

### **30. Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts**

During the period under review, the Council held four meetings under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”.<sup>962</sup> Three of the meetings took the form of briefings, and the remaining meeting was convened for the adoption of a decision,<sup>963</sup> in which the Council adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter.<sup>964</sup> More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in the table below.

In 2023, Council members heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Acting Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. In addition, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union and two civil society representatives. Briefings during the reporting period were focused on the increasing threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da’esh) affiliates and those of Al-Qaida, which continued to exploit past and new fragilities, in particular, in and around conflict zones; the need for a multidimensional, gender-sensitive approach beyond security-centered responses to address high-level threats; the merit of preventive measures; the need to hold perpetrators of sexual crimes accountable and to assist victims; and the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in support of the counterterrorism efforts of the Member States. Council members also discussed developments in Afghanistan, their impact on counterterrorism efforts in the region, the fear of weapons and ammunition falling into the hands of terrorists,<sup>965</sup> and the importance of countering the use of new and emerging technologies.

On 9 February, Council members heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism on the sixteenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da’esh to international peace and security.<sup>966</sup> The Under-Secretary-General reported that despite the loss of many of its leaders and expenses that were diminishing its cash reserves, the

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<sup>962</sup> See [A/78/2](#), part II, chap. 21.

<sup>963</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

<sup>964</sup> Resolution [2716 \(2023\)](#).

<sup>965</sup> For more information on the situation in Afghanistan, see sect. 14 above.

<sup>966</sup> See [S/PV.9257](#). See also [S/2023/76](#).

threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security remained high and had increased in and around conflict zones in which the group and its affiliates were active. He emphasized that the expansion of Da'esh and its affiliates was particularly worrying in Central and Southern Africa and in the Sahel, and that Da'esh continued to use the internet, social media and gaming platforms to extend the reach of its propaganda to radicalize and recruit new supporters. He also noted that Da'esh continued to use unmanned aerial systems for surveillance and reconnaissance, and virtual assets to raise funds. He further indicated that despite repeated calls by the Secretary-General for urgent action, the dire situation in camps and detention facilities in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic persisted, with the pace of repatriations remaining too slow. The Under-Secretary-General underscored the need for multidimensional approaches with more complementarity between security responses and preventive measures to address the high-level threat posed by Da'esh and its affiliates, and for such approaches to be gender-sensitive and firmly anchored in international law. He pointed out that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy would be undergoing its eighth strategic review in 2023, and further efforts were needed to address and prevent conflicts.

The Executive Director of Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate indicated that Da'esh continued to exploit local fragilities and intercommunal tensions, and that despite suffering losses, it had sustained its ability to carry out operations across diverse regions, expand its base of affiliated entities, notably in Central, Southern and Western Africa, and generate revenue and fundraising which had become critical to its operations. He added that the group's access to conventional and improvised weapons, including components of unmanned aircraft systems and information and communications technologies, continued to contribute to the terrorist menace. Regarding the Directorate's activities, the Executive Director reported that through country assessment visits as well as analysis of emerging trends, it facilitated Member States' understanding of the evolving threat and their implementation of the provisions of relevant Council resolutions. He added that the Directorate coordinated closely with the Office of Counter-Terrorism and other partners to support capacity-building activities and noted that both the Directorate and the Committee had ramped up efforts to address the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists.

At the same meeting, Council members heard a briefing by the Director of Multilateral Relations of the Global Center on Cooperative Security, who noted that mainstreaming gender into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of countering violent extremism and counter-terrorism measures was about ensuring the inclusive and equitable participation and leadership of people of diverse gender identities, which was a prerequisite for successful human rights-based and people-centred policies and programmes intended to address peace and security issues. She further shared a set of guiding principles for more gender-sensitive, rights-based approaches in that regard.

On 28 March, at the initiative of Mozambique, which held the presidency for the month,<sup>967</sup> the Council held a high-level debate under the sub-item “Countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism by strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and mechanisms”.<sup>968</sup> Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the President of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union.

The Secretary-General noted that terrorism was both the root cause and the result of many of the problems under the consideration of the Council and expressed particular concern regarding the situation in Africa. Expressing his deep concern by the gains that terrorist groups were making in the Sahel and elsewhere, he added that the trail of terror was widening, with fighters, funds and weapons increasingly flowing between regions and across the continent, with new alliances being forged with organized crime and piracy groups. He underlined that the United Nations stood with Africa to end the scourge of terrorism, including through the Council’s policy guidance, technical assistance, and support for the sanctions regimes, as well as the 65 assessment visits by the Counter-Terrorism Committee to ensure compliance with Council requirements. He further added that such support included above all, close collaboration with the African Union, regional and subregional African organizations. He indicated that the United Nations was delivering tailored assistance to African Member States and tirelessly advocating for a new generation of robust peace enforcement missions and counter-terrorism operations led by the African Union with a Council mandate under Chapter VII and with guaranteed, predictable

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<sup>967</sup> A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 24 February 2023 ([S/2023/147](#)).

