

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM



Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

Security Council

Open debate on "Threats to international peace and security caused
by terrorist acts: combatting the financing of terrorism"

New York, 28 March 2019

Mr President,

Belgium thanks the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, the Under-Secretary-General, Mr Vladimir Voronkov, the Chairman of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Mr Marshall Billingslea, and Ms Mercy Buku, an expert in the fight against terrorist financing and money laundering.

Mr President,

Last week, Belgium commemorated one of the most tragic attacks our country has ever experienced. On 22 March 2016, no fewer than 32 people were killed and 340 others injured, some of them very seriously. As we remember the victims and their families, this anniversary reminds us how unfairly and indiscriminately terrorism strikes. Also, the tragic attacks on two mosques in Christchurch on Friday 15 March show that no region of the world is immune to this phenomenon. We must remain vigilant and never let down our guard.

In this context, the resolution that the Council has just adopted is essential. Belgium would like to express its deep appreciation to France for its initiative and the considerable efforts it made during the consultation process that led to this resolution.

The fight against terrorist financing is a subject to which Belgium attaches considerable importance. There is already an important set of international conventions calling on States to combat terrorist financing, but a new Security Council resolution, adopted under Chapter 7 of the Charter, pulls them together in a coherent and transparent manner. This resolution also fills important gaps related to the rapid evolution of the electronic financing infrastructure.

For Belgium, it is essential first of all to understand the nature of the problem. Terrorists abuse both legitimate and illegitimate means of fundraising, and are constantly finding new ways to do so. Belgium is particularly concerned by the increasing use of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and wildlife trafficking for terrorist purposes. In recent years, wildlife trafficking in particular, which is a form of organised crime, has generated considerable profits for terrorist organisations in Central Africa, such as Boko Haram.

To combat this phenomenon effectively, it is crucial that States develop a legal basis for the criminalisation of terrorist financing and create effective financial intelligence services, in cooperation with the private sector and civil society organisations. These services should be able to share their information with the relevant authorities, both at national and international level, in a way that is balanced and does not affect the fulfilment of States' obligations under international human rights instruments.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has already done considerable work in establishing international standards for the creation of legal, regulatory and operational measures to combat terrorist financing, and we welcome the fact that the new resolution calls on Member States to implement these standards and recommendations.

Mr President,

We would like to reiterate our view that none of the counter-terrorism measures taken should hinder the work of humanitarian organisations whose work is neutral and impartial. Not only are we convinced that this is the most effective approach for a successful counter-terrorism strategy, since its harmful effects are limited, we must also remember that we agreed on these fundamental principles almost 70 years ago when we adopted the Geneva Conventions, a legal framework that remains just as relevant today.

While we understand that the reality on the ground is often very complex, and that terrorist organisations can operate in war zones, we believe it is important to take into account the potentially harmful effects of our counter-terrorism policy on the work of humanitarian organisations whose action is neutral and impartial. This is one of the essential principles on which international humanitarian law is based. We believe that mitigation measures should be taken to prevent or, in any case, reduce the possible negative consequences of this policy to a minimum.

Mr President,

Let us now make the implementation of this resolution a priority.

Thank you.