrorism, including reducing corruption, improving governance and ensuring respect for the rule of law.

The threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (IS-KP) is increasing, and in recent months we have seen abhorrent attacks by the group

on civilians in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Russia and Türkiye. That emphasizes the need for us to tackle IS-KP collectively as the international community and to take a creative approach to understand how it operates, starve its resources and tackle its propaganda. As part of that effort, the United Kingdom launched the IS-KP diplomatic grouping in May 2023 to focus on the increasing threat with regional partners. The grouping convened most recently in Doha last month to share expertise and drive action on countering IS-KP finance, travel and propaganda.

Attacks on military bases in Iraq are increasing tensions across the Middle East, perpetuating instability and threatening Iraq's and the coalition's collective ability to counter Da'esh. De-escalation should be a collective priority, and we call for continued work with partners to suppress the threat.

As we mark 10 years since Da'esh perpetrated genocide against the Yazidi people, we cannot lose focus in the fight against Da'esh as it spreads to new theatres.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their briefings. I also thank the Monitoring Team for its work on the reports.

Japan remains deeply concerned by the fact that terrorism continues to be a serious threat to international peace and security, despite efforts by Member States and United Nations entities. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan is reported to have been responsible for a series of high-profile attacks and is now seen not as a potential threat but a manifest one that threatens the entire globe. We are also alarmed by reports that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and their affiliates are exploiting new and emerging technologies. The increasing use of anonymity-enhancing cryptocurrencies, also known as privacy coins, is concerning. The exploitation of 3D printing to manufacture weapons and uncrewed aerial systems can be a serious loophole in arms embargoes.

I commend your leadership, Mr. President, in raising awareness about West Africa and the Sahel today. Unfortunately, the region continues to be one of the major centres of terrorism and violent extremism. According to the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, both the number of incidents of terrorism and their fatalities have been significantly increasing.

Let me highlight the following three points.

First, we must address conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism with a long-term and comprehensive approach. A security-centred approach alone is insufficient to counter the threat, which has not risen in isolation. Terrorists and violent extremists are exploiting societal fragility caused by the multifaceted challenges the region faces, such as political instability, poverty and the devastating effects of climate change. Therefore, Japan reiterates the importance of adopting a holistic approach, utilizing a human security lens and promoting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Secondly, people must be at the centre of all efforts, especially those who are most affected by adversity, such as women, youth and minorities. Human dignity must be respected in all circumstances. Neglecting gender considerations can weaken counter-terrorism efforts and potentially exacerbate the conditions that lead to terrorism and violent extremism. Therefore, it is crucial to address sexual and gender-based violence, which is utilized by terrorists for strategic purposes. In that regard, Japan believes the adoption of resolution 2734 (2024) was an important milestone. We also note that the sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) is a practical tool at the Council's disposal, and it is our responsibility to utilize it effectively.

Thirdly, a transnational perspective is essential, as many challenges — including terrorism, violent extremism and climate change — know no borders. The international community should incorporate efforts by the entire United Nations system, as well as international financial institutions, regional and subregional organizations and civil society. In that regard, Japan congratulates the successful holding of the high-level African counter-terrorism meeting in Abuja this April.

In conclusion, I wish to say one more thing. Let us not forget the sexual violence perpetrated by ISIL against the Yazidi community 10 years ago. Those who committed such acts must be held accountable. We should not allow the same tragedy to happen anywhere, in any region in the world.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I extend my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their informative briefings today.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the continuing threat of terrorism and violent extremism across the globe and, in particular, in West Africa, which has led to the Sahel becoming the world's epicentre of terrorism. Today I would like to make three points.

First, efforts should be made to build the capacity of States in the Sahel region to enhance border stability. As highlighted in the African Union's 2020 border governance strategy, terrorists can exploit a lack of governance in border areas, which exacerbates various security problems beyond such boundaries. A good example of such a capacity-building project includes the Countering Terrorism in Travel and Transport initiative under the United Nations Joint Appeal for Counter-Terrorism in Africa, to which the Republic of Korea contributed financially this year. That programme aims at strengthening capacities to identify and prevent the movement of terrorists and organized criminal groups across borders. We look forward to seeing positive outcomes from that vital initiative.

Secondly, all countries concerned in the region should strengthen their cooperation and coordination to counter terrorism, given the presence of Da'esh affiliates in the region and in the wake of recent regional realignments. In particular, the dissolution of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger from the Economic Community of West African States led to a lack of coordinated regional responses, thereby increasing the risk of continued expansion of terrorist groups across West Africa and the Sahel. In that context, we strongly support African-led initiatives to counter terrorism, including through the Accra initiative, focused on regional cooperation and collective action. We also firmly back the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and the Counter-Terrorism Committee to enhance regional cooperation to combat terrorism.

Thirdly, we appeal to the international community to promote the participation of local stakeholders, including women and youth, in designing tailored strategies to prevent violent extremism based on unique realities and needs on the ground. For instance, in Mauritania, local women religious guides and community leaders known as *mourchidates* were trained extensively, with United Nations support, and played an active role in preventing violent extremism within their local communities. Their vast knowledge

of Islam and their roles as community leaders helped them to deconstruct the radical rhetoric of extremist groups using religious arguments. As such, we urge all relevant actors, including Governments, civil society and United Nations agencies, to pay heed to the lessons learned and actively engage local stakeholders in initiatives to prevent violent extremism.

Today's briefing shows that the underlying causes of terrorism in the region are complex and require a holistic, whole-of-society approach in response. The Republic of Korea remains committed to supporting counter-terrorism efforts in Africa, as emphasized in the joint declaration of the 2024 Korea-Africa Summit.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their briefings. I would like to take this opportunity to commend both of them as well as the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) of the Security Council for their work.

