

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

*Statement by Mr. Hilale, Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations.*

I would like, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of December, and especially on the pertinence of the thematic choice for the debate, namely, threats to international peace and security: terrorism and cross-border crime.

The Kingdom of Morocco takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, stressing that nothing can justify a terrorist act. Therefore, following the Taliban terrorist attack perpetrated at a school in Peshawar, His Majesty King Mohammed VI sent a message of condolence and sympathy to the President of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, and through him, to the people of Pakistan, in which he condemned these despicable acts in the strongest terms, stressing that terrorism is banned by the precepts of our tolerant Islamic religion and rejected by heavenly religions, the principles of humanity and democratic values that hallow the right to life as the supreme principle of human rights.

We also condemn in the strongest terms the abduction in northern Nigeria of women and children as well as the killing of several dozens of them by the terrorist group Boko Haram. We reiterate our solidarity with the Government and the people of Nigeria. My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2195 (2014), which will help to consolidate the relevant instruments and resolutions in the fight against terrorism, as well as those relating to cross-border crime.

The last decade has seen a resurgence of terrorist acts coupled with a increase in the power of cross-border crime, threatening the stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Networks of terrorists and criminals who cooperate and are active in trafficking of all kinds — weapons, human beings, drugs and so on — spare no effort to weave links for criminal purposes. Our continent, Africa, is no exception, unfortunately, and the Sahelo-Maghreb region has not escaped this scourge.

The fact is that as this danger is studied and analysed, the link between drug trafficking, cross-border crime, armed groups, separatist movements, tiny terrorist groups and the financing of terrorism is increasingly confirmed. Drug-traffickers and arms dealers have joined the ranks of Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). These criminal networks are intertwined and support each other, but they are also globalizing, thereby increasing their abilities to destabilize, massacre and commit atrocities. They threaten peace and security not only in the African region, and especially in the Sahel-Maghreb region, but also at the international level.

The Kingdom of Morocco was among the first States to alert the international community to these dangerous connections between traffickers, armed groups and terrorists in the Sahel, calling for vigilance and joint efforts at the subregional, regional and international levels. Our concerns grew from the discovery of the connections between terrorism, trafficking in drugs, weapons and human beings, and the taking of hostages — innocent tourists, aid workers and

even United Nations officials. My country then called for concerted preventative action by the States of the Sahel and Maghreb region to curb the already-visible adverse effects of such activities.

Events in northern Mali and the serious infringement of its territorial integrity, the expansion of the terrorist group Boko Haram, whose influence is spreading in the Sahel-Saharan region, and the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and criminals have only confirmed our fears and shown that the threat of instability is not merely hypothetical but immediate and real, with adverse consequences for our entire region. Morocco's concerns therefore led to our call for concerted action by the States of the Sahel-Sahara and Maghreb region to fight such transnational crime and terrorism together.

To tackle the phenomena of terrorism and cross-border crime, my country has developed its own national strategy based around security governance, the implementation of a legal framework, the fight against social insecurity and the reform of the religious sector. Moreover, we have contributed to international efforts — within the United Nations, as part of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and through fruitful and active cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force — as well as at the regional and subregional levels, through cooperation and exchange of expertise in various fields with allied African countries, and through South-South and triangular cooperation. We have also contributed to international initiatives and discussions in the fight against terrorism, including the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

Terrorism and cross-border crime feed on a complex set of interdependent political, economic and social challenges that must be met by strengthening good governance, sustainable development, promoting and upholding respect for human rights, and investment in human capital through appropriate education and training to immunize individuals against crime, extremism and terrorism. That is why my country believes that the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel requires both the ownership of each Member State of the region and the support of the international community.

It is also essential to strengthen border security in the Sahel-Maghreb region to cut off transnational threats and prevent the free movement of terrorists and traffickers in arms, human beings and drugs so as to stop this surge of terrorism in the region. It is with this objective that the Kingdom of Morocco hosted several meetings and conferences, including the ministerial conference on cooperation on border control in the Sahel and Maghreb, held in Rabat in November 2013, which culminated in the Rabat Declaration, calling for concrete steps to improve border security. On 28 and 29 October 2014, Morocco organized, again in Rabat, the Regional Conference of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development in the Middle East and North Africa region, under the theme “Ending armed violence for peace and development”, with the aim of emphasizing the crucial need for subregional cooperation.

In the context of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum Foreign Terrorist Fighters initiative, The Hague–Marrakech Memorandum on Good Practices for a More Effective Response to the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon was adopted, as my colleague the Dutch

Ambassador just mentioned. Morocco co-chairs the Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters with the Netherlands and held a meeting on this subject on 15 and 16 Marrakech, which adopted a vigorous and ambitious plan of action to counter foreign terrorism. In conclusion, because terrorism and cross-border crime are blind to religion, to nationality and to borders, the international community must equip itself with a comprehensive strategy for mobilization and cooperation at all levels. The fight against these twenty-first century scourges must be the ever-vigilant daily task of all of us until they are totally eradicated.