

Mr. Bertoux (France) (spoke in French):

At the outset, let me thank you, Sir, for organizing this open debate, and to endorse, in advance, the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Today I would like to focus on three main themes that should, from my country's viewpoint, be priorities for the international community and our Organization.

The first is violent extremism, which feeds the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. I would like to begin by thanking the United Nations and Switzerland for having organized a high-level conference on this subject in Geneva on 7 and 8 April. It produced fruitful exchanges, as the Secretary-General just highlighted.

Just who are these individuals who go to Syria and Iraq to join the ranks of jihadist groups, foremost among them Da'esh? They are young people, with varied profiles — men, women, converts, minors, and so on, from more than 100 countries. In France, this phenomenon has reached extremely alarming proportions, with 600 individuals present in the area, including 217 women and 18 minors. To adapt to this new face of the threat, we have taken some important steps.

In April 2014, the French Government adopted a plan to combat terrorist networks and violent radicalization. An interministerial committee is responsible for coordinating the strategy to prevent and treat radicalization. The Government has also established a territorial mechanism to monitor persons that have been reported and to assist families in order to respond appropriately to each case. Finally, the law of 13 November 2014 introduced into our law several major innovations. It instituted a ban on leaving the territory and a prohibition on entry into and residence in national territory for foreigners not residing in France that constitute a danger to national security.

At the international level, it is essential that the United Nations remain committed to stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and to preventing violent extremism. The full implementation of resolution 2178 (2014) and following up the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism are the two primary axes of that action. The Secretary-General's Plan in particular aims to unite and better coordinate efforts that we all undertake, Member States and United Nations, at the national, regional and international levels to prevent radicalization, which is an essential aspect of the fight against terrorism. That Plan makes concrete the strategic role of guidance and coordination that the United Nations should play in this area.

I take the opportunity provided by this debate to announce that in September, France will co-organize with UNESCO a seminar in Paris on the prevention of violent extremism through education. Preventing the radicalization of youth will also be one of the topics discussed at the sixteenth Summit of la Francophonie, in Madagascar in November 2016.

The second priority for us all is the fight against terrorist financing and the full implementation of resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). The funding of Da'esh was greatly affected by the strikes of the coalition, forcing the group to decrease the salary that it pays its fighters. However, we will manage to drain the finances of that organization only through increased international mobilization. We call on all our partners to implement the United Nations resolutions and to adopt robust measures. I welcome the holding, at this very moment, of a joint meeting of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counterterrorism and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, on terrorist financing, with the presence of the President of the Financial Action Task Force on Money-Laundering.

At the national level, France has a plan to combat the financing of terrorism. The plan has three objectives: to reduce anonymity in the economy in order to better trace financial transactions; to improve monitoring, through the mobilization of financial actors in the fight against terrorism; and to strengthen the capacity to freeze assets held by the actors of terrorism. France is also fully mobilized in the fight against the trafficking in works of art and antiques. We have drawn the attention of antique dealer associations to the trafficking of works of art from Syria and Iraq and to the fact that such trafficking may contribute to the financing of Da'esh. Customs has enhanced the surveillance of imports of cultural property, particularly items from the Middle East. The President of the Republic announced at UNESCO the introduction by France of a customs control of the importation of cultural property and the creation of safe havens in France to hold endangered cultural property. These provisions have been included in a bill currently being debated in Parliament.

Finally, the third area of work, combating terrorist propaganda, which is undertaken pursuant to resolution 2253 (2015), is another fundamental area where mobilization of the international community is indispensable. The ease with which terrorists use the Internet and social networks so as to spread their messages of hate is particularly worrisome. We stress that any initiative in this area should respect the freedom of expression. Upholding human rights and the rule of law, as well as education, inclusion and social harmony, will be key factors in the long term in any strategy to prevent or of fight violent extremism. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that combating terrorism, which is so crucial to the safety of our fellow citizens, necessarily goes hand in hand with upholding human rights.

Given a threat of this scope, we have no other choice but to strengthen international cooperation. Specific progress is possible, as was demonstrated by the adoption today of the passenger name registry by the European Parliament. In each of these areas, the United Nations has a great added value to provide, be it in the creation of standards, strategic guidelines or mobilizing the international community. The review of the United Nations global strategy in May would be a time to continue these discussions on how to strengthen international cooperation in counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism. France will play its full part in these debates.

For more information, please check the [complete record](#).