<sup>968</sup> See [S/PV.9296](#).

funding through assessed contributions. He also noted that the eighth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2023 would be a critical opportunity to strengthen work in that area and to find new ways in effectively tackling the structural conditions that created fertile ground for terrorism.

The President of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union underscored that the terrorist contagion continued to grow in almost all parts of Africa, and noted that the African Union had already taken on initiatives to respond to the threats posed by terrorism, including the establishment of its Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism to support Member States and regional economic communities in implementing the conclusion of the May 2022 African Union sixteenth Extraordinary Summit on terrorism. He pointed out that the continent was continuing to make great strides in addressing various security challenges, including through the deployment of major peacekeeping operations such as the African Union Mission in Somalia and, subsequently, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, as well as the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad basin. He added that the success of those missions had helped to reduce violence, contain terrorist groups, and protect affected populations. He emphasized that the ongoing security challenges required sustained and renewed efforts within the relevant regional and continental frameworks in a collective momentum for peace, security and stability on the continent. To that end, he added, the sharing of relevant information and intelligence and the coordination of operations was essential. Emphasizing that one of the factors contributing to the spread of terrorism was the lack of attention given to primarily preventive approaches, he urged the Council to redouble its efforts by strengthening United Nations-African Union collaboration in prevention and recommended the use of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the planned African Union-United Nations Development Programme Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions to support States in political transitions to build resilient institutions. He also called for the mobilization of the necessary funds for preventing and combating terrorism and for ensuring predictable, flexible and sustained funding for African Union peacekeeping operations, which were also intended to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

On 25 August, Council members heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism on the seventeenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat

posed by Da'esh to international peace and security.<sup>969</sup> He reported that Da'esh and its affiliates continued to constitute a serious threat in conflict zones and neighbouring countries.<sup>970</sup> He assessed that the Da'esh affiliate in the Sahel was becoming increasingly autonomous and its confrontations with an Al-Qaida affiliate in the region, coupled with the uncertain situation after the coup d'état in the Niger, presented a complex and multi-faceted challenge. He also observed that because of counter-terrorism efforts, Da'esh had adopted less hierarchical and more networked, decentralized structures, with increased operational autonomy by its affiliated groups. In conclusion, he offered four observations for the Council's consideration. First, compliance with international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law, remained the essential bedrock for the success of counter-terrorism efforts. Second, the persistent challenges posed by terrorism underlined the need for counter-terrorism initiatives to be firmly grounded in political strategies for resolving the conflicts that fuel terrorism the most. In that regard, he recalled the Secretary-General's policy brief on the New Agenda for Peace, which had called for a new generation of counter-terrorism operations led by African partners with a Council mandate under Chapters VII and VIII of the Charter, with guaranteed funding through assessed contributions. Third, the nature of the threat posed by Da'esh underscored the need for more complementarity between security responses and preventive measures, necessitating further efforts to prioritize and significantly increase investment in prevention efforts. Finally, developments in some parts of Africa were deeply concerning and interconnected with existing conflicts and local grievances.

At the same meeting, the Executive Director of Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate highlighted four key trends during the reporting period. First, terrorist activity had continued to occur predominantly in the context of existing conflict. That trend, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, required a comprehensive and integrated approach, rather than continuing solely with over-securitized responses in countering terrorism. Second, Member States continued to repatriate their citizens from the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, including some for the first time. In that context, she recalled the responsibility of Member States to bring terrorists to justice and to demonstrate international cooperation in

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<sup>969</sup> See [S/PV.9405](#). See also [S/2023/568](#).

<sup>970</sup> See [S/PV.9405](#).

such efforts. Third, the Da'esh's operational presence in parts of Africa continued to evolve and it was essential that the United Nations provide tailored and comprehensive support to African Member States in boosting capacity to address underlying conditions conducive to terrorism. Fourth, the United Nations had stepped up its efforts to hold Da'esh accountable for its crimes. In that regard, the Directorate had continued to assess criminal justice frameworks with a view to enhancing accountability for terrorist acts in accordance with relevant Council resolutions and international standards, and she referred to concrete examples of support provided by the Directorate to Member States.

