

## Eritrea's Statement at the Security Council's Discussion On «Countering Terrorism and Extremism in Africa»



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Mr. President,

Let me congratulate you for assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of March and wish to thank China for organizing an open debate on the theme "Peace and security in Africa: countering terrorism and extremism in Africa".

I would also like to thank Under Secretary Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Fatima Mohammad and ASG Abdoulaye Mar Dieye for their statements. I would like to convey Eritrea's outrage and condemnation of the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdock and reiterates its solidarity with the people and government of Sudan.

Mr. President,

Eritrea's robust stance and decades-old struggle against terrorism and extremism is otherwise a matter of record. As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, and in the past two decades, despite the arduous challenges that our region has faced with extreme ideologies, Eritrea has remained a peaceful and harmonious nation, as it has done so for centuries. The laws of the country contain explicit provisions that preserve a healthy and centuries-old social fabric of mutual tolerance and co-existence between the various faiths.

Social peace has been a proven asset in combating violent extremism and this is a result of its secular policies. Eritrea's culture of ethnic and religious tolerance and respect is an asset. Adherence to the principles of social justice in its development policies, and an educational system that

aims to inculcate the culture of civic service and promotion of human dignity continue to play a vital role in curbing this scourge.

Mr. President

As you will all agree with me, the scourge of terrorism and extremism has global dimensions and tentacles; is transnational in intent and scope; and continues to grow and proliferate, in spite of all the concerted efforts to uproot and eradicate this scourge. For Africa, the Post-Cold War era has been more predatory than the previous era, and it has faced unprecedented attacks from fundamentalist groups of all flavors. The regional and international responses to the growing threats have been inadequate and incoherent.

In the event, it is important to ponder and assess profoundly, at this juncture, on the tools and methods that have been employed to date to combat this abomination, and, more importantly, to diagnose and fully address the underlying causes that may have contributed to its incubation.

Creating robust regional and global mechanisms of coordination; the establishment and consolidation of suitable coalitions that encompass all stakeholder countries is critical. These are broadly speaking, flexible architectures of defense cooperation that can be created to combat specific threats. This means that they will be limited in geographic and temporal terms. But above and beyond these specific coalitions, the scope of continuous exchange of information, coordination and experiences must be enlarged in terms of participant countries and frequency of interactions.

In the new congenial climate of regional cooperation, Eritrea is already pursuing these objectives with added vigor and urgency. Both in bilateral and trilateral Summits that Eritrea has held with its neighbors in the Horn of Africa. In January, during their trilateral meeting in the Eritrean capital Asmara the leaders of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia agreed on a comprehensive plan to combat and neutralize the common threats they face, including terrorism, arms and human trafficking and drugs smuggling.

As part of its overall commitment to promote peace and security and to combat terrorism, Eritrea continues to take measures in improving its legislative and law enforcement capacities to prevent and prosecute acts of terrorism in all their manifestations. It has issued a proclamation on "Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism" as well as established a Financial Intelligence Unit to monitor and criminalize financing of terrorism. Eritrea is an observer member of, the Eastern and Southern Anti-Money Laundering Group.

At the operational level, all relevant enforcement bodies are collectively working with the highest vigilance to fight and suppress any threat of terrorism and public awareness-raising programs, including at schools, are regularly conducted by the relevant authorities. As a victim of terrorism since the earliest days of its independence, Eritrea condemns and actively combats terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Without a conscious and vigilant public participation at all levels, terrorism and violent extremism would have sabotaged the survival and development of the nation. The active involvement of religious and societal leaders in the development and implementation of national policies is crucial.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate the following two points:

First: The interlinkage between terrorism and other forms of organized crimes such as trafficking in person and smuggling of migrants needs to be emphasized at policy and operational levels. These crimes reinforce each other, and have to be addressed comprehensively.

Today, cyberspace has become a battlefield for hearts and minds of young people all over the world, and a 'fertile ground for hate mongering'. Online falsehoods have become an apparatus to sow discord and extremism, and in some states, leading to communal riots. Concrete measures with determined focus on counter-narratives is needed in order to safeguard society.

Second: It is important to create a narrative of hope and defy the prevailing narratives of despair and gloom which perpetuate ideologies of extremism and terrorism. While international development has been discussed for decades, hundreds of million still languish in poverty. We need to enhance our cooperation to achieve a common defense against terrorism and violent extremism and reverse the growing inequality between rich and poor nations.

I thank you