At present, terrorism continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. The threat posed by the Islamic State, Al-Qaida and its affiliated terrorist organizations continues unabated, and terrorist activities are intertwined with ethnic conflicts and regional disputes. Since the beginning of this year, there have been frequent terrorist attacks, from Europe and Asia to Africa, resulting in massive casualties. As the new round of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to escalate, its spillover effects are constantly emerging, leading to a surge in hate crimes and an increased risk of terrorist attacks in many countries. Those developments are deeply concerning and disturbing.

In the face of the complex and grim counter-terrorism landscape, the international community must strengthen solidarity, intensify cooperation and tackle challenges together. I would like to make three points.

First, it is necessary to build international consensus and optimize synergies. Unity and cooperation are the only powerful weapon in the fight against terrorism. Counter-terrorism should not become a tool for rivalry among major Powers, a bargaining chip in geopolitics or a pretext for interfering in other countries' internal affairs. All countries should uphold the concept of common security, abandon ideological bias, eradicate double standards or selectivity in counter-terrorism efforts and effectively respect and protect the security

of each and every country. We must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as our founding principle, uphold and practice true multilateralism, make effective use of the central coordinating role of the United Nations in international counter-terrorism efforts, fully implement Council and General Assembly resolutions on counter-terrorism and the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy and jointly combat all terrorist organizations and individuals listed by the Council.

States should step up cooperation at national, regional, and global levels, actively advance the collective counter-terrorism mechanism and intensify counter-terrorism cooperation efforts in the areas of early warning, financing, travel restrictions, border control and intelligence exchange. Meanwhile, States should also conduct in-depth research into, and actively address the impact of, emerging technologies on the international fight against terrorism, deepen policy dialogue and pragmatic cooperation and jointly tackle new threats and challenges in the area of counter-terrorism.

Secondly, it is necessary to identify the priorities of counter-terrorism efforts and optimize the allocation of resources. The Secretary-General's report (S/2024/583) highlights that there is an increased risk of the resurgence of the Islamic State in the Middle East, about which the international community should stay highly vigilant, especially in order to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a hub for terrorist organizations. Africa has long been at the forefront of international counter-terrorism efforts, with the situation in West Africa and the Sahel region being particularly grave. The United Nations and the international community should, on the basis of the counter-terrorism needs of the countries concerned, further increase allocated resources to help strengthen the legislative, judicial and law enforcement capabilities of the countries concerned and enhance their comprehensive counter-terrorism and deradicalization capabilities.

Thirdly, it is necessary to tackle both the symptoms and the root causes of terrorism. It has been proved many times that terrorism cannot be completely eliminated purely through military means. Only by taking a holistic view, focusing on the long-term and on the root causes and taking a multifaceted approach in the economic, political, social, cultural and religious fields, can we eliminate the root causes and ultimately achieve victory in the fight against terrorism.

One of the main reasons that people in the Sahel region join violent extremist organizations is poverty, unemployment, and the lack of an alternative way of making a living, which is quite common in terrorist-prone regions of Africa and the world at large. In countering terrorism, countries of the region should focus on eradicating poverty and improving education, employment and the economy and should further explore a development path in line with their national conditions. The international community should increase development assistance, support and help the countries concerned to resolve their debt and financing problems and enhance their capabilities for sustainable social and economic development.

It is essential to promote a political settlement of regional conflicts and hotspot issues, improve the humanitarian situation in conflict areas and prevent terrorist forces from taking advantage of the chaos. In that connection, I would like to make a special appeal to the international community to make concerted efforts to promote a ceasefire in Gaza as soon as possible, to ease tensions in the region as soon as possible and to spare no effort in preventing further escalation of the conflict and confrontations, which could lead to even greater catastrophe.

China has always attached great importance to, and actively participated in, international counter-terrorism cooperation, and has long been helping developing countries, African countries in particular, with counter-terrorism capacity-building through bilateral and multilateral means. Through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund, we have supported UNOCT and CTED in their cooperation projects in Nigeria, Mozambique, Somalia and Djibouti, while helping them tackle violent extremism and terrorism and enhancing their law enforcement and counter-terrorism capabilities. In the face of the new situation and new challenges, China will continue to work along with all parties to uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable vision of security, with a view to making ongoing contributions to effectively addressing the threat of global terrorism and creating a world of lasting peace and universal security.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Vladimir Voronkov and Natalia Gherman for their briefings on the activities of the Office on Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate in assisting States to combat the

terrorist threat. We greatly appreciate their work in that crucial area and will continue to fully support it.

We have reviewed the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2024/583) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The information about the persistently high threat level and the evolving challenges is a wake-up call for us and a reminder that terrorism can be tackled only through our joint efforts. However, it is unfortunate that, against that backdrop, some States are politicizing the counter-terrorism agenda. Double standards in the fight against terrorism and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States on the pretext of counter-terrorism are now the calling card of Western countries, which do not balk at even using international terrorist organizations for their own geopolitical goals. Tame terrorists destabilize developing countries. And supposedly in order to combat them, the West shifts to the tried-and-tested tactic of destroying States to plunder their natural and human resources. We will illustrate that thesis with some concrete examples, all substantiated by information contained in the Secretary-General's report.

Let us begin with the situation in Syria, where ISIL is stepping up terrorist activity and, meanwhile, terrorists are thriving in the regions illegally seized and occupied by the United States military. United States military bases established in Syria through the West's aggression against that country are being used, among other activities, to pump and smuggle out — essentially to steal — Syrian oil. A real terrorist ghetto has developed in those areas, with camps holding people affiliated with ISIL and members of their families. The situation there is a sheer humanitarian and food crisis.