At the same meeting, Ms. Farida Khalaf, President of Farida Global Organization, urged the Council to fully recognize the crimes that Da'esh committed against the Yazidi community which amounted to genocide and to develop an environment safe for the return of Yazidis to their homes. She estimated that 70 per cent of Yazidis remained displaced in camps that lacked the basic requirements needed to live in dignity, and that prolonged displacement led to psychological and educational challenges, in particular for women. She advocated for their rights to seek asylum in States of their own choosing where their religious and racial identities were respected and protected and called for more efforts to put an end to sexual violence, to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes against women, and to increase support for female survivors and victims' families. In that context, the briefer called on the Council to work with the Iraqi government to ensure that Da'esh elements were not included in the general amnesty for prisoners, Da'esh elements and their affiliates currently being discussed in the Iraqi Parliament.

On 14 December, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2716 \(2023\)](#),<sup>971</sup> under Chapter VII of the Charter, by which it decided that all States should continue to take the measures required by paragraph 1 of resolution [2255 \(2015\)](#) with respect to individuals and entities designated prior to the date of adoption of resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#) as the Taliban, as well as other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with the Taliban in constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan as designated by the Committee established in paragraph 30 of resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#) in the 1988 Sanctions List. By the resolution, the Council also extended for a period of 12 months, until December 2024, the

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<sup>971</sup> See [S/PV.9506](#).

mandate of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team in support of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#).<sup>972</sup>

After the vote, the representative of the United States emphasized that the 1988 Monitoring Team's reporting remained crucial in understanding both the impact of sanctions and events on the ground, adding that those insights enabled Member States to track whether the Taliban followed through on its commitments, including, inter alia, human rights for women and girls.<sup>973</sup> The representative of China expressed appreciation for the inclusion in the resolution of a provision that encouraged the Monitoring Team to visit Afghanistan and to communicate with all Afghan parties and expressed hope that the visit would take place smoothly and timely. He also expressed China's belief that the Council should make timely adjustments to the sanctions measures for pragmatic engagement with Afghanistan by the international community and to avoid any negative impact on the development and the livelihoods of the people. In particular, he further noted that the Council should resume the travel exemptions granted to some officials of the Afghan Taliban, which were a necessary tool for facilitating dialogue and engagement. The representative of the Russian Federation welcomed the call for the Monitoring Team to visit Afghanistan, including for contacts with the de facto authorities. While taking note that the resolution included a reference to the need for a revision of the 1988 sanctions regime, she expressed regret that the travel ban exemptions for 11 members of the Taliban had not been extended.

Further to the briefings and adoption, Council members reaffirmed that terrorism continued to be a threat to international peace and security and expressed concern about the expansion of that threat throughout Africa. During the high-level debate held on 28 March, participants discussed how to improve cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and other African subregional organizations in countering terrorism and expressed support for African initiatives to counter extremism and prevent terrorism, including through United Nations financing of African peacekeeping operations.<sup>974</sup> Numerous Council members underlined the importance of the Delhi declaration on countering the use of new and emerging

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<sup>972</sup> Resolution [2716 \(2023\)](#), paras.1 and 2.

<sup>973</sup> See [S/PV.9506](#).

<sup>974</sup> See [S/PV.9296](#). For more information on the discussion, see part VIII, sect. I.B.

technologies for terrorist purposes which had been adopted at the special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in October 2022. Council members also discussed the importance of holistic approaches to countering terrorism, including addressing its root causes.

Developments concerning threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts were also considered under the item entitled “Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council”.<sup>975</sup>

**Meetings: Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 2023**

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.9257</a> 9 February	Sixteenth 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 ( <a href="#">S/2023/76</a> )			Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Acting Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Director of Multilateral Relations at the Global Center on Cooperative Security	All Council Members, all invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.9296</a> 28 March	Countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism by strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and mechanisms  Letter dated 24 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the		Rwanda	President of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union	The Secretary-General, all Council members, <sup>a</sup> all invitees <sup>b</sup>	

<sup>975</sup> See part I, sect. 31 below.



<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
	Secretary-General <a href="#">(S/2023/147)</a>					
<a href="#">S/PV.9405</a> 25 August	Seventeenth 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 <a href="#">(S/2023/568)</a>			Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Survivor, activist and President of the Farida Global Organization	All Council Members, all invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.9506</a> 14 December		Draft resolution submitted by the United States <a href="#">(S/2023/984)</a>			China, Russian Federation, United States	Resolution <a href="#">2716 (2023)</a> 15-0-0 (Adopted under Chapter VII)

<sup>a</sup> Gabon was represented by its First Vice-President; Ghana was represented by its President; Mozambique (President of the Council) was represented by its President; Switzerland was represented by its President; Brazil was represented by its Secretary of State for Multilateral Political Affairs of the Ministry of External Relations; China was represented by its Special Representative for African Affairs; the United Arab Emirates was represented by its Minister of State; and the United States was represented by its Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Member of the President's Cabinet.

<sup>b</sup> Rwanda was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.