

Speech: “It is really essential that we keep preventing violent extremism at the heart of all of our work.”

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Chairs for your briefings this morning.

As you set out clearly today, these committees perform a crucial role in our continuing fight against terrorism. This is intricate and vital work, and I really thank you for your service to this Council.

The threat is one that so many countries around this table know only too well. The United Kingdom witnessed it less than two months ago in the horrific attack in Westminster that claimed the lives of five people and injured over 50 more.

It speaks volumes of the threat we now face that the senseless actions of one man on one day could affect the lives of innocent men and women from 12 countries, including the United States, France, China and Italy, as well as people from my own country.

And this is just one example of many. So we share a single threat; one that demands a shared response. And it's a threat that is continually evolving. Just as terrorists pursue every means possible to carry out their hateful acts, so too must we pursue every available avenue to stop them.

The three committees are an important part of that effort. So let me take each briefly in turn.

Firstly, I welcome the work that the Counter Terrorism Committee and Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate are doing to galvanise our efforts to tackle terrorists on every front – whether combating illicit trafficking, or the financing of terrorism, or the abuse of the internet and other forms of communication.

Secondly, thanks to the 1267 committee and their monitoring team, we have a clear, up-to-date understanding of the evolving threat posed by Da'esh and Al Qaeda. I welcome the committee's work keeping the sanctions list up-to-date, ensuring that individuals, groups, and entities joining or affiliating with these groups are listed.

And thirdly, thanks to the work of the 1540 Committee, we are taking tangible steps to prevent weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists and non-state actors. Sadly, as the Joint Investigative Mechanism has confirmed, this is no longer a hypothetical nightmare scenario.

To adapt to this new reality, it is important that 1540 takes account of new and emerging challenges from the terrorist threat and advances in science and technology. And we must all do more, as others have said, to encourage Member States to submit their reports on national implementation of 1540.

Because, Mr President, to defeat terrorism, we all need to play our part. The committees can't do it alone. That's why the United Kingdom has been such a champion in this Council for aviation security, including through resolution 2309.

Protecting civil aviation should be high on everyone's counter-terrorist agenda. We all need to follow the international standards and recommended practices for aviation security developed by the International Civilian Aviation Organisation. These are designed to keep pace with the evolving nature of the threat.

Member States should recognise, support and draw on the co-operation between the United Nations and ICAO and take steps to strengthen that work. The CTC's upcoming meeting on Aviation Security in July is an important opportunity for us to focus on this issue, to share best practice, and to explore how the UN and ICAO can best support Member States.

Finally, Mr President, it isn't enough to simply counter terrorism; we must also ensure that we put the prevention of violent extremism – in all its forms – at the heart of our collective efforts.

We've made good progress over the past year; the prevention of violent extremism was recognised in the UN Global Counter Terrorist Strategy and was presented in the UN Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism in January 2016. As we go forward, it is really essential that we keep preventing violent extremism at the heart of all of our work.

Thank you.