Lofty words by Western colleagues who love to hold forth about respecting human rights when taking counter-terrorism measures belie, as always, their actual deeds. Most Western States are, despite the numerous calls in the Secretary-General's reports, still refusing to repatriate their citizens held in the camps. European Union countries have clearly failed in that task and are not fulfilling their obligations to repatriate, prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters and their family members.

Particular attention should be paid to the activities of the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K); we warned about its growing capabilities long ago, at a time when NATO and United States forces were still in Afghanistan.

However, that information was deliberately ignored and the growth and influence of the group was downplayed. The reports significantly underestimated the number of fighters in the Afghan wing of ISIL, the extent of the group's proliferation and its ties in the region. As a result, the international community did not pay due attention to combating that entity and it continued to grow unchecked. ISIL-K is now a threat not only to Afghanistan and neighbouring region, but also to Europe.

Incidentally, we would caution against attempts to ascribe the terrorist attack of 22 March on Crocus City Hall, near Moscow, exclusively to ISIL and ISIL-K before the official investigation is concluded. If Council members have evidence of that, we urge them to share it with the Russian specialized bodies tasked with investigating. At times, we are under the impression that some know more about that terrorist act than those who are investigating it.

No less troubling is the situation of terrorist activity in Africa. The Secretary-General's report highlights that Africa remains the focus terrorist groups' activities. In the report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities (see S/2024/556), which is included as annex to the report of the Secretary-General, details are provided on the merger of terrorist activities in the region. It states that the ongoing takeover of territory by both ISIL-affiliated groups and the listed group Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) in the Sahel continues to claim many victims and to affect regional security and stability.

The report also contains information about the group's intention to reach non-aggression agreements with the Cadre stratégique permanent pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement in order to focus its efforts solely on the Malian armed forces and their auxiliaries that support the forces in combating terrorism in the north of the country. There is no longer any doubt that there is cooperation between those groups. They share a territory where they operate. The fact that those groups are in close coordination with each other is also evidenced by the transfer of a cadre from the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad, which is integrated into the Cadre stratégique permanent pour la paix, la sécurité et le développement, along with several dozen fighters, to JNIM. That fact is also reflected in the most recent report of the Monitoring Team.

What is compounding the situation and furthering the existing threats is the absolute unwillingness of the countries concerned to at least try to camouflage their support for international terrorist organizations. States in the region have repeatedly provided information about the systematic financing and training of fighters of those groups by France. Moreover, JNIM was provided with intelligence information, weapons and ammunition.

There have been egregious cases of certain States openly bragging about their support for international terrorist organizations in Africa. Worth mentioning here is the direct statement by the spokesperson for the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, Mr. Yusov, and Ukraine's Ambassador to Senegal, Mr. Pyvovarov, that their country provided support to those who attacked the Malian armed forces on the border with Algeria in the region of Tin Zaouatène on 25 and 27 July. I would like to stress that the attack was carried out, inter alia, by a group affiliated with Al-Qaida. The Sahel States were swift to react. The statement by the Malian Government on that was issued as an official document of the Security Council dated 5 August. That was followed by official statements by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso and the representative of the Niger. African States have strongly condemned Ukraine's support for international terrorism on their continent and its blatant interference in their internal affairs leading to destabilization in the region. Consequently, Mali and the Niger are known to have severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine.

Even the Western press has published materials confirming that the terrorist groups operating in Mali have been trained to operate drones and handle explosives under the guidance of Ukrainian special services both on the territory of Ukraine and on the territory of Mali in the regions controlled by terrorists.

We know first-hand about the terrorist essence of the Kyiv regime. On many occasions, the Russian delegation has provided specific, factual information about the true face of the Kyiv regime, cherished by the West. Acting at the behest of, under the supervision of and in close cooperation with its NATO masters, that regime has not hesitated to use blatantly terrorist methods. With the terrorist attack by Ukrainian fighters on the Kursk region, carried out with weapons supplied by the West, we can now see Ukraine's true face. There is ample evidence on the Internet of nationalists purposefully shooting unarmed civilians

and destroying civilian objects. They are acting just as their Nazi German predecessors did 80 years ago, whom they now idolize. And they will meet the same end. Far from criticizing their terrorist actions, the Western patrons of Zelenskyy's junta have essentially justified them. That is indeed a merger of terrorists.

The information we provided was confirmed by representatives of African States and European law enforcement agencies, for example, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, about the weapons supplied by Western countries to Ukraine ending up in the hands of criminal and terrorist groups in various regions of the world has been confirmed. We urge the United Nations specialized experts not to ignore that data now, but to carefully study it and assess the role of Western special services and their Ukrainian disciples in the aiding and abetting of such terrorist attacks.

Furthermore, I would like to recall that the current sanctions regime of resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) provides for the imposition of sanctions on any individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida. In order to combat terrorism, we believe it is important to use that well-established mechanism to bring to justice those who actively assist terrorists and those who far from hiding those links actively advertise them. Otherwise, all the buzzwords and bombastic rhetoric about the need to fight international terrorism will ring hollow.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Executive Director Natalia Gherman for their briefings.

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. That threat continues to evolve and exploit the vulnerabilities created by conflict, political and humanitarian crises and climate change.

The terrorist threat is at an alarming level in West Africa and the Sahel. Al-Qaida remains particularly strong there, through its Sahelian affiliate Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, as does Da'esh, which is stepping up its operations and continuing to expand its networks. The activities of those groups jeopardize the safety of civilians, aggravate the instability of the region and compromise the development prospects.

I am not forgetting the other regions of the world, where the terrorist threat remains high, notably in Central Asia, where the growth of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan represents a major security challenge.

Terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, also continue to use the Internet and social networks to increase the impact of their attacks, spread propaganda based on misinformation and to recruit.

Only global and coordinated action by the international community can provide an effective and lasting response to the scourge of terrorism.

