

Statement by Ambassador Dr Palitha Kohona

Permanent Representative of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to the  
UN

State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has jolted terrorism back to the sharp centre of our attention. The slaughter of children, beheadings and mass executions have shocked the Sri Lankan people along with the rest of the international community.

However, we must note that the horrendous methods of ISIL are not novel. They did not invent terrorist violence and brutality. They have copied existing models. Their methods, in fact, are borrowed from the tool kits of other terrorist groups of which communities have been victims previously. Sri Lanka knows only too well, having experienced the ruthlessness of the terrorist group, the LTTE, three decades which defined suicide technology including the use of the suicide vest and engaged in mass executions and killing of civilians. It is imperative therefore that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose, be condemned with equal vehemence. There can be no good terrorists. Terrorism and its apologists log t

been successful in this respect is a clear misunderstanding. They have copied the techniques of other terrorist groups which so effectively used the media to meet their objectives, both political and financial. This includes everything from inflicting terror on civilians, seducing the impressionable to join their ranks and seeking funding. States should work together, pooling their resources and sharing intelligence to address this phenomenon. Part of this strategy should entail better use of the media to counter and discredit the narrative propagated by terror groups.

Attempts by any terror group to associate itself with a particular religion should also be rejected. Such cynical efforts only polarize communities further and generate hatred. States must work with credible partners who wield influence within religious groups that they claim to associate with to discredit the terror narrative. Attempts by these terror groups to foster animosity amongst religious groups should be confronted with ecumenical initiatives that highlight the commitment of all the world's religions to respect fundamental tenets of human dignity and the right to life. The media has a significant role to play in this respect. We must also address the socioeconomic factors that create a sense of hopelessness that spawn terrorist sympathisers.

The expanding transcontinental reach of terror groups should further strengthen the call on multilateralism to challenge this hydra-headed monster. Terror groups today rely on international networks spanning continents to propagate their ideology, raise funds and purchase weaponry. Terrorism is funded by vast illicit enterprises that encompass trafficking in drugs, humans, weapons and money laundering. Without these networks, terror groups simply would not be able to sustain themselves for too long. One primary factor that assisted Sri Lanka's victory over terrorism in 2009, was the assistance we received from friends in dismantling key nodal points of the international network of the LTTE that provided the organization with the necessary finances and weaponry.

Sri Lanka believes that the finalization of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is urgently required given that such a legal framework would give clarity to a unified strategy to confront global terrorism. This would significantly reinforce and advance the norm setting process that has been taking place within the UN system. It is essential that all compromises be found to overcome the deadlock in the Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate Terrorism to move forward in the finalization of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. The recent upsurge in terrorist attacks around the world should only reinforce the need for such a framework.

Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to the UN Global CounterTerrorism Strategy that consolidates the activities of the Member States and presents a common strategic and operational framework to fight terrorism and protect the right to life. We also fully endorse the work of the CounterTerrorism Committee Executive Directorate. Our victory over terrorism gave us insights which we would be happy to

I thank you.