

Statement by H.E. Mr. Majid Takht Ravanchi

*Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic
Republic of Iran to the United Nations*

VIRTUAL COUNTER-TERRORISM WEEK

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***Member States' Counter-Terrorism Priorities in the Post
COVID-19 Environment – Synergies and Complementarities
between the COVID19 and Counter-Terrorism Agendas***

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Thank you, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov,

The coronavirus and terrorism have several astounding commonalities. Neither recognizes any border. Both kill innocent people in an indiscriminate manner. They spread easily and undermine the well-being of societies whilst bringing tremendous economic downturns. They spread fear and anxiety and can only be defeated in the spirit of global partnership, solidarity and genuine cooperation among all actors at the national, regional and international levels.

In the fight against terrorists, there is no choice but to harness the power of the multilateral approach through enhanced information sharing and cooperation to effectively and swiftly address the vulnerabilities, mitigate the existing challenges and find practical solutions for emerging problems.

Despite the vital importance of collective and coordinated responses to terrorism and its devastating impacts, certain challenges still exist emanating mostly from unilateral approaches. For instance, the unilateral coercive measures deny essential tools for a collective response to terrorism and hinder international cooperation as well as genuine efforts in this endeavor, hence providing a breeding ground for terrorism.

The pandemic has even exacerbated the consequences of such a vicious approach. The imposition by the US of its laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact on my country and others is, by definition, tantamount to terrorism. The coercive measures are manifestations of structural violence that violate inalienable human rights, inter alia, the right to peace, right to development, right to health and above all, the right to life.

The United States' maximum pressure policy against Iran is designed to deliberately and indiscriminately target innocent civilians with the sole purpose of causing pain and suffering among them. Therefore, these actions constitute terrorist acts and, in the broader context, economic terrorism.

The United States' brutal and cowardly assassination of Major General Qasem Soleimani, the champion of fighting terrorists in the region, and his companions, while on an official visit to neighboring Iraq, is another obvious example of State terrorism pursued in gross violation of the fundamental principles of international law, entailing criminal responsibility of its perpetrators. This tragedy was a big gift to Daesh and other terrorist groups in the region who celebrated his assassination.

In other parts of our region, people continue to suffer from terrorism. The brutal suppression of Palestinian people by the Israeli

regime is among the gravest forms of terrorism which should be condemned by the international community, especially in the time of emergencies. On the other hand, we must not lose sight of the fact that foreign interventions and aggressions in our region, especially in Iraq and Syria, have helped create the current violent extremist and terrorist groups.

Last but not least, the excessive and disproportionate use of military force, including drones, in the name of countering terrorists, has created fertile grounds for vicious cycles of violence and terrorism leading to disastrous results. The recent decision of the International Criminal Court to authorize the opening of an investigation of the crimes committed in Afghanistan has opened the windows of hope for the administration of justice.

Mr. Chairman,

The U.S representative, in his presentation today, levelled unsubstantiated claims against Iran. It is common knowledge that Iran has been at the forefront of combatting terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida and ISIS. In fact, it is the US who is promoting terrorism not only in our region, but almost everywhere in the world. The United States' interventionist approach in our region has created chaos and an environment fertile for terrorism to grow. Moreover, the US has been harboring the MKO, a notorious and dangerous terrorist organization responsible for the killing of at least 12,000 Iranians and many Iraqis. Through providing the deadliest weaponry to the aggressors in the conflict in Yemen, the US is responsible for the continued catastrophe in that country resulting in terrorizing and killing of many innocent Yemenis.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.