The use of force may be necessary to counter terrorist groups. France, whose soldiers have fought to counter terrorism, commends the action of African soldiers engaged on the continent in regional initiatives to combat terrorism. France and the European Union continue to support those efforts, in particular by backing the Multinational Joint Task Force, created by the Lake Chad basin States to combat the expansion of Boko Haram and now Da'esh. But military solutions alone will not be enough. Our efforts to combat terrorism must take a holistic approach, addressing all the causes of that threat. At the heart of that approach must be the preservation of fundamental rights and freedoms, the strengthening of governance structures and the rule of law, the resilience of the most vulnerable communities and the fight against disinformation and the spread of extremist content.

We must develop partnerships based on dialogue, aimed at meeting the needs expressed by States and populations affected by terrorism. To that end, Côte d'Ivoire and France have established the International Academy for the Fight Against Terrorism, aimed at strengthening the capabilities of countries of the region, not only in terms of operations, but also in threat analysis and prosecution.

The so-called security solutions proposed by certain private military companies run counter to that integrated approach, which respects both partners and populations. Their practices aggravate instability and fuel terrorism through their human rights violations.

On this occasion, I cannot respond to some unfounded accusations by the Russian Federation. However, I will just recall that some solutions proposed by the Russian Federation are not likely to improve the protection of civilians in the Sahel. As for the

accusations concerning Ukraine, they are completely outside the scope of the topic proposed by the presidency for today's discussion. We have already had many opportunities, and we will have more, during the meetings on the illegal aggression of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, to refute the remarks made by my Russian colleague.

Finally, France reiterates its support for the United Nations, which makes an essential contribution to the fight against terrorism. We intend to continue supporting the training and capacity-building actions carried out by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, in conjunction with regional organizations, for the benefit of West African countries.

France reiterates its commitment to the resolutions adopted by the Security Council to combat terrorism in all its aspects, including by drying up its sources of financing. We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 2734 (2024), which renewed the mandate of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and which now makes it possible to take into account sexual and gender-based violence in requests for inclusion on the sanctions list.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their updates and recognize their efforts in preparing the report being considered today (S/2024/583).

Terrorism continues to threaten global peace and security and negatively impact the socioeconomic well-being of States. Guyana condemns terrorism in all its forms and underscores the need to hold all perpetrators accountable.

Regrettably, terrorism is on the increase. According to the 2024 Global Terrorism Index from the Institute for Economics and Peace, deaths from terrorism increased by 22 per cent in 2023, reaching 8,352 deaths — the highest level since 2017. The average number of deaths per terrorist attack has also increased, indicating that attacks have become more deadly.

Factors contributing to this growing threat include unemployment, unmet economic expectations, technological advancements, extremist ideologies, inequalities and marginalization and weak governance. Those factors are further compounded by challenges related to climate change and food insecurity in many areas. In sum, there is a close link between

underdevelopment and terrorism, reinforcing the conviction that there can be no peace without sustainable development and no sustainable development without peace.

Guyana is particularly concerned about the growing recruitment, radicalization and victimization of youths by terrorist groups and the increased involvement of children in terrorist activities. In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384), it was noted that the highest numbers of violations against children in armed conflict involved recruitment, use and abduction — violations that are key to the activities of terrorist groups that use children in their operations. In fact, the report confirms that children were detained for actual or alleged association with armed groups, including those designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations.

Guyana remains concerned about the threat posed by Da'esh to Africa, especially in West Africa and the Sahel. We are particularly alarmed at the high number of internally displaced persons, the complex attacks against security forces, the incidents of harassment and extortion, as well as the number of mass atrocities against civilians in West Africa and the Sahel. The significant impact of Da'esh activities on children in the central Sahel is concerning. We note, for example, that the terrorist group Islamic State West Africa Province is abducting, recruiting and sexually violating children. Guyana condemns these actions in the strongest terms and calls for all perpetrators to be held accountable. Children are among the most vulnerable groups, and we must do all we can to protect them. The general deterioration in the protection of civilians and the ongoing violations of human rights must also cease.

Guyana shares the Secretary-General's concern about the risk posed by the continued expansion of terrorist groups for increasing instability across West Africa and the Sahel. We therefore welcome the launch of the Abuja process in April to coordinate and mobilize resources for counter-terrorism in the African region. It is important for the international community to fully support that process.

We also acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies in countering the threat posed by Da'esh by enhancing capacities in border management and security and strengthening cooperation between international partners and African Member States, among other areas.

To effectively counter the threat of terrorism, including in West Africa and the Sahel region, we must target its root causes. Preventive measures should therefore be geared towards addressing structural poverty and inequality, economic disparities and lack of education, among others. We must also examine the incidence of unconstitutional change in Government since this impacts the region's stability and the strength of its democracy. The international community must also continue to support the counter-terrorism initiatives of regional bodies, including the Economic Community of West African States. There must be deliberate strategies for active and continuous collaboration between Government stakeholders and local communities for combating terrorism. Youth participation in such efforts is pivotal.

Regional and international cooperation are also key to the effectiveness of these preventive measures, including in the areas of capacity-building for law enforcement and judiciary personnel, enhancing border security, sharing of intelligence and disruption of terrorist financing.

As young people are the ones most disproportionately affected by terrorist activities, their increased representation in the decision-making processes for counter-terrorism laws and policies should be at the centre of preventive measures. Investment in the education and empowerment of young people must be prioritized. They must also have adequate opportunities for meaningful employment in order to prevent them from being targets for recruitment by terrorist groups.

Guyana emphasizes the obligation of Member States to take adequate steps to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts and to refrain from providing support to entities or persons involved in such acts.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Guyana's commitment to working with the international community to address the challenges posed by terrorism in a manner consistent with international law, international human rights law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their informative briefings. We also thank the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Reports on the threat posed by Da'esh consistently contain the observation that despite sustained and relatively successful counter-terrorism efforts, terrorist groups are showing adaptability and resilience. Slovenia is concerned about the reported trends related to the use, exploitation and misuse of new and emerging technologies, such as drones, financing through cryptocurrencies and spreading terrorist narratives through the use of artificial intelligence.

Responses tend to lag. It is therefore all the more important that national and international efforts, including measures adopted by the Council, follow suit and become more flexible. States need to build a robust counter-terrorist structure and greater capacity to fight terrorism on these new fronts. All efforts need to be comprehensive, inclusive and cooperative in order to be effective.

On that note, we welcome the clarification in resolution 2734 (2024), on the Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions regime, that sexual and gender-based violence constitute a form of terrorism and are therefore part of the listing criteria when perpetrated by these groups.

Slovenia shares the concern about the disproportionate impact of the terrorist threat in fragile and conflict-affected environments, particularly in West Africa and the Sahel and welcomes the focus of today's discussion on the region. With the predominant focus on the kinetic counter-terrorism operations in the region, we would like to emphasize the pivotal role of tackling the drivers of terrorism.

Social and economic circumstances, human rights violations and abuses, the effects of climate change and competition for natural resources, as well as intracommunal and intercommunal tensions, all serve as drivers of radicalization that are exploited by terrorists for recruitment and spreading their narratives. These drivers must be addressed through comprehensive, inclusive, human rights-based and gender-responsive efforts, in partnership with civil society and local communities. The most effective way to fight terrorism is from the ground up, starting with building strong, democratic institutions and bolstering the resilience of the local communities.

The United Nations Messenger of Peace Malala Yousafzai said, "with guns you can kill terrorists, with education you can kill terrorism". Education not only enables critical thinking, but also opens up opportunities, the lack of which is one of the

main drivers, particularly for children and youth, to seek alternatives.

Regional and international support and cooperation are essential in those endeavours, as terrorism does not abide and is not restricted by national borders. In that context, we welcome the launch of the Abuja process, which we are confident will lead to increased cooperation. Slovenia advocates effective coordination of the existing counter-terrorism initiatives in the region and preventing the fragmentation of those efforts at the local level.

We recognize that the drawdown of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) and its efforts to categorize and organize the evidence collected before handing it over to the Iraqi authorities. However, in our opinion the end of UNITAD's mandate does not mean that its intended goal, namely, helping to ensure accountability for the members of Da'esh, has been fully realized.

Much attention has been paid to accountability mechanisms in the Middle East. However, because of the shift of Da'esh activity to Africa, notably to West Africa and the Sahel, additional focus is needed to fight impunity and ensure accountability in the region. Perpetrators of terrorist acts, regardless of who or where they are, should be brought to justice.

Accountability is also an essential part of the counter-terrorism efforts. It serves not just to satisfy the States and to signal to perpetrators the unacceptability of their actions, but also, and above all, to show victims of terrorism who have gone through unimaginable trauma that they are heard and hopefully bring them some closure.

Mr. Hamiane (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the briefers for their valuable remarks.

Our meeting today is of paramount importance because, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/583), the threat posed by terrorism to international peace and security remains high. Furthermore, terrorist groups continue to demonstrate resilience and the ability to adapt despite international and regional efforts to combat that scourge.

Since Africa remains the continent most vulnerable to terrorist operations, we are witnessing an expansion of the threat, both in terms of its scale and geographical

scope, to several regions on the African continent. Indeed, West Africa and the Sahel are the regions in Africa most affected by terrorism.

Terrorist groups continue to exploit socioeconomic and political instability and protracted conflicts in conducting their operations, as they provide a fertile breeding ground for the recruitment of new elements by those groups.

The nexus between terrorism and transnational organized crime is increasingly linked, as terrorist groups continue to profit from smuggling, drug trafficking and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The decentralized command structure of terrorist groups has enabled them to expand their activities and control vast swathes of territory.

While we recognize the United Nations role in supporting Member States in combating terrorism, including through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, we must strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. Indeed, the African Union plays a central role in addressing that scourge. It has the needed capacity to promote cross-border cooperation and intelligence-sharing, including through the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism. Moreover, AFRIPOL plays a key role in preventing and combating transnational organized crime, terrorism and cybercrime. The African Union therefore must be empowered to conduct counter-terrorism operations by providing sustainable, predictable and adequate funding to the African Union to that end.

In his capacity as the African Union Coordinator on the Prevention and Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism, President of Algeria Abdelmadjid Tebboune, reiterated Algeria's steadfast commitment to strengthening joint African action in combating that scourge. To that end, the President recommended measures aimed at further strengthening African Union counter-terrorism capacities, including the following measures: adopting a new continent-wide counter-terrorism plan, which would replace the 2003 plan; operationalizing the African Trust Fund for Counter-Terrorism; establishing a list of African individuals and groups involved in terrorism; and enforcing African arrest warrants.

Recalling Algeria's role as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, allow

me to underscore a number of measures that are an urgent priority.

We must reduce institutional red tape to quickly adapt to the constantly evolving and transforming terrorist threat. We must prioritize flexibility and agility to ensure that our responses are as timely and effective as possible.

We must establish a targeted and effective sanctions regime that strengthens the global counter-terrorism framework to disrupt the activities of terrorist groups.

We must bolster border security capacities in view of the porous and long borders in the Sahel-Saharan region and the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters.

We must curb the sources of terrorist financing, including ransoms and revenues from transnational organized crime, in particular drug trafficking.

We must prevent terrorist groups in the Sahel from acquiring and using small arms and light weapons and uncrewed aerial vehicles systems.

We must prevent and combat the use of improvised explosive devices by terrorist groups, in particular in West Africa.

We must also develop national and regional capacities to combat the criminal use of information and communications technologies and cyberterrorism, in particular in the Sahel region.

We must address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, unemployment, extremism and marginalization.

Finally, we must promote good governance and the rule of law to strengthen local people's trust in their Governments through an approach based on justice, protection, inclusion, education and the provision of social services for all.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their briefings.

We welcome the continued focus on the need to continuously enhance joint efforts in countering the threat of terrorism.

The nineteenth report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/583) highlights with concern the fact that the threat posed to international peace and security by Da'esh remains high, with the group and its affiliates

continuing to demonstrate resilience and adaptability despite sustained counter-terrorism efforts.

Malta is alarmed by the risk of resurgence of Da'esh in the Middle East, by the ability of the Khorasan branch of the Islamic State to project threats outside Afghanistan, as well as by the continuous focus of the activities of Da'esh in Africa. The proliferation of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel continues to require our immediate attention.

We believe that our collective goals in addressing and curbing the threat of terrorism can be achieved through capacity-building efforts aimed at enhancing the capabilities of intelligence authorities, the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and military authorities.

In that regard, we commend important counter-terrorism initiatives of the European Union (EU) in Africa, such as its military training missions in Somalia and Mozambique; EU support for the creation of dedicated gendarmerie counter-terrorism units in the Sahel; the European Peace Facility's support for the efforts of the Lake Chad basin countries and the transregional Multinational Joint Task Force; and the EU's funding of the global facility of the Malta-based International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and the Counter-Terrorism Platform for Human Rights Engagement, which is providing capacity-building activities to a number of African countries.

Malta also supports the proactive use of targeted sanctions to counter the threat of Da'esh and Al-Qaida, as well as their affiliates. In that regard, we welcome the recent renewal of the 1267 sanctions regime through resolution 2734 (2024).

Security-centred approaches to counter terrorism must be accompanied by efforts that are human rights-based, gender-responsive and not in conflict with the humanitarian principles or conduct of principled humanitarian action. In this regard, States must ensure that counter-terrorism laws and practices comply with international human rights standards, that perpetrators are held accountable for human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence linked to terrorism, and that women's participation in decision-making processes related to counter-terrorism and security is continuously promoted.

As the report highlights, women, girls and boys face serious risks of gender-based violence by terrorist groups. Malta is deeply concerned about the report's

references to Islamic State's grave violations against girls, in particular, through abduction, recruitment and sexual violence.

Malta is also alarmed that the situation faced by thousands of individuals, mostly women and children, in camps and other facilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic remains dire. Sustained humanitarian assistance remains key.

We reiterate the importance of preventive approaches within national policy frameworks. Meaningful engagement with youth groups, women-led organizations and civil society fosters community resilience while preventing radicalization. In this regard, a whole-of-society approach that promotes education and literacy skills is a powerful tool in preventing and countering violent extremism. Advancing literacy skills across all populations also ensures the success of numerous global and national strategic communication campaigns aimed at mitigating the scourge of terrorism.

In conclusion, as we approach the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, marked every year on 21 August, we recognize the pivotal role of victims and survivors as agents for peace, and we are reminded of our duty to advance the protection, promotion and respect of the rights of victims of terrorism.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Gherman for their briefings.

Terrorism continues to pose a danger to international stability and security. Its impact transcends borders and affects communities indiscriminately, disrupting the social fabric and undermining the rule of law. In areas where underlying factors have contributed to instability and conflict, terrorism is expanding its presence and influence. Young people are particularly vulnerable to recruitment, while women and girls are subjected to sexual and gender-based violence.

My delegation shares the concern about the threat that Da'esh and its affiliated groups pose to international peace and security. The attacks in Kerman and Moscow demonstrate that no region is immune to this scourge. There is also a growing risk that the operational, financial and logistical autonomy enjoyed by Da'esh-affiliated groups in West Africa and the Sahel will create a zone of increasing instability.

In that context, the trends identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2024/583) are worrisome and call for reflection and action in at least three areas.

First, the transnational and decentralized nature of Da'esh and its affiliated groups calls for a strategy focused on multilateralism, information-sharing and cross-border cooperation. We therefore welcome the holding, in April, of a high-level African counter-terrorism meeting in Abuja. The meeting addressed regional cooperation and institution-building to address the evolving threat of terrorism in Africa, as well as the convening of the third edition of the Marrakesh Platform in June.

Secondly, we know that in order to recruit members and strengthen their capabilities, terrorist groups are increasingly resorting to the use of emerging technologies, new financial instruments and uncrewed aerial systems. The United Nations, through the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with the support of the Financial Action Task Force, must therefore strengthen the capacities of States to address these new challenges, including the links between terrorism and organized crime.

Thirdly, it is undeniable that terrorism cannot be eradicated by security measures alone, and that a comprehensive strategy is needed, instead, in order to eliminate its root causes. We must therefore promote sustainable economic and social development and break the vicious circle in which poverty and exclusion become the breeding ground for violent extremism. Reports issued by the United Nations Development Programme suggest that the hope of finding a job is the main factor driving people in sub-Saharan Africa to join violent extremist groups.

In conclusion, I voice my concern and underline the need to address the humanitarian situation of Da'esh suspects and their families detained in centres in north-eastern Syria.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): Mozambique commends the Sierra Leone presidency for convening this briefing on global counter-terrorism efforts. We thank the briefers for sharing their perspectives on the topic.

The global spread of terrorism is a matter of grave concern as it threatens international peace and security

and undermines global stability and prosperity. We are at a pivotal juncture. Volatility and conflict in regions like the Middle East and parts of Africa, including West Africa and the Sahel region, provide fertile grounds for terrorist groups to escalate their operations.

The persistence of groups, such as Boko Haram, the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara underscores the urgent need for coordinated and comprehensive international counter-terrorism measures and actions. The ability of those terrorist groups to infiltrate ongoing conflicts, utilize emerging technology and merge with criminal networks presents a multifaceted challenge that requires a differentiated and vigorous response.

As the concept note (see S/2024/589) points out, terrorism cannot be eradicated by security measures alone. An effective counter-terrorism strategy must be a multifaceted package of political, economic, judicial and social responses to address the root causes of radicalization.

Mozambique emphasizes a collective, integrated approach to counter-terrorism that upholds the rule of law, human rights and gender inclusion, as rightly outlined in the New Agenda for Peace. We therefore call for the swift implementation of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the African Union declaration of Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government, as well as the outcomes of the April high-level African counter-terrorism meeting in Abuja, Nigeria.

We commend regional organizations' efforts, including those of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. We look forward to leveraging resolution 2719 (2023) to enhance Africa's response capabilities. Those frameworks remain critical tools in our arsenal towards our collective actions.

While acknowledging that preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism require a robust regional and national strategies that are inclusive and uphold the rule of law and human rights, Mozambique remains committed to combating terrorism via a collective and integrated approach through national actions and international cooperation. In is in that context that Mozambique is committed to combating terrorism with the support of its bilateral, regional and international partners. We are also committed to the obligations set forth by the pertinent instruments of the United Nations, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community.

At the national level, Mozambique has ratified Law No. 14/2023, which established the legal framework and measures for the prevention and combat of money laundering and terrorist financing, and has undertaken a series of security, legal, judicial and administrative actions. Mozambique is also implementing the Northern Resilience and Integration Development Programme that is aimed at restoring peace and promoting sustainable development, through a multidisciplinary and integrated approach, which addresses human rights, gender, youth, food security, climate resilience and development. We are mindful that the active participation and collaboration of local communities play a crucial role in preventing radicalization and promoting social cohesion, particularly in the northern provinces affected by armed violence since 2017.

In conclusion, Mozambique reaffirms its commitment to support national, bilateral, subregional, regional and international counter-terrorism efforts. We believe that through united and concerted actions, we can effectively combat the endemic spread of terrorism and pave the way for a more secure and prosperous future for Africa and the world at large. Let us continue to stand together, strengthen our cooperation and uphold our shared values of peace, security and human dignity, by silencing the guns in Africa, our shared vision for a peaceful Africa.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Gherman for their briefings. I would like to express our appreciation for the new format of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/583), which we find conducive to our discussions.

The attacks perpetrated around the world demonstrate that terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The continued expansion of terrorist groups in West Africa and the Sahel is a destabilizing factor for the entire region. Signs of the resurgence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Middle East and the threat emanating from Afghanistan through ISIL-Khorasan and other groups, as well as persistent attacks by Al-Shabaab in Somalia, are also worrisome developments and require our sustained attention.

The global threat posed by terrorism takes many regional and local forms. A one-size-fits-all approach will not deliver the solutions we seek. A better

understanding of each specific context, inclusive and concerted action and a constant review of our efforts are essential to achieve lasting results.

Allow me to emphasize two points in that regard.

First, we must prioritize prevention. Relying solely on strictly security-based approaches is insufficient and could even make the situation worse. Indeed, new grievances may emerge and be exploited by the very actors we seek to defeat. Our efforts must therefore be holistic and coherent, based on international law, in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law. Those are key elements that Switzerland has incorporated in its recently updated national counter-terrorism strategy and its action plan to combat radicalization and violent extremism. We commend the fact that sexual and gender-based violence have been added as listing criteria under the sanctions regime pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015).

Secondly, all our efforts must be targeted, effective and measurable. We welcome the President's suggestion to examine more closely the situation in West Africa and the Sahel. The Counter-Terrorism Committee should step up its engagement with the States of the region. In that way, it could contribute to a better understanding of the most recent developments and to ensure that support from the international community is closely aligned with the needs on the ground. Furthermore, we must ensure that we are able to measure the success of the United Nations engagement to recalibrate efforts and tailor them to needs to achieve the best possible results. In that regard, we must prioritize the implementation of operative paragraph 96 of the eighth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, namely, the development of a results framework. That will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Strategy's implementation.

It is essential that we constantly improve our understanding of the various factors leading to violent extremism and terrorism, including the most recent observations on the effects of climate change and technological innovation. That requires strong engagement with the States concerned, but also sustainable partnerships with stakeholders such as civil society, local actors directly affected and involved and the private sector. We have built up solid networks over the past few decades. Let us continue to develop them

and use them to better understand today the challenges of tomorrow in order to overcome them successfully.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Sierra Leone.

Let me thank our briefers, Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Ms. Natalia Gherman, for their invaluable insights on the evolving threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and associated individuals and groups. We acknowledge the important work by United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities in addressing those threats and attacks, their impact and the underlying conditions conducive to its entrenchment and spread. I also thank Council members for their additional focus on the Sahel and West Africa region and the call for the most urgent support for the countries in the region.

Sierra Leone welcomes the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security (S/2024/583) and recalls the commitment of the Council in adopting resolutions 1373 (2001), 1377 (2001) and 2253 (2015), affirming that a sustained, comprehensive approach with active participation and collaboration by States and organizations is essential to combating the scourge of international terrorism.

While sanction regimes continue to serve as an effective tool in the fight against terrorism, Sierra Leone notes further that the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism; and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) play crucial and complementary roles. And Sierra Leone reiterates its support to expedite the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We call for renewed commitment and innovative thinking to move the working group forward and deliver on our collective mandate to further develop the convention's legal framework.

Terrorist organizations thrive in environments of social exclusion, inequality and the relegation of human rights. These groups deliberately seek out deeply disillusioned, marginalized and desperate people as

fertile grounds to propagate their so-called ideologies. Environments with limited opportunities for education and economic empowerment, which deprive a significant portion of the population, like young people, of a dignified life, are particularly susceptible to instability, with women and girls usually affected the most. It is an unfortunate reality that these socioeconomic deficiencies are further exacerbated by the negative effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Over the past years, the global terrorist threat has evolved, with increased attacks by Da'esh, its affiliates and its supporters. The branches and affiliates of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham have expanded their influence beyond Iraq and Syria, encompassing a wider population consisting mainly of youth, and are now reaching across the globe to the central Sahel and West Africa region. This new epicentre of terrorism accounts for almost 50 per cent of all deaths from terror acts globally.

We highlight the dire security situation in the central Sahel and West Africa region and wish to share the following reflections.

First, addressing the root causes of terrorism is key to preventing further entrenchment and spread. Despite continuing to face leadership attrition and financial setbacks, Da'esh and its affiliates have retained their capacity to conduct terrorist attacks and project a threat beyond their areas of operations through cells and facilitation networks, including in north-west Nigeria, through the Islamic State West Africa Province and support for Islamic State in the Greater Sahara. Addressing the root causes of terrorism therefore will be critical to prevent their further entrenchment and spread.

Secondly, we share the Secretary-General's concern that the continued expansion of terrorist groups could result in an expanding area of instability across West Africa and the Sahel, especially if Da'esh affiliates are allowed to enjoy greater operational, financial and logistical autonomy. The magnitude and complexity of the problem are alarming and require concerted action. In that regard, the launch of the Abuja process, which aims to develop a comprehensive African-led and -owned strategy to address the growing threat of terrorism on the continent, represents a positive development. A coordinated approach to this transnational threat cannot be overemphasized.

Thirdly, we note with grave concern from the report that the situation in West Africa and the Sahel has not changed since the previous report (S/2024/117) and that the Furqan Office in the region has grown in importance and capability. Additionally, we have serious concerns regarding the impact of Da'esh operations on children in the Central Sahel region, with a constant deterioration in the protection of civilians and frequent violations of human rights affecting people and property.

Recalling the Arria Formula meeting organized by Sierra Leone and co-sponsored by Algeria, Guyana and Mozambique, three members of the A3+, on combating the rise of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel, we reiterate our call for a scaled-up comprehensive response to tackle the scourge of terrorism and to mitigate threat multipliers such as growing food insecurity, climate change-induced hardship, health and education concerns and the alarming mass forcible displacement of people in the region.

Strengthening security and regulatory frameworks and accountability mechanisms for a coordinated response at the national, regional and international levels is of paramount importance. In our experience, State institutions can be capacitated to effectively deter, investigate and prosecute terrorist activity. In Sierra Leone, through recent legislation to counter money laundering, terrorism financing and funding for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as to bolster our central intelligence and security agency and cybersecurity initiatives, we have established a network of institutions to prevent and hold responsible actors, supporters and financiers of terrorist activity — internally and across borders.

In addition to national efforts, regional and international cooperation is critical for addressing terrorism. Terrorist groups often exploit porous borders, weak border controls and security vulnerabilities for their illegal cross-border trafficking of weapons, drugs and people. Sierra Leone particularly welcomes efforts to strengthen regional cooperation and institution-building in the West Africa and Sahel region, including the high-level African counter-terrorism meeting in Abuja, with support from the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, held in April, which launched the Abuja process for mobilizing resources.

We commend the work of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism in providing technical

assistance to a number of States and facilitating regional cooperation. We urge continued logistical, financial, technical and technological support for regional initiatives, particularly in the implementation of the decisions in the communiqué of the sixty-fifth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, held on 7 July, to fully operationalize the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Accra Initiative and the Lake Chad basin in response to the rapidly evolving and sophisticated activities of terrorist groups and criminal organizations in West Africa and the Sahel.

Preventing terrorists from accessing financial resources is also crucial to successfully sustaining gains in counter-terrorism. We note the efforts of the Financial Action Task Force and call for enhanced United Nations coordination with the Task Force in identifying and remedying weaknesses in anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks.

We call on all Member States to reaffirm their collective responsibility and commitment to zero tolerance of terrorism. It is crucial that they all fulfil their obligations under international counter-terrorism instruments and conventions. This collective responsibility must transcend political interests, and external influence must be leveraged in a positive and constructive manner. We must not countenance double standards, and terrorists should not be seen through the lens of a specific religion, region or ethnicity.

When addressing these threats, it is essential that the credibility of the multilateral system is maintained and that we improve and uphold the working methods of the committees dealing with sanctions and counter-terrorism so as to achieve greater transparency and accountability in their work. Enlisting and delisting individuals and entities under the United Nations sanctions regimes must be done objectively, transcending political or religious reasons. Proposals in that regard merit due examination before circulation so as not to erode our collective credibility.

Let me conclude with a final thought on this year's Summit of the Future, which provides an opportunity to reinvigorate multilateralism in critical areas, including threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. Improving our global response to terrorism must play a central role in the New Agenda for Peace, uniting stakeholders from the security, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors in order to achieve a future without terrorism. As threats to international peace and security continue to evolve, the Security Council too must evolve in its approach to ensure the collective security mandate in order to guarantee that prompt and effective action is fully realized.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I apologize for taking the floor once again, but I need to respond to some remarks made earlier by the representative of the Russian Federation, who once again tried to politicize the global effort to eradicate terrorism.

The growing threat of terrorism, especially in the Middle East, is something that we can tackle effectively only as a united global community. In that vein, I call on Russia to use its real and growing influence with terrorist groups — such as Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthis — and with Iran, the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism, to end their terrorist attacks, which threaten to ignite a greater war in the region.

I have one last point to make in response to comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation about the United States presence in Syria. As we have said many times and I will say once more — United States forces are in Syria only to fight and